

**Familial processes and Women Empowerment: An Evidence Based Study
from district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan**

Dr. Afzaal Afzal (Corresponding Author)	Community Development Officer, Housing Urban Development & Public Health Engineering Department, Punjab, Pakistan. afzaal.afzal2010@gmail.com
Dr. Sumera Tul Hasan	Assistant Professor, Department of sociology, University of Okara, Punjab, Pakistan sumerahasana@uo.edu.pk
Ali Asghar	Advocate High Court, Member Pindi Bhatia Bar Association, District Hafiz Abad, Punjab, Pakistan. aliasgharnoon@gmail.com

Abstract: *Women empowerment is one among the most imperative aspects for intensification of personal, familial, communal and national development. Functions, responsibilities, assertiveness, interpersonal relationships and ability to deal with critical circumstances largely inclined with familial processes. Familial processes provide rudiments and play a central role in devastating women's abilities and capabilities in their lives. Twenty-first century is witnessed the unprecedented changing in adaptability and configuration of women's role throughout the world especially in developing countries like Pakistan. Patriarchal societies with socio-cultural pre-determinants confined the role of women and their empowerment is not homogenous because of various intercepting factors such as traditional values, rituals, affiliations with caste or class system, religious beliefs and economic condition among others. Keeping in consideration the said scenario, an in-depth evaluation is carried out to check the impacts of familial processes on women empowerment. Primary information was obtained through stratified linear systematic quota sampling techniques from women and advanced statistical software's such as SPSS-21, smartPLS-4 used for data analysis. Findings indicated that women empowerment have significant association with familial processes. The women belongs to supportive familial processes has more confidence, self-esteem, and plays a more productive role for their personal, familial, and social life.*

Keywords: Family structure, Family relationships, Familial processes, Women empowerment, Gender work balance

Introduction

Women empowerment is one among the most imperative aspects for growth and development of any country (Calvi et al., 2022). With the changing pattern in familial processes adaptability and configuration of women's role is increased throughout the world especially in patriarchal societies like Pakistan. Woman empowerment creates autonomy, independence, responsibilities and enhances productivity among women at individual, family and community level (Nurasyiah et al., 2020).

Empowerment of women is about allowing and equipping them to make their decisions and decide their daily life matters independently. The women are considered empowered when they are considered valued and have access to the opportunities without restriction, limitation and interference with regard to their personal life, education, profession, and movement among many others (Kabeer. 2020).

Family is the primary social institution for any individual and has significant socio-economic and physical impacts throughout the life.

Women empowerment largely depended on family process, as women perform their responsibilities as the backbone of whole family systems (Women, U. N, 2019). Empowerment of women occurs through the improvement of living conditions, events, standards according to the perspective of gender equality. Generally, women empowerment has its basic components such as a sense of self worth, importance of choices, access to basic rights, opportunities and resources, and the right to manage their own lives among others both within and outside their families (Ruszczyk et al., 2020).

Familial processes remain the intrinsic component within which to protect and effect change and empower their women. Empirical evidences from existing researches (Duriancik et al., 2019; Steele et al., 2020; Wickersham et al., 2021; United Nations, 2022) demonstrated that gender equality, excess to resources, education, participations in interpersonal and family decisions among other are the basic fundamental for women empowerment (Sudirman et al., 2021). In other words, for a woman to take advantage of available opportunities such as qualification, socialization, confidence among others largely depends on family support and involvement with positive gestures. Familial processes can either discourage or encourage women's abilities and capabilities to take opportunities which are provided by the communities, national and international initiatives (Ambler et al., 2021).

Traditionally the roles of women were considered mainly to take care and nurture of families inside the house and the men took charge in decision making and livelihood (Al-Shimari et al., 2022). Families expected that women should be more inclined to stay at their homes, pampering the children & elders of the family, cooking & cleaning and confining themselves to closed off (Duriancik et al., 2019). The general perception is that if women work outside their homes, participate in socio-cultural events and become economically independent, it may prevent them from playing their affective role within the family. Patriarchal values and socio-cultural pre-determinants confined the role of women and most of the people focused

on women to marry well rather than to find a good job or develop her career (Zaborskis et al., 2021). This distinctive approach shapes the critical perception and expectation with regard to the role of women in the family and society. This kind of stereotype thinking, in most of the families and society members are unable to observe or tolerate the personal growth, development and progress of women, outside their homes (Fosco et al., 2019).

