

Female Gender Portrayal through News Blogs: Analysing the Ideological Representation of Pakistani Working Women

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Pakistan is a patriarchal society where the ideology of a woman's place has focused on domesticity. The principal division between the roles of women and men is based on women's association with children and home and men's association with employment and economic opportunities. A working woman in Pakistan has failed to gain support of the society when it comes to pursuing a career. For this research the genre of news blogs is selected for studying the representation of Pakistani working women. Analysis of news blogs for depicting an image of working women is an area which has not been explored or examined significantly in Pakistan. This research study is a critical discourse analysis of news blogs to examine how through the choice of linguistic items female bloggers formulate an identity of Pakistani working women and how that identity correlates with Pakistani social context. For the purpose of research study three blogs each from Express Tribune and Dawn are selected. Data is analysed to perceive the ideological representation of working women which helps in formulating the identity of female gender in Pakistani social context in the present age. This study will help in providing a significant insight into women's identity in Pakistani social context. Further it will establish the utility of news blogs as a genre for portraying ideological representations of Pakistani society.

Keywords: patriarchal society, Pakistani working women, news blogs, ideological representation, critical discourse analysis, linguistic choices, identity.

Pakistan is a patriarchal society where both men and women occupy sharply different roles: a woman's place is at home as a wife and as a mother; a man's place is in the public sphere and he is considered to be the breadwinner for the home. According to Jalal-ud-Din and Khan (2008, p. 486), "Man has traditionally been assigned as the providers for the family, while women have to take almost total responsibility for childcare and household activities." The societal and familial roles of both men and women in Pakistan are socially constructed images rather than naturally endowed abilities. The construction of gender, and the roles assigned to genders in the society are particularly important in understanding the portrayal of female gender in Pakistan.

The gender roles which emerge from the activities assigned to each sex places men and women in their stereotypical images (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). Stereotypes are usually based on tradition and are resistant to change. Gender identity from a particular ideological perspective, is largely constructed through language (Sunderland & Litosseli, 2002) which provides a basic

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Contribution of Authors:

The first author, is the main writer of the article, and has done literature review for this paper. This paper is based on her thesis for MPhil in Linguistics.

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mechanism by which individuals are categorised into groups and by which stereotypes are portrayed. The most important function of language at all times is to represent attitudes, views, norms, and ideals present in a society. Representation, however, depends not only on how language is organized and operationalized but also largely on the user of the language. According to Fairclough (1989, p.23) "Language is a part of a society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena." The research study here analyses discourse of the news blogs to comprehend how the bloggers use language for establishing and maintaining an identity of the female gender in general and Pakistani working women in particular. Blogging has become a real social phenomenon as it serves as a convenient and readily available medium for expressing and sharing opinions, activities, experiences, reflections and comments.

Literature Review

This section will focus on theories related to gender representation, the traditional bases of gender roles in Pakistan and the role played by media in portraying an image of the female gender.

Butler (1990) refers to the concept of socially constructed gendered identity as introduced by Simone de Beauvoir that a person is not born a woman rather becomes a woman, and Butler (1990) finds that "becoming a woman" means constant negotiation and performance of identity. Various studies by Bakken (1998), Brownmiller (1975), Eisenstein (1999), Kahlor and Eastin (2011), Kouvo (2008) O'Gara (2014) claim that throughout history, the position of women in society has been portrayed as secondary to men, where neither did they have legal rights nor had freedom to act as autonomous individuals. Johnson and Repta (2012) believe that though gender is context-specific and subject to change, in almost every society in the world, but still men are more highly regarded and possess greater power, access, money, opportunities, and presence in public life.

In Pakistan there is a deeply embedded gender structure based on patriarchal pattern where male power and superiority is maintained both inside and outside the family. Gender is seen as one of the organizing principles of Pakistani society, and patriarchal values predetermine the social value of gender (Channar, 2010). In a Pakistani family unit males are considered as the head of the family and are authorised to take all kinds of decisions on behalf of their women, including the decision of having employment (Shafiq, 2013).

