

Women (Im-) Mobility in Pakistan: Salami Slicing the Public Transport to Navigate Social Inequality and Marginalization

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Abstract

Industrialization, technological advancement, and globalization have transformed societies and significantly reshaped the traditional roles of women. These developments expanded women's participation in education, employment, and public life. However, such progress remains uneven across the Global South. Despite these advancements, women in the Global South continue to be one of the most marginalized segments of society. Pakistan, as part of the Global South, exemplifies these challenges. Despite rapid urbanization and infrastructural development in Pakistan's major cities, including Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, female continue to face significant transportation challenges that restrict their access to education, employment, and other opportunities of empowerment. This study aims to investigate the transportation challenges faced by female university students of Lahore focusing on the frequently unobserved door-to-door phase of their daily commute from home to university and back. It examined their complete commuting experiences, including walking, public transport, reserved transport, and ride-hailing services covering entire journey from their doorstep to the university gate. Qualitative data were collected from female university students of Lahore and analyzed using SPSS to identify significant patterns in their commuting experience. The findings reveal that women continue to face unsafe transportation, harassment, mobility insecurity, and social stigmas that discourage independent travel. These barriers limit women's educational, economic and social opportunities. Drawing on the principle of Salami Slicing within modernization theory, the study recommends gradual but immediate transportation reforms, including women-friendly public transport, immediate enforcement of anti-harassment laws, and awareness campaigns to enhance women's mobility, encourage gender equality, and promote inclusive development in Pakistan.

Article History

Received 29 March 2026

Revised 13 June 2026

Accepted 24 June 2026

Published 30 June 2026

Corresponding Author: *

OPEN ACCESS

Keywords

Industrialization, Globalization, Unplanned Urbanization, Women's Mobility, Educational Access, Transport Challenges, Government Reforms, Socio-Economic Development, Commuting Vulnerabilities, Women in Global South.

1. Introduction

Pakistan came into being in 1947 on the 14th of August. Since its independence, Pakistan is struggling with so many issues, including political instability, economic crisis, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, and many more. One burning issue which is most daunting is the gender discrimination in Pakistan. Unfortunately, there is a division of gender roles in Pakistan, where men are considered as breadwinners and women as homemakers. This gender-specific role limits women's active participation in society, ultimately slowing the country's progress. Unless, both segments of society (men and women) didn't work side by side in every field of life; no country can progress. One crucial aspect that can drive any country towards development is providing women with equal opportunities to pursue education. As educated population is the backbone of any nation. According to Article

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26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) every individual has the right to education. This article not only emphasizes the importance of education but also mandates it as a fundamental right of all.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-2023, the country's literacy rate stands at 62.8%, with a significant gap between rural and urban areas. In rural regions, the literacy rate is 54%, while in urban areas, it is 77.3%. Moreover, the male literacy rate is 73.4%, whereas the female literacy rate lags at 51.9% (Chalk and Chalk 2024). Pakistan ranks 142nd out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, highlighting the severe gender disparity in education and other sectors (Abbasi 2023). The growing economy in Lahore has drawn women into universities and workplaces, but urban planning still follows outdated, patriarchal norms lead to low women enrollment in educational institutions (Sajjad et al., 2018). For Pakistan to progress one of the most effective ways to empower women in by providing them with educational opportunities where higher education must be made accessible for everyone in general and for women in particular, as education is the real key towards women's empowerment.

Mobility is an integral part of the socio-economic empowerment of women; however, in cities, rapid urbanization has led to the expansion of metropolitan areas, with most educational institutions concentrated in central locations poses a challenge for female students who do not have access to door-to-door commute services (Sajjad et al., 2018). To use public transport, they often have to rely on cabs, taxis or rickshaws just to reach bus stops, adding both financial burden and safety concern on female in pursuit of education. The situation is even worse in rural areas, where educational institutions are often located far from villages. Even when public transport is available, safety concerns such as harassment create additional barrier. Though the Metro Bus service is available, still women comprise less than 15% of bus riders, while women drivers have reportedly been threatened more than threefold and over 72% women feel unsafe while commuting. This indicates a gap between modernization and what women actually need (Sajjad, Anjum, and GLM, LIC, 2018).

This study uses the idea of "salami slicing," meaning small, strategic changes that can build up over time, to look at how policies can improve women's mobility. Using Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, the study argues that initiatives like Lahore's Pink Buses (women-only buses) are small steps forward (Sajjad et al., 2018). However, these buses cover only three routes and are not enough on their own (Kouamé 2024). When expanded and combined with other small changes, these steps could lead to bigger improvements. For example, Mumbai's use of gender-specific data to redesign its train system helped improve safety for women. This shows that small, gradual changes can make a big difference when scaled up. Most research on women's mobility focuses on the time spent on public transport, but it often ignores the crucial "door-to-door" journey, the last part of the trip from home to the bus or train stop. In Lahore, 40% of women say walking to a transport stop is unsafe (Sajjad, Anjum, and GLM, LIC, 2018). This part of the journey is not given enough attention in policy discussions, but it is crucial in understanding the challenges women face.

