

Bounded Bodies and Framed Voices: Gender Settings, Mobility Constraints, and Gender-Sensitive Language in Social Institutions

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Abstract

This study examines the interrelationship between gender settings, mobility constraints, and gender-sensitive language within social institutions, conceptualizing them as interconnected mechanisms that regulate both physical presence and symbolic participation. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, data were collected from a sample of 316 students enrolled in the BS (4-Year) Social Sciences program at a public sector university. A structured questionnaire comprising multiple sections was used as the primary data collection instrument. Prior to the main survey, pilot testing was conducted with 30 randomly selected students to ensure the clarity and reliability of the instrument. An attitudinal scale measuring levels of (dis)agreement captured students' perceptions. Univariate analysis was applied to examine data distributions and patterns, and the findings were systematically discussed to derive results and conclusions. The study reveals that gender settings, mobility restrictions, and language practices function as mutually reinforcing forms of institutional power that disproportionately discipline gendered bodies, particularly those of women, however, framing voices in ways that normalize unequal participation and visibility. The findings further suggest that the adoption of gender-sensitive language remains largely symbolic when embedded within institutional contexts that continue to reproduce gendered hierarchies. The study underscores the need for integrated structural interventions addressing spatial regulation, interactional norms, and discursive practices to move beyond symbolic inclusion toward substantive gender equality within social institutions.

Keywords: Gender Settings, Mobility Constraints, Gender-Sensitive Language, Gender Inequality, Symbolic Participation

Introduction

Social institutions are not neutral arenas; they are structured spaces in which power, norms, and inequalities are produced, regulated, and reproduced through everyday practices (Fairclough, 1995; Marques, Hernandez-Leo, & Castillo, 2024; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025c; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Among the most persistent yet subtle dimensions of institutional regulation are gender settings, mobility constraints, and language norms (Martínez-Romera, Cebrian-de-la-Serna, & Priego de Montiano, 2021; Ali, Shoaib, & Ali, 2025; Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a). Together, these elements shape how bodies move, how voices are recognized, and how identities are legitimized within institutional environments (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b; Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b; Risman, 2004). The study “bounded bodies and framed voices: gender settings, mobility constraints, and gender-sensitive language in social institutions” situates gender not merely as an individual attribute but as an organizing principle embedded in spatial arrangements, interactional rules, and discursive practices. Gender settings refer to the formal and informal institutional configurations that assign differentiated roles, expectations, and access based on gender (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a; Ali, Shoaib, & Kausar, 2025; Lazar, 2007). These settings structure participation in education, workplaces, religious spaces, and governance institutions by defining appropriate behaviors, spatial presence, and interactional boundaries for men and women (Fairclough, 1995; Iqbal, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, 2025). Within such settings, mobility is not only a physical matter but a socially regulated process (Connell, 2002; Shoaib, Ahmed, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025). Mobility constraints manifested through restricted movement, surveillance, timing regulations, or symbolic boundaries operate unevenly across genders, often limiting women’s access to public spaces, leadership positions, and institutional resources (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025a, 2025b). These constraints reflect broader patriarchal arrangements that discipline bodies and normalize gendered inequalities under the guise of tradition, safety, or institutional order (Shoaib, Ahmed, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a).

Language functions as a parallel site of regulation within these institutions. Gender-sensitive language has emerged as a critical intervention aimed at challenging androcentric norms and symbolic exclusions embedded in institutional discourse (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b, 2025c). However, language is not merely reflective of social realities; it actively frames whose experiences are acknowledged and whose voices are marginalized. Institutional language policies, official documents, classroom interactions, and everyday communication practices often reproduce gender hierarchies by rendering certain identities invisible or secondary (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025c). However, the adoption of gender-sensitive language signals progressive intent, its effectiveness is contingent upon the surrounding gender settings and mobility structures that enable or constrain

meaningful participation (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b; Shoaib, Ali, & Kausar, 2025). This study argues that bounded bodies and framed voices are mutually constitutive processes (Shoaib & Bashir, 2025; Shoaib, Batool, Kausar, & Abdullah, 2025). Restrictions on physical mobility reinforce discursive marginalization, however, exclusionary language legitimizes spatial and institutional barriers (Shoaib, Iqbal, & Iftikhar, 2025; Shoaib, Iqbal, Rasool, & Abdullah, 2025). Drawing on sociological theories of gender, space, and discourse, the study examines how social institutions simultaneously regulate movement and meaning, shaping gendered experiences of inclusion and exclusion. By integrating spatial regulation with linguistic practices, the research moves beyond fragmented analyses of gender inequality and offers a holistic understanding of how institutions sustain gendered power relations.