Khan (2010) reports that 'Gender division in labour is widespread in Pakistan.' Society, culture, tradition and religion are the important factors which influence the working environment for women in Pakistan (Malik, 2009). The gender-bias against working women is deep-rooted reflecting the traditional mind set. According to Khan (2007) women in Pakistan work out of economic need; they face limited employment options, less wages as compared to men, miserable working conditions, and an extensive burden of labour due to unremitting domestic responsibilities at home.

Regardless of the societal pressure for change in traditional gender roles, the culture prevalent around the world still frames men and women in their stereotypical images. A person's gender continues to be a source for categorizing people and is given a distinct social significance. Sirajunisa and Panchanatham (2004) reports that the last five decades have definitely brought a radical change in 'the role status of the Women' in Pakistan but there had been 'no or just an unimportant transform in the role of the man' (as cited in Khan, Maqsood, & Ahmad, 2015, p.147). Pakistani society represents unequal gender power relations where women face inequality and discrimination both within the household and outside the domestic sphere (Khan, Maqsood, & Ahmad, 2015). Gallagher (2005, p.14) finds that though the coverage of women and women's issues

has improved in Pakistani media but still ‘certain stereotypes are reflected on women by media everywhere’ as media continues to portray women as ‘objects and/or as victims.’ Hence there is an ‘intentional as well as unintentional reinforcement of social stereotypes about women’ in Pakistani society (Gallagher, 2005, p.65).

Media has always played a significant role in accomplishing social transformation and social change. It plays a significant role in portraying a distinct and a stereotypical image of the two genders. Kumari and Joshi (2015) reports that in news and entertainment media, women have frequently been marginalized and they tend to cast gender stereotypes as women are mostly given roles where they are shown as not making important decision at home and outside and are always desirous of men’s protection. Malik and Kiani (2012) have found that the characteristics of light heartedness, spontaneity, general attractiveness and figure is what best describes women in media. Women are represented in the media as dependant, oppressed and confined within the household domain (Ali & Batool, 2015).

Online platforms have become an important source for voicing opinions on social issues. Khan and Moin (2013) find that social media has given voice to everyone; even to those who want to promote justice and empowerment for woman (as cited in Kumari & Joshi, 2015).

Blogs and Ideology

Blog is an abbreviation of weblog which itself is a combination of web and log. Quinn and Lamble (2008, p.31) define blog as “a type of web site where entries are written, or posted, the same way you would update a journal or diary...blogs and their relatives represent part of a media revolution known as social networking, participatory journalism or citizen reporting.” Allan (2008) describes blogs as a kind of online diary, written by individuals or groups, on websites with easy ways to add material. Traditionally people were reluctant to share their diaries but the advancement in technology and the desire for socialization has made people share their personal accounts and entries with people (Schmidt,2007).

Blogs consist of texts and visuals and can thus be considered as a discursive ‘unit’ and a material manifestation of discourse (Chalaby, 1996 as cited in Philips &Hardy, 2002) and hence are in a position to construct social ideology. Language choice and language itself are part of ‘identity construction’ (Wodak, 2011). We no longer communicate only in ‘traditional’ written or spoken genres, but now new means of communication such as text messages, e-mails, tweets and Facebook posts have also become very common (Wodak, 2011). This propounds the role of language in being used as a representative of social identities.

Discourse generated in the news blogs is regularized by the norms and conventions of the social structure prevalent in Pakistan and also constructs, propagates and transforms the dimensions of the Pakistani social structure. Fairclough (2000) explains that it is through discourses that certain social values and ideas are projected which in turn contributes to the [re]production of the society. It is through language that the social world is constituted in the manner in which “we talk about the world influences the society we create, the knowledge we celebrate and despise, and the institutions we build” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.21).

The analysis of the discourse in the research study is significant as it not only reflects the ideological system but also constructs the ideological perceptions of the society (Fairclough, 1992). Ideologies are defined as general systems of ideas that influence our interpretation of social events

and situations and control our discourse and other social practices as group members (van Dijk, 2011). Fairclough (1995, 1998) views ideologies as significations/constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices and which contributes to the production, reproduction, or transformation of relations of power, domination and exploitation. The current research therefore through the analysis of the discursive practices determines the ideological portrayal of the female gender in the society by specifically concentrating on the representation of Pakistani working women.