Other cities, like Buenos Aires, have taken gender-sensitive approaches to improve transport for women by designing infrastructure with their needs in mind. In contrast, Lahore's reliance on women-only compartments is a small step that does not go far enough. While cities in the Global North integrate measures like reserved seating and safety protocols, Pakistan's policies are more reactive and don't focus on larger, more comprehensive solutions like safety audits or better public transport planning. This study contends that Lahore's mobility issues reflect broader challenges in Global South cities, where economic growth often doesn't match up with the development of infrastructure. By focusing on the door-to-door journey and using the "salami slicing" approach, we can propose small yet meaningful changes that, over time, can help reduce the inequality women face in urban mobility.

1.1. Research Problem

- Poor policy implementation for Women Safety
- Harassment in Public Transports
- Socio-economic restrictions and female commute independent
- To identify the obstacles facing female in the "door-to-door" commute.

1.2. Research Objective

- The purpose of the study is to explore the challenges faced by female commuters in Pakistan
- To evaluate the socio-economic impediments of transport challenges for female students in Pakistan
- Propose a comprehensive policy recommendation, aimed at ensuring door-to-door security for female students.

- To propose accessible policy improvements by “Salami Slicing” approach.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The study aims to identify the challenges faced by female commuters from their home to university and back and provide policy recommendations for addressing these issues.

2. Research Methodology

Research methodology outlines the techniques and procedures used to collect and analyze data from various perspectives.

2.1. Research Design

The nature of the study is both qualitative and descriptive. To examine commuting hitches from different perspectives a structured questionnaire was distributed amongst the female university students in Lahore. The survey covered various modes of travelling, such as walking, public transport, regular reserved transport and ride-hiring services like cabs. A total of 1,021 responses are included in the research based on the validity of the responses. The questionnaire were filled by female students of various degree programs, allowing for an analysis of commuting problems based on factors such as, age and degree level. The objective of questionnaire was to investigate the difficulties women face while their commute from home to university and vice versa.

2.2. Area of Study

In order to align with research objective of examining the issue from multiple perspective the research was conducted in four public sector universities of Lahore: Government College University Lahore, University of Punjab, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences and Education University. These universities were chosen because these universities have large female student population, from diverse socio-economic background making them ideal for studying the commuting challenges faced by female students.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

In order to analyze the collected data, a descriptive analysis and inferential statistical methods has been applied. Descriptive analysis involved frequencies and percentages to summarize the key variables, such as mode of transportation, experiences of harassment and female’s safety concerns. Moreover, bar charts and stacked bar charts has been created to visualize the data trends in order to enhance its interpretability.

Various statistical tests, including the Kruskal-Wallis test, Spearman’s rank correlation and logistic regression analysis, were conducted on the available data, in order to assess the relationships, frequencies, strengths and impacts between different variables. These analysis provided deeper insights of the behavioral patterns of female students, influenced by such safety concerns and the commuting challenges faced by female students in Lahore. All descriptive and statistical analyses were conducted by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Scientists), ensuring the accuracy and the reliability of the data interpretation.

3. Findings and Discussion

The analysis the data and complete findings with relevant literature is presented in this section.

3.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The questionnaires were distributed across the four public sector universities in Lahore. The collected data provided a fair representation which was essential to ensure the diversity in the responses. This research analysis shows that majority of respondents 28.7% are from Government College University Lahore, shadowed by University of Punjab 25.8%, and the University of Education 25.0%. While the lowest percentage of participants 20.6% are from University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore (**Appendix, Figure 1**). This information was collected to ensure the inclusion of respondents from different educational background such as social sciences, life sciences etc. in the research (**Appendix, Figure 2**). Respondents from different age groups are being selected as 61.2% respondents were from the age of 21-25 years. 26.1% population of the survey was between the ages of 18-20 years who are just newly enrolled in the universities. 12% respondents were of 26-30 years of age. While less than 1% respondents were above 30 years of age. Diversity in age can present different experiences (**Appendix, Figure 3**). Similarly various degree programs also indicates the maturity level of respondents (**Appendix, Figure 4**).

3.2. Experience of Harassment While Travelling

Harassment while travelling is a serious issue as it not only limit female mobility but also restrict many women in their homes. Female students often experience verbal abuse, inappropriate touching and deep stares, making

their daily commutes stressful and unsafe. Ambreen and Mohyuddin (2012) in their study observed that female face harassment while travelling which ultimately results in low female enrollment in educational institutions, as parents feel insecure about the safety of their daughters. Sometimes parents try to protect the honor of their family and restrict women mobility Mehmood (2018).

Ever Harassed While Traveling

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	447	42.1	43.8	43.8
	Once only	260	24.5	25.5	69.2
	More than once	221	20.8	21.6	90.9
	Often	93	8.7	9.1	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 1: Responses on Harassment While Traveling

The data showed that a significant number of respondents (42.1%) never experienced harassment while traveling, while 24.5% respondents had experienced it once, and 20.8% had faced harassment more than once. Alarming, 8.7% respondents responded that they experienced harassment more than once. This research presented that **more than half (57.9%)** of the respondents have experienced harassment at least once in their life while traveling. This percentage make this issue as concerning. The cumulative percentage presents that after the inclusion of all the responses who have been harassed “**more than once**” almost 91/% of the respondents ultimately seems as the victim of harassment, presenting the severity of the concern. These findings suggest that harassment while traveling is a widespread issues, highlighting the need for better safety measures, awareness campaigns and policy interventions.

