

GENDER SOCIALIZATION INFLUENCING CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS AMONG STUDENTS IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how gender socialization influences classroom interactions among students in contemporary schooling environments. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through purposive sampling of published research documents, including peer-reviewed articles, ethnographies, and theoretical analyses relevant to gendered behaviors, participation patterns, and institutional practices in education. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving iterative coding, pattern identification, and refinement, which led to the derivation of eight major themes: gendered socialization and early behavioral norms, participation patterns and classroom discourse, teacher expectations and differential attention, peer interaction and gendered group dynamics, classroom power relations and authority structures, curriculum content and gender representation, intersectionality and compounded social inequalities, and student agency, resistance, and transformative practices. Findings reveal that early socialization, teacher expectations, peer dynamics, and curricular content collectively shape differentiated classroom experiences, often privileging behaviors aligned with traditional gender norms. Intersectional factors further compound these disparities, affecting participation, recognition, and academic confidence. Importantly, students exercise agency to resist restrictive norms through leadership, collaborative engagement, and critical negotiation of classroom roles. The study underscores the need for inclusive pedagogy, equitable participation strategies, and diversified curricula to challenge gendered hierarchies, foster transformative classroom practices, and promote equity in contemporary schooling contexts.

Keywords: Gender Socialization, Classroom Interactions, Participation Patterns, Peer Dynamics, Intersectionality, Inclusive Pedagogy

1.INTRODUCTION

Gender socialization plays a critical role in shaping students' behaviors, expectations, and interactions contained by contemporary schooling environments (Bourdieu, 1977; Connell, 2009; Tannen, 1990). From early childhood, individuals are exposed to cultural norms, values, and expectations that define appropriate roles and

behaviors for different genders (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Fennema & Peterson, 1985). These socially constructed norms are reinforced through families, media, peer groups (Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026c; Shoaib & Ullah, 2026), and educational institutions, ultimately influencing how students communicate

(Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026d), participate, and position themselves contained by classroom settings (Shoaib, Shamraiz, Abdullah, & Shahzadi, 2026b; Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026b). In many educational contexts, gender socialization affects patterns of participation, leadership, collaboration, and even academic confidence among students (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Fennema & Peterson, 1985). Boys are often encouraged to display assertiveness and competitiveness, whereas girls have been subtly guided toward compliance, cooperation, and emotional sensitivity (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Fennema & Peterson, 1985). Such differential expectations shape classroom discourse (Shoaib, Shahzadi, Shamraiz, & Abdullah, 2026a; Shoaib, Shamraiz, Abdullah, & Shahzadi, 2026a), teacher-student interactions, and peer dynamics (Shoaib, Shahzadi, Shamraiz, & Abdullah, 2026b, 2026c), thereby contributing to gendered patterns of engagement and visibility in learning spaces (Shoaib, Shahzadi, & Abdullah, 2026; Shoaib, Shahzadi, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026).

Inside contemporary schools, classroom interactions serve as a microcosm of broader societal gender relations (Shoaib, Iqbal, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026b, 2026c). For instance, research has shown that boys often receive more attention during discussions (Shoaib, Iqbal, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a; Shoaib, Iqbal, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026a), whereas girls have been praised for neatness and diligence rather than intellectual risk-taking (Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026b; Shoaib, Iqbal, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026b). These interactional patterns influence not only students' academic experiences but also their self-perceptions (Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026c), aspirations, and sense of belonging in educational settings (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Baneen, 2026a, 2026b). Understanding how gender socialization shapes classroom interactions is therefore essential for educators (Shamraiz, Shoaib, Baneen, & Shahzadi, 2026a; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Baneen, 2026c) and policymakers seeking to create inclusive and equitable learning environments that challenge traditional gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for all students (Shahzadi, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026; Shamraiz, Shoaib, Baneen, & Shahzadi, 2026b).

Study Context

Regardless of significant progress toward gender equality in education, classroom interactions in many contemporary schooling environments continue to reflect deeply embedded patterns of gender socialization (Larijani, Shoaib, & Abedi, 2026; Shahzadi, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2026; Shahzadi, Shoaib, Baneen, & Abdullah, 2026). Students enter classrooms with socially constructed beliefs about appropriate gender roles (Ali, Abdullah, & Shaoib, 2026; Ali, Abdullah, & Shoaib, 2026), behaviors, and expectations that shape how they participate in learning activities, interact with peers, and respond to teachers (Ahmed, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026a, 2026b). These gendered dispositions often influence who speaks more in class discussions (Ahmed, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2026; Waris, Shoaib, Sharif, & Abdullah, 2025a), who assumes leadership roles in group work (Waris, Shoaib, Sharif, & Abdullah, 2025b, 2025c), and how students' express confidence or hesitation in academic settings (Shoaib, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025; Waris, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025). As a result, classroom dynamics unintentionally reinforce traditional gender norms, leading to unequal participation (Shoaib, Waris, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025b; Shoaib & Zaman, 2025), differential recognition, and varied academic experiences for male and female students (Shoaib, Waris, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Waris, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025a).