Theoretical Framework and Model of Analysis for the Current Research

The research study here frames news blogs as sites of ideological representation of Pakistani working women. Depending upon the nature of the current research, the theoretical framework which provides a philosophical and intellectual insight to this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003, 2010). The theoretical framework is preoccupied with the ideological implications of language use and, thus, helps to uncover the discursive practices of the society and examines the power positioning of the female gender in terms of social roles assigned to them and attributes associated with them (Rasul, 2015).

For the purpose of data presentation and analysis, Fairclough's (1995, 2001, 2003) three-dimensional analytic framework is used which involves analysis at the textual, discursive and social level. The first dimension of textual analysis is sub-categorised for clear, systematic and thorough presentation of analysis of the blogs. Hence the Model of Analysis adopted for analysing news blogs from both e-papers *Express Tribune* and *Dawn* is:

- I. Analysis of the Text of Blogs;
 - a. Analysis of the Title of the Blogs
 - b. Analysis of the Main Content of the Blogs
 - c. Analysis of the Lexical Choices of the Blogs
- II. Analysis of the Discursive Practices;
- III. Analysis of the Social Practices

'Analysis of the Text of Blogs' provides a detailed analysis of both the title and the main content of the blogs which involves lexical and grammatical interpretations of the blog. These lexical and grammatical interpretations of the main content of the blogs are also presented in the tabular form which helps analysing the blogs semantically. These tables present the lexical features used in the blogs for describing the working women in Pakistani social context and hence presents an elaborative and clear portrayal of working women. Lexical features take on meaning in relation to how they are used, their context and the frequency of their use. 'Analysis of the Discursive Practices' provides an understanding of text production, distribution and consumption (Fairclough, 1995). 'Analysis of the Social Practices' looks at the context of the situation and the wider social context presented through the blogs.

Method

This section presents the main aim and significance of research and details about data collection and analysis.

Aim of the Research

The main aim of this research paper is to study the ideological representation of Pakistani working women in the News Blogs and to see how this representation and identity correlate with Pakistani social context. In order to achieve this aim the research study sets out to investigate that how do the linguistic choices of the news blogs help in constructing and portraying an ideological

representation of Pakistani working women and how is this identity projected in the social set up? This research also sets to find out how do the linguistic resources used in blogs help in portraying male and female gender differently? The study of representation of Pakistani working women on a broader level helps in formulating and comprehending the portrayal of female gender in Pakistani social context.

Significance of Research

The current research is significant because it analyses a relatively new genre of social media, 'News Blogs', which has dramatically changed our experiences of the world because of their pervasiveness and increased use in our daily lives. Analysis of News Blogs for depicting an image of working women is an area which has not been explored or examined significantly in Pakistan. Kaukab and Mehrunnisa (2014) noticed that there is hardly any proper research available on the use of blogs in Pakistan. Research on news blogs is necessary so as 'to make a contribution to knowledge' and to carry out 'the systematic study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions' (O'Leary, 2010, p. 2). Considering the paucity of studies in this area, it is important to create a system to review blogs which provide a deep insight about the ideology prevalent in the society as they reflect the views of common people in the society.

The significance of research also lies in its interpretation of the portrayal of female gender in the patriarchal set up prevalent in Pakistan where women are regarded as less significant than their male counterparts as their capabilities and potentialities as working individuals are undermined. The research study here will help those interested in women issues understand the potential role of news blogs in portraying an identity of Pakistani working women.

The research is important as it helps in examining the power structure and the discursive practices of the society regarding female gender through the critical discourse analysis of the blogs. The critical discourse analysis not only helps in comprehending female gender portrayal as a socio-cultural phenomenon but also highlights issues related exclusively to Pakistani working women. Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (1998, 2003, 2010) is adopted for the analysis of the blogs which extends and enriches the scope of literature in the domain of female gender portrayal in Pakistan.

