STEM Education Review

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Influence of Family Structure on Women's Household Decision Making in Karachi, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Women's decision-making power is an important aspect of empowerment and plays a significant role in improving their social and economic status. The ability of women to participate in decisions related to their personal lives, careers, healthcare, and household matters reflects their level of autonomy within the family. This study examines the decision-making power of women in joint and nuclear families in Karachi and explores how factors such as education, family structure, and community participation influence women's autonomy. Methods: The study adopted a quantitative research design. Primary data were collected from 76 women through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents were selected from different areas of Karachi, including District East and District Malir. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between selected variables and women's decision-making power in different areas of life, including freedom of movement, career decisions, and healthcare decisions. Results: The findings reveal that family structure, whether joint or nuclear, showed no significant relationship with women's decision-making power. The results indicate that women living in nuclear families do not necessarily enjoy greater autonomy than those living in joint families. The study further found that confidence in applying educational knowledge is an important factor influencing women's ability to make decisions regarding their careers and healthcare. Similarly, participation in community activities and women's groups was found to have a positive effect on women's freedom of movement. However, several variables showed no statistically significant relationship with women's decision-making power. Conclusion: The study concludes that women's autonomy is influenced more by personal confidence, educational empowerment, and social participation than by family type alone. These findings suggest that efforts to improve women's decision-making power should focus on enhancing educational opportunities, building confidence, and encouraging greater participation in community activities. Such measures can contribute to strengthening women's role in household decision-making and promoting gender equality in society.

Keywords: Women's Decision-Making Power; Women Empowerment; Joint Family; Nuclear Family; Education; Community Participation; Karachi

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give an introduction of the research topic, explain why this area is important to study and barriers that limit women from participating in decision-making. This chapter will also cover the research objectives, research questions, also the scope and significance of the study. Focusing on difficulties and denial of basic rights experienced by women within their own household is an essential aspect of our society. Despite their countless sacrifices and services, women are still not given the respect, status and freedom they rightfully deserve in our society because we live in a society where men are given clear preference over women and they are forced to live their lives based on the expectations of others rather than their own choices.

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Received: 11 September 2025; Revised: 12 October 2025; Accepted: 1 November 2025
https://doi.org/10.67229/stemer.26090029

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They are always criticized by everyone, no matter what. Every single action is examined, and if they don't meet the expectations of other people around them, they are degraded and made to question their own worth.

As Jinnah said, "No nation can rise to the height of its glory unless its women are side by side with them. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the house as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live "But in Pakistan it's totally opposite because patriarchal values in Pakistani societies are so deeply rooted and hard to change[1]. Many women in our society don't even know their rights in the first place due to lack of awareness and education. So, even if their rights are being violated, they may not recognize it as injustice. The freedom and opportunities received by women are often tied to their education level, employment status, and family background, but not to them as human beings deserving of equal rights.

According to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*, Pakistan ranked 148th out of 148 economies, indicating significant gender disparities in the country. Since Pakistani society is a male-dominated community, women's contribution to decision-making is lower[2]. People of other religions believe that Islam is a strict religion, but Islam does not restrict women from empowering them; instead, it encourages them. The Quran emphasizes the common origin and human dignity of men and women. According to the Holy Quran, humanity was created from a single soul and from it created its mate (Qur'an 4:1).The verse states: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your lord, who created you from a single soul and its mate, and they have spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty towards Allah in whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and towards the wombs (that bore you). Lo! Allah has been watching over you" (An Nisa 4:1).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Women in Pakistani society are deprived of equal rights and freedom regardless of their countless contributions and sacrifices. They are not given equal status to men. Lack of awareness about basic rights, deeply rooted patriarchal values and measuring women through different aspects such as their educational level, family background, employment status and financial dependency prevent women from living a life of their own choices and following their passion and interests.

In the position of mother, sister, daughter, and wife, women experience changes in their responsibilities throughout their lifespan, and they take good care of all the relations tied to them because it is considered their core obligation. Regardless of all the sacrifices and efforts made by them, they are still being treated unfairly[3]. In many low and middle income countries, women usually have less say in important household decisions than men. This affects how money and responsibilities are shared in the home [4]. Income also matters. Women who earn or are educated often have more influence at home. Family type makes a difference too. In joint families, women usually have less freedom because elders make most decisions. In nuclear families, women often have more say because decisions are mostly between husband and wife[4]. Women are not allowed to speak for themselves. They are unable to take a stand for themselves or their children; even when they are being treated unfairly, they tend to live their lives as per men's choice because in Pakistani societies, women are considered male belonging. They do not have a say in decision-making and if they ever tried to raise their voice regarding their rights, their status as "good women" will change[3]. Being an Islamic Republic Country, all the laws of Pakistan are built on and derived from Islam, but in terms of women, their choices are often guided by culture, which selects what's right and wrong for them. Patriarchal norms do not permit women to fully enjoy their rights given to them by Islam[5].

