Women's Role in Mitigating Road Conflicts in Pakistan

Manahil Javaid
Dr.Humaira Zulfiqar
Dr. Shahla Tabassum
Department of Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women
University, Rawalpindi

Road conflicts are a global concern, leading to numerous accidents annually. While data on female drivers in Pakistan is lacking. This study aimed to explore the multifaceted ways in which women contribute to conflict resolution on the roads. By employing qualitative methodologies, in-depth interviews with female drivers, and traffic police wardens were conducted, to explore the effect of women drivers on road safety and conflict reduction in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The study revealed the underlying factors including social norms, socio-economic factors, and gender aspects that shape these responses. By understanding the complexities of gendered encounters on the roadways, this research identifies the strategies employed for conflict resolution. Additionally, the study provides insights into the effect of women drivers on social dynamics and the overall road environment. The study concludes that women drivers contribute to reducing road conflicts, highlighting their role in fostering safer and more harmonious road

environments and potentially informing future road safety interventions and policies.
Keywords: *Road conflict, gender dynamics, mitigation & social norms*

INTRODUCTION

The conflict has been investigated by various researchers for centuries. However, there is no specific agreed-upon definition for the term conflict. This is because the culture of any community or society defines the type of conflict. Fisher (2000) defined conflict as the difference of values, goals, or opinions between individuals or groups in any relationship accompanied by desires to control each other while having aggressiveness toward each other.

The source of conflict handling is conflict by itself. It is therefore natural to expect that different types of conflict and different sources of conflict will lead to different types of conflict handling. As Jens (1993) noted, there is a universal tendency to try to get rid of conflict when it arises. The means chosen to do so might, however, have the opposite effects. He suggests five types of conflict handling can be distinguished: Prevention of conflict (conflict can be prevented by taking action, before an actual conflict has developed, to prevent conflict-generating features from occurring). Secondly, avoidance of conflict refers to a case in which conflict action is expected (because of actual conflict-generating features or experienced grounds for conflict) but does not occur. Thirdly, compromise is a symmetrically regulated type of conflict handling, where all parties inhibit their claims and demands to some degree so that mutual

compatibility between the claims occurs when conflict is terminated by one party. Last but not least, competition is thus a way of regulating conflict with the goal of restricted dominance and submission. Resolving a conflict, thus, often involves changing attitudes of revenge and hatred by excusing and forgiving the other party (Burton, 1987).

Conflict itself is the major source of mitigating the conflict. It is obvious to expect that the various sources of conflicts and their types will give different ways of mitigating the conflicts. According to Jens (1993), there is a universal inclination toward conflict resolution when it happens. However, the ways to mitigate conflict can help mitigate or even worsen the effects. Conflict resolution, however, involves shifting aggressive and revenge attitudes to forgiving and excusing other individuals or groups (Burton, 1987).

Road conflicts present a significant hazard to public safety in nearly every nation, often leading to incidents of road conflict, injuries, and even fatalities. Approximately, 1.35 million road traffic accidents happen each year globally (Stewart, 2022). Statistical data indicates that women are becoming more visible behind the wheel in a variety of settings. For example, the proportion of females over the road in the trucking business rose from 7.13% in 2017 to 7.89 in 2018 and then up to 10% in 2023, indicating an upsurge in the representation of women in line (Maemunah, Yuliantini, & Sholihah, 2023). In Pakistan, looking at the recent data, no precise data was easily accessible regarding the rise in

the number of female drivers. Reports and anecdotal evidence, however, indicated a progressive growth in recent years, especially in urban areas, driven by several factors such as shifting norms of society, economic empowerment, and better access to chances for women to pursue higher education and work (Adeel, 2016).

As a means of self-defense, women tend to avoid resorting to violent actions that might provoke retaliation from other drivers, as they are often more adept at anticipating the risks and consequences of their actions than men (Shukri, Jones & Conner, 2022). While women may experience similar levels of anger as men, or even more in certain driving situations, they are less inclined to respond to aggressive driving behavior. Research by Gonzalez, Gomez, and Luengo (2012) suggests that women are more likely to drive with children present, which incentivizes them to drive cautiously and refrain from outward displays of rage.

From an evolutionary perspective (1994) links the intense reproductive competition among early men to what they term "the young male syndrome," where young men exhibit higher levels of aggression and risk-taking behavior. Moreover, not all drivers respond to frustrating traffic situations in the same aggressive manner. Research indicates that factors such as gender and age play a moderating role in how drivers react to traffic-related challenges, with younger male drivers exhibiting more aggressive responses.