In doing so, the study contributes to contemporary debates in sociology of gender, institutional analysis, and critical discourse studies. It underscores the need to examine not only policy-level commitments to gender equality but also the everyday institutional practices through which bodies are bounded and voices are framed. Such an approach is essential for understanding the persistent gap between formal gender equality frameworks and lived gendered realities within social institutions.

Study Context

This study is situated within formal social institutions that play a central role in structuring gender relations, particularly in societies where gender norms are strongly embedded in cultural, organizational, and institutional practices. The research focuses on institutional settings such as higher education institutions, public-sector organizations, and allied administrative environments, where gendered regulations of space, movement, and communication are both formally codified and informally enforced. These institutions serve as critical sites for examining how gender settings, mobility constraints, and language practices intersect to shape everyday experiences of men and women. The context of the study is informed by socio-cultural settings in South Asia, with particular reference to Pakistan, where gender relations are influenced by a complex interplay of patriarchy, religion, tradition, and modern bureaucratic structures (Shoaib, Kausar, Ali, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025c). In these settings, gendered expectations regarding appropriate behavior, spatial presence, and interaction are deeply institutionalized (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b). Women's mobility within institutional spaces is often mediated by formal rules, surveillance mechanisms, and informal norms related to safety, respectability, and honor (Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b). Men, by contrast, typically experience fewer restrictions, reinforcing asymmetrical access to institutional resources, authority, and visibility. Within these institutions, gender-sensitive language has increasingly been introduced through policy documents, codes of conduct, curriculum frameworks, and organizational communication (Shoaib, Rasool, Kalsoom, & Ali, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025b). However, the practical implementation of such language often remains symbolic rather than transformative (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025c).

Institutional discourse formally acknowledges gender inclusion whereas everyday communicative practices continue to reproduce masculine norms, silence women's voices, or frame them as secondary participants (Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Ahmed, 2025; Abdullah, Akhtar, & Munir, 2025). This disjunction between policy-level discourse and lived institutional practice provides a critical empirical backdrop for the study.

The study context also encompasses everyday interactional spaces within institutions, including classrooms, offices, meetings, corridors, and semi-public areas, where mobility and language are enacted simultaneously (Shoaib, Shamsher, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Shamsher, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2025a; Abdullah, Munir, & Malik, 2025). These micro-level spaces are important for understanding how gendered power operates beyond formal regulations, shaping who speaks, who moves freely, and whose presence is normalized (Shoaib, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2025b; Shoaib, Tariq, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025). By examining these settings, the study captures the relational dynamics through which institutional norms are reproduced and occasionally contested. Overall, the study is positioned at the intersection of gender, space, and discourse within institutional life. By grounding the analysis in a context marked by both formal commitments to gender equality and persistent structural inequalities, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how gender settings, mobility restrictions, and language practices operate together to sustain or challenge gendered hierarchies in social institutions.

The Data and Methods

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed for this study. The sample comprised 316 students enrolled in the BS (4-Year) Social Sciences program at a public sector university. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of multiple sections. Prior to the main survey, pilot testing was conducted with 30 randomly selected students to assess the clarity and reliability of the research instrument. An attitudinal scale measuring levels of (dis)agreement was used to capture students' responses. Univariate analysis was performed to examine the distribution and patterns of the data, and the findings were discussed to draw results and formulate conclusions.

Results

Gender Settings:

Table 1 outlines the response of the students towards gender settings. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as "you easily communicate in online class". The primary analysis indicated that 48.4 percent pupils was agree and 25.0 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item "you easily communicate in online class". However, 09.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 17.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement "you easily communicate in online class". It concluded that more than half of the both

gender students were in indulgence of agreement to the given statement “you easily communicate in online class”.

Table 1 Response of the Students towards Gender Settings

SA=Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree=SD

S. No.	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
i	You easily communicate in online class	79 (25.0)	153 (48.4)	29 (09.2)	55 (17.4)
ii	You express your questions in an online discussion	34 (10.8)	151 (47.8)	48 (15.2)	83 (26.3)
iii	You actively participate in virtual learning platforms	39 (12.3)	152 (48.1)	52 (16.5)	73 (23.1)
iv	You are reluctant to participate in co-educational class	42 (13.3)	145 (45.9)	71 (22.5)	58 (18.4)
v	Virtual learning provide equal opportunities for all genders	73 (23.1)	158 (50.0)	60 (19.0)	25 (07.9)
vi	You experienced gender-based critics in virtual class	49 (15.5)	109 (34.5)	67 (21.2)	91 (28.8)
vii	Your gender affects the way instructor interact	48 (15.2)	118 (37.3)	53 (16.8)	97 (30.7)