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1) To explore the role of family (nuclear or joint) in women's contribution to the household to make decisions.

2) To elaborate on how the educational level of women impacts the decision-making power of women in the household.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) Does family type have a significant relationship with women's involvement to make decisions?

2) What is the effect of educational level on women's decision making power in the household?

SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research only focuses on studying the decision-making power of women in the household and does not cover the decision-making power of women in the community, work, or politics. This research is restricted to Karachi, Pakistan. The study uses a cross-sectional research design and information is collected from participants during a specific period. In a household, there are several factors that affects who makes the decisions

such as the family background of a married woman, which has a direct influence on their decision-making power. However, education plays a key role in developing a better understanding between husband and wife because education not only raises the status of women in society but also allows them to keep doing what they enjoy[6]. Our society should support opportunities for women to earn income and education because the academic education of women will facilitate both husband and wife to communicate effectively and help them understand each other in a better way[7].

The significance of studying the decision-making power of women in a household is very important because the authority to make decisions is in the hands of men , and women's opinions are often given little attention. By studying this topic, we will be able to see to what extent women have a say in household decisions and identify the barriers stopping women from participating in decision-making. These barriers can be cultural, traditional, lack of financial independence or lack of awareness. By understanding these issues, we will be able to find ways to overcome them. In the steadiness and sustainability of a country, not only men play an active role but also women. Equal opportunities for men and women will surely create beneficial outcomes in the progress of the country[8]. Women empowerment is the process of building women's skills and making it possible for them to attain a meaningful life. Women empowerment is believed to be important for gender equality to provide everyone equal rights, duties and responsibilities [6]. The main problem has been highlighted in this chapter. The research objectives, research questions, scope and significance of the study have also been explained.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will describe the independent and dependent variables in detail. It will also develop the theoretical framework and hypothesis.

SUPPORTING THEORY

This study is grounded in Resource Theory, introduced by Blood and Wolfe, which explains household decision-making power in terms of the distribution of resources among family members[9]. According to this theory, individuals who possess greater resources such as education, income, employment, and social status tend to have more influence over household decisions. These resources increase a person's bargaining power within the family, allowing them to participate more actively in important matters related to finances, children's education, healthcare, and daily household decisions.

In the context of women's decision-making power, Resource Theory suggests that women who are educated, economically active, or professionally experienced are more likely to have a stronger voice in household decisions. Their access to resources is expected to improve their autonomy and strengthen their role in both nuclear and joint family settings. However, the extent of this influence may vary depending on the family structure and social environment. In nuclear families, decision-making is often more direct between spouses, which may allow women's resources to translate more easily into influence. In joint family systems, however, decision-making is often shared with or controlled by elder family members, which may limit the impact of women's individual resources.

By applying Resource Theory, this study examines how women's access to education and other resources influences their decision-making power in joint and nuclear families in Karachi. It also helps to find out whether these resources are sufficient on their own to ensure autonomy, or whether other social and family factors also play a role in shaping women's influence within the household.

KEY VARIABLES

This study focuses on the relationship between type of family, educational level of women, area of residence and decision-making power of women at household. The dependent variable here is decision-making power of women which means the ability of women to take part in important family matters like finances, children's education and household management.

Type of Family

The first independent variable is type of family. In both family types whether joint or nuclear families, the primary factor is independence. Women in joint families typically have less say in decision-making because they are inclined to follow the instructions and obey the rules and regulations set out by the head of the household, who could be their husband or in-laws. On the other hand, women in nuclear families will be freer and independent due to the absence of an elder or senior person who would have more influence on matters at home; therefore, the women living in such families will have more decision-making power. Women are unable to take a stand for themselves or their children; even when they are being treated unfairly, they tend to live their lives according to men's choice because in Pakistani society, women are considered male property. They may not have a say in decision-making, and if they ever tried to raise their voice regarding their rights, their status as "good women" will change[3].