Research Design

The research study here primarily employs qualitative research design using Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (2003, 2010) which not only describes language in use, but also analyses, interprets and explains the significance of the relationship of representation embedded in discourse (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph 2005). The quantitative research design is used as a complementary approach for quantifying the lexical choices used for presenting a particular image of Pakistani working women in the blogs. Quantitative research design makes the research more objective and reliable as the results can be measured and categorized systematically for representing the result.

Critical Discourse Analysis as a research paradigm helps in interpreting the relationships between discourse and society, text and context, and language and power by bringing together text analysis, the analysis of processes of text production and interpretation, and the social analysis of discourse events (Fairclough, 2001b, 2003).

The reason for choosing CDA is two-fold: first it offers an explanation for the specific choices of linguistic features embedded in the discourse; second it shows categorisation of specific choices of

language within ideologies for constructing textual identities which helps in establishing and maintaining power and dominance in the society (Fairclough, 2003, 2010).

Results

For the purpose of research study data is taken from the News Blogs posted on two English e-papers: *Express Tribune* and *Dawn* which have maximum number of blogs written on all social issues including representation of Pakistani working women. Blogs written during June 2013 and November 2014 are taken for analysis. These blogs are written by free-lance writers, who are of Pakistani origin, and are not influenced by the policies of the newspapers as they are not written by newspaper correspondents. Three blogs about Pakistani working women are selected for analysis from each e-paper, *Express Tribune* and *Dawn*, through purposive sampling where only those blogs and those contents of the blogs are selected for analyses which are relevant to the issues of working women and represent ideology of female gender in Pakistani social context. Complete text of the blogs is provided in the appendix.

Analysis of the Text of Blogs

The first three blogs taken for analysis are from the e-paper *Express Tribune* and the next three are taken from the e-paper *Dawn* (See Appendix):

- i. Blog 1 '*All in a day's work: The modern Pakistani (super) woman*' posted by a female blogger Mifrah Haq on July 7, 2013(included eleven paragraphs).
- ii. Blog 2 '*Working mom dilemmas: A life in progress*' posted by a female blogger, Farahnaz Zaidi, on June 12, 2013(included thirteen paragraphs).
- iii. Blog 3 '*Working women do not make better moms*' posted by a female blogger, Sara Alvi on March 8, 2014 (included twelve paragraphs).
- iv. Blog 4 '*The doctor's bride*' updated by a female blogger Rafia Zakaria on July 26, 2013 at 3:45 p.m. (included seven paragraphs).
- v. Blog 5 '*Mr Erdogan, we're mothers... and much more*' by Fyza Iqbal, updated on November 25, 2014 at 05:35 p.m. (included fifteen paragraphs).
- vi. Blog 6 '*Why I won't be cheering for Shahid Afridi anymore*' posted by Alia Chughtai, updated, on March 12, 2014 at 12:48 a.m. (included fifteen paragraphs).

Analysis of the Title of Blogs

The title of the blogs presupposes that being a working woman in Pakistani society is synonymous with the struggles and hardships. These titles also undermine their identity as an individual. *The modern Pakistani (super) woman* is expected to carry out her responsibilities competently -*All in a day's work*- referring to her extensive duties everyday both at home and at her work place. *Working mom dilemmas* refers to the perplexities which a working mother faces while trying to do justification to both her role as a mother and as a career person. *Working women do not make better moms* reflects the preconceived notion of the society which rates a stay-at-home mom superior than a working mom.

Analysis of the Main Content of the Blogs

The blogs from *Express Tribune* exhibits a dominant and over powering role of society over women which '*expects*' a woman '*to take on domesticity as her foremost occupation*'(See Appendix, Blog 1) and keep her career on the '*back seat*' (See Appendix, Blog 3). The society maintains an indifference towards the '*overburdened responsibilities*' and '*commitments*' of a working woman (See Appendix, Blog 2) and expects her to fulfil all the norms of socialization forgetting that she has a '*demanding job*' also. With modernization paving way the role of the society has also developed as

now a woman is expected to take on the *'additional responsibility of sharing household expenses as well'*(See Appendix, Blog 1).