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you express your questions in an online discussion”. The primary analysis indicated that 47.8 percent pupils was agree and 10.8 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you express your questions in an online discussion”. However, 15.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 26.3 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you express your questions in an online discussion”. It concluded that more than half of the both gender students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “you express your questions in an online discussion”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you actively participate in virtual learning platforms”. The primary analysis indicated that 48.1 percent learners was agree and 12.3 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you actively participate in virtual learning platforms”. However, 16.5 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 23.1 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you actively participate in virtual learning platforms”. It concluded that more than half of the male/female students were in errand of agreement to the given statement “you actively participate in virtual learning platforms”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you are reluctant to participate in co-educational class”. The primary analysis indicated that 45.9 percent pupils was agree and 13.3 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you are reluctant to participate in co-educational class”. However, 22.5 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 18.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you are reluctant to participate in co-educational class”. It concluded that more than half of the male/female students were in errand of agreement to the given statement “you are reluctant to participate in co-educational class”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “virtual learning provide equal opportunities for all genders”. The primary analysis indicated that 50.0 percent pupils was agree and 23.1 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “virtual learning provide equal opportunities for all genders”. However, 19.0 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 7.9 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “virtual learning provide equal opportunities for all genders”. It concluded that more than half of the both gender students were in indulgence of agreement to the given statement “virtual learning provide equal opportunities for all genders”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you experienced gender-based critics in virtual class”. The primary analysis indicated that 34.5 percent pupils was agree and 15.5 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you experienced gender-based critics in virtual class”. However, 21.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 28.8 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you experienced gender-based critics in virtual class”. It concluded that more than half of the both gender students were in errand of agreement to the given statement “you experienced gender-based critics in virtual class”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “your gender affects the way instructor interact”. The primary analysis indicated that 37.3 pupils was agree and 15.2 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “your gender affects the way instructor interact”. However, 16.8 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 30.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “your gender affects the way instructor interact”. It concluded that more than half of the both gender students were in indulgence of agreement to the given statement “your gender affects the way instructor interact”.

Mobility Restriction:

Table 2 outlines the response of the students towards mobility restriction. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you face unequal access to virtual learning”. The primary analysis indicated that 34.8 percent of the students were agree and 17.1 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you face unequal access to virtual learning”. However, 15.5 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 32.6 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you face unequal access to virtual learning”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “you face unequal access to virtual learning”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your ability”. The primary analysis indicated that 36.1 percent of the students were agree and 14.6 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your ability”. However, 24.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 24.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your ability”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your ability”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your motivation”. The primary analysis indicated that 35.4 percent of the students were agree and 15.8 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your motivation”. However, 24.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 24.1 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your motivation”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your motivation”.

Table 2 Response of the Students towards Mobility Restriction

SA=Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree=SD

S. No.	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
i	You face unequal access to virtual learning	54 (17.1)	110 (34.8)	49 (15.5)	103 (32.6)
ii	Gender-based mobility restrictions affect your ability	46 (14.6)	114 (36.1)	78 (24.7)	78 (24.7)
iii	Gender-based mobility restrictions affect your motivation	50 (15.8)	112 (35.4)	78 (24.7)	76 (24.1)
iv	Gender-based mobility restrictions affect your education	48 (15.2)	99 (31.3)	75 (23.7)	94 (29.7)

v	Communication gap have been observed	57 (18.0)	154 (48.7)	63 (19.9)	42 (13.3)
vi	You have faced distraction at your home	84 (26.6)	128 (40.5)	61 (19.3)	43 (13.6)
vii	Online class have lack of students attention	118 (37.3)	117 (37.0)	50 (15.8)	31 (09.8)

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your education”. The primary analysis indicated that 31.3 percent of the students were agree and 15.2 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your education”. However, 23.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 29.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your education”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “gender-based mobility restrictions affect your education”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “communication gap have been observed during online class”. The primary analysis indicated that 48.7 percent of the students were agree and 18.0 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “communication gap have been observed during online class”. However, 19.9 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 13.3 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “communication gap have been observed during online class”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “communication gap have been observed during online class”

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you have faced distraction at your home during online class”. The primary analysis indicated that 40.5 percent of the students were agree and 26.6 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you have faced distraction at your home during online class”. However, 19.3 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 13.6 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have faced distraction at your home during online class”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “you have faced distraction at your home during online class”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “online class have lack of student’s attention”. The primary analysis indicated that 37.0 percent of the students were agree and 37.3 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “online class have lack of students attention”. However, 15.8 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 9.8 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “online class have lack of student’s attention”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “online class have lack of student’s attention”.