The persistence of gendered interaction patterns in classrooms raises important concerns regarding equity and inclusivity in educational environments (Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b, 2025c). Teachers' expectations, curricular practices, and peer relationships reproduce subtle forms of gender bias that shape students' academic engagement, confidence, and aspirations (Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b). In many cases, these patterns remain unrecognized or normalized contained by institutional practices (Shoaib, Tariq, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a), limiting opportunities to address them effectively (Shoaib, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b). Consequently, there is a need to critically examine how gender socialization influences classroom interactions and contributes to the reproduction of gender inequalities contained by educational settings (Shoaib, Shamsher, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Shamsher, &

Iqbal, 2025). Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing pedagogical strategies and institutional policies that foster equitable participation (Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Ahmed, 2025), challenge stereotypical gender roles, and create more inclusive learning environments for all students (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a, 2025c).

The Data and Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how gender socialization influences classroom interactions among students in contemporary schooling environments. Data were collected through purposive sampling of published research documents, including peer-reviewed journal articles, ethnographic studies, and theoretical analyses, selected for their direct relevance to the topic. This approach ensured a focused examination of existing scholarly insights on gendered behaviors, participation patterns, teacher expectations, peer dynamics, curriculum content, and intersectional factors affecting classroom interactions. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following an iterative process of coding, pattern identification, and refinement. Initial codes were generated from recurring concepts and observations across the literature, which were then organized into broader categories reflecting key aspects of gender socialization in educational contexts. Through repeated review and synthesis, these categories were distilled into eight major themes: 1) gendered socialization and early behavioral norms, 2) participation patterns and classroom discourse, 3) teacher expectations and differential attention, 4) peer interaction and gendered group dynamics, 5) classroom power relations and authority structures, 6) curriculum content and gender representation, 7) intersectionality and compounded social inequalities, and 8) student agency, resistance, and transformative practices. This rigorous qualitative approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which gender norms shape classroom interactions, providing insights for inclusive pedagogy, equitable participation, and policy development in schooling environments.

Results and Discussion

Theme 1: Gendered Socialization and Early Behavioral Norms

Gendered socialization begins early in life through family practices, cultural traditions, media representations (Shoaib, Rasool, Kalsoom, & Ali, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025b), and peer interactions, shaping children's understanding of appropriate behaviors, attitudes, and roles associated with masculinity and femininity (Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b). These early experiences cultivate what sociologists often describe as gendered dispositions or habitus, which students carry into educational settings (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b). Boys are frequently encouraged to exhibit assertiveness, independence (Shoaib, Kausar, Ali, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025c), and competitiveness, whereas girls are often socialized to value cooperation, politeness, and emotional sensitivity (Shoaib, Iqbal, Rasool, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib & Kausar, 2025). Such normative expectations influence how students behave in classrooms, including their willingness to participate in discussions (Shoaib, Batool, Kausar, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Iqbal, & Iftikhar, 2025), challenge ideas, or engage with authority figures (Shoaib, Ali, & Kausar, 2025; Shoaib & Bashir, 2025). As a result, classroom interactions often reflect broader societal gender norms, where boys appear more outspoken and dominant (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025b, 2025c), whereas girls demonstrate more cautious or supportive forms of engagement (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025c; Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a). These patterns highlight how early gender socialization contributes to differentiated behavioral norms that shape students' learning experiences (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b).