The blogs revolve around the role of a working woman as a multi-tasker who is seen as a *'juggler'* (See Appendix, Blog 2) *'juggling'* around with her responsibilities. A working woman is titled as a *'Superwoman'* or a *'Supermom'* as she handles job, home, children, in laws all together. She is expected to come back from work and tend to her domestic responsibilities so as to ensure that her *'family's physical and emotional needs are met'*(See Appendix, Blog 1).In contrast a man is expected to get *'a hot dinner', 'a clean house'* and *'additionally a working housewife'* when he returns from work (See Appendix, Blog 1). A working woman forms a *'silent pact'* with her husband that her job would not cause any negligence towards her responsibilities at home (See Appendix, Blog 3).

A woman who is not employed is easily subjected to societal norms and expectations as she is considered *'dim-witted', 'lazy', 'with no exposure to the outside world', 'victim of circumstances'*; her manner of speaking is described as *'sheepish', 'apologetic', 'pretending', 'fending off'* and *'concealing'*; and her identity is a *'stay-at-home-mom'* (See Appendix, Blog 1). In contrast a working woman is regarded as *'impatient'* and *'grouch'* who due to her dual responsibilities turn out to be an irritated person, always complaining about her life(See Appendix, Blog 2).Female bloggers, being working women, do not consider themselves to be negligent towards their duties. In fact they have a *'working-woman's mommy guilt'* (See Appendix, Blog 2) which pinches them all the time making them extra conscious towards their domestic responsibilities. Working women do not find motherhood to be a *'coercive responsibility'* rather they consider it as *'a fun and rewarding relationship'* (See Appendix, Blog 2).

Blogs from *'Dawn'* discusses the social norms and values prevalent in Pakistani society. A woman after marriage is inhibited from pursuing a career even if she is educationally qualified (See Appendix, Blog 4) as the social norms compels a woman to forego her profession *'in the path of devoted wifedom and motherhood'* (See Appendix, Blog 4). The blogs describe the image of a female sought for marriage which is purely based on her looks and sweet temperaments *'she only needed to be fair, from a good family, charming, and pliable'*. Modernization, however now demands that a girl sought for marriage should be academically sound also but the utility of this qualification is nothing more than *'a degree dowry'* so as to get suitable suitors for marriage (See Appendix, Blog 4).

Working women to demonstrate their professionalism even work for long hours, *'but are often overlooked in favour of their male counterparts'*(See Appendix, Blog 5).A single working woman *'faces an uphill struggle'* in convincing her male superiors that she can perform the same job responsibilities as her male colleagues. A woman even fails to receive the same pay as her male colleagues and face far more *'career hiccups than men'* (See Appendix, Blog 5 and Blog 4)signifying the difficulties which a working woman faces in establishing herself in a career.

Women who decide to work in professional fields are forced *'to stick to those career paths which resonate well with gender-typical roles'*, like teaching and nursing and medicine (See Appendix, Blog 5).Blog 6 finds a male cricket star's (Shahid Afridi's) remark *'a woman solely belongs to the kitchen'* insulting as it denies the talents of a woman in Pakistan. This insult was targeted at Pakistani female cricket team as it shows gender segregation when it comes to choosing a career. The blogger believes that the male-dominated society *'push the daughters of the nation into the kitchen'*, believing that they have *"zaiqa"* (taste) in their hands identifying them only in domestic roles.

Segregation towards a working woman is also seen in the form of ‘*harassment and intimidation*’ at work places (See Appendix, Blog 4). The bloggers believe that ‘*a society is always looking for excuses to keep women out of the workplace*’ (See Appendix, Blog 4) and demands total submission from a woman so as to satisfy male ego; ‘*a man who can boss a woman around is quite manly, but a man who bosses a doctor around is the manliest*’ (See Appendix, Blog 4).