Globally, in developing countries like Pakistan traditionally women have participated in domestic or unpaid work in their houses and fields to assist their men, but nowadays the situation has entirely changed and women feel empowered which participation in productive work is comparatively high. They get higher education, improve their personal knowledge and skills and prove themselves as capable leaders in public and corporate sectors. Despite this remarkable growth of women's role in families is as important as earlier and they participate at micro & macro level of family affairs (Negriff et al., 2019). In the context of Pakistani socio-cultural situations, women's productive work is considered a serious threat to the egoistic nature of men, and women's equal participation in household economic activities leads to under-remuneration for their work (Negriff et al., 2020).

In Pakistan the status of women empowerment is not homogenous because of various intercepting factors as family system, cost or class system, religious beliefs of the family and socio-economic status among others (Wickersham et al., 2021). The socio-cultural situation in country divided men and women as two separate worlds, where household responsibilities are the legitimate ideological space for women and outside the home obligations men are responsible (Steele et al., 2020). The phony concepts demarcation among inside and outside the house, public and private world is maintained through the perception of honor and purdah in Pakistan. Since the concept of family honor linked, with the physical and sexual role of women, their liberty and movement on their own will is threatened (Sear, 2021). Therefore, that kind of discrimination

and segregation bring considerable diversity and has a significant impact on the roles and life patterns of women. Due to paternal inheritance approach always men's were prioritized to get better education and looking for a job or personal business, and be able to fulfill the basic life requirement of the family. Consequently, the investment in female's education or development was seen as a waste of time, money and family resources (Van et al., 2022).

To deal with the complexity of the familial processes the contextual factor helps and provides background. Normally it is difficult for any member, especially women, to deal with negative and stressful situations. Dealing with new circumstances, conditions, challenges and people is more difficult as compared with normal situations (Negriff et al., 2019). Self monitoring, self motivation, self presentation in individualistic context is more favorable as compared with collectivistic context. The contextual factor of familial processes deals at further two levels such as inter-family and intra-family differences (Steele et al., 2020). Inter-

family difference deals with the matters related to cross cultures and intra-family refers to the family in a certain context (Tikkanen et al., 2022).

Objectives of the Study

- To measure the familial processes among different family structures towards their women
- To determine the relationship between family structure, familial processes and women empowerment

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Different structure of families such as joint family system, nuclear family system among others has different impacts on Familial Processes and women empowerment. Variables considered in this study such as family structure and processes linked with their different aspects and flow relationship with women empowerment. Conceptual framework for this study presented in Figure-1 highlighted direct relationships between independent, dependent and mediating variables.