Educational Level of Women

The second independent variable is education. The educational level of women plays a significant role in their ability to make decisions because education improves women's understanding of their fundamental rights, and they can differentiate between what's right and wrong. Since education has a direct impact on women's contribution to decision-making, they can use education as a tool in order to achieve gender equality. Education also develops a better understanding between husband and wife.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Decision-making power of married women is the dependent variable, while type of family (joint or nuclear) and education level of women are the independent variables. The framework proposes that both family type and women's education influence the extent to which married women participate in household decision-making.

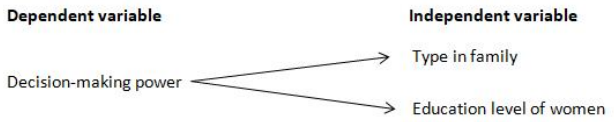


Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the relationship between family type, women's education level, and decision-making power

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H_1. There is a significant relationship between the type of family (joint or nuclear) and decision-making power of women in the household.

H_2. There is a significant relationship between the educational level of women and their decision-making power at household.

This chapter has explained the dependent and independent variables of this research. It has also proposed a theoretical framework and hypotheses for this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the study's research design, area of study, population, sample size, sampling technique, instrument for data collection, administration of the instrument, and data analysis method.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher chose a survey research design because it provided the most appropriate way of meeting the objectives of the study. Survey research is defined as the process where data are collected from a selected number of respondents and analyzed with regard to their opinions, perceptions, and experiences in relation to the research problem. In this case, a survey method was adopted through the use of a questionnaire which collected quantitative data from married women about their decision-making power in their families.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this study, the opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of married women living in Malir and East district of Karachi were sought on their decision power within the household. The study only focuses on the freedom and autonomy power of married women in nuclear and joint families, and the divorced, widowed, and unmarried women were excluded, as the research aims to compare the decision power within intact family systems.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

All married women residing in Karachi, Pakistan, are the study's target population. However, married women who live in District Malir and District East of Karachi and are part of either nuclear or joint family systems are included in the accessible population because of limited resources and time . The population for this study consists of 95 (N) married women who are currently living in households with their husbands and are at least eighteen years old. Two family types are particularly the subject of the study: joint families, which include the husband, wife, children, and other family members, including parents-in-law or other relatives living in the same home, and nuclear families, which are made up of the husband, wife, and their children.

SAMPLE OF THE POPULATION

A sample in this study is a smaller participants group selected from an accessible population using a specific process. The sample size of this study is 76.

The sample included a total of 20 respondents from District East and 56 respondents from District Malir, giving a total of 76 respondents. (Figure 2)

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In this study, a non-probability sampling technique was applied. In particular, snowball sampling and convenience sampling techniques were used. First, the study used convenience sampling to distribute the Google Form link to married women who lived in Karachi's Districts Malir and East. After that, these participants were asked to use

Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

Figure 2. Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination Table

snowball sampling to send the survey link to other married women in their social circles who were also eligible. Due to time and resource limitations, this approach was chosen in order to facilitate access to married women from both nuclear and joint family systems.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The main tool used to collect data for this study was a questionnaire prepared by the researcher. It included simple close-ended questions (where respondents selected from given options) to understand how much decision-making power women have in their households.

The questions focused on different areas such as managing money, buying household items, decisions about children's education, healthcare matters, and social or family issues.

The questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and shared online, and the responses were automatically saved for analysis.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The survey was conducted online using Google Forms after the questionnaire was created. Married women living in Karachi's Districts Malir and East were given access to the questionnaire link. 76 respondents in total were successfully received and electronically recorded. Reaching respondents was made simpler by the online data collection method, which also established quick information retrieval. Respondents filled out the questionnaire based on their personal knowledge and experiences with household decision-making; participation was entirely voluntary.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The information gathered via Google Forms was downloaded and tested through SPSS. To address the research questions and evaluate the hypotheses, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Each response was given a numerical value because the questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree):

5 points = Strongly Agree (SA)

4 points = agreeing (A)

3 points are neutral (N)

2 points = Disagree (D)

1 point = strongly disagree (SD)

An independent sample t-test was used to examine the variation in decision-making authority between women in nuclear and joint families. A significance level of 0.05 (5%) was used to test the hypotheses. The null hypothesis was rejected if the estimated p-value was less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference between the two-family systems. The null hypothesis was accepted if the p-value was higher than 0.05.