The research studies from the past found that women have significantly low representation and

participation in conflict management. Women have an indirect role in the indigenous system. However, despite having an indirect role in conflict management, women have a role of offering views and ideas for conflict mitigation. The major factors that restrict women from leadership roles and decision-making are the lack of experience in making public decisions, and sociocultural norms (Bayu, 2020).

The present study aimed to analyze the female response to road conflicts and what factors influence and shape their responses. Further, this study revealed how the presence of a female driver affects the social dynamics and overall road environment.

Objectives
1. To analyze the distinct actions and behaviors of female drivers in reaction to road conflicts.
2. To get insights into how the presence of women on roads affects social dynamics and the general road environment.
3. To analyze the factors influencing female's response toward road conflicts, including, societal norms, personal experiences, and driving behaviors.

Research Questions
1. How do women drivers respond to road conflicts compared to men, and what factors influence these responses, including societal norms, personal experiences, and driving behaviors?
2. What impact does the presence of women drivers have on social dynamics and the general road environment?

3. What strategies do women drivers employ to resolve road conflicts, and how do these strategies contribute to overall road safety and harmony?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Road accidents rank eighth among the leading causes of death worldwide, persisting as a significant public health concern where gender dynamics play a crucial role. Men are disproportionately more involved in road accidents compared to women, despite females constituting 51% of the global population. Shockingly, women only represent 24% of road fatalities (WHO, 2009, 2019; European Commission, 2019). Furthermore, gender variances in fatal accident risk heavily hinge on age demographics. Young males under 25 years old contribute to a staggering 73% of all road fatalities and are three times as likely to be involved in accidents compared to females (WHO, 2018). However, this gender divide diminishes with age. For drivers aged 16 to 39, the risk for males is 1.6 to 2.5 times higher than for females, but this discrepancy lessens for drivers aged 40 to 59, with males having a 1.2 to 1.3 times greater risk (WHO, 2018; Massie et al., 1995). Among drivers over 60, this gender disparity disappears entirely (Massie et al., 1995; Granie et al., 2019; Granie et al., 2021).

These gender differences in driving patterns are discussed in several studies. Hidayati, Tan, and Yamu (2020) found how gender influences transport mobility and how gender differences are incorporated into planning practice. Moreover, travel restrictions, patterns, and transport modes are also defined by these gender

differences. Mostly, the victims of these gender differences are female road users, their travel patterns are restricted to short trips for work, domestic, and social purposes.

The driver's speeding behavior is influenced by various factors in addition to social factors such as no social partner, crash experience, gender, car ownership, age, profession, years of driving experience, adventurous trips, income, personality type, and other driving attitudes such as engine size and experience (Javid et al., 2022). Mercedes Castro-Nuñ and Lourdes Lopez-Valpuesta's study in 2023, further explores gender differences in adherence to traffic laws in Spain. They discovered that women tend to support stricter compliance with regulations regarding various aspects of road safety, indicating a more cautious approach to driving that enhances overall road safety.

Al-Hussein et al., (2021), discussed in their research that young drivers are more aggressive in their patterns compared to older and middle-aged drivers. Further, the study found that old drivers are more skilled than the younger new drivers, they have better grip on the steering wheel. Whereas, young drivers drive faster than older road users.

Addressing how aggression manifests differently between genders, Mouloua, Brill, and Shirkey (2007) observed that while male drivers tend to display overt aggression, female drivers exhibit more passive-aggressive behavior. This insight underscores the need for tailored approaches in driver education and simulation-

based training to address gender-specific patterns of aggressive driving and mitigate its adverse effects on road safety.

According to Al-Hussein et al., (2021), past research on gender was inconsistent in their findings, most of them concluded that male drivers are more aggressive and drive at higher speeds than female drivers. Whereas, Goldenbeld and Van Schagen (2007) concluded that gender does not contribute to the speeding factor. Moreover, the study found that gender plays a considerable role in driving as a whole, where male drivers are aggressive on the road and females drive faster than male drivers. The study shows that young and female drivers drove faster than senior and male road users (Al-Hussein et al., 2021).

A research study Granié et al., (2020) focused on investigating the driving behavior around different geographical regions found that regions, where there is high gender equality in educational terms, have higher risky driving patterns among females compared to male drivers which shows that females in such regions with high gender quality adopt behaviors similar to men. Additionally, the study concluded that almost in all regions females reported less risky behavior among friends than males.