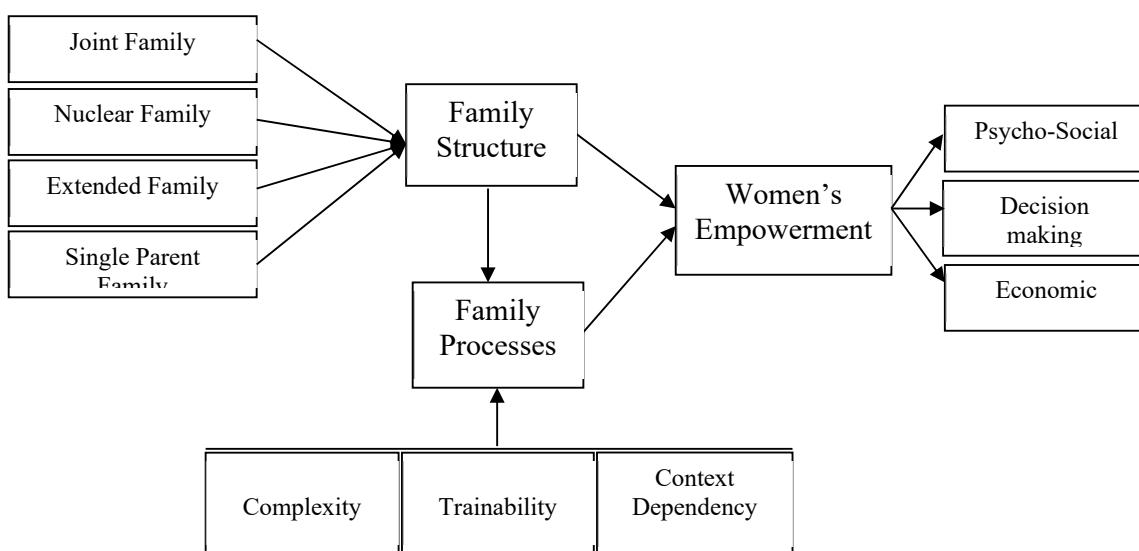


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Hypotheses of the Study

Throughout the world, families put their best efforts to maintain and ensure a favorable environment for family members. Men and women are basic pillars of any family and

without their equal participation and importance no family can run their business smoothly. Most of the families put their best efforts to provide and maintain a conducive environment as per their socio-economic conditions. However, the

significant gap existed among assumptions and actual practices and most of the family structure and familial processes. Focusing on the impacts of family structure and Familial Processes on women's empowerment hypotheses were proposed as under.

H1. Higher the level of supportive family structure higher the level of women empowerment

H2. Higher the level of supportive familial processes higher the level of women empowerment

Table 1 Target Area for data collection

S.N	Union Council	Number	S.N	Union Council	Number
1	Feroozabad	45	9	Noorpur Shrqi	53
2	Sardar Pura	46	10	Muslim Abad	54
3	Amina Abad	47	11	Faisal Gate	55
4	Faiz Abad	48	12	Mehmunda	56
5	Railway Road	49	13	Margzar	57
6	Kalra	50	14	Alipura	58
7	Fatupura	51	15	Shah Hussain	59
8	Ghari Shahdhola	52			

Through stratified sampling techniques equal participants were approached from each union council. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire; which comprising three sections such as the first section was about demographic information; the second was about the different types of family structure and processes and third was about women's empowerment. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed in both English and Urdu language for ensure the maximum accuracy. For the purpose of this study 824 respondents were approached through household survey methods. Subsequent, to the data collection, a detail scrutinized process was conducted and collected data was edited and coded accordingly. The final data was entered in statistical software such as SPSS-21 for numerous, univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis.

The reliability and validity of collected data checked before utilization of data for descriptive

Materials and Methods

Studying changing patterns of familial processes and its impacts on women empowerment is a complex phenomenon and requires a systematic approach. This study employed quantitative research methods & techniques and study conducted in district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. Target area (Gujrat City) of the study administratively divided into fifteen union councils presented in table 1 and each union council considered as one stratum.

and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis, cross tabulations, confirmatory factor analysis was applied before measurement of study model. Structural equation model was run through smart PLS-4 for the measurement of construct which supposed to be measured. The confirmation and goodness of model fit was also described according the nature and extent of data. Smart PLS-4 also helps in mediation analysis and hypothesis testing and highlighted the interlinked chain which depicts the relationships between observed variables.

Results / Findings

Reliability and validity of all considered variables was tested by various methods and parameters such as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CRs). Initially all indicators were tested and the indicators with smaller values than 0.600 were dropped. Data is collected according to different aspects such as

family structure and its role, familial processes and its impacts and women empowerment and its relation with family matters. The findings

presented in table 2 indicates that the values of Alpha and composite reliability were greater as 0.700 which considered suitable for these tests.