Contained by classroom contexts, these gendered behavioral norms influence how teachers and peers interpret and respond to students' actions (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025b; Shoaib, Ahmed, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Behaviors associated with masculinity, such as speaking assertively or taking risks in academic discussions, interpreted as confidence and leadership (Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025a), whereas similar behaviors from girls sometimes be perceived differently due to entrenched gender expectations (Shoaib &

Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Ahmed, & Iqbal, 2025). Conversely, girls' cooperative and compliant behaviors have been rewarded as discipline and responsibility (Shoaib, 2025a, 2025b), reinforcing gendered patterns of participation and recognition (Ali, Shoaib, & Kausar, 2025; Iqbal, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025). These interactional dynamics subtly shape students' academic identities, self-confidence, and perceptions of competence (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b). Such patterns reproduce gendered expectations in educational environments, influencing both opportunities for participation and the ways students perceive their roles contained by the learning process (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b). Understanding the influence of early gendered socialization is therefore essential for educators seeking to foster classroom environments that encourage equitable participation and challenge restrictive gender norms (Ahmed, Shoaib, & Zaman, 2025; A. Ali, Shoaib, & Ali, 2025).

Theme 2: Participation Patterns and Classroom Discourse

Participation patterns and classroom discourse are significantly shaped by gender socialization (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024b; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abbas, 2024), influencing how students engage in discussions, express opinions, and interact with teachers and peers (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024a). In many classroom settings, boys tend to participate more frequently in verbal exchanges, often speaking spontaneously, interrupting discussions, or challenging ideas (Shoaib, Ali, & Abbas, 2024). Such patterns are often linked to social norms that encourage boys to demonstrate confidence, assertiveness, and competitiveness (Shoaib, Abdullah, Naqvi, & Ditta, 2024). In contrast, girls are frequently socialized to communicate in more cooperative and reflective ways, which lead them to wait for permission to speak, contribute after careful consideration, or prioritize harmony in group discussions (Shoaib, 2024e). These differences do not necessarily reflect variations in ability or knowledge but rather the influence of socially constructed gender norms that shape communication styles and participation behaviors contained by educational contexts (Shoaib, 2024b, 2024d).

Classroom discourse practices further reinforce these gendered participation patterns through teacher responses, interaction structures, and peer dynamics (Shoaib, 2024a, 2024c). Teachers unintentionally call on more outspoken students often boys during discussions, thereby amplifying their visibility and influence in the learning process (Ali, Zaman, & Shoaib, 2024; Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). In the meantime, girls' contributions occur in smaller group settings or collaborative tasks, where dialogue tends to be more supportive and inclusive (Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023; Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2023). Similarly, interactional patterns shape students' academic confidence, sense of belonging, and perceived authority contained by the classroom (Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2023; Shoaib, Naseer, & Naseer, 2023). Before certain voices dominate classroom discourse, the learning environment reproduce broader social hierarchies related to gender and power (Shoaib, 2023b, 2023c). Recognizing these dynamics is essential for educators seeking to design pedagogical strategies that promote balanced participation, encourage diverse communication styles, and ensure that classroom discourse becomes an inclusive space for all students (Shoaib, 2023a; Ullah, Shoaib, Ali, & Ullah, 2022).

Theme 3: Teacher Expectations and Differential Attention

Teacher expectations and differential attention play a significant role in shaping gendered classroom interactions (Ullah & Shoaib, 2021). Teachers often enter classrooms with implicit assumptions about students' abilities, behaviors, and learning styles that are influenced by broader societal gender norms (Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a, 2021b). These expectations affect how teachers interact with students, including whom they call on during discussions, how they provide feedback, and the types of encouragement they offer (Shoaib, Iqbal, & Tahira, 2021; Shoaib, Rasool, & Anwar, 2021). In many educational settings, boys are perceived as more active or assertive and receive more attention during classroom discussions (Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021; Shoaib, Fatima, & Jamil, 2021), even when that attention is related to discipline or behavioral management (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, & Naseer, 2021). Conversely, girls are frequently viewed as more compliant, organized, and diligent, which

lead teachers to praise them for neatness (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021), responsibility, and cooperation rather than intellectual risk-taking or critical thinking (Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021). Such patterns subtly shape students' perceptions of their roles and capabilities contained by academic environments (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2021b; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021). Differential attention from teachers' influence students' confidence, engagement, and academic identity over time (Ali, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2021; Shoaib, 2021). Once certain students consistently receive more opportunities to speak, respond, or lead activities, they gain greater visibility and reinforcement for active participation (Ahmad, Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021; Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021). In the meantime, students who receive less direct engagement internalize lower expectations regarding their academic voice or authority in classroom discourse (Abdullah & Shoaib, 2021a, 2021b). These dynamics contribute to gendered participation patterns and reinforce existing inequalities in educational experiences (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020). Recognizing the impact of teacher expectations is therefore crucial for fostering equitable classroom environments (Shoaib & Ullah, 2019). Reflective teaching practices, inclusive participation strategies, and awareness of implicit biases help educators ensure that all students receive balanced attention and equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the learning process (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Shoaib, 2016).