The study further discussed that the psychological factors are influenced by the gender and region. The study concluded that gender differences are a cultural concept. The by-products of these gender differences are declared behaviors, safety, personal adequacy, law perceptions,

policy support on road safety, self-worth, social desirability, and automated vehicle perception. While some gender constructs irrespective of cultural context can be explained in two ways. Firstly, gender itself has a significant effect on the attitudes related to road safety. Secondly, the socializing of men and women around the world is similar which makes it hard to find gender influence on some of the aspects of life such as road attitude (Granié et al., 2020).

Previous researches highlight that including women and gender in the peacebuilding process promotes good governance, development, democracy, and long-lasting stability. Gender perspective can foster a better understanding of conflict dynamics and also highlight its association with poverty and development challenges.

The research we have conducted, on the one hand, attempts to find how the presence of women on the road influences the overall road environment and social dynamics. Also, the study has analyzed the factors responsible for shaping the women's response to road conflicts such as personal experiences, driving behaviors, and social norms.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for the current research is based on the following concepts and theories.

Inter-personal conflict
The theory of interpersonal conflict posits that conflict arises through the interaction between two individuals, which may be influenced by the style of communication,

misunderstanding, perception, etc. The concept of interpersonal conflict is taken in this research due to its relevance with the conflicts that occur on the road. Road conflicts often occur due to miscommunication between drivers, which leads to aggressive encounters.

In the context of women's role in resolving/mitigating road conflicts, it is very important to analyze, how their communication styles differ from men. Women are perceived to have a more collaborative communication style, which can facilitate conflict resolution through dialogue and understanding rather than aggression.

Social role theory

The second theory incorporated to analyze the role of Women in mitigating road conflicts is social Role theory, which explains how societal norms dictate the behaviors, roles, and expectations of individuals based on their gender. This theory can help explain how women's roles are defined in the context of road safety and conflict resolution. By exploring how traditional gender roles shape women's roles in the context of road safety and conflict resolution, the research explains how girls are socialized to exhibit nurturing behaviors that may predispose them to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Pacific means to resolve conflict

The third concept used in this research is "Pacific means to resolve conflict". Pacific means are the peaceful method to resolve conflict i.e., negotiation, mediation, conciliation, etc. In road conflicts, women are perceived

to resolve conflicts through peaceful negotiation. This approach highlights the importance of preventive and peaceful negotiation strategies that women often use to avoid escalation and ensure safety on the road.

Justification of the study

In many places, including Pakistan, road conflicts and disputes are common problems that put public safety at risk and frequently result in instances of road rage. The objective of this research was to explore the effects of several women motorbike and car drivers on road safety and conflict reduction in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

The reasoning of this study is based on the finding that, because of societal norms and expectations, women's presence on the road can act as a deterrent to traffic conflicts. Women's increased presence on the roadways may have an impact on men's conduct by discouraging hostility and conflicts as they become more involved in public life. This study aims to present empirical evidence in support of the concept that women are capable of fulfilling the roles of peacekeepers and missionaries in the realm of road safety by evaluating the relationship between female visibility and the occurrences of road conflicts.

Furthermore, policies and initiatives targeted at advancing gender equality and improving road safety can benefit from an understanding of the complexities of gendered encounters on the roadways. Through illuminating the possible role of women in reducing road

conflicts, this study adds to the larger conversation on gender, and peacekeeping, for the public in Pakistan and elsewhere. In the end, this study's findings might help establish policies that promote a more tolerant and tranquil driving environment that supports social cohesiveness and sustainable growth.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was used to gather insights on women's role in mitigating road conflicts from a Pakistani perspective. Within qualitative research, In-depth interviews were conducted with female drivers and the traffic police wardens to gather insights about experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding road conflicts and the effect of female's presence on the road. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique and the interviews were conducted in the areas with higher visibility of women drivers that were identified with the help of Saddar traffic police station Rawalpindi. The potential gatekeeper was the superintendent of the city traffic police, therefore, we first talked to the superintendent of the city traffic police and shared the details of the research saying that all the ethical considerations and confidentiality would be met.

The superintendent then provided us access to the traffic wardens at our request. Before conducting the interviews, verbal consent of all the participants was taken, and they were ensured that the information, provided by them would be used only for research purposes, without mentioning their names. Some

interviews were done in the city traffic office and some were on the site where the traffic wardens were appointed. The superintendent was very precise and cautious about the kind of questions being asked by the wardens as they are strict regarding sharing information that may affect them or could potentially be a reason for backlash. The schedule was a major issue as the wardens have a very busy schedule throughout the day that's why some of the participants gave interviews in two sessions, on the site and afterward on call. Another major aspect was the gender difference due to which the wardens were hesitant in the start but eventually got comfortable.