The research methodology used for the study was described in this chapter. The population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, data collection method, and data analysis method were all described. Google Forms was used to distribute a structured questionnaire as part of the study's quantitative survey design. The decision-making authority of women in the two family systems was compared using statistical analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the data collected for the study on women's decision-making power in nuclear and joint families in Karachi. The main purpose here is to see how family type, education shape women's role in household decisions, along with their level of freedom and access to opportunities. The study is based on responses from 76 women belonging to both urban and rural areas of Karachi. All responses were recorded through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, where participants indicated their level of agreement with different statements. The data was later processed and analyzed using SPSS.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDANTS

This section presents the demographic information of the respondents who participated in the study. The demographic data include gender, age group, occupation, educational qualification, and monthly income level of the respondents. The purpose of this section is to provide background information on the participants involved in the research.

GENDER

Gender refers to the classification of respondents as male or female. This variable is included in research to examine differences in opinions, behaviors, or experiences between genders. Gender distribution is commonly represented through percentages and pie charts in demographic analysis. (Figure 3)

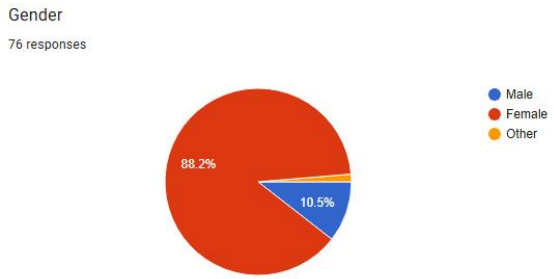


Figure 3. Gender

AGE

Age represents the number of years lived by respondents and is usually divided into categories such as 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, etc. Age is an important demographic factor because it influences attitudes, experiences, and decision-making patterns of respondents. (Figure 4)

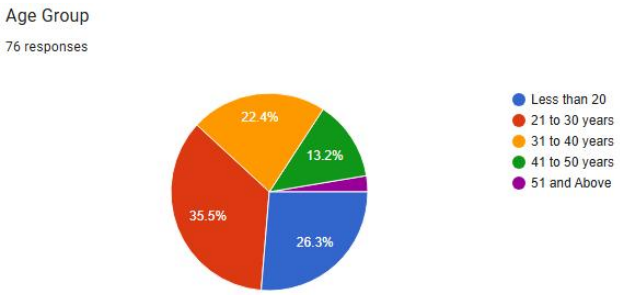


Figure 4. Age group

HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL

Monthly income refers to the amount of money earned by respondents within a month. It is generally categorized into different income groups for analysis purposes. Income level is considered an important socioeconomic variable that may affect respondents' lifestyle, purchasing power, and perceptions. (Figure 5)

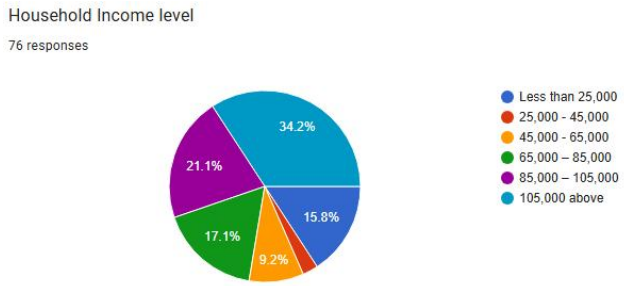


Figure 5. Household income level

QUALIFICATION

Academic qualification or level of schooling attained by respondents, such as intermediate, bachelor's, master's, or postgraduate education. Educational background helps determine respondents' knowledge, awareness, and understanding related to the research topic. (Figure 6)

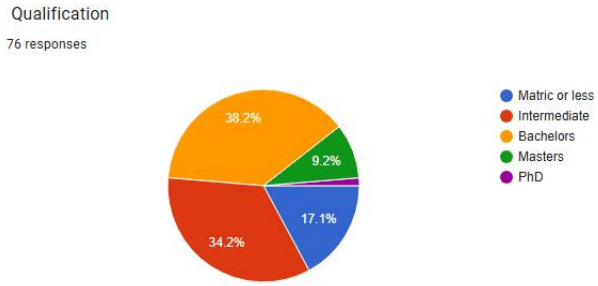


Figure 6. Qualification

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience refers to the number of years respondents have spent in employment or professional activities. It is commonly grouped into categories such as less than 5 years, 5-10 years, and above 10 years. Work experience helps researchers evaluate respondents' practical knowledge and professional exposure related to the study area. (Figure 7)