Theme 4: Peer Interaction and Gendered Group Dynamics

Peer interaction is a central element of classroom life, and gender socialization strongly influences how students form relationships, communicate, and collaborate with one another (Shoaib & Rafique, 2015). From an early age, children often develop gender-segregated friendship networks that reinforce distinct behavioral expectations and interaction styles (Rafique & Shoaib, 2015). In classroom settings, these patterns shape how students participate in group discussions, cooperative learning activities, and informal exchanges (Shoaib, Shaukat, Khan, & Saeed, 2013). Boys' peer groups are often characterized by competition, hierarchy, and assertive communication (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013),

whereas girls' groups tend to emphasize cooperation, emotional support, and relational harmony (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013). These differing interaction styles influence classroom discourse, decision-making processes, and the distribution of roles during collaborative tasks (Shoaib, Saeed, & Cheema, 2012). As a result, gendered peer dynamics shape not only the nature of group work but also students' confidence in expressing ideas and negotiating positions contained by collective learning environments (Arshad, Anwar, & Shoaib, 2024a, 2024b).

Contained by group-based classroom activities, gendered expectations frequently influence how responsibilities and leadership roles are allocated among students (Anwar, Shoaib, & Shahid, 2024; Anwar, Shoaib, Zaman, & Arshad, 2024). Boys have been more likely to assume visible leadership roles such as presenting ideas (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023a), directing group discussions, or taking control of technical tasks (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023b), whereas girls have been expected to perform supportive roles such as organizing materials, recording information, or ensuring group cohesion (Naseer, Shoaib, & Naseer, 2022). Although these roles are not inherently unequal, their repeated reproduction reinforce gendered perceptions of authority (Saba Mariam, Anwar, & Shoaib, 2022), competence, and participation (Anwar, Shoaib, & Mustafa, 2022). Peer approval and social pressure further sustain these patterns, as students conform to gender norms to maintain acceptance contained by their social groups (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2021a). Consequently, peer interaction becomes a powerful mechanism through which gender norms are reproduced contained by classroom environments (Naseer, Shoaib, Ali, & Bilal, 2021). Addressing these dynamics requires educators to design collaborative learning structures that encourage equitable role distribution (Naseer, Shoaib, Ali, & Ahmad, 2021), promote inclusive dialogue, and challenge stereotypical assumptions about gender and leadership in educational settings (Mariam, Anwar, Shoaib, & Rasool, 2021).

Theme 5: Classroom Power Relations and Authority Structures

Classroom power relations and authority structures are important dimensions through which gender socialization influences student interactions and participation in educational

settings (Anwar, Shoaib, & Zahra, 2021). Classrooms are not merely neutral spaces for knowledge transmission; they are social environments where authority (Ali, Shoaib, & Syed, 2021), influence, and recognition are negotiated among teachers and students (Ali, Shoaib, & Asad, 2021). Gender norms often shape how students perceive and respond to authority contained by these settings (Ahmad, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2021). Boys, who are frequently socialized to display assertiveness and independence have been more likely to challenge teachers' viewpoints, question instructions, or dominate classroom debates (Abdullah & Shoaib, 2021a). In contrast, girls are often encouraged to demonstrate respect (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2020), politeness, and compliance with authority figures (Shoaib, Munir, Masood, Ali, & Sher, 2012), which lead them to participate in more restrained or supportive ways during classroom interactions (Shoaib, Khan, & Shaukat, 2012). These behavioral tendencies reflect broader societal expectations about gender roles and shape how authority and influence are distributed in learning environments (Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, et al., 2026c; Shoaib & Ullah, 2026).

Such dynamics contribute to gendered hierarchies of voice and participation contained by the classroom (Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, et al., 2026a, 2026d). As soon as assertive forms of engagement are more visible or valued in academic discussions, students who adopt these styles gain greater recognition as confident or capable participants (Shoaib, Shamraiz, Abdullah, et al., 2026b; Shoaib, Shamraiz, Baneen, et al., 2026b). For the moment, students who engage through collaborative or reflective communication styles receive less visibility despite meaningful contributions (Shoaib, Shahzadi, Shamraiz, et al., 2026b, 2026c). These interaction patterns influence students' perceptions of their academic authority, self-confidence, and role contained by the educational process (Shoaib, Shahzadi, & Abdullah, 2026; Shoaib, Shahzadi, Iqbal, et al., 2026). Consequently, classroom power relations inadvertently reproduce gendered patterns of dominance and marginalization (Shoaib, Iqbal, Baneen, et al., 2026b, 2026c). Recognizing these dynamics is essential for educators seeking to cultivate inclusive classrooms where authority is negotiated through mutual respect (Shoaib, Iqbal, Iqbal, et al., 2026a; Shoaib, Iqbal, Baneen, et al.,