Analysis of Lexical Choices of the Blogs

The detailed textual analysis of the blogs reveal that the choice of lexemes particularly adjectives in these blogs suggest both the negative and positive connotation attached to the representation of Pakistani working women. The table below gives the adjectives and other parts of speech used for describing working women and their connotations are also given which help in analysing the portrayal of working women by interpreting the word choices:

Choices of Lexemes	Negative Connotation	Positive Connotation
<i>Superwoman</i> – handling job, home, children	✓	
<i>victim</i> of your circumstances	✓	
<i>urban, suave, educated</i> woman!	✓	
<i>financially independent</i>		✓
<i>intellectually sound</i>		✓
<i>coercive</i> responsibility	✓	
<i>depleted</i> of happiness	✓	
<i>cranky, irritated, moody</i>	✓	
<i>impatience</i> and <i>grouchiness</i>	✓	
<i>feign</i> interest	✓	
<i>mood swings</i>	✓	
<i>energetic</i>		✓
<i>too tired</i>	✓	
<i>less motherly</i>	✓	
working mother’s <i>struggles</i>	✓	
<i>Confidence</i>		✓
sense of independence	✓	
<i>tremendously</i> happy		✓
<i>possible</i> rebellion	✓	
<i>harassment</i> and <i>intimidation</i>	✓	
<i>uphill</i> struggle	✓	
<i>blatant</i> discrimination	✓	
<i>career</i> hiccups	✓	
<i>gender-typical</i> roles	✓	
<i>side-lined</i> or <i>discouraged</i>	✓	
<i>immensely</i> proud	✓	
<i>limited</i> roles		✓
<i>educated</i> and <i>professional</i>		✓
<i>combat-ready</i> fighter pilot		✓

The table shows that words with negative connotation are more frequently used for describing Pakistani working which constructs a negative representation for them.

The analysis of the main content of the blogs reveal that the working women portrayal is related to a specific image which is created by societal expectations. The lexical choices revealing the societal *expectations* towards working women are quantified which helps in analysing the role which society plays in constructing a specific image of working women.

Word Frequency for 'Expect' and its synonymous Lexemes	Count
Expect	10
Expected	5
expectations	4
must do (read, watch, socialise)	3
price tag	2
need energy	5
has to be	3
(one is) taught	2
needed to be	3
must also be	1
Considered	1
Implications	1
encouraged to take	1

The frequency count of 'expect' and its related word or synonyms reveal the larger than life influence of society on working women in Pakistani society.

The linguistic analysis of the blogs reveal that the working women always suffer from a guilt as it is instilled in their brains from the very beginning that their prime responsibilities are towards their home. The first three blogs reveal the use of '*guilt*' and their synonyms which explain the remorse which working women feel as a result of their pursuance of careers.

Word choice of 'guilt' and its related expressions	Frequency in blogs
conceal your <i>guilt</i> ; <i>apologetic</i> explanation; <i>wasting</i> your life	3 times in Blog 1
<i>sorry</i> for myself; worst forms of <i>guilt</i> ; the "working-woman's mommy <i>guilt</i> ; indulge in <i>self-flagellation</i> ; <i>make you feel</i> horrible; <i>depleted</i> of all happiness;	6 times in Blog 2
faced with a <i>dilemma</i> ; <i>complied</i> like many others; <i>to prove</i> something	3 times in Blog 3

Analysis of the Discursive Practices

The second dimension of the theoretical framework involves analysis of the discursive practice which examines the process of production, interpretation, and consumption of the blogs.

Blogs as a genre is adapted from other genres which were prevalent in the past, including online diaries, personal web-pages and newsgroups, and they also share some common and general elements with other social networking sites like Livejournal.com, Facebook, and Twitter (Shaw,2012).

The blogs selected for analysis are produced by female bloggers who are working women and are of Pakistani origin and use these blogs as a forum for relating their own personal experiences

of being part of female workforce. These bloggers support the plight of Pakistani working women by sharing their own experiences and highlight the social prejudices against women representing their segregated identities.

