

# Review of: "'Women come out for less important tasks': Understanding the reality of the gendered transport sector in Karachi through Key-Informant Interviews"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

**Title:** The title looks good but could benefit from minor adjustments.

- a. The use of the phrase "less important tasks" in the title may introduce a level of implicit bias. It implies a preconceived notion about the perceived importance of tasks undertaken by women, potentially influencing the reader's interpretation before delving into the actual research.
- b. The title implies a generalization about women's roles within the transport sector, which may risk perpetuating stereotypes. It is important for the research to present a complex view that considers the diversity of experiences among women in the transport sector, avoiding the reinforcement of stereotypical narratives.
- c. Relying solely on Key-Informant Interviews may introduce a potential limitation.

Suggested title: *"Unveiling Gender Dynamics in Karachi's Transport Sector: Insights from Key-Informant Interviews on Women's Roles and Challenges"*

**Abstract:** The abstract provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by women in the context of transport and mobility in Karachi, Pakistan. However, there are a few points to consider:

- a. The abstract does not provide information on the sample size or diversity of the experts interviewed. Knowing the number of participants and their backgrounds may add more value to the reader.
- b. The abstract mentions data gathered through 'conversations with purpose,' but it lacks detail on the specific methodologies employed. Providing more information on the research methodology would enhance the credibility of the study.

**Background:** The background provides several statistics, such as Pakistan's ranking on the gender gap index and the percentage of women in the workforce, this data is crucial for understanding the context. The sources of this data have been provided, which strengthen the narrative. This adds transparency and credibility to the information presented.

However, there are few issues to improve:

- a. The background touches on the gender gap in labour force participation in Pakistan, but it could benefit from a more explicit exploration of how these gender dynamics extend to the transport sector. Clearly establishing the connection between societal gender norms and their impact on women's mobility within the transportation context would enhance

the reader's understanding.

- b. The transition between discussing gender-related statistics and the focus on the transport sector could be made smoother. Consider introducing the link between gender disparities in the broader context and how they manifest within the transport sector in a more cohesive manner.
- c. The mention of protecting women to safeguard family honour restricting their non-work trips is a significant point. However, providing more context on how this honour-based restriction specifically affects women's mobility and access to transport could deepen the reader's comprehension.
- d. While it is asserted that the transport sector is heavily male-dominated with zero representation of women, specific examples or instances of discrimination against women within the transport sector would add depth to the argument.
- e. The background introduces the issue of gender differences in public transport usage but does not delve into the specific needs and challenges faced by women in this context. A more detailed exploration of women's transport needs and how the current transport system fails to address them would strengthen the argument.
- f. The section discussing the structure of transport planning and operation introduces various sub-topics (informal transport, sectorial approach to transport) without a clear transition. Consider organizing the information into subsections with clear headings to improve readability and comprehension.
- g. How does gender inequality affect the planning and operation of transport in Karachi?
- h. The background relies on data from various sources, but it would strengthen the argument to include more recent statistics, especially if there have been changes or developments in the gender gap index or women's participation in the workforce since 2013.
- i. The background concludes by highlighting the general challenges in Karachi, but there could be a smoother transition to the next section, where the focus shifts to understanding the structure of transport planning and operation.

By addressing these points, the background section can provide a more comprehensive foundation for the subsequent discussion on the gendered aspects of the transport sector in Karachi.

**Introduction:** The introduction effectively establishes the importance of transport in societal development and introduces the concept of the "mobility turn." However, it could benefit from addressing the following issues:

- a. A more explicit statement about the specific focus and objectives of the paper. Clearly outlining the research questions or objectives would help guide the reader through the paper's intentions.
- b. While the introduction broadly discusses the impact of social norms on women's mobility, incorporating specific examples or case studies from Pakistan would make the narrative more tangible. Real-world instances can illustrate the complexities of gendered mobility in the context being discussed.
- c. Although the intention to assess the attitudes and perceptions of key informants is mentioned, the overall purpose of the paper could be stated more explicitly. Clearly stating the research gap or problem the paper aims to address and the specific contribution it seeks to make would enhance clarity.
- d. Ensure consistent citation style throughout the introduction. Some citations are placed within the text, while others are in parentheses. Maintaining a consistent citation format (either in-text or parenthetical) would improve the overall

presentation.

- e. The introduction touches on feminist perspectives and their impact on understanding the link between gender and mobility. However, a more explicit synthesis of these theoretical perspectives with the broader concept of the “mobility turn” would enhance the theoretical grounding of the paper.
- f. The introduction mentions the existing literature briefly, but a more thorough engagement with key studies, debates, or gaps in the literature would strengthen the justification for the current research. Clearly delineating how this study contributes to or builds upon existing knowledge is crucial.
- g. The term “deep distributional” is introduced without clear elaboration. Consider providing a concise definition or explanation to ensure that readers grasp the concept and understand its significance within the context of transport and gender.
- h. The introduction critiques assumptions made in a household study conducted by JICA (2010), but it could benefit from a more detailed discussion. Addressing these assumptions and explaining how the current study aims to overcome or provide a nuanced perspective would strengthen the rationale for the research.
- i. Some sentences are complex and might benefit from simplification for improved readability. Additionally, consider refining certain phrases for greater clarity, especially when introducing theoretical concepts or complex ideas.