FAMILY TYPE

Family type refers to the classification of a household based on its structure, mainly divided into joint and nuclear families. It helps to identify whether respondents

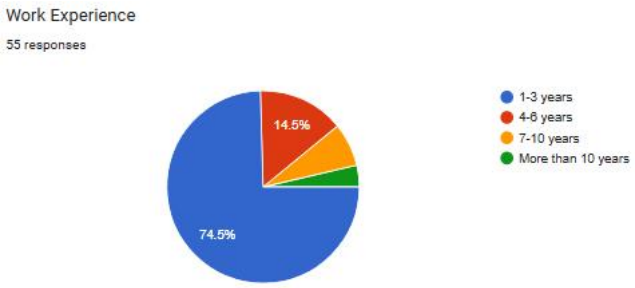


Figure 7. work experience

live in an extended family system with multiple generations or in a smaller immediate family setup consisting of parents and children only. This variable is included to examine how household structure may influence women's roles and decision-making power. (Figure 8)

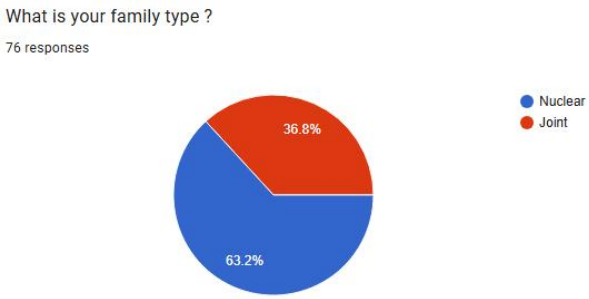


Figure 8. What is your family type

NO. OF GENERATIONS IN HOUSEHOLD

Number of generations in the household refers to how many family generations are living together under one roof, such as single-generation (parents and children), two-generation (parents and grandparents), or three-generation households. This variable is important because the presence of multiple generations can influence family dynamics, authority distribution, and women's autonomy in decision-making. (Figure 9)

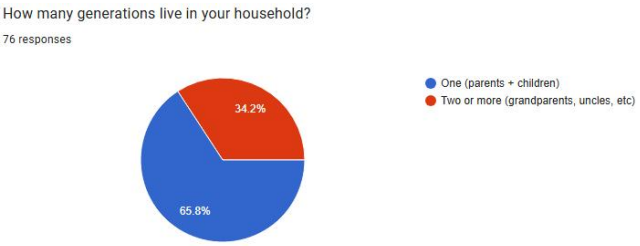


Figure 9. How many generations live in your household

AREA OF RESIDENCE

Area of residence refers to the geographical location where respondents live, commonly categorized as urban or rural areas within Karachi. This variable is included to understand the background context of respondents, as living environment can influence social norms, access to opportunities, and lifestyle patterns that may affect women's decision-making power. (Figure 10)

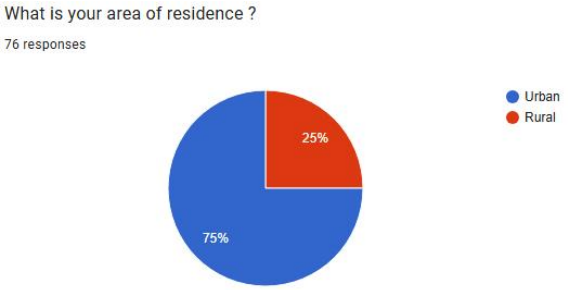


Figure 10. What is your area of residence

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (DATA ANALYSIS AND THEMATIC REPORTING):

Model summary (Table 1**)**

Table 1: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.656	0.430	0.380	0.979

INTERPRETATION

A moderately positive association between the independent variables and the dependent variable was revealed by the multiple regression analysis results (R =0.656). 43.0% of the variation in women's unrestricted flexibility to visit friends and family was explained by the model (R^2 =0.430). After adjusting for the number of predictors, the Adjusted R2 value of .380 shows that the model accounts for around 38.0% of the variation in the dependent variable. This implies that women's freedom of movement can be explained rather well by the chosen predictors. The average difference between the expected and actual numbers is shown by the Standard Error of the Estimate (0.979).