Table 2 Reliability, Validity and Item loadings

	Lambda	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
FS1	0.811				3.280
FS 2	0.913				3.343
FS 5	0.932				3.453
FS 7	0.971	0.976	0.923	0.823	3.564
FS 8	0.921				5.564
FS 12	0.871				3.323
FS 15	0.988				5.566
FP1	0.854				3.675
FP 4	0.901				3.453
FP 5	0.899				5.564
FP 18	0.897	0.988	0.991	0.812	3.456
FP 23	0.945				3.677
FP 24	0.870				3.665
FP 25	0.972				3.876
FP 39	0.911				4.676
WE6	0.811				5.876
WE 8	0.902				3.557
WE 11	0.897				5.876
WE 15	0.956	0.934	0.911	0.871	3.776
WE 7	0.877				3.564
WE 10	0.981				3.545
WE 14	0.991				3.545

Similarly the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the CRs values were also as per recommended level 0.700 and 0.500 respectively. Multicollinearity and discriminant validity were also assessed through the process of cross loadings. The value of variance inflation factors (VIF) was determined below than 10. Below table 3 presented the various items such as family structure (FS), familial processes (FP) and women empowerment (WE). The parameters proposed by the researchers (chin et

al., 2003) the results considered poor incase the observed values remain less than 0.30, and if the values are 0.31 to 0.500 it is considered fair or normal for the test. Accordingly when the result values are between 0.51 to 0.60 concern factors looks good and considered moderate or average and similarly when the observed values of factors is between 0.61 to 0.80 or above, it is strong or perfect for further proceedings.

Table 3 Discriminant validity through the method of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

	Family Structure	Familial Process	Women Empowerment
FS1	0.811	0.198	0.211
FS 2	0.913	0.231	0.234
FS 5	0.932	0.187	0.341
FS 8	0.921	0.191	0.349
FS 12	0.871	0.166	0.287
FS15	0.988	0.219	0.332
FP1	0.349	0.854	0.109

FP 4	0.321	0.901	0.132
FP 5	0.213	0.899	0.237
FP 18	0.199	0.897	0.101
FP 23	0.432	0.945	0.276
FP 24	0.238	0.870	0.343
FP25	0.432	0.972	0.234
FP39	0.231	0.911	0.198
WE6	0.125	0.167	0.811
WE 8	0.234	0.187	0.902
WE 11	0.321	0.207	0.897
WE 15	0.334	0.288	0.956
WE 7	0.432	0.234	0.877
WE10	0.367	0.327	0.981
WE14	0.281	0.453	0.991

The findings of the study indicated that all values were higher than 0.600 which were according to the recommended values and strongly acceptable according to the nature of study. The observed values of Alpha, CRs

among others were greater than 0.700 and in the meanwhile CRs was also greater than 0.800 and 0.600 accordingly. Similarly, table 4 presented the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion for the verification of discriminant validity.

Table 4 Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion for the verification of discriminant validity

	Family Structure	Familial Process	Women Empowerment
FS	0.911		
FP	0.325	0.902	
WE	0.431	0.291	0.917

Descriptive Results

Descriptive results presented the actual distribution of data in the form of numbers and percentages for further coherent discussion and rational explanations of study findings. Table-5 presented the frequency distribution of responses against the different demographic factors, out of a total huge portion 57.1% of respondents fall in the age of 26 to 45 years. Maximum respondents 49.8% reported they belong to the nuclear family system as

mentioned in before that the nuclear family system rapidly changed all types of family setup especially in Pakistani context. 58.3% respondents have completed their high school (matriculation or intermediate) and a small portion of respondents reported graduation or above qualification. When the respondents asked about their family income 55.2% respondents said they have 20001 to 60000 monthly household incomes.

Table 5 Descriptive findings of demographic aspects

Background aspects	Indicators	N	%
Age	18-25	206	25.1
	26-35	244	29.6
	36-45	227	27.5
	45 or above	147	17.8
Family System	Total	824	100
	Nuclear	410	49.8
	Joint	241	29.2

	Separated	105	12.7
	Extended	68	8.3
	Total	624	100
	Primary	76	9.2
	Middle	124	15.0
Education Level	High	159	19.3
	Intermediate	321	39.0
	Graduation or Above	144	17.5
	Total	824	100
	10000-20000	192	23.3
Household Income (per month)	20001-40000	187	22.7
	40001-60000	268	32.5
	60001-80000	126	15.3
	80001 or Above	51	6.2
	Total	824	100

Table 6 presented the frequency distribution of responses and shows that 61.11% respondents reported high impacts of family structure on women empowerment. Out of total respondents 77.91% responded that the impacts of Familial

Processes are in high category, similarly 81.15% respondents reported that women empowerment highly dependent on family structure and family process.