3.3. Modes of Commute to University

Long distance of educational institutions serves a higher impact on female education. Alam, E. (2018) stated that the time is changing so the modes of commute, many students in urban areas use modern means of traveling, while female in reserved or rural areas still depend on their male counterparts for commute. Inadequate transportation facilities, high costs, and less availability also make matter more concerning.

Commute to university		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public Transport	334	31.4	32.7	32.7
	Private vehicle	300	28.2	29.4	62.1
	Pick and Drop	227	21.4	22.2	84.3
	Walk/Self Drive	160	15.1	15.7	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.2: Responses on Commute to University

The above data shows that majority of the students (32.7%) commute while using public transport, making it as the most common mode of travelling. Whereas 29.4% of the respondents presents that they rely on their private or family owned vehicles. Moreover, 22.2% respondents answered that they are dependent on their family members or “Pick and Drop” service, which is ultimately regarded as the safest mean of transportation but ultimately it lacks independence and is considered as less flexible. Walking and self-driving are regarded as the least common mode of transportation, with only 15.7% responded using this mode of commute. This may be due to distance constraints, safety concerns, or a lack of economic resources.

3.3.1. Cross-tabulation: Commute Mode & Harassment Experience

Commute to university * Ever harassed while travelling Cross tabulation

Ever harassed while travelling

Total

		Never	Once only	More than once	Often	
Commute to university	Public Transport	138	99	62	35	334
	Private Vehicle	146	61	75	18	300
	Pick and Drop	98	71	46	12	227
	Walk/Self Drive	65	29	38	28	160
Total		447	260	221	93	1021

Table 3.3.1.: Cross Tabulation of Commute and Harassment

The cross-tabulation analysis between commute mode and harassment experience of females provide a crucial insights of the safety of female students while traveling. The data shows that harassment frequency varies depending on the mode of transportation. Among the 334 female using public transportation, 29.6% reported being harassed at least “once”, while 10.5% faced it “often”. Similarly, among the 160 students who walk or drive themselves, 23.8% reported experiencing harassment “more than once”. Contrary to that, only 6% of private vehicle holders reported lowest experience of harassment, representing private vehicles as the most secured mean of transportation for female.

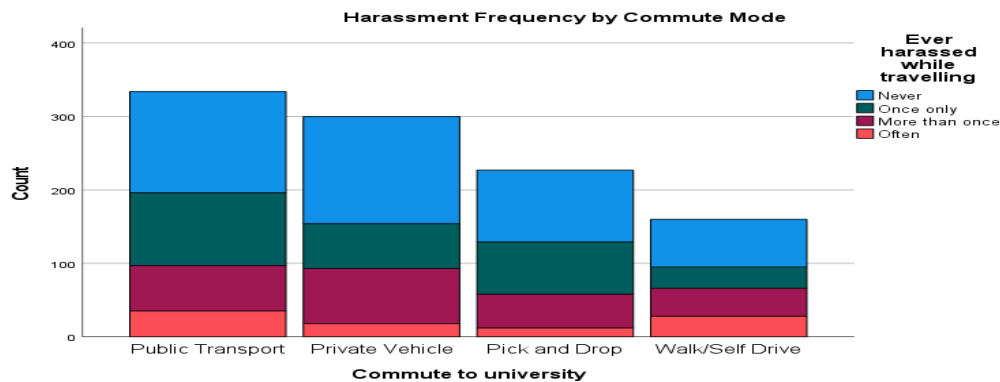


Fig. 3.3.1. Stacked Bar Charts Commute and Harassment

3.3.2. Statistical Analysis: Does Harassment Vary by Commute Mode?

Does harassment (Q1) vary by commute mode (Q2)?

- Test: Kruskal-Wallis (Q1 ordinal ~ Q2 nominal).
- Post-hoc: Dunn’s test if significant.

Whether harassment frequency while traveling (Q1: ordinal variable with categories Never/Once/More than once/Often) differs significantly across commute modes (Q2: Public Transport, Private Vehicle, Pick and Drop, Walk/Self Drive).

Kruskal-Wallis Test

		Ranks	
		Commute to university	N
Ever harassed while travelling	Public Transport		334
	Private Vehicle		300
	Pick and Drop		227
	Walk/Self Drive		160
	Total		1021
		Mean Rank	

Table 3.3.2. Does harassment (Q1) vary by commute mode (Q2)

1. Ranks Table:

- Public Transport (N=334): Mean rank = 517.74 (highest harassment reports).

- **Walk/Self Drive (N=160)**: Mean rank = **560.57** (highest rank, implying more frequent harassment).
- **Private Vehicle (N=300)**: Mean rank = **489.44** (lowest harassment reports).
- **Pick and Drop (N=227)**: Mean rank = **494.64**.