Coefficients (Table 2**)**

INTERPRETATION

The coefficients table displays each predictor's unique contribution to the dependent variable, "I can visit my relatives and friends whenever I want without any con-

Table 2: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.752	0.888		0.847	0.400
	In my household, important family decisions are made collectively by multiple adult members.	0.001	0.116	0.001	0.009	0.993
	I actively participate in local community events, meetings, or women's groups outside my home.	0.463	0.102	0.472	4.545	0.000
	I feel confident applying the knowledge I gained from my education in household decisions.	0.236	0.132	0.205	1.786	0.078
	My education allows me to understand and make informed decisions about my family's needs.	0.195	0.151	0.134	1.290	0.201
	Living in a joint family affects my personal decision-making	-0.071	0.120	-0.064	-0.590	0.557
	Living in a nuclear family affects my personal decision-making	-0.029	0.103	-0.027	-0.286	0.776

Note: a. Dependent Variable: I can visit my relatives and friends whenever I want without any restriction.

straint". The sole statistically significant predictor was active involvement in local meetings, events, or women's groups (B =0.463, β =0.472, t = 4.545, p <0.001). This suggests that women's flexibility to visit friends and family is greatly enhanced by increased involvement in community activities. Although the association was not statistically significant (p =0.078), confidence in using educational knowledge in family decisions had a favorable influence (B =0.236, β =0.205). Although there was a positive correlation between education and informed family decision-making (B =0.195, β =0.134), the effect was not statistically significant (p =0.201).

The dependent variable was not significantly affected by the collective decision-making of several adult family members (B =0.001, β =0.001, p =0.993). The effect of living in a two-family home was negative but not statistically significant (B = -0.071, β = -0.064, p =0.557). A negative and non-significant connection was also shown by living in a single-family home (B = -0.029, β = -0.027, p =0.776).

Overall, the coefficient results show that the only significant predictor of women's freedom of movement is active participation in women's organizations and community events; family structure and education-related variables did not have a statistically significant effect in this model.

Model summary (Table 3**)**

Table 3: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.529	0.280	0.217	1.238

INTERPRETATION

The impact of family structure, educational empowerment, collective family decision-making, and community involvement on women's career flexibility was investigated using a multiple regression analysis. A moderate association between the independent and dependent variables was shown by the model's correlation coefficient of R =0.529. The model's predictors account for 28.0% of the variance in women's job choice freedom, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2 =0.280). After controlling for the number of covariates, the model explains around 21.7% of the variation in job choice flexibility, according to the Adjusted R^2 value of.217. The average forecast error was represented by the Standard Error of the Estimate, which was 1.238. All things considered, the model shows a moderate degree of explanatory power in forecasting women's career independence.

Coefficients (Table 4**)**

INTERPRETATION

The only statistically significant predictor of women's freedom of choice in their careers, according to the coefficients analysis, was confidence in using educated knowledge in household decisions (B =0.746, β =0.578, t = 4.473, p <0.001). This suggests that women are more likely to have more autonomy when it comes to making decisions about their careers if they feel comfortable using their educational background. There was a negative but statistically insignificant correlation between career choice flexibility and the variable "In my household, essential family decisions are made collaboratively by various adult members" (B = -0.134, β = -0.111, t = -0.912, p =0.365). In a similar vein, profession choice freedom was negatively and non-significantly impacted

Table 4: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.240	1.123		1.994	0.050
	In my household, important family decisions are made collectively by multiple adult members.	-0.134	0.147	-0.111	-0.912	0.365
	I actively participate in local community events, meetings, or women's groups outside my home. "	-0.076	0.129	-0.069	-0.588	0.558
	I feel confident applying the knowledge I gained from my education in household decisions.	0.746	0.167	0.578	4.473	0.000
	My education allows me to understand and make informed decisions about my family's needs.	-0.240	0.191	-0.146	-1.254	0.214
	Living in a joint family affects my personal decision-making.	$4.989E^{-5}$	0.151	0.000	0.000	1.000
	Living in a nuclear family affects my personal decision-making.	-0.037	0.130	0.030	0.283	0.778

Note: a. Dependent Variable: I have freedom of choice in my career."

by active engagement in local community activities, meetings, or women's clubs (B = -0.076, β = -0.069, t = -0.588, p =0.558). The dependent variable showed a negative but statistically insignificant connection with the variable "My education allows me to comprehend and make educated decisions regarding my family's requirements" (B = -0.240, β = -0.146, t = -1.254, p =0.214). Furthermore, living in a two-family household showed no meaningful effect on women's career choice freedom (B = 0.000, β = 0.000, t = 0.000, p = 1.000), indicating a completely non-significant relationship. Likewise, living in a one-family household had a positive but non-significant effect (B = 0.037, β = 0.030, t = 0.283, p = 0.778).