The female participants (drivers) were approached on the premises of Fatima Jinnah Women's University, as the majority of the faculty members drive their cars. Fatima Jinnah Women's University was chosen because of being near the Saddar Traffic Police Station. Among the faculty members, those who were willing to give interviews were selected. The female drivers consented over the audio recordings, but the traffic wardens declined, requiring detailed notes of the interviews. The collected data was analyzed by using thematic analysis, involving transcription. The next step involved coding the data, which means identifying and categorizing themes, and concepts within the texts. After coding, themes were generated and the data was interpreted to draw conclusions and insights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the role of women in mitigating road conflicts in Pakistan. This chapter presents the analysis of the interviews conducted with female drivers and male traffic police wardens. This is a thematic-based analysis. The following eight themes were generated after the coding of interview responses. The findings are cross-referenced with the literature review. The theoretical framework is used to support the research findings.

Demographics influence road behaviors.

The research participants were female drivers and male traffic police wardens. The age of female drivers was between 20 to 30 years. Whereas the traffic police wardens were between 30 to 40 years old. Most of the female participants had less than 5 years of driving experience while few of them had more than 10 years of driving experience. Whereas, traffic wardens had more than 15 years of driving experience, where some wardens were working as wardens for only 2 to 3 years whereas, others were for more than 5 years in the warden field.

The demographic of the research participants tells how and why they respond to road conflicts in a specific way. Drivers with more experience have a different way of handling road conflict compared to drivers with less driving experience. Al-Hussein et al., (2021) Discussed in their research that young drivers are more aggressive in their patterns compared to older and middle-aged drivers. Further, the study found that old drivers are more skilled than the younger new drivers, they have better grip on the

steering wheel. Whereas, young drivers drive faster than older road users.

Female drivers with less than five years of driving experience were more cautious with their driving and approached preventive road conflict mitigating strategies. Participant A said: *"I am cautious while driving because I do not have much driving experience and try to be preventive whenever any conflict occurs on the road. "*Whereas drivers with more than 10 years of driving experience had experienced conflicts on roads with other drivers and were confident in their driving skills. Participant D mentioned: *"No there was no difference in my response as compared to the male driver. I see everyone as drivers and do not categorize them based on male or female."*

On the other hand, traffic wardens mentioned that they have seen female drivers more skillful and good drivers who follow the traffic rules on the road. Traffic warden A mentioned: *"Men are violent while women are safe drivers.* Whereas, the age and experiences of traffic wardens highlighted that wardens with more experience in the field were aggressive and dealt the road conflicts strictly compared to the wardens with less experience in the field who bound themselves to follow the policies and guidelines and not to go beyond them.

Wardens further added that men are more aggressive in their driving and they become violent once encounter any conflict on the road. Traffic warden B mentioned: *"They respond differently, they are violent and aggressive, they create rush on roads to get involved*

while women get afraid of such situations." The concept of interpersonal conflict is taken in this research due to its relevance with the conflicts that occur on the road. Road conflicts often occur due to miscommunication between drivers, which leads to aggressive encounters. A traffic warden with 15 years of experience as a warden said: *"Every person has different social norms and sometimes female drivers respond and argue".*

Nature of conflict

The age and driving experience are linked with how frequently drivers were involved in conflicts and how many times they were issued traffic tickets by the traffic wardens. According to the female participants, they have never been issued traffic tickets except for one participant. Her age is 27 and has around 4 years of driving experience. Participant A mentioned: *"I have been issued traffic tickets 3 to 4 times and each time it was my mistake."* The other participants with different ages and driving experience have never been issued the ticket. There could be many reasons for this as mentioned by the participants themselves.

Female drivers mentioned that being a socially subordinate group of the society they are more cautious while driving and try to avoid violating the traffic rules and abide by the laws on the road. Participant B mentioned: *"Being a female I ignore the conflicts as much as I can whereas men argue and never accept their mistakes on the road and keep on making a scene knowing the other party won't respond as such".*A slightly

different response came from Participant A: *"My social norms say not to be outspoken but my parents taught me if I am wrong even on the road I should apologize. I would not stay quiet only because I am a girl."*

This finding has been supported by the literature which suggests that as a means of self-defense, women tend to avoid resorting to violent actions that might provoke retaliation from other drivers, as they are often more adept at anticipating the risks and consequences of their actions compared to men (Shukri, Jones & Conner, 2022). All the female drivers mentioned that they had encountered verbal conflict with male drivers on the road, and few of them mentioned that they realized their mistake, sometimes ignored it to avoid conflict, and accepted that they made a mistake. Participant C said: *"I once had a conflict and it was my mistake. I didn't give the indicator. I realized my mistake but it was not a conflict, it was just a mistake."* Whereas, Participant D mentioned: *"Once I had a verbal conflict with a male driver and I argued because I was not at fault and things escalated pretty fast."*

Literature suggests that while women may experience similar levels of anger as men, or even more in certain driving situations, they are less inclined to respond to aggressive driving behavior (Shukri, Jones & Conner, 2022). The traffic police wardens shared that they often encounter conflicts with people driving on the road Traffic warden C mentioned: *"Most of the time conflict is verbal, where one in a thousand comes to physical*

violence." Most of the time wardens issue traffic tickets to drivers involved in road conflicts.