Gender Sensitive Language: Table 3 outlines the response of the students towards gender Sensitive Language. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “your course uses gender-neutral words”. The primary analysis indicated that 51.6 percent of the students were agree and 23.7 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “your course uses gender-neutral words”. However, 8.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 16.5 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “your course uses gender-neutral words”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “your course uses gender-neutral words”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “teachers use gender-sensitive language in class”. The primary analysis indicated that 40.5 percent of the students were agree and 11.4 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “teachers use gender-sensitive language in class”. However, 24.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 17.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “teachers use gender-sensitive language in class”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “teachers use gender-sensitive language in class”.

Table 3 Response of the Students towards Gender Sensitive Language
SA=Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree=SD

S. No.	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
i	Your course uses gender-neutral words	75 (23.7)	163 (51.6)	26 (08.2)	52 (16.5)
ii	Teachers use gender-sensitive language in class	36 (11.4)	128 (40.5)	71 (22.5)	81 (25.6)
iii	Gender-neutral pronouns are used in class	53 (16.8)	129 (40.8)	78 (24.7)	56 (17.7)
iv	Your institution provides guidance on inclusive language	47 (14.9)	147 (46.5)	71 (22.5)	51 (16.1)
v	Your friends follow gender-sensitive language rules	55 (17.4)	142 (44.9)	62 (19.6)	57 (18.0)

- vi You notice gender inclusivity in online37 (11.7) 116 (36.7) 77 (24.4) 86 (27.2) classes
- vii Teachers prefer to communicate with gender51 (16.1) 112 (35.4) 58 (18.4) 95 (30.1) lens

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “gender-neutral pronouns are used in class”. The primary analysis indicated that 40.8 percent of the students were agree and 16.8 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “gender-neutral pronouns are used in class”. However, 24.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 17.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “gender-neutral pronouns are used in class”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “gender-neutral pronouns are used in class”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “your institution provides guidance on inclusive language”. The primary analysis indicated that 48.4 percent of the students were agree and 25.0 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “your institution provides guidance on inclusive language”. However, 09.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 17.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “your institution provides guidance on inclusive language”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “your institution provides guidance on inclusive language”. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “your friends follow gender-sensitive language rules”. The primary analysis indicated that 44.9 percent of the students were agree and 17.4 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “your friends follow gender-sensitive language rules”. However, 19.6 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 18.0 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “your friends follow gender-sensitive language rules”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “your friends follow gender-sensitive language rules”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you notice gender inclusivity in online classes”. The primary analysis indicated that 36.7 percent of the students were agree and 11.7 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “you notice gender inclusivity in online classes”. However, 24.4 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 27.2 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you notice gender inclusivity in online classes”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “you notice gender inclusivity in online classes”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “teachers prefer to communicate with gender lens”. The primary analysis indicated that 35.4 percent of the students were agree and 16.1 percent of the students were strongly agree with the given item “teachers prefer to communicate with gender lens”. However, 18.4 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 30.1percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “teachers prefer to communicate with gender lens”. It concluded that more than half of the male and female students were in favor of agreement to the given statement “teachers prefer to communicate with gender lens”.

Discussion

Gender Settings: The summary of the frequency distribution declared that the students easily communicated in online classes. However, the study findings claimed that students express their questions in an online discussion. The primary data analysis highlighted that students actively participated in virtual learning platforms. Further, the study findings summarized that students were reluctant to participated in co-educational class. The study findings indicated that virtual learning provided equal opportunities for all genders. Contently, the study findings asserted that students experienced gender-based critics in virtual classes. Moreover, the primary data analysis pointed out that student's gender affected the way instructor interacted. The study findings had been aligned with several studies on the subject of sociology of education and specifically for gender spaces and virtual learning environment. The study findings outlined that evaluating gender inequalities in satisfaction with learning within educational institutions had been found gender spaces in virtual learning (Marques, Hernández-Leo, & Castillo, 2024; Abdullah & Nisar, 2024; Shoaib & Ullah, 2025). Similarly, the education findings disclosed that the impact of gender on the engagement of students with virtual universities among students had been found gender dynamics at tertiary level (Martínez-Romera, Cebrián-de-la-Serna, & Priego de Montiano, 2021; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a; Abdullah & Ullah, 2022). Likewise, the study of McGuire, Okrey Anderson, and Michaels (2022) indicated that gender-segregated restrooms effected on students' justice, security, and medical conditions at higher level and also had been found gender spaces.