The female bloggers highlight the difficulties faced by the working women, which gives evidence of female subjugation and marginalization in male dominated society. By criticizing the authority and domination of the society the bloggers readily accepts unchanged and consistent position of women, *'Modern society may have emancipated several women by making them financially independent and intellectually sound, but are our lives any easier than they used to be?'* (See Appendix, Blog 1). It shows that modernization has not brought about any change in the status of a working woman in Pakistani society as she has been made financially independent and intellectually sound only in words but not in spirit.

The blogger blames the female gender, including herself, for *'giving in too easily'* portraying the identity of a working woman as submissive and docile (See Appendix I, Blog 3). The blogger being a female shows her own weakness when she says *'I wish, we the women could answer back'* – *'wish'* lacks conviction and symbolizes the weak and marginalized position of Pakistani working women (See Appendix I, Blog 3).

The forum chosen by the bloggers to express their opinions reflects advancement in technology and knowledge. Living in the age of modernization and technological advancement it is expected that the status of the female gender should be elevated.

Analysis of Social Practices

The third dimension involves analysis of social practices. The analysis of these blogs reveals the patriarchal structure prevalent in Pakistan which affirms male authority and power. The blogs analysed in this research study while explicitly portraying the image of the female gender, also gives an implicit depiction of the male gender. In the social context a woman appears weak as compared to man's superiority. The male gender continues to enjoy a domineering position and maintain unbound expectations towards a woman. Hence a woman is always found submitting to the will and commands of her male counterpart.

Generally, a woman fails to portray an individual identity in Pakistani social structure. She is seen as a wife and as a mother and if she is good at both then only she is seen as a good homemaker. The profession of a woman always takes a back seat in her life. The struggles which she makes to maintain a successful life both at home and at work place are hardly acknowledged or appreciated by the society. In Pakistani social structure the two identities of a woman as a housewife and as a working person always remain in contrast with one other. The society remains judgemental of a working woman as she is believed to be careless and neglectful towards her domestic responsibilities.

The society expects a woman to push her *'degree'* and *'work'* in the background and take on *'domesticity'* as the foremost occupation. With the advent of modernization the societal expectations towards a woman have also altered as now she is expected to work and share the expenses of the house too.

'Pakistan is changing slowly – it just needs more women to run with the wolves' (Appendix, Blog 4) signifies both the patriarchal set up prevalent in Pakistan and the position of a woman in this social set up where men are referred to as *'wolves'* who use different ways and means to subjugate a

woman. It is important to notice here that a woman needs to prove herself to a man so as to get socially accepted. The emphasis here is on slow progression of Pakistani society where modernization has failed to bring any significant change in the status of a woman.

Findings and Discussion

The main aim of this research is to observe the linguistic choices of the blogs so as to study the ideological representation of Pakistani working women. The analysis of the text portrays the identity of a woman foremost as a housewife who is expected to serve her husband, produce and rear children and look after the in-laws. The analysis also shows that the society is not very supportive towards the employment of a woman as it is assumed that she fails to do justice to her family. In fact the woman stands nowhere without the consent of a male presence in her life; be it at home or at workplace which gives her a passive identity.

The analysis draws a comparison between a professional man and a working woman. The latter is expected to perform dual responsibilities – both at home and at workplace – even if it requires acting like a ‘superwoman’. Blogs have also highlighted the issue of job segregation where discrimination between two genders is accepted as a universal phenomenon; less pay, more struggles and stereotyping are features associated with women only.

The analysis also shows a comparison between a working woman and a stay-at-home mom. A woman who stays at home is generally admired because she can be subjugated easily and a working woman is accused of negligence because she tries and maintains her own individuality.

Textual, discursive and societal analysis of the blogs reveals that a woman is never considered equal to a man in both her capabilities and career progression. Men undoubtedly have more social power in a patriarchal set up. Blogs reveal the existence of oppositional gender ideologies – a woman is foremost seen as a wife, as a mother and as a good homemaker. A working woman creates a negative image in the society and finds it difficult to gain acceptance. On the other hand a woman who prioritize career over marriage is considered as a stigma for the society. Male gender in Pakistani society is generally regarded as an epitome of supremacy and authority and women as their dependents.