Gender, socioeconomic status, and social norms

We have seen how age and gender are important factors influencing the responses to road conflicts. Males and females are reported to respond in different ways to road conflicts. As mentioned by the traffic police warden and the female driver, responses to the conflict are the product of social norms that tell individuals how to behave in society. According to Daly and Wilson (1994), the theory of substitute social role models suggests that a person's tendency for violence, influenced by their gender, is shaped by their social learning experiences, which reinforce distinct gender roles valuing nurturing and submissiveness in women and assertiveness and dominance in men.

Female drivers and wardens mentioned that socioeconomic status defines your understanding of road environment and conflicts. Female participant C mentioned: *"People with high social status consider themselves superior and become violent if they are stopped on the road and become aggressive and rash drive. Most of the time conflicts happen because of the social status difference among road users."* Traffic police warden E said: *"In Pakistan, socioeconomic status matters in road conflicts and violations, they feel being insulted and ask "WHY". They try to point out that others are violating rather than accepting their mistake.* He further commented: *"Really sorry to say but mostly*

educated people do not accept their mistakes while middle class and poor once have more values."

People with high social status consider themselves superior and become violent if they are stopped on the road and become aggressive. People with strong socio-economic backgrounds and luxury vehicles rashly drive and violate the rules on the road. Wickens et al., (2012) findings suggest that the prevalence and predictors of self-reported driver aggression, emphasize its correlation with demographic factors and overall risk variables.

This shows that gender is not the only factor shaping road behaviors. Rather socioeconomic status, age, driving experiences, and social norms also have important roles in shaping road behaviors and responses to conflicts on roads. Female participants said that soft-spoken and people with high tolerance deal with road conflicts in their own way, however in this aggressive society people handle conflicts aggressively. They reflect on your personality. Female participant D mentioned: *"Norms play an important role in how people interact on the road. There is a hierarchy or class concept in Pakistan that influences the road environment based on class difference, age, and gender."*

Literature suggests that gender differences are a cultural concept. The by-products of these gender differences are declared behaviors, safety, personal adequacy, law perceptions, policy support on road safety, self-worth, social desirability, and automated vehicle perception. While some gender constructs irrespective of cultural context can be explained in two ways. Firstly,

gender itself has a significant effect on the attitudes related to road safety. Secondly, the socializing of men and women around the world is similar which makes it hard to find gender influence on some of the aspects of life such as road attitude (Granié et al., 2020).

Traffic wardens added that socioeconomic status and social norms are the factors shaping road behaviors. Traffic warden A said: *"They are very much related, the public generally with luxury cars violate rules. However, maturity in public comes with age."* Most of the time female think that they are stopped because of their gender and they misbehave for being stopped and issued a traffic ticket. This is due to cultural norms that give women respect in all aspects. Wardens mentioned that their priority is to ignore arguing with such people and follow the rules and guidelines provided to them. Traffic warden A said: *"We follow rules and guidelines as well as situations. Wardens avoid involving themselves in conflicts. People abuse wardens most of the time"*. They need to register an FIR if attacked rather than reacting on the spot. Wardens said they are trained to use gadgets provided to them. Traffic warden C said: *"We prioritize our safety in conflict situations and make use of gadgets provided by the department."*

Female driver presence and road environment
These gender differences in driving patterns are discussed in several studies. Hidayati, Tan, and Yamu (2020) Found how gender influences transport mobility and how gender differences are incorporated into planning practice.

Moreover, travel restrictions, patterns, and transport modes are also defined by these gender differences. Mostly, the victims of these gender differences are female road users, their travel patterns are restricted to short trips for work, domestic, and social purposes. The researcher suggested that it is important to study the relationship between socio-cultural factors and gendered driving behaviors because they are the reason behind aggressive driving patterns.