Table 6 Frequency distribution of Family Structure, Family Processes and women empowerment

Variable	High	Medium	Low
F.S	61.11%	24.78%	14.11%
F.P	77.91%	11.21%	10.88%
W.E	81.15%	13.99%	4.86%

To understand the strength of association among various independent and dependent variables is very important for accurate conclusion and outcomes; in this context Table 7 indicated these relationships among study variables. Family

structure has strong association with familial processes and women empowerment. In the meanwhile, women empowerment is also strongly associated with familial processes and family structure.

Table 7 Association among Family Structure, Family Processes and women empowerment

	Individual Behaviour	Sibling Relationship	Sharing/Discussion	Adaptability	Social Interaction	Leisure Time
Family Structure	31.332**	28.21*	30.13**	28.236*	29.740**	56.92**
Familial Processes	29.561**	25.92*	31.47**	33.680*	25.850*	79.21**
Women Empowerment	30.113**	29.81*	26.241*	27.985*	34.58*	39.460* *

i. *P-Value at 5% level

ii. **P-Value at 1% level

The impacts of familial processes on family structure and women empowerment presented in table 8 and results point out that 81.4% participants reported supportive impacts of positive familial processes on women empowerment. Similarly 76.8% respondents

reported that a positive familial processes is supportive in women empowerment. The findings of the study also supported study hypotheses such as supportive familial processes have significant association with family structure and women empowerment.

Table 8 Relationship of Familial Processes with Family Structure, and women empowerment

Variables	Supportive Familial Processes						Total N	% %
	Supportive		Neutral		Non-Supportive			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Family Structure	High	433	81.4	19	40.4	99	40.4	551 66.9
	Medium	57	10.7	20	42.6	32	13	109 13.2
	Low	42	7.9	8	17	114	46.6	164 19.9
	Total	532	100	47	100	245	100	824 100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05								
Women Empowerment	High	371	76.8	16	64	151	47.8	538 65.3
	Medium	53	11	4	16	32	10.1	89 10.8
	Low	59	12.2	5	20	133	42.1	197 23.9
	Total	483	100	25	100	316	100	824 100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05								

Researchers also try to understand the frequency distribution of family structure with regard to other variables of the study. The result presented in Table 9 indicated that 60% respondents reported that family structure has supportive impacts on familial processes. This indicated that the changes in family structure can impact on familial processes. Similarly, 63.9% respondents reported that supportive family

structure is highly supportive in the processes of women empowerment. The findings of the study also supported study hypotheses such as supportive family structure have significant association with familial processes and women empowerment.

Table 9 Impacts of family structure on Family Processes and women empowerment

Variables	Family Structure						Total N	% %
	Supportive		Neutral		Non-Supportive			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Familial Processes	High	288	60	18	31.6	77	26.8	383 46.5
	Medium	121	25.2	17	29.8	58	20.2	196 23.8
	Low	71	14.8	22	38.6	152	53	245 29.7
	Total	480	100	57	100	287	100	824 100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05								
Women Empowerment	High	287	63.9	25	27	51	18	363 44.1
	Medium	98	21.8	30	33	71	25	199 24.2
	Low	64	14.3	36	40	162	57	262 31.8
	Total	449	100	91	100	284	100	824 100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05								

Study also hypothesizes that the empowered women also have significant impacts on family structure and family process. Table 10 highlights these impacts as, 80.2% respondents reported

that women empowerment has high impacts on family structure. Similarly, women empowerment has strong association with the Familial Processes as 80% respondents reported

that women empowerment is highly supportive in the family process. The findings of the study also supported study hypotheses such as women

empowerment have significant association with family structure and family process.