Interpretation: Higher mean ranks indicate **more frequent harassment**. Walk/Self Drive users report the highest harassment frequency, while Private Vehicle users report the lowest.

Test Statistics^{a,b}

Ever harassed while travelling	
Kruskal-Wallis H	7.876
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.049

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Commute to university

- **Kruskal-Wallis H = 7.876**
- **Degrees of freedom (df) = 3** (since there are 4 commute mode groups).
- **p-value (Asymp. Sig.) = 0.049.**

Interpretation:

The p-value (**0.049**) is **statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)**, meaning harassment frequency **differs significantly** across commute modes. There is a significant difference in harassment frequency based on commute mode. **Walk/Self Drive users** experience the most harassment (highest mean rank), while **Private Vehicle users** experience the least. **Public Transport** users also report relatively high harassment (second-highest mean rank).

3.4. Fear of Traveling Alone at Night

The fear of traveling alone at night serves as the major concern of many female students and their families. Due to safety concern linked with traveling in dark, especially in poorly lit and silent spaces, the chances of harassment and criminal activities raises. That make commuting alone at night more risky.

Ever felt scared going home alone from university

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	152	14.3	14.9	14.9
	Never	390	36.7	38.2	53.1
	Sometimes	398	37.4	39.0	92.1
	Most of the times	81	7.6	7.9	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.4: Frequency Distribution of Fear While Traveling Home Alone

The respondents were asked whether they feel scared while traveling home alone from university. A total of 39% respondents reported that they “sometimes” feel scared, while 38.2% respondents stated that they have never felt scared, which is ultimately showing a contrast in the safety perception. An alarming 14.9% respondents reported that they “always” feel scared, underscoring significant safety concerns regarding travel safety at nights. Similarly, 7.9% respondents indicated that they feel scared “most of the time,” emphasizing the need for a safer transportation conditions, particularly for female commuters. We can analyze that the higher percentage of fear or anxiety about the safety concern among the female students can be stem from past experiences of harassment,

lack of government initiatives ensuring women safety or judgmental attitude of society towards women traveling alone at night.

3.4.1. Cross-tabulation: Ever felt scared going home alone from university * Prefer a women cab driver

Ever felt scared going home alone from university * Prefer a women cab driver Cross tabulation Count

		Prefer a women cab driver				Total
		Always	Most of the times	Sometimes	Never	
Ever felt scared going home alone from university	Always	45	48	39	20	152
	Never	68	103	116	103	390
	Sometimes	112	114	106	66	398
	Most of the times	23	26	11	21	81
Total		248	291	272	210	1021

Table 3.4.1. Cross-tabulation: Ever felt scared going home alone from university * Prefer a women cab driver

A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted between *feeling scared while going home alone* and *the preference for a female driver*. The responses presents that students who frequently feel scared teavelling home alone tends to prefer a female cab driver as compared to those who do not experience such threats. The above data presents a significant connnection between fear and gender of the driver.

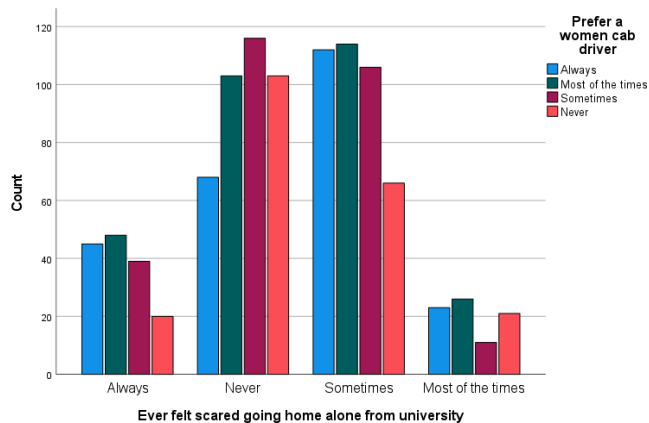


Fig 3.4.1. Stacked Bar Chart Felt Scared and Prefer Cab Driver

3.5. Bullying by Boys on Public Transport

Women encounter with bullying by boys on public transportation that ultimately serves as a significant barrier in their independent mobility. Literature shows that over 70% of male family members discourage their female relatives from using public transport due to harassment risks (Sajjad et al., 2017). Bullying by boys on buses and at stops dater girls from attending schools and universities (Mehmood et al., 2018).

Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	394	37.1	38.6	38.6
	Once only	238	22.4	23.3	61.9
	More than once	252	23.7	24.7	86.6
	Often	137	12.9	13.4	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	

Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.5.: Frequency of Bullying by Boys on Public Transport*

The responses of the participants highlighted that bullying on public transport is a widespread issue, which is affecting a majority of female students. While 38.6% of students stated that they never faced experience of bullying. 23.3% of responded that they faced bullying “at least once” in their traveling experience, presenting that many female students have encountered this torturing experience during their commute from home or university or vice versa. 24.7% said that they experienced it more than once and 13.4% reported bullying on public transport is a persistent issue for them. The cumulative percentage reveals that a total of 86.6% students who have experienced bullying in their life time more than once, which is an alarming number. By this percentage we can assume that nine out of ten students have been bullied in public transports on multiple occasions.