Implications, Applications and Needed Future Research

The research study is significant both academically and socially as it has provided an insight into the ideological perception and power structure of Pakistani society, especially with relevance to working women. It has also revealed the social structure which exists in Pakistan in this fast developing and technological set up.

Academically this research is significant as it probes into a new form of social media. Blogging is a new trend in Pakistan and hence required an adequate amount of scholarly attention. The social contribution is also significant as from ideological perspective gender identity construction in a patriarchal society like Pakistan is a topic which has been extensively researched upon; however this research study brings in a new emerging media form in focus.

CDA as a research tool helped in interpreting the image of a working woman in the society by highlighting social injustices targeted towards the female gender. CDA as a research paradigm however has not been used widely in Pakistan in this manner and hence needs to be utilized more

extensively to get an insight into the ideological practices of Pakistani society especially with relevance to the female gender issues.

The research has developed critical awareness regarding the portrayal of female gender in the modern era. The advancement in technology and progress in education, as evident by the popular use of social media as compared to print and electric media, also demands that the ideology of a woman in Pakistani society needs to be reframed.

This study is also important because it helped all those researchers interested in women issues to consider blogs as a potential research area for interpreting the identity of Pakistani working women.

The research study provides prospects for future research. The comments generated by the participants serve as online message board. The qualitative interpretation of these messages will give a valuable insight into the social practices prevalent in the society. This gives rise to the possibility of conducting a form of ethnographic research on the discourse community known as cyber-ethnography. This concept is still relatively new but it demands more attention.

Conclusion

Grounding on the proposed research question, the linguistic analysis of the news blogs reveals that Pakistani working women represent an ideology of gender inequality. Working women in Pakistan have failed to gain support of the society when it comes to pursuing a career which proves that discrimination against female gender is inherently manifested in the social structure.

The research reveals that lives of women, working or not working, are dominated by the society. The perpetuation of the ideology of gender inequality from print and electronic to social media has denied Pakistani working women an opportunity to gain recognition as an individual and a competent being. She has still failed to gain recognition as a professionally sound, capable and skilled individual. In Pakistani social set up the potential and capabilities of working women have always been seen in comparison to their male counterparts. Modernization and advancement in technology has failed to bring any change in the position of the female gender.

The research study discloses the role of blogs in a rapidly advancing, technology oriented and fast educating society. The current research proves that blogs are being used as a perfect medium for expressing social perceptions, experiences and reflections. These blogs also reflect the role of the bloggers who establishes and maintains authority and power over the readers by influencing their thoughts and views. Blogs assist the female bloggers to create a direct link with the readers and express their opinions regarding female gender. They share their own experiences as working women which helps in revealing the ideological representation of educated and career oriented women in the society.

Furthermore, the current research has created a system of reviewing blogs and assessing the representation of working women and consequently of female gender, keeping in mind the considerable increase of women as workforce in Pakistan in the recent years. The research fulfils the necessity of using blogs as a medium of research, as blogging has gained considerable popularity in the social setup.

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Appendix: Complete Text of the Blogs are available on the given links:

Since it is not feasible to place the complete blogs in Appendix so the link for each blog from *Express Tribune and Dawn* is provided here for easy and thorough reference:

- i. Blog 1 *'All in a day's work: The modern Pakistani (super) woman'*<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/17779/all-in-a-days-work-the-modern-pakistani-super-woman/>
- ii. Blog 2 *'Working mom dilemmas: A life in progress'*<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/15854/a-working-mommy-the-perfect-anti-aging-formula/>
- iii. Blog 3 *'Working women do not make better moms'*<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/21289/working-women-do-not-make-better-moms/>
- iv. Blog 4 *'The doctor's bride'*<http://www.dawn.com/news/1032070>
- v. Blog 5 *'Mr Erdogan, we're mothers... and much more'*<http://www.dawn.com/news/1146795>
- vi. Blog 6 *'Why I won't be cheering for Shahid Afridi anymore'*<http://www.dawn.com/news/1092485>

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