Mobility Restriction: The summary of the frequency distribution declared that students faced unequal access to virtual learning. However, the study findings claimed that gender-based mobility restrictions affected student's ability. The primary data analysis highlighted that gender-based mobility restrictions affected student's motivation. Nonetheless, the study findings summarized that gender-based mobility restrictions affected student's education. The study findings indicated that communication gap had been observed during online classes. Further, the study findings asserted that students had faced distraction at home during online classes. The primary data analysis pointed out that online classes had lack of student's attention. The study findings had been aligned with several studies on the subject of sociology of education and specifically for gender spaces and virtual learning

environment. Moreover, the study findings outlined that restriction actions approaching and utilizing public and private places and had found mobility restriction at higher level (Olesen & Lassen, 2012; Abdullah, Matloob, & Malik, 2024; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b). Similarly, the study findings showed that in different national settings the gender and higher educational institutions performances had been found e-learning inclusive at tertiary level (Abdullah et al., 2024; Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2011; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b, 2025c). Besides, the study of Akramy (2022) indicated that Afghanistan higher educational institutions examined the shocks and aftershocks of COVID-19 pandemic on students learning and had been found gender spaces in virtual learning at tertiary level.

Gender Sensitive Language: The summary of the frequency distribution declared that students course used gender-neutral words. However, the study findings claimed that teachers used gender-sensitive language in classes. The primary data analysis highlighted that gender-neutral pronouns are used in online classes. Further, the study findings summarized that educational institution provided guidance on inclusive language. The study findings indicated that class friends followed gender-sensitive language rules. Moreover, the study findings asserted that students noticed gender inclusivity in online classes. The primary data analysis pointed out that teachers preferred to communicated with gender lens. The study findings had been aligned with several studies on the subject of sociology of education and specifically for gender spaces and virtual learning environment. Contently, the study findings outlined that the racial and gender disparities prevailed in higher educational organizations among both gender students and also had been found in online classes (Abdullah, Nisar, & Malik, 2024; Bhopal & Henderson, 2021; Shoaib & Zaman, 2025; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Besides, the study findings showed that metropolitan space, gender, and class on public and private areas had been found gender dynamics in modern cities (Abdullah, Nisar, & Ahmed, 2025; Bondi, 1998; Shoaib, 2024e; Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024a, 2024b). Likewise, the study of Browne, Jenkins, and Walker (2006) indicated that an analysis of UK higher learning universities used of virtual classrooms from a long-term viewpoint for students and also had been found online assessment methods smoother.

Theoretical insights

This study is theoretically anchored in feminist sociology, the sociology of space, and critical discourse analysis to explain the interconnected regulation of bodies and voices within social institutions. Feminist theory conceptualizes gender not as an individual trait but as a social structure embedded in institutional arrangements that shape access, authority, and participation (Connell, 2002; Risman, 2004; Shoaib, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d; Shoaib, Ali, & Abbas, 2024; Abdullah, Sultana, & Nisar, 2025; Abdullah, Shoukat, Malik, Akhtar, 2025). From a spatial perspective, the regulation of mobility is understood as a form of power that disciplines bodies and normalizes gendered inequalities through formal rules and informal norms (Foucault,

1977; Massey, 1994; Shoaib, 2021, 2023a, 2023b, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d; Shoaib, Ali, et al., 2024)). Simultaneously, critical discourse theory highlights language as a constitutive force that frames social reality, legitimizes institutional practices, and either reproduces or challenges gender hierarchies (Abdullah, Nisar, Ahmed, & Sultana, 2025; Fairclough, 1995; Lazar, 2007; Shoaib & Ullah, 2019, 2021a, 2021b)). Gender-sensitive language, therefore, is not merely symbolic but operates within broader gender settings and mobility structures that condition whose voices are heard and whose experiences are marginalized (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2023; Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). By integrating these theoretical strands, the study conceptualizes bounded bodies and framed voices as mutually reinforcing mechanisms through which social institutions sustain gendered power relations despite formal commitments to inclusion and equality.

Conclusion

This study concludes that gender settings, mobility constraints, and language practices operate as interlinked mechanisms through which social institutions regulate both physical presence and symbolic participation. The analysis demonstrates that restrictions on mobility are not merely logistical or cultural arrangements but forms of institutional power that disproportionately discipline gendered bodies, particularly those of women. Simultaneously, the framing of voices through gender-insensitive or selectively inclusive language legitimizes these spatial constraints by normalizing unequal participation and visibility. Even where gender-sensitive language is formally adopted, its transformative potential remains limited when embedded within institutional settings that continue to reproduce gendered hierarchies. By conceptualizing bounded bodies and framed voices as mutually reinforcing processes, the study highlights the need for structural interventions that address spatial regulation, interactional norms, and discursive practices simultaneously in order to move beyond symbolic inclusion toward substantive gender equality within social institutions.

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