3.5.1. Statistical Analysis: Does Bullying on Public Transport Influence Fear of Travelling Alone

Is feeling scared (Q3) linked to bullying (Q4)?

- Test: Spearman’s rank correlation (both ordinal).

Correlations

			Ever felt scared going home alone from university	Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport
Spearman's rho	Ever felt scared going home alone from university	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.115**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	1021	1021
	Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport	Correlation Coefficient	.115**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	1021	1021

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.5.1: Statistical Analysis: Does Bullying on Public Transport Influence Fear of Travelling Alone

The Spearman’s Rank Correlation analysis examined the relationship between "Ever felt scared going home alone from university" and "Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport". There is a statistically significant **weak positive correlation** between feeling scared going home alone and facing bullying on public transport ($\rho = 0.115$, < 0.0001). The ** indicates the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (99% confidence). The p-value is less than 0.001, meaning there's less than a 0.1% probability that this correlation occurred by chance. We can reject the null hypothesis (that there is no correlation) with high confidence.

The analysis is based on ($N = 1021$) respondents, which is a substantial sample size that increases the reliability of the results. The positive correlation suggests that **women who report facing bullying by boys on public transport are slightly more likely to also report feeling scared when going home alone from university**. However, the weak strength (0.115) means this relationship, while statistically significant, is not particularly strong in practical terms. Only about 1.3% of the variance in one variable is explained by the other (calculated as $0.115^2 = 0.0132$).

3.6. Conscious About Appearance

Pakistan is an Islamic state, where society’s expectations and cultural norms prevail in every walk of life. Being a conservative society too women dressing are often associated with harassment, if a women is fully covered he is regarded as modest and less expose to threat or vulnerabilities often leads to negative attention, discrimination, or hurtful comments (Useche et al., 2024).

Conscious about your appearance					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	274	25.8	26.8	26.8
	Mostly	317	29.8	31.0	57.9
	Sometimes	305	28.7	29.9	87.8
	Never	125	11.8	12.2	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.6.: Frequency Distribution of Appearance Consciousness

Female participants were asked whether they are conscious about their appearance. A total of 31% participants reported that “mostly” they are conscious about their appearance in campus. While, 26.8% respondents said that they “always” conscious. Additionally, 29.9% respondents mentioned that they “sometimes” feel conscious about their appearance, whereas 12.2% reported that they “never” feel conscious about their appearance. This indicates that there is no direct correlation between harassment and dressing of female. The cumulative percentage shows that 87.8% students experience some level of appearance consciousness, which can be interpreted as societal or cultural pressure on female to maintain a certain image in society.

3.7. Wearing headscarf or Abaya

Wearing headscarf or Abaya can be a female’s personal choice but sometimes families also restrict their female to wear these, as they regard it as they will be protected and no one can harm them(Saleem et al., 2024).

Wear headscarf or Abaya					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	310	29.2	30.4	30.4
	Mostly	280	26.3	27.4	57.8
	Sometimes	273	25.7	26.7	84.5
	Never	158	14.9	15.5	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.7: Frequency Distribution of Wearing a Headscarf/Abaya

The collected responses showed that 30.4% female “always” wear a headscarf or hijab, while 27.4% shows similar results that they “mostly” wear it. Additionally, 26.7% stated that they “sometimes” wear it, and only 15% said that they “never” wear it. The majority of the (84.5%) respondents indicated that they wear a headscarf or abaya at least “sometimes”, this output can interpret as Pakistan, being a conservative society, having a cultural or religious influence on female dress choices, as reflected in the above table. However, this assumption could be completely wrong, as their choice may be purely personal.

3.8. Facing Problems While Coming To University Alone

The fear of sexual or verbal harassment often makes female hesitant to travel alone in the dark, ultimately limiting them from participating in educational activities or social events after daylight (Saleem et al., 2024). The personal security threat is one reason why females avoid going out at night or refrain from staying outside after dark. Another issue is that some families impose restrictions on women, not allowing them to go out after evening unless they are accompanied by a family member.

Face problems while coming to university alone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	191	18.0	18.7	18.7
	Mostly	272	25.6	26.7	45.4

	Sometimes	348	32.7	34.1	79.5
	Never	209	19.7	20.5	100.0
	Total	1020	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	43	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.8: Frequency Distribution of Facing Problems While Coming To University Alone

Students were asked whether they face problem while coming to university alone. A total of 18.7% respondents said that they “always” face difficulties while traveling to university alone. Similarly, 26.7% respondents reported that they “mostly” experience problems. Additionally, 34.1% said they “sometimes” encounter such challenges, whereas, only 20.5% respondents said they “never” experienced this issue while commuting alone. A significant majority of (79.5%) have experienced problems at some point of their commute. This higher ratio of response highlights the major security concerns and need immediate policies to counter this problem.