Female drivers mentioned that whenever there is a female driver on the road, other road users become cautious while some stereotype women's presence on the road which females uncomfortable while driving. Female participant E mentioned: *"Some drivers become more cautious while others divert their attention and make mistakes on the road."* Participant D said: *"The presence of female drivers challenges their authority and stereotypes."*

Further, they added it is all about the perception and social norms that shape individuals' behavior and actions. Previous research concluded that women's increased visibility on the roads, particularly as drivers of motorcycles and vehicles, challenges traditional notions of male dominance in public spaces. This shift reflects broader social changes, including women's access to education and employment opportunities, which may lead to tensions and conflicts as established power dynamics are challenged. Females' experiences are made more difficult on the road by the intersection of gender with other factors, like, socioeconomic and cultural

expectations. This indicates the need for a more comprehensive way in which gender intersection and social elements play a role in the contribution of road conflicts that would influence road behavior and safety in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Female participant D said: *"Female driver presence overall creates a positive road environment, promoting safer driving."* This finding is supported by the framework that suggests how traditional gender roles shape women's roles in the context of road safety and conflict resolution, the social role theory explains how girls are socialized to exhibit nurturing behaviors that may predispose them to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Female drives highlighted there is no change in social dynamics and road behavior over time. Most other road users prefer to drive their vehicles at a distance from female-driven vehicles because they think that women are not good and skilled drivers. Female participant B mentioned: *"Male drivers prefer to keep their distance from female-driven vehicles. There is a change because people want their females to drive and not depend on others."*

A participant mentioned that people have accepted women drivers but they still believe that women are not good drivers. Whereas, the traffic police wardens mentioned that there are no such perceptions regarding female drivers, dynamics have changed over time. Traffic wardens A, B, C, D, and E mentioned: *"People have now accepted female drivers. "*Also, they did not experience any complaints from male drivers regarding female

drivers. They further added that: *"Women are good drivers compared to men."*

Mercedes Castro-Nuñ and Lourdes Lopez-Valpuesta's (2023), further explore gender differences in adherence to traffic laws in Spain. They discovered that women tend to support stricter compliance with regulations regarding various aspects of road safety, indicating a more cautious approach to driving that enhances overall road safety. The findings of this study and the evidence from past research point out that women have a significant role in mitigating road conflicts.

Women's role in mitigating road conflict

According to a study Al-Balbissi (2003), there are prominent differences in the driving styles of male and female drivers such as in skills, speed, and attitude on the road. Further, the study discusses that males are more skilled drivers and take risks while on the road, while female drivers are more cautious and drive at a lower speed.

However, the responses from the traffic wardens and the female research participants tell a different story. The Female drivers mentioned that they go for safe and defensive driving and keep their distance from other vehicles to avoid confrontation. If they encounter any conflict they tend to ignore the situations and accept their mistakes. Female participant B mentioned: *"I prefer safe driving and driving slowly and following the rules."* However, Female participant C said: *"My priority is to*

keep my distance and follow the rules. I try to stay calm and active on the road."

The traffic police wardens added that women are good drivers who follow the traffic rules and regulations, if they violate any they accept their mistakes whereas men often do not accept their mistakes while they are aggressive in their driving and behaviors on the road. This concludes that women play a major role in mitigating road conflicts through their behaviors and actions. Traffic warden D mentioned: *"A lot of differences between males and females. Women are favored. even if they are guilty."*Female drivers shared their views that the most effective way to mitigate road conflicts is by obeying the rules and spreading awareness among the general public. However, Female participant E mentioned: *"I think men and women both have their part in mitigating road conflicts. We cannot say that women have some different role to play on roads."*

Traffic education influences on-road behaviors
Female drivers suggested promoting road education, following rules, driving at the speed limit, and promoting positive driving behaviors. Female participant D said: *"Fostering a culture of respect among all road users will help mitigate road conflicts and promote a positive road environment"*. The research studies from the past found that women have significantly low representation and participation in conflict management. Women have an indirect role in the indigenous system. However, despite having an indirect role in conflict management, women

have a role of offering views and ideas for conflict mitigation. The major factors that restrict women from leadership roles and decision-making are the lack of experience in making public decisions, and sociocultural norms (Bayu, 2020).

Whereas, a traffic warden mentioned that: *"A nation's identity is reflected in its adherence to traffic rules"*. Further, they added to observe the rule of law in any country you must see the traffic system of that country. Women are not the reason for traffic conflicts. But they can play their part by educating their children and family members on adhering to traffic rules. They must ensure their family members have a driving license, they can play part as mothers, sisters, or daughters to educate their family.