Table 10 Impacts of women empowerment on Family Structure, Family Processes

Variables	Women Empowerment								
	Supportive		Neutral		Non-Supportive		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Family Structure	High	376	80.2	32	40	83	30.2	491	59.6
	Medium	42	9	20	25	46	16.7	108	13.1
	Low	51	10.8	28	35	146	53.1	225	27.3
	Total	469	100	80	100	275	100	824	100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05									
Familial Processes	High	392	81	34	27.2	69	32.1	495	60.1
	Medium	39	8.1	44	35.2	24	11.2	107	13
	Low	53	11	47	37.4	122	56.7	222	26.9
	Total	484	100	125	100	215	100	824	100
Pearson χ^2 significant at p<.05									

Analysis of Variance

The study variables such as family processes, family structure and women empowerment have significant impacts and this impact analyze through average comparison by applying analysis of variance (ANOVA). The

homogeneity among group variance observed through test of normality and table 11 presented the findings. The observed values highlighted that all the variables are not same nor have equal impact. The test assumption was approved and researchers find that all variable have their own importance and impacts on each others.

Table 11 Analysis of Variance among study variables

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	583861.957	9	221758.871	2351.319	.000
Within Groups	372514.382	4341	71.850		
Total	959076.339	4350			

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to confirm the factors for further multivariate analysis such as SEM. Only the most important indicators with high loadings were considered and factors with poor loaded were discarded from the list. The findings from CFA goodness

of fit is presented in table 12 and various goodness of fit measure such as advance goodness of fit, goodness of fit, root mean square error of approximation, d.f and chi-square were found excellent fit. The considered indicators of FS, FP and WE were found fit for furthers multivariate statistical analysis.

Table 12 Goodness of fit for CFA

Variables	Chi-square	d.f	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
Family Structure	511.13	89	.991	.912	.061
Familial Processes	219.09	41	.917	.989	.067
Women Empowerment	401.31	71	.987	.954	.063
Recommended good fit value	≥ 0.90		≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08	

Structural Equation Model

Variance based structural equation model was applied for testing the complexity and accurate measurement of the model. The model of this study has complex, direct and mediation impacts on independent variables, smartPLS 4 was used

for evaluation the impacts. The fitted model shows below in graph 2 which highlighted that family structure has significant impacts on Familial Processes and women empowerment. The measurement and path results of all study variables with impacts level upon others is also presentenced.