3.9. Facing Adverse Attitudes or Remarks When Arriving Home Late

Research indicates that when female come home late at night from university or any other social gathering, they often have to face negative comments or judgements because of societal norms, as society perceive this as contradictory to the image of the ideal female, who should be confined within the walls of her home. Ultimately, this view portrays women’s independence or mobility, especially at night, in a negative light. Such attitudes reflects the gender inequality in the society, as men are free to roam anywhere without the restriction or limitations, whereas women considered the “izzat” (honor) of the house, must be restricted to home. If they has to go out, they are expected to be accompanied family members (Useche et al. 2024b).

Face any adverse attitudes\remarks if arrive home late from university

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	174	16.4	17.0	17.0
	Mostly	256	24.1	25.1	42.1
	Sometimes	319	30.0	31.2	73.4
	Never	272	25.6	26.6	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.9: Frequency Distribution of Facing Adverse Attitudes or Remarks When Arriving Home Late

The question was asked to respondents about the behaviour of their family whenever they arrive late from university. The responses showed that 17% respondents “always” receive adverse remarks from their family, while 25.1% reported that they “mostly” experienced a negative attitude of their family. Additionally, a 31.2% stated that they “sometimes”, face such reactions, whereas only 26.6% marked that they “never” receive adverse remarks for arriving home late. A significant majority (73.4%) of students have experienced some level of negative remarks or attitude from their families whenever they arrive home late. This can link to gender norms or cultural expectations for women, where they are more likely be judged, even when their lateness was due to some serious concerns.

3.9.1. Statistical Analysis: Spearman’s Rank Correlation

Does harassment (Q1/Q4) correlate with adverse attitudes (Q8)?

- **Test:** Spearman’s rho.

Correlations

		Ever harassed while travelling	Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport	Face any adverse attitudes\remarks if arrive home late from university
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.392**	-.089**

Ever harassed while travelling	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.004
	N	1021	1021	1021
Faced bullying by boys while travelling on public transport	Correlation Coefficient	.392**	1.000	-.084**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.007
	N	1021	1021	1021
Face any adverse attitudes\remarks if arrive home late from university	Correlation Coefficient	-.089**	-.084**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.007	.
	N	1021	1021	1021

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.9.1: Statistical Analysis: Spearman's Rank Correlation

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (ρ)	Strength & Direction	Significance
Harassed while travelling	Bullied by boys on transport	0.392	Moderate positive	p < 0.001
Harassed while travelling	Adverse attitudes at home	-0.089	Very weak negative	p = 0.004
Bullied by boys on transport	Adverse attitudes at home	-0.084	Very weak negative	p = 0.007

Table 3.9.2: Spearman's Rank Correlation Matrix

The analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.392$, $p < 0.001$) between the variables of experiencing harassment while travelling and being bullied by boys on public transportation. **This statistically significant relationship suggested that** individuals who report **bullying by boys on public transport** are also more likely to report **general harassment while travelling**. Since bullying is a form of harassment, this strong relationship makes logical sense, which ultimately highlights the overlapping nature of these bad experiences in public spaces.

On the other hand, the study also identified a weak and negative correlation between harassment and adverse attitude from home for arriving late ($\rho = -0.089$, $p = 0.004$), as well as between bullying and adverse attitudes ($\rho = -0.084$, $p = 0.007$). Both correlations are **statistically significant but very weak** (close to zero), this weak magnitude indicates that they are not particularly strong in practical terms. The **negative sign** suggests a slight tendency as those who report **more harassment/bullying while travelling** are **slightly less likely** to face adverse remarks at home for arriving late. A Possible explanations for this trend is that Victims of harassment may avoid late arrivals (thus fewer adverse remarks). A possible explanation for this trend is that families may be more sympathetic if they know about harassment experiences.

3.10. Use of Private Cabs and Taxi's, like UBER/CAREEM

The research conducted in "Queen Mary, University of London (2022)", shows that many female students rely on private cab services as their mode of commute. The ultimate behind this choice can be that these options are much safer. However, studies indicate that there are still safety concerns, like the risk of harassment by drivers or a lack of ways to hold drivers accountable (Sajjad, Anjum, and GLM, LIC, 2018).

Use private taxis/cabs, like UBER \ CAREEM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	136	12.8	13.3	13.3
	Most of the times	333	31.3	32.6	45.9
	Sometimes	407	38.3	39.9	85.8
	Never	145	13.6	14.2	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.10. Frequency Distribution of Use of Private Cabs and Taxi's, Like UBER/CAREEM

Question was asked to research population, whether they use private Cabs or Taxi services. A significant portion of the respondents (39.9%) reported using them “**Sometimes**”, while (32.6%) responded “**most of the times**”. Additionally, 14.2% of the population reacted that they “**never**” use these services, whereas 13.3% indicated that they “**always**” do. The cumulative percentage distribution correspondingly highlighted that **85.8%** of female students have used private taxis at some point of their degree, reinforcing their role as an essential mode of transportation for students. The findings suggests that private riding services play a crucial role in students’ mobility, and demands a more safer, affordable and services for female commuters.

