



AN ONLINE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS FEMINIST ISSUES

Ms. Yashvi Navin Gada

B. Ed. Research Student

Dr. Rajeet I. Jha

Associate Professor (Research Guide)

Bombay Teachers' Training College, Mumbai

Introduction

Feminism according to the researchers means working towards achieving global gender equality. As we know that everyone is born equal, regardless of gender, race, or sexuality. However, there are so many aspects of life in which people are not treated equally like politically, economically, legally, and socially. And to a clear idea feminism is about working against the systems built to keep certain groups of people oppressed, and striving towards equality for everyone. It means having civil conversations with people. Feminism actually means having a common sense of equality. It's the idea that everyone is equal and deserves to be given this equity. However, in our world, this isn't always the case, and that's where feminism comes in.



Aarhat Publication & Aarhat Journals is licensed Based on a work at <http://www.aarhat.com/erj/>

People who support feminism are known as feminist and to me being a feminist means that you fight for the equality of all people. But in today's era there is a wrong sense of approach towards Feminist.

There are many efforts that are put in to neutralize the negative stigma which surrounds feminism in recent years and this has led to an increase of online publicity for the feminist cause. Feminists who follow the strong idea of feminism have always a common goal to fight against that is equality for all the sexes and not being biased towards any particular gender, but the current situations have contradicted it. And this has led to a different attitude or perspective towards Researchers are aware that feminism has achieved positive publicity in recent years, but still there are those who actively disassociate with the label. For this the best example is the 'why I don't need feminism' and 'meninist' movements which have been known through the use of social media, particularly focusing on Facebook, Twitter as platforms.

There are campaigns that have examined feminism for promoting female pre-eminence at the expense of men. This is an example of how there are those who no longer understand feminism by its earlier mentioned definition of equality, and have let negative stereotypes overtake their perceptions of an entire movement.

Literature Review

1. Feminist attitudes and ideologies: an examination of a North-eastern US MSW program (Charter & Wilson 2018)
in this paper the main idea of focus is that they found the relationship that Masters in Social Work (MSW) students in the United States have with feminism appears to be paradoxical, in which MSW students tend to endorse feminist



principles but are hesitant to identify themselves as feminists, For research purpose they used already established scale, the Liberal Feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale. Their findings indicated that MSW students were more likely to highly endorse the Gender Roles, Global Goals, and Specific Political Agendas subscales compared to Discrimination and Subordination and Collective Action subscales suggesting that students should promote gender role parity and feminist goals.

2. Perceptions of feminist beliefs influence ratings of warmth and competence (Meijs, Kate A. Ratliff, Lammers, 2017) This research paper had collected integrative data and analyzed the data across five studies which showed that women who labelled themselves as feminists were seen as less warm and more competent than women who express gender-equality beliefs but do not label themselves feminists. Therefore this research showed that in addition to the negative evaluations of the feminist stereotype the feminist label might cue strong gender-equality beliefs that in turn are related to differences in evaluations.
3. I am not a feminist. But why students support the cause but not the label by (Remenyi 2016). This research project was aimed to build on existing research that finds that the majority of people agree with the objectives of the feminist movement, but do not identify as feminists. The first hypothesis got rejected in that it was found that negative feminist stereotypes are not the primary influence on disassociation with the feminist label for University of Kent students who agree with the objectives of the feminist but do not identify as feminists. Hypothesis two was accepted, as it was found that men are more likely to disassociate with the feminist label despite agreeing with the objectives of the feminist movement than women. And for the last hypothesis it was accepted as it was identified that there was an increased percentage of individuals openly identifying as a feminist than that seen in research by Anderson (2009)
4. Everyone feels Empowered: Understanding feminist self-labelling (Miriam Liss Mindy J. Erchull, 2010) in their research findings questions were raised about whether the feminist identity development model provides information about women's social identification as a feminist.. For this research an online questionnaire was administered to 653 female self-identified feminists and non-feminists in order to investigate the association between feminist self-labelling and synthesized the scores and to better understand what it means to take on the social identity of a feminist.
5. Gender Role Identity and Attitudes toward Feminism (Paige W. Toller, Elizabeth A. Suter, and Todd C. Trautman, 2004) in their study they had examined the relationships among gender role identity, support for feminism, non-traditional gender roles, and willingness to consider oneself a feminist. So for female participants they got positive relationships among higher masculinity on the PAQ that is non-traditional attitudes toward gender roles, and the combined SRAI that is (Sex Role Attitudinal Inventory). And to this the second result for female participants was a negative correlation was also found between lower scores on the PAQ masculinity–femininity index and the combined SRAI in women. And the findings of male participants was positive relationships among high femininity on the SIS that is (Sexual Identity Scale), willingness to consider oneself a feminist, positive attitudes toward the women's movement, and the combined SRAI. They also found a negative relationship between high masculinity on the PAQ and willingness to consider oneself a feminist in men.
6. The Attitudes toward Feminist Issues Scale: It is a Validation Study (Elaore, Patricia B. And others March-1975) showed that there are many studies that have tried to show general attitudes toward the women's movement,