However, educational institutions and relevant authorities can run campaigns, educate people on traffic laws, and ensure their implementation. Social role theory suggests how traditional gender roles shape women's roles in the context of road safety and conflict resolution, the research explains how girls are socialized to exhibit nurturing behaviors that may predispose them to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Most of this study's findings are evident from the past research adopted in the literature review, and the theoretical framework supports most of the findings. However, there are a few gaps in this study that we need to fill in future research in this study area. This gap includes generalized data that can be obtained by involving male and female drivers as subjects of the

research. Other recommendations will be made in the next chapter to fill this gap. Other gaps include psychological insights and women's role in other aspects relevant to traffic conflicts.

Response to conflicts and mitigation strategies

There is a gendered difference in the response to the road conflicts. Female drivers on the one hand responded that they had experienced verbal conflict with the other drivers on the road whereas, traffic police wardens reported that men also are engaged in verbal conflict but they are aggressive with their responses. Traffic warden B said: *"They (men) respond differently, they are violent and aggressive, they create rush on roads to get involved while women get afraid of such situations."*

Where female drivers mentioned that they would apologize, ignore, the situation, and learn from their mistakes if they did any while driving. Participant B mentioned: *"I just left and ignored the situation."*

The finding of the study is supported by the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Pacific means to resolve conflict which states that the peaceful method to resolve conflict includes negotiation, mediation, conciliation, etc. In road conflicts, women are perceived to resolve conflicts through peaceful negotiation. This approach highlights the importance of preventive and peaceful negotiation strategies that women often use to avoid escalation and ensure safety on the road.

A research study Granié et al., (2020) focused on investigating the driving behavior around different geographical regions found that regions, where there is

high gender equality in educational terms, have higher risky driving patterns among females compared to male drivers which shows that females in such regions with high gender equality adopt behaviors similar to men. Additionally, the study concluded that almost in all regions females reported less risky behavior among friends than males.

Female drivers mentioned that there is a gender difference in response to the conflicts, where women's first strategy is to ignore the situation while men argue with other drivers and traffic police wardens. It was reported that women try to ignore any confrontation. Participant C mentioned: *"There is a difference. I always try to avoid confrontations with anyone on the road either male or female. Most of the time males become aggressive and they blame women."*

The social role theory suggests that the origins of sex differences in human behavior can lie mainly in evolved dispositions that differ by sex or mainly in the differing placement of women and men in the social structure. For such conflict situations on the road the traffic wardens follow the guidelines and respond to the situation accordingly, Traffic wardens mentioned that their response to such conflicts depends on different factors such as the nature and severity of the conflict, age of the drivers, and gender. Traffic warden C said: *"Depends on the person or driver, and their age. Make them aware that this challan is for the betterment of people."*

They mentioned that most of the time they ignore the situations that can cause a big conflict or just issue a traffic ticket to the person violating the rules. Traffic warden A mentioned: *"Depending on the situation, most of the time ignore and issue challan ticket"*. Following the guidelines and policies, traffic wardens clear the road and call the administration to interfere and handle the conflict. Further, a traffic warden added that their responses to the conflict depend on their years of experience as a warden. Their priority is to stay calm and efficiently handle the conflict, if the drivers try to exaggerate the conflict then in such situations they sometimes have to be rude to control the situation. The female drivers and traffic wardens highlighted that wardens only issue challan to the female drivers and behave politely with them. But in any case, they cannot escape the traffic ticket if they violate the rules.

However, the female driver mentioned that there should be more representation of female traffic wardens for situations where women play their "women card" to avoid getting traffic challan. Female participant C mentioned: *"Male wardens deal with female drivers politely and just issue them challan if they violate the rules. Women wardens must be on the roads to deal with female drivers. Because in such cases women play their "women card" and leave the scene"*. Further, the wardens mentioned that they have seen differences in conflict responses among male and female drivers. They mentioned that most of the time men are the ones violating the traffic rules while women are safe drivers.

CONCLUSION

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of women drivers' responses to road conflicts, explains the specific actions and behaviors they exhibit in such situations, and identifies the strategies employed for conflict resolution. Additionally, the study provides insights into the effect of women drivers on social dynamics and the overall road environment, assessing how their presence influences interactions among road users and contributes to road safety.