3.11. Prefer a Female Driver

It has been observed that many female often prefer female drivers while commuting. This can be attributed as they are concerned about their safety and comfort while traveling. According to “Sajjad, Anujum, and GLM, LIC, 218”, the rising incidents of harassment and bullying of women while using public or private transportation limit women’s participation, both as passengers and workers. When the driver is female, female commuters feels less conscious about their safety, which ultimately increases their confidence in choosing them.

Prefer a women cab driver

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	248	23.3	24.3	24.3
	Most of the times	291	27.4	28.5	52.8
	Sometimes	272	25.6	26.6	79.4
	Never	210	19.8	20.6	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3.11. Frequency Distribution of Prefer a Women Cab Driver

The survey data examined students’ preference for a female cab driver when using ride-hailing services. The (24.3%) of the respondents expressed that they “**always**” prefer female cab drivers. 28.5% chosen “**most of the times**”. However, 26.6% respondents stated that “sometimes” they prefer the gender of the driver, while 20.6% said they have “never” used such services. The cumulative percentage distribution correspondingly highlighted that almost (79.4%) of female students at least at sometimes prefer a female driver, which ultimately shows female concern regarding safety, comfort and cultural factors. The findings demands a strong demand for female drivers.

3.11.1. Cross-tabulation: Prefer a women cab driver * Ever harassed while travelling

Prefer a women cab driver * Ever harassed while travelling Cross-tabulation

		Ever harassed while travelling				Total
		Never	Once only	More than once	Often	
Prefer a women cab driver	Always	123	49	45	31	248
	Most of the times	97	109	64	21	291
	Sometimes	107	62	80	23	272
	Never	120	40	32	18	210
Total		447	260	221	93	1021

Table 3.11.1: Cross-tabulation: Prefer a women cab driver * Ever harassed while travelling

The cross tabulation analysis between *harassment experiences while traveling* and the *preference for a female cab driver* reveals notable patterns in commuting preferences. Results shows that 123 respondents “never” experienced harassment while traveling, while 125 respondents reported harassment at least “once”. This indicates a balanced distribution, presenting that harassment experiences may not be the sole reason of their choice. 109 participants stated that they have experienced harassment “**Once only**”, while 85 respondents faced harassment “**more than once**”. We can interpret these results shows a stronger connection between harassment and preference for female drivers. A higher preference for female cab drivers is observed by those who have

faced harassment at least once while traveling. Those who never have experienced harassment are less likely to prefer female drivers, proposing that safety concerns can be a driving factor in choosing a female cab driver. But there are chances that the preference is not exclusively tied to past experience of harassment, as a significant number of respondents who prefer a female cab driver have never faced harassment. There might be other reasons as well; personal choices, cultural norms, gender-based perceptions of commuters can also influence this choice.

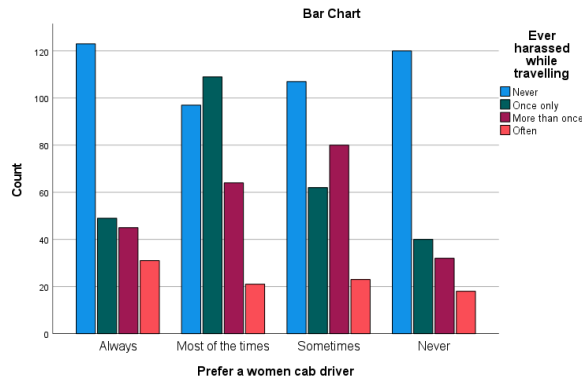


Fig 3. Stacked Bar Chart: Female cab Driver*Ever Harassed While Traveling

4. Conclusion

The study explored the challenges faced by female students during their daily commutes. Harassment while travelling, safety concern of female, and societal pressure was studied through questionnaire responses. The findings of the study reveals that female commuters face numerous challenges while traveling to their educational institutions. Public transport was found to be the most commonly used mode to travel but the study revealed that a significant number of participants have reported harassment as the common issue while traveling on public transports. The analysis revealed that female using public transport or walking were more likely to face harassment, as compared to those who use private transports or are dropped by their family members. But the problems remain that not everyone can afford the private ride-hailing services as they are costly. The study also revealed that a larger population of the survey feel afraid while going home alone at night. This fear can be result of past experience of harassment in public spaces, inadequate security measures or societal attitude.

Another daunting concern highlighted by the findings of the study revealed that inappropriate attitude of males in public transportation, adds fuel to the concern. As it affects female mental health becoming the reason of mental stress, and anxiety among female students. This factor also serve as the barrier in the education of female as most families feel insecure about the safety of their daughters and because of such bad incidents they confine their daughters, sisters in the four walls of the home. Many female students have also expressed concerns regarding societal expectations related to their appearances, as it is assumed that if females are dressed moderately than there will be less chances of harassment.