and to show that very little work has been done to measure attitudes toward the individual issues that are identified with women's liberation. The instrument that was developed was entitled the Attitudes toward Feminist Issues Scale. Subjects were 61 introductory women's studies students and 44 introductory psychology students. As the study was consistent and worked on the same line with previous studies (Spence & Helmreich, 1972; Spence et al. 1973; Dempewolff, 1974a; Kaplan and Goldman, 1973), the first finding was a global factor of feminism. The second finding was in general and that for the pre course administration of the Attitudes toward Feminist Issues Scale, women's studies students and women responded with a more liberal feminist position than introductory psychology students and men, respectively. These results that they got were similar to the differences found by Anderson and Jacobson (Note 1) and Dempewolff (1974b).

Statement of the Problem:

An Online Comparative Study of the Attitudes towards Feminist Issues

Major Objectives of the Research Study:

1. To study the level of the participants' attitudes towards feminist issues.
2. To compare the mean scores of the participants' attitudes towards feminist issues in terms of:
 - i. Sex,
 - ii. Age,
 - iii. Educational qualification,
 - iv. Academic stream,
 - v. Institutional affiliation,
 - vi. Professional qualification,
 - vii. Professional status,
 - viii. Work experience,
 - ix. Residential status,
 - x. Marital status,
 - xi. Presence of siblings,
 - xii. Number of siblings, and
 - xiii. Ordinal position of the participants

Null Hypotheses:

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the participants' attitudes towards feminist issues with reference to their:

1. Sex,
2. Age,
3. Educational qualification,
4. Academic stream,
5. Institutional affiliation,
6. Professional qualification,
7. Professional status,
8. Work experience,



9. Residential status,
10. Marital status,
11. Presence of siblings,
12. Number of siblings, and
13. Ordinal position of the participants

Research Methodology and Participants:

For this research project the data collection was done using the online medium and the questionnaire was hosted online by Google Forms. The form was circulated to the target participants, that is students pursuing or pursued Higher Education in different fields. Data that was collected relied on a snowballing effect of participants as this was the most feasible method of data collection in the limitation of the current scenario.

Majority of the participants were between the age group of 18-32 years of age, females and males, of Mumbai and its suburbs, affiliated to different Universities. All these participants voluntarily participated in the online data collection process. Overall there were 164 responses to the survey.

Major Findings of the Research Study:

The collected data was tabulated and analyzed both through descriptive and inferential analysis (t-test).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Sex wise comparison							
Groups	Count	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Sample Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Females	127	74.91	74	9.36	87.53	0.28	-0.78
Males	37	71.95	72	6.48	42.05	1.09	2.92

1. The mean score for the female participants on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 74.91$, $SD = 9.36$) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 1.80$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.07$) from that of the male participants ($M = 71.95$, $SD = 6.48$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-1) is supported.
2. Analysis of variance found that there was no statistically significant difference between the age groups of the participants ($F = 2.97$, $p > 0.05$). The means for the three age groups that is 18-21, 22-25, 26-32 (72.14, 75.97 and 74.28 respectively) were not statistically significantly different from each other. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-2) is supported.