By addressing these points, the introduction can become more focused, explicit, and engaging, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent sections of the paper.

**Materials and Methods:** The section looks good; however, some improvement is needed to enhance its quality.

- a. The description of the interview technique as a “controlled conversation” could benefit from a bit more clarity. Consider providing a brief explanation or definition to ensure that readers understand the nature and purpose of a controlled conversation.
- b. There is a slight inconsistency in verb tenses in the sentence “which served as prompts for the discussion.” Consider revising to maintain consistency (e.g., “which served as prompts for the discussion”).
- c. While it is mentioned that open-ended questions were used, the specific nature of these questions is not provided. Offering a sample or highlighting the types of questions asked could enhance the reader’s understanding of the depth and breadth of the interviews.
- d. The three questions listed as prompts for the discussion are clear, but providing additional information on how these questions were formulated or refined based on the research objectives would be beneficial. This can help readers understand the rationale behind the chosen questions.
- e. The description of attending relevant transport-related events and making contacts with stakeholders is useful. However, providing a bit more detail on the nature of these events and how they contributed to the identification of key informants would add context to the fieldwork.
- f. The difficulty in finding a female key informant is highlighted, but it would be valuable to discuss any efforts made to include diverse perspectives. Addressing the challenges in obtaining gender-balanced representation would add transparency to the sampling process.
- g. The criteria for identifying key informants could be explicitly stated. What qualities or roles qualified individuals to be

key informants? This information can help readers understand the basis for selecting these specific participants.

- h. While it is mentioned that the interviews were transcribed and coded using NVIVO, a brief overview of the coding process or criteria for selecting codes could enhance the transparency of the analysis.

By addressing these points, the Materials and Methods section can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the research design, data collection process, and the rationale behind the chosen methodology.

**Results:** The section provides a comprehensive overview of the identified themes; however, there are some areas for improvement:

- a. While the themes are generally clear, explicitly stating them at the beginning of the Results section would serve as a helpful guide for readers. A brief summary or introduction to each theme before delving into specific findings could enhance the overall coherence.
- b. The mention of triangulation with KI5 and KI6 is made, but it would be beneficial to elaborate on how these differences or critical beliefs influenced the overall analysis. Providing specific examples of the triangulation process would strengthen the validity of the findings.
- c. Including direct quotes from key informants at strategic points within the text could add depth and authenticity to the findings. Quoting directly from the interviews, especially when key informants express critical beliefs, would enhance the presentation of results.
- d. Consider highlighting the interconnections or relationships between the identified themes. For instance, how does the lack of integrated planning contribute to the disregard for women's struggle or the absence of gender mainstreaming? Emphasizing these interconnections can enrich the analysis.
- e. The mention of Figure 1 is made but without its actual presence in this text, it's challenging to fully grasp its significance. If relevant, consider incorporating visual elements directly within the text to illustrate examples or documents referenced by the key informants.
- f. While the challenges related to women's mobility are discussed, providing more insights into how key informants perceive the purpose and importance of women's trips could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of their perspectives.
- g. As the Results section concludes, consider providing a brief summary or transition that prepares the reader for the interpretation or discussion section. This can create a smoother flow between sections.

**Discussion:** The discussion effectively synthesizes the key themes identified in the results. It is clear that the analysis considers various aspects, including the lack of integrated planning, gender insensitivity, and challenges faced by women in the transport sector. However, the section can be improved:

- a. The mention of spatial mismatch and the need for comprehensive research on route coverage is insightful. However, expanding on these points, providing examples, or suggesting potential implications for women's mobility could enhance the depth of the discussion.
- b. The discussion rightly highlights the acute lack of awareness about issues faced by females, and the dominance of

males in decision-making positions. Adding a brief exploration of how this lack of representation might contribute to gender-exclusive provisions could provide further context.

- c. The discussion touches on the burden of care on females and its relation to urban planning. Expanding on this aspect and linking it with the broader discourse on gender equality and sustainable urban development could enrich the discussion.
- d. The inclusion of Levy's concept of 'deep distributional' issues is valuable. Further elaborating on how these issues manifest in the transport sector, particularly in the context of gender dynamics, would deepen the theoretical engagement.
- e. Consider including a brief transition statement at the end of the discussion, preparing the reader for the conclusion section. This can help in creating a smoother flow between sections.

**Recommendations and Conclusions:** Overall, the recommendations and conclusions section provides valuable insights and policy suggestions. Adding more specificity and illustrative examples would strengthen the practical applicability of these recommendations.

## References

- a. Ensure consistent formatting across all references, especially in terms of author names, publication years, and titles. Some references use initials for authors, while others use full names.
- b. For references where only partial information is provided (e.g., "a, b, c, d"), consider providing complete details for clarity. Readers should be able to trace each reference without ambiguity.
- c. Ensure consistency in formatting journal references. For instance, some journal references include volume and issue numbers, while others do not.
- d. Cross-verify in-text citations with the corresponding references to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Based on a thorough evaluation of the submitted manuscript, and subject to minor review, it is my recommendation that the manuscript has potential to significantly contribute knowledge to the field. The manuscript exhibits a rigorous and well-executed study focused on understanding the multifaceted challenges within the urban transport sector in Karachi, particularly with a keen emphasis on gender-related issues.