Study revealed that most of the female wore abaya and headscarf but the study didn't establish link between dress choices and harassment experience so the choice or reason of this dress code can't be predicted, whether it is their personal choice or some sort of pressure from family and society. Research also revealed that female students face difficulties while travelling alone to university, such as transport related challenges, safety concerns, disapproval from society or culture. Many female students responded that if they arrive late home from university they also face harsh remarks or torturing attitude from their families, reflecting the cultural restrictions imposed on women's mobility. Study also revealed about their concern over the gender of the driver as most of the female students prefer female cab driver in order to be safe while travelling. The findings of the study urges immediate reforms for the safety of female students in order to ensure that they can travel freely and without any fear or restrictions.

5. Policy Recommendations

Pakistan as a prominent country of the Global South, is gradually progressing. Being a developing state and because of the prevailing political instability in Pakistan; many government plans and policies either remain partially implemented or are not even executed at all. Slowly and gradually Pakistan is progressing. However, ensuring women's safety remains a critical issue. Women's active participation in all sphere of life is crucial and without their active participation no country can progress. In order to safeguard female in public sphere particularly in public transportation there are certain policy recommendations. While keeping mind the fact that

transforming society overnight is practically impossible, governmental reforms can be implemented with immediate effects. Currently, Punjab's Chief Minister is also a woman, which gives a hope that she will understand the gender-related security concerns and take actions to address them. Below are some policy recommendations aimed at enhancing women's safety in Pakistan, particularly Pakistan.

1. The government should install fully functional CCTV cameras at bus stands to enhance security.
2. Proper street lighting should be ensured on roads, and lights should remain on throughout the dark.
3. More female security officers should be recruited, and their presence at bus stands and other commuting areas should be ensured so that any issue can be immediately addressed.
4. Separate seating arrangements for women should be made in buses and other public transports, and female attendants should be assigned to these sections.
5. In case of harassment, culprits should face strict and immediate punishments to serve as a deterrence.
6. Existing harassment laws should be properly enforced, and strict legal actions should be taken against offenders.
7. Initiatives like women-only transport services, such as Pink Bus, should be expanded.
8. Workshops in universities should be organized to educate students on how to handle such incidents and provide self-defense training.
9. Awareness campaigns should be launched through media to educate the society on appropriate behavior in public spaces.
10. To facilitate safe door-to-door commuting, universities should collaborate with local transport services or provide their own secure, affordable and reliable transports for female students, considering that not all families can afford high transport fees.
11. Free emergency helplines should be introduced so that even if someone lacks sufficient credit for a call, they can still contact the police or nearby help centers for security assistance.

By adopting the Salami Slicing approach, these initiatives can gradually be implemented, making them more practical and achievable. Instead of overwhelming the system with large-scale reforms all at once, taking small but impactful steps will lead to a sustainable change in Pakistan.

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Appendix

Appendix: Demographic Frequency Tables

Table 1: Frequencies of Participants by Institution

Name of Institution		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government College University Lahore	293	27.6	28.7	28.7
	Punjab University	263	24.7	25.8	54.5
	Education University	255	24.0	25.0	79.4
	University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences	210	19.8	20.6	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 2: Frequencies of Majors of the Respondents

Major Subject		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Biology	44	4.1	4.3	4.3
	Biotechnology	46	4.3	4.5	8.8
	Botany	57	5.4	5.6	14.4
	Business Accounting and Finance	11	1.0	1.1	15.5
	Business Administration	40	3.8	3.9	19.4
	Chemistry	81	7.6	7.9	27.3
	Computer Science	7	.7	.7	28.0
	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine	13	1.2	1.3	29.3
	Economics	51	4.8	5.0	34.3
	Education	26	2.4	2.5	36.8
	Education Leadership and Management	18	1.7	1.8	38.6
	English Literature	42	4.0	4.1	42.7
	Environmental Science	21	2.0	2.1	44.8
	Fine Arts	11	1.0	1.1	45.8
	Food Science and Technology	23	2.2	2.3	48.1
	Geography	8	.8	.8	48.9
	Information Technology	21	2.0	2.1	50.9
	Islamic Studies	25	2.4	2.4	53.4
	Mathematics	41	3.9	4.0	57.4
	Nutrition and Dietetics	9	.8	.9	58.3
	Persian	3	.3	.3	58.6
	Pharmacy	34	3.2	3.3	61.9
	Philosophy	5	.5	.5	62.4
	Physics	62	5.8	6.1	68.5
	Political Science	44	4.1	4.3	72.8
	Psychology	70	6.6	6.9	79.6
	Sociology	16	1.5	1.6	81.2

	Special Education	21	2.0	2.1	83.3
	Statistics	17	1.6	1.7	84.9
	Urdu	61	5.7	6.0	90.9
	Zoology	93	8.7	9.1	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 3: Frequencies of Respondents by Age
Age of the Respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20 years	266	25.0	26.1	26.1
	21-25 years	625	58.8	61.2	87.3
	26-30 years	123	11.6	12.0	99.3
	More than 30 years	7	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		

Table 4: Frequencies of Respondents by Degree Level

Degree		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	269	25.3	26.3	26.3
	M.A \ M.Sc.	593	55.8	58.1	84.4
	M.Phil.	152	14.3	14.9	99.3
	PHD	7	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	1021	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	42	4.0		
Total		1063	100.0		