Table 2: ANOVA: for (Educational Qualification wise Comparison)						
Age Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Class 12 & Diploma	47	3352	71.32	72.70		



UG	78	5897	75.60	83.49		
PG & Above	39	2926	75.03	64.50		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	569.859	2	284.929	3.753	0.026	3.052
Within Groups	12223.87	161	75.925		Sig. at 0.05 l.o.s	Null Hypothesis is rejected
Total	12793.73	163				
Tukey HSD Test (Educational Qualification wise Comparison)						
HSD[.05]=4.11; HSD[.01]=5.14						
M1 vs. M2 P<.05						
M1 vs. M3 nonsignificant						
M2 vs. M3 nonsignificant						
M1 = mean of Sample 1 = Class 12 & Diploma M2 = mean of Sample 2 = UG M2 = mean of Sample 2 = PG & Above						
HSD = the absolute [unsigned] difference between any two sample means required for significance at the designated level. HSD [.05] for the .05 level; HSD [.01] for the .01 level.						

3. Analysis of variance found that there was a statistically significant difference between the participants whose qualification was class 12& Diploma, UG and PG & above ($F = 3.753$, $p < 0.0001$). The Tukey test found that the means for, UG, PG & above and Class 12 & Diploma (75.60 75.03 and 71.32 respectively) were statistically significantly different from each other. The mean of the UG students were statistically significantly higher than the means of both the participants doing PG and class 12 and Diploma. The mean of the PG and above participants



were statistically significantly higher than the mean of the class 12 and Diploma participants. Thus, the null hypothesis (H0-3) is rejected.

Table 3 ANOVA for (Academic Stream wise Comparison)						
Age Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Science	41	3059	74.61	61.89		
Commerce	57	4058	71.19	44.55		
Arts	66	5058	76.64	106.30		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	913.8196	2	456.910	6.192	0.003	4.739
Within Groups	11879.91	161	73.788		Sig. at 0.05 l.o.s	Null Hypothesis is rejected
Total	12793.73	163				
Tukey HSD Test (Academic Stream wise Comparison)						
HSD[.05]=3.96; HSD[.01]=4.95						
M1 vs. M2 nonsignificant						
M1 vs. M3 nonsignificant						
M2 vs. M3 P<.01						
M1 = mean of Sample 1 = Science M2 = mean of Sample 2 = Commerce						



M2 = mean of Sample 2 = Arts

HSD = the absolute [unsigned] difference between any two sample means required for significance at the designated level. HSD [.05] for the .05 level; HSD [.01] for the .01 level.

4. Analysis of variance found that there was a statistically significant difference between the Science, Commerce and Arts academic streams and ($F = 6.192$, $p < 0.1$) The Tukey test found that the means for Arts, Science and Commerce Streams (76.64, 74.61 and 71.19 respectively) were statistically significantly different from each other. The mean of the Arts academic Stream were statistically significantly higher than the means of both the academic streams Science and Commerce. The mean of the Science academic stream was statistically significantly higher than the mean of the Commerce academic stream. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-4) is rejected.

Table 4 t-Test: Institution Affiliation wise Comparison		
	Mumbai University	Other Universities
Mean	73.63	77.79
Variance	74.95	87.82
Observations	140	24
Pooled Variance	76.78	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	162	
t Stat	-2.15	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.03	Sig. at 0.05 l.o.s.
t Critical two-tail	1.97	Null Hypothesis is rejected

5. The mean score of the participants of other universities on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 77.79$) is statistically significantly higher ($t = 2.15$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.03$) than those of participants of Mumbai Universities ($M = 73.63$, $SD = 8.76$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-5) is rejected.
6. The mean score for the Professional qualification of the participants on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 73.14$) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 0.84$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.40$) from that of the no professional qualification ($M = 74.55$, $SD = 8.86$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-6) is supported.



7. The mean score of the participants whose professional status is student on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 74.85$) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 1.34$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.18$) from that of the participants whose professional status was working ($M = 72.84$, $SD = 8.83$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-7) is supported.
8. Analysis of variance found that there was no statistically significant difference between the working experience ($F = 1.124$, $p > 0.05$). The means for no work experience, work experience of less than 2 years and work experience of more than two years (74.45, 75.83 and 72.72 respectively) were not statistically significantly different from each other. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-8) is supported.
9. The mean score for the participants of urban residence on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 74.71$,) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 1.10$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.27$) from that of the participants of suburban residence ($M = 73.02$, $SD = 8.85$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-9) is supported.
10. The mean score for the married participant on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 72.12$, $SD =$) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 1.33$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.18$) from that of the participants who are single ($M = 74.64$, $SD = 8.83$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-10) is supported.
11. The mean score for the participants having siblings on the variable 'Attitude towards Feminist Issues' ($M = 74.55$) did not differ statistically significantly ($t = 1.03$, $df = 162$, two-tailed $p = 0.30$) from that of the participants with no siblings ($M = 72.63$, $SD = 8.84$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-11) is supported.
12. Analysis of variance found that there was no statistically significant difference between the participant's number of siblings ($F = 2.809$, $p > 0.05$). The means for participants with no siblings, 1 siblings and with more than 1 siblings (72.82, 75.94 and 72.59 respectively) were not statistically significantly different from each other. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-12) is supported.
13. Analysis of variance found that there was no statistically significant difference between the participants ordinal position ($F = 0.19$, $p > 0.05$). The means for participant's position as eldest, middle or other and youngest (73.99, 73.87 and 74.87 respectively) were not statistically significantly different from each other. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0-13) is supported.