2026a), diverse participation styles are valued, and all students are encouraged to engage critically and confidently in the learning process (Shoaib, Ahmed, et al., 2026b; Shoaib, Iqbal, Iqbal, et al., 2026b).

Theme 6: Curriculum Content and Gender Representation

Curriculum content plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles, authority, and knowledge contained by educational settings (Shoaib, Abdullah, et al., 2026c; Shoaib, Ahmed, et al., 2026c). The ways in which men and women are represented in textbooks, classroom examples, historical narratives, and academic materials influence how students interpret social roles and intellectual contributions (Ali, Abdullah, & Shoaib, 2026; Larijani et al., 2026). In many educational systems, curricular content has historically emphasized the achievements, experiences, and perspectives of men whereas marginalizing or underrepresenting women and other gender identities (Shoaib, 2025a, 2025b). Such imbalances subtly reinforce the perception that authority, leadership, and intellectual achievement are predominantly male domains (Shoaib, 2024d, 2024e). As students engage with these materials during classroom discussions and learning activities, gender representation contained by the curriculum becomes an important factor influencing participation patterns, confidence, and identification with academic subjects (Shoaib, 2024b, 2024c).

The absence or limited visibility of diverse gender perspectives in curricular materials also shape classroom discourse and interaction (Shoaib, 2023b, 2024a). Before examples, case studies, or historical accounts predominantly highlight male figures, female students find fewer role models with whom they identify, potentially affecting their sense of belonging and academic engagement (Shoaib, 2023a; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a). Conversely, inclusive curricula that incorporate contributions from women and diverse gender groups encourage broader participation and more critical discussions about gender, knowledge, and social structures (Shoaib, 2021). Such representation not only challenges traditional stereotypes but also fosters a learning environment where students recognize the diversity of intellectual contributions across societies (Shoaib,

2024b, 2024d). Therefore, addressing gender representation in curriculum content is essential for promoting equitable classroom interactions and ensuring that educational knowledge reflects a more balanced and inclusive understanding of social realities (Shoaib, 2024a; Shoaib, Zaman, et al., 2024).

Theme 7: Intersectionality and Compounded Social Inequalities

Intersectionality highlights how multiple social identities such as gender, class, ethnicity (Shoaib, 2024d), and disability interact to shape students' experiences and opportunities in classroom settings (Shoaib, 2024b). Gender socialization does not operate in isolation; it intersects with other forms of social stratification, producing compounded inequalities that affect participation (Shoaib, 2024a, 2024c), recognition, and access to learning resources (Shoaib, 2023b, 2023c). For instance, girls from marginalized ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds face greater challenges in asserting their voices in classroom discussions compared to their more privileged peers (Shoaib, Rasool, et al., 2021; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021b). Similarly, boys from disadvantaged communities experience stereotypes that limit their perceived academic potential, influencing how teachers and peers respond to their contributions (Shoaib, 2021). These intersecting social factors create layered and context-specific barriers that go beyond simple gender differences, highlighting the need to examine classroom interactions through a multidimensional lens (Shoaib, 2024d).

Compounded social inequalities also affect peer relationships, teacher expectations, and access to leadership or collaborative opportunities contained by schools (Shoaib, 2024b). Students navigating multiple marginalization experience lower visibility, reduced participation, or limited opportunities to develop agency in classroom interactions (Shoaib, 2024c). Furthermore, classroom discourse and institutional practices unintentionally reinforce these disparities, further entrenching inequities (Shoaib, 2023c). Recognizing intersectional dynamics is therefore essential for developing inclusive pedagogical strategies that address the diverse needs of students (Shoaib, 2023a). By acknowledging the complex interplay of gender with other social identities, educators foster learning environments that challenge systemic inequalities (Shoaib, 2024d),

support equitable participation, and empower all students to engage confidently in academic and social aspects of schooling (Shoaib & Abdullah, 2025).