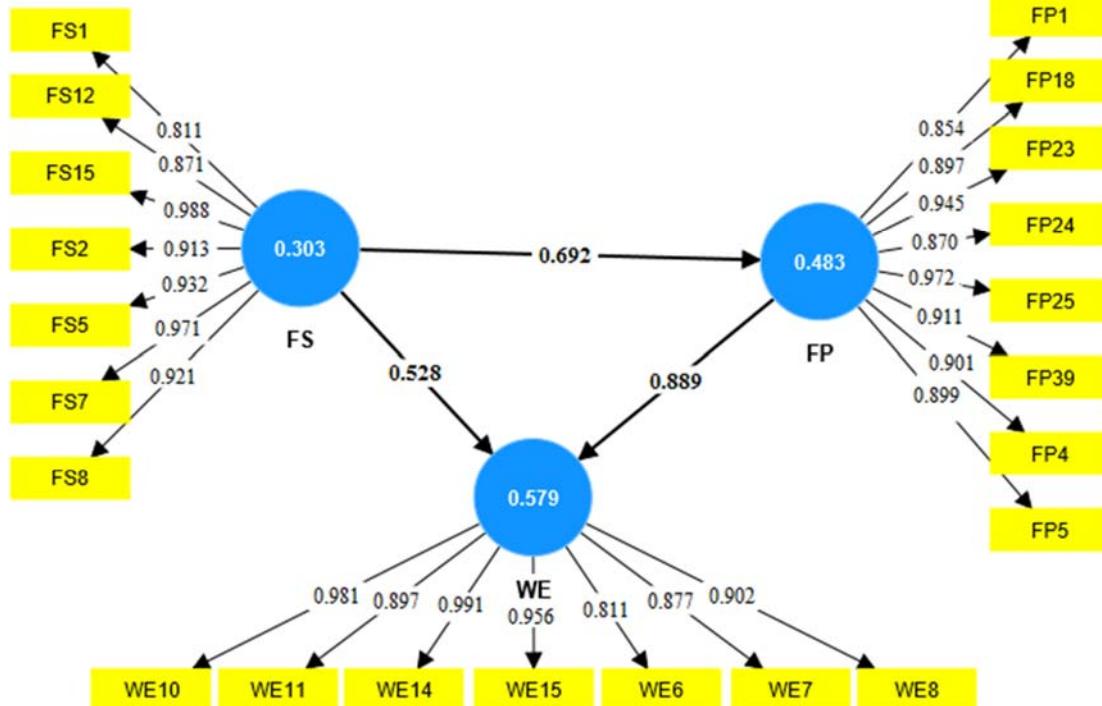


Fig 2: Fitted model and path results (β -values)

Results highlighted that strong association existed among family structure, Familial Processes and women empowerment. Women empowered socially, psychologically, economically among other play her role more effectively not only inside the family matters but also with outside. The study findings also endorsed the assumptions and structural equation model confirmed that supportive family structure and familial processes have significant impacts on women empowerment. This leads to suggest that the women belongs from the family who have supportive family structure and positive Familial Processes can be more socially, psychologically, and economically empower and can take their decision more independently. The results from

SEM also highlighted that empower women also have significant impacts on family structure and Familial Processes positively.

Goodness of Fit

Statistical software smartPLS facilitates in observing goodness of model fit and the observed values presented in table 13 shows that the study hypothesis approved and strongly suggested that the higher level of supportive family structure and Familial Processes can improve women empowerment at family, community and societal level. Which proved fare chance to women and they put their best in the development of their families and reduced the unbearable socio-economic burdens on bread earner of the families

Table 13 Goodness of fit measures for structure equation model

	Chi-square	d_ULS	d_G	RMS_Theta	SRMR
Observe Value	5359.464	1.702	0.647	0.131	0.057
Recommended parameters	p-value \leq 0.05	d_ULS \leq 99%	d_G \leq 99%	RMS-Theta \leq 0.12	SRMR 0.10 <

Hypothesis Testing

Smart PLS-4 software provide comprehensive details regarding testing the hypothesis. Various methods such as bootstrapping with 5000 bootstrap, considering oversample size,

generation path coefficient among others for testing study hypotheses. The findings presented in table 16 shows the results with the health of various recommended parameters such as hypothesis effects, path coefficient, standard error, t-value and p-values.

Table 14 Hypothesis Testing Analysis

Hypothesis No	Hypothesized Effect	Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H1	FS>WE	0.311	0.059	5.716	0.000***	Supported
H2	FP>WE	0.274	0.055	4.172	0.000***	Supported

***: P<0.01, ii. **:P<0.05, iii *:P<0.1

Discussion & Conclusion

For the development and prosperity of nation's equal participation of both genders is mandatory in all fields of life. Women empowerment is the most imperative perceptive with regard to their personal, social and professional life. Families are the basic units for all human being the processes and relationships among family members have long lasting socio-cognitive and physical impacts, especially on girls and women. In the patriarchal societies like Pakistan, women empowerment faced multidimensional obstacles. It feel quite difficult to empower women, so that they determine their own destinations, prove their abilities and capabilities at domestic and community level. A woman can only be considered empowered, and then she actively participates in all family matters and takes their decision freely as per need and available resources. Only healthy, confident, and empowered women can play a productive role with respect to their social and economic development.

The present study examined the impacts of Familial Processes on women empowerment. It

is evidently observed, and existing literature (Negriff et al., 2020; Ambler et al., 2021; Jonathan et al., 2022) highlighted that various national and international organizations and governments spend billions of funds, resources and skills on women empowerment and intricate gender inequality for better development of human beings. The results from this study revealed that women empowerment is strongly associated with their family structures and family process. Findings indicated that the women who belong to supportive family structure and Familial Processes possess more confidence and perform better in all aspects of life. Supportive Familial Processes can build or enhance a positive environment, so that the individuals as family members enhance their understanding and confidence, improve their interpersonal skills and play a productive role for their family and country. Women empowerment such as social, physiological and economic empowerment largely depends on the families where they belong. With the passage of time and rapid change in family structure the role of each family member largely affected especially the role of women.

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