Conclusions of the Study:

1. Sex of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
2. Age of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
3. Educational Qualification of the participants seems to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues. The scores of Graduate participants is statistically significantly greater than that of participants whose educational qualification is Class 12 and Diploma.
4. Academic Stream of the participants seems to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues. The scores of Arts Stream is statistically significantly greater than that of Commerce Stream.
5. Institution Affiliation of the participants seems to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues. The scores of participants of institutions affiliated to other universities is statistically significantly greater than that of participants of institutions affiliated to University of Mumbai.
6. Professional Qualification (Possession and non-possession) of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.



7. Professional Status (student versus working professional) of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
8. Work experience of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favourable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
9. Residence (Urban versus Suburban) of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
10. Marital Status (Married versus Single status) of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
11. Presence or Absence of Siblings of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favorable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.
12. Number of Siblings of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favourable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues
13. Ordinal Position of the participants does not seem to be a contributor to favourable Attitudes towards Feminist Issues.

Scope and Delimitation:

- Online mode of data collection (Google Form) and snowballing technique of sampling was employed due to both constraints imposed by the situation and feasibility for the researcher.
- Whatsapp contacts and groups were employed for snowballing to get a large sample.
- Likert-type scale instruments have been employed for the ease of study.
- Computer / Digital response has been elicited.
- Time period for data collection has been limited.
- Most of the participants completed the scale at their convenience and were urged by their known contacts to do so.
- Only three streams are focused (Science, Commerce and Arts)
- Qualitative data analysis is not presented for this paper.

Significance of the Study:

The study, has been a proper survey, and has helped in knowing about favorable and non-favourable contributions of many factors towards “Attitude towards feminist Issues’. So factors namely educational qualification, academic streams and institution affiliation has found to be contributors to favourable attitudes towards feminist issues. Future studies which are wider in scope and depth needs to be undertaken so know whether the label of feminism is accepted widely or not.

References:

- Abowitz, D. (2008). The Campus "F" Word: Feminist Self-Identification (And Not) Among Undergraduates. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, 34(1), 43-63. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23070710>
- Elmore, Patricia H.; And Others The Attitudes Toward Feminist Issues Scale: A Validation Study. Mar 75 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED109544.pdf>
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1368430217733115>



<https://www.e-ir.info/2016/09/03/im-not-a-feminist-but-why-students-support-the-cause-but-not-the-label/>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23070710?seq=1>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232536476_A_scale_of_attitudes_toward_feminism

John, W. Best and James, V. Kahn (2006). '10th Edition. Research in Education

Liss, M., & Erchull, M. J. (2010). Everyone Feels Empowered: Understanding Feminist Self-Labeling. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34(1), 85–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01544.x>

Meijs M, Ratliff KA, Lammers J. Perceptions of feminist beliefs influence ratings of warmth and competence. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. 2019;22(2):253-270. doi:10.1177/1368430217733115

Mollie Lazar Charter & Cristina Mogro-Wilson (2018) Feminist attitudes and ideologies: an examination of a Northeastern US MSW program, *Social Work Education*, 37:2, 139-156, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2017.1389881

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02615479.2017.1389881?journalCode=cswe20>)

Smith, Eliot & Ferree, Myra & Miller, Frederick. (1975). A scale of attitudes toward feminism.

Toller, Paige W.; Suter, Elizabeth A.; and Trautman, Todd C., "Gender Role Identity and Attitudes toward Feminism" (2004). Communication Faculty Publications. 74. <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/commfacpub/74> (<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1077&context=commfacpub>)