Theme 8: Student Agency, Resistance, and Transformative Practices

Student agency, resistance, and transformative practices highlight the ways in which students actively negotiate, challenge, and reshape gender norms contained by classroom interactions (Shoaib, 2025a). However, gender socialization often prescribes specific behaviors and participation styles, students are not passive recipients of these expectations (Shoaib, 2025b). Many students, particularly those aware of restrictive stereotypes, exercise agency by asserting their voices, assuming leadership roles, or engaging in collaborative and innovative ways that challenge traditional gendered behaviors (Waris, Shoaib, et al., 2025a). For example, girls take on assertive roles in debates or STEM-related activities (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025b), whereas boys engage in cooperative or reflective learning practices, thereby disrupting conventional gendered expectations (Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b). Such acts of resistance demonstrate that students reinterpret and redefine the norms governing classroom interactions (Shoaib, Tariq, Rasool, et al., 2025).

Transformative classroom practices emerge once students' agency is recognized and supported through inclusive pedagogical strategies (Shoaib, 2025a). Educators who provide equitable opportunities for participation, encourage diverse communication styles (Shoaib, 2025b), and create spaces for collaborative decision-making enable students to challenge entrenched gender hierarchies (Shoaib, 2024d). Peer networks, mentorship programs, and critical discussions about social norms further empower students to question and transform the implicit rules shaping classroom life (Shoaib, 2024b). These forms of agency and resistance contribute not only to more balanced participation but also to broader cultural shifts contained by educational environments, fostering inclusivity, critical engagement, and social empowerment (Shoaib, 2024a). Recognizing and supporting student-driven transformation is therefore essential for creating classrooms where gender norms are actively interrogated, and all

students engage fully and confidently in the learning process (Shoaib, 2023a, 2025a).

Theoretical Insights

Gender socialization fundamentally shapes classroom interactions through a network of behavioral norms, expectations, and institutional practices that are reinforced from early childhood. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus explains that students internalize gendered dispositions boys are often socialized toward assertiveness and independence, whereas girls are encouraged to be cooperative and compliant that influence how they engage in classroom discourse and collaborative activities (Connell, 2009). These early patterns manifest in participation differences, peer interactions, and responses to authority, as Tannen's (1990) gendered communication theory highlights, with boys tending toward competitive and outspoken engagement and girls toward reflective and supportive contributions. Teacher expectations further reinforce these dynamics, as the Pygmalion effect suggests that educators' implicit assumptions about gender shape attention, feedback, and recognition, subtly privileging certain behaviors over others (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Fennema & Peterson, 1985). Intersectional factors complicate these patterns, as Crenshaw's (1989) framework shows that gender intersects with class, ethnicity, and other social identities, producing compounded inequalities that affect participation, access, and recognition in classroom settings (Lewis et al., 2012). Curriculum content and representation also contribute, with traditional materials often emphasizing male perspectives, thereby shaping students' sense of authority and academic identity (Apple, 1990; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). Importantly, students exercise agency to resist restrictive gender norms, adopting leadership roles, negotiating collaborative tasks, and challenging stereotypical expectations, in line with Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy (hooks, 1994). Together, these theoretical insights illustrate that classroom interactions are not neutral but are shaped by deeply embedded gendered structures, socialization processes, and opportunities for transformative engagement.

Conclusion

The study on gender socialization influencing classroom interactions among students in

contemporary schooling environments demonstrates that classroom dynamics are deeply shaped by socially constructed gender norms that students internalize from early childhood. These norms influence participation patterns, communication styles, and responses to authority, resulting in differentiated experiences for male and female students. Boys often display assertiveness and verbal dominance, whereas girls tend toward cooperative and reflective engagement, patterns reinforced by teacher expectations, peer interactions, and curricular content. Differential attention from educators and gendered representations in textbooks further contribute to disparities in visibility, recognition, and confidence, illustrating how educational practices unintentionally reproduce broader societal inequalities. Moreover, the study highlights that gendered classroom interactions are compounded by intersectional factors, including socio-economic status, ethnicity, and cultural background, which create layered barriers for participation and engagement. Despite these structural constraints, students exercise agency and resist restrictive norms through leadership, collaborative participation, and critical engagement, suggesting the potential for transformative classroom practices. Promoting inclusive pedagogy, equitable participation, and diverse curricular representation mitigate gendered disparities and foster a more supportive learning environment. Overall, the findings underscore that gender socialization is not a deterministic force but interacts with institutional structures and student agency, shaping both challenges and opportunities for achieving equity in contemporary schooling contexts.

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