The study concludes that women use preventive conflict mitigation strategies to deal with road conflicts. They use peaceful methods to resolve conflict i.e., negotiation, mediation, conciliation, etc. In road conflicts, women are perceived to resolve conflicts through peaceful negotiation. Peace means of conflict theory and social role theory explain how societal norms dictate the behaviors, roles, and expectations of individuals based on their gender. The findings explain how women's roles are defined in the context of road safety and conflict resolution. By exploring how traditional gender roles shape women's roles in the context of road safety and conflict resolution, the research explains how girls are socialized to exhibit nurturing behaviors that may predispose them to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Furthermore, the research uncovers the factors that shape women's responses to road conflicts, considering societal norms, personal experiences, and driving behaviors. Finally, the study evaluates the contribution of women drivers to the reduction of road conflicts,

highlighting their role in fostering safer and more harmonious road environments and potentially informing future road safety interventions and policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some potential gaps with recommendations for future research:

1. Broad demographic research: The participants of this study are limited to specific ages and geographic areas. Including participants from different age groups, gender, and geographical areas will provide more insightful data on road conflict behavior.
2. Psychological factors: An in-depth analysis of psychological factors such as anxiety, stress, and personality characteristics that influence road conflicts will provide a deep understanding of the topic.
3. Women's role in mitigating road conflict: A limited discussion has been made on how women's representation in different aspects of life contributes to conflict management on roads. Women from advocacy, education, and other leadership roles would add comprehensive data to the research.

REFERENCES

Adeel, M., Yeh, A. G., & Zhang, F. (2017). Gender inequality in mobility and mode choice in Pakistan. *Transportation*, 44, 1519-1534.

Al-Balbissi, A. H. (2003). Role of gender in road accidents. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, *4*(1), 64–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/15389580309857

Al-Hussein, W. A., Kiah, M. L. M., Por, L. Y., & Zaidan, B. B. (2021). Investigating the effect of social and cultural factors on drivers in Malaysia: A naturalistic driving study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(22). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182211740

Bayu, E. K. (2020). Gender and conflict management: The Rrole of Wwomen's inIindigenous conflict resolutions for Ppeace Bbuilding in Ethiopia: Asystematic Rreview and Meta-Analysis. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, *80*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.7176/iags/80-01

Burton, M. G., & Higley, J. (1987). Elite settlements. *American Sociological Review*, 295-307.

Castro-Nuno, M., & Lopez-Valpuesta, L. (2023, May). Traffic compliance effect of more women behind the wheel: Pride or prejudice?. In Women's Studies International Forum. 98, p. 102727. Pergamon.

European Commission (2019) Directorate General for mobility and transport. In handbook on the external costs of transport, publications office of the European Union: Belgium, Brussels, ISBN 9789279969171.

Fisher, R. J. (2019). Interactive conflict resolution, identity, and culture. In Routledge companion to peace and conflict studies (pp. 259-268). Routledge.

Goldenbeld, C., & vVan Schagen, I. (2007). The credibility of speed limits on 80 km/h rural roads: The effects of road and person(ality) characteristics. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, *39*(6), 1121–1130.

Javaid, Zulfiqar & Tabassum

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2007.02.012

Granié, M.-A., Thévenet, C., Evennou, M., Lyon, C., & Vanlaar, W. (2020). Gender issues. In *Neurologic Clinics* 23(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ncl.2004.10.003

Hidayati, I., Tan, W., & Yamu, C. (2020). How gender differences and perceptions of safety shape urban mobility in Southeast Asia. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, *73*, 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TRF.2020.06.014

Javid, M. A., Ali, N., Abdullah, M., Campisi, T., Shah, S. A. H., & Suparp, S. (2022). Analysis of driver's socioeconomic characteristics relating to speeding behavior and crash involvement: A case study in Lahore. *Infrastructures*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/infrastructures7020018

Javid, M. A., Ali, N., Abdullah, M., Campisi, T., Shah, S. A. H., & Suparp, S. (2022). Analysis of driver's socioeconomic characteristics relating to speeding behavior and crash involvement: A case study in Lahore. *Infrastructures*, 7(2), 18.

Krahé, B., & Fenske, I. (2002). Predicting aggressive driving behavior: The role of macho personality, age, and power of car. Aggressive Bbehavior: Official Journal of the International Society for Research on Aggression, 28(1), 21-29.

Ma, Z., & Zhang, Y. (2024). Driver-automated vehicle interaction in mixed traffic: Types of interaction and drivers' driving styles. *Human factors*, *66*(2), 544-561.

Massie, D.L.; Campbell, K.L. and Williams, A.F. (1995) Traffic accident involvement rates by driver age and gender. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 27(1): 73-87.

Mouloua, M., Brill, J. C., & Shirkey, E. (2007). Gender differences and aggressive driving behavior: A factor analytic study. In Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting 51(18)(Vol. 51, No. 18, pp. 1283-1286). Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Shukri, M., Jones, F., & Conner, M. (2022). Theory of planned behaviour, psychological stressors and intention to avoid violating traffic rules: A Multi-Level modelling analysis. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, *169*, 106624.

WHO (2009) World report on road traffic injury prevention, Geneva.

World Health Organization (2018). Fifth United Nations Global road safety week.