Overall, the findings suggest that women's confidence in applying the knowledge gained through education is the strongest and only significant predictor of freedom of choice in career decisions, whereas community participation, family structure, collective family decision-making, and education-related understanding of family needs do not significantly influence career choice freedom in this model.

Model summary (Table 5**)**

Table 5: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.389	0.151	0.077	1.346

INTERPRETATION

The impact of family structure, educational empowerment, collective family decision-making, and community involvement on women's capacity to make decisions about their own healthcare was investigated using a multiple regression analysis. A weak to moderately positive association between the independent factors and the dependent variable was shown by the model's correlation coefficient of R =0.389. The model's predictors account for 15.1% of the variance in women's healthcare decision-making, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2 =0.151). After controlling for the number of predictors, the model explains roughly 7.7% of the variation in healthcare decision-making, according to the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.077. The regression model's average prediction error was represented by the Standard Error of the Estimate, which was 1.346. Overall, the model's ability to predict women's autonomy in healthcare decision-making is comparatively poor.

Coefficients (Table 6**)**

INTERPRETATION

The only statistically significant predictor of women's capacity to make decisions about their own healthcare, according to the coefficients analysis, was confidence in applying educational knowledge in household decisions (B =0.412, β =0.380, t = 2.966, p =0.004). This suggests that women are more likely to exercise autonomy in healthcare-related decisions if they feel more confident in applying what they have learned through education. Healthcare decision-making was positively correlated with the measure "I actively participate in local community activities, meetings, or women's groups outside my house" (B =0.171, β =0.184, t = 1.593, p =0.116); however, this correlation was not statistically significant. Similarly, there was a positive but non-significant correlation between the dependent variable and "My education allows me to comprehend and make educated decisions regarding my family's requirements" (B =0.052, β =0.038, t =0.328, p =0.744). Healthcare decision-making was positively and statistically non-sig-

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.716	0.935		1.836	0.071
	In my household, important family decisions are made collectively by multiple adult members.	0.032	0.123	0.032	0.263	0.793
	I actively participate in local community events, meetings, or women's groups outside my home. "	0.171	0.107	0.184	1.593	0.116
	I feel confident applying the knowledge I gained from my education in household decisions.	0.412	0.139	0.380	2.966	0.004
	My education allows me to understand and make informed decisions about my family's needs.	0.052	0.159	0.038	0.328	0.744
	Living in a joint family affects my personal decision-making	-0.142	0.126	-0.137	-1.130	0.263
	Living in a nuclear family affects my personal decision-making	0.027	0.109	0.026	0.247	0.806

Note: a. Dependent Variable: I can make decisions regarding my own healthcare."

nificantly impacted by the variable "In my household, key family decisions are made collectively by various adult members" (B =0.032, β =0.032, t =0.263, p =0.793). Living in a two-family home was associated with healthcare decision-making in a negative but non-significant way (B = -0.142, β = -0.137, t = -1.130, p =0.263). Living in a single-family home also showed a favorable but statistically insignificant effect (B =0.027, β =0.026, t =0.247, p =0.806). Overall, the results show that the only significant predictor of women's capacity to make independent healthcare decisions is their confidence in using their educational knowledge. In the current model, healthcare decision-making did not significantly show a relationship with community involvement, family structure, collective family decision-making, or educational understanding of family needs.

Further regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the various dimensions of women's decision-making power (DV) and the independent variables, namely family type (IV1) and educational level (IV2).

HYPOTHESIS

The research hypotheses were tested to determine the relationship between variables. The hypotheses include the following:

H_1 There is a significant relationship between the type of family (joint or nuclear) and women's decision-making power in the household.

Decision: Rejected

Reason: The regression results show that family type (joint or nuclear) did not have a statistically significant impact on women's decision-making power in any of the three models (freedom of movement, career decision-making, and healthcare decision-making). The p-values for both family types were greater than 0.05, indicating no meaningful relationship between family structure and women's autonomy in household decisions.

This suggests that simply living in a joint or nuclear family does not significantly change women's decision-making power in the studied sample.

H_2 There is a significant relationship between the educational level of women and their decision-making power in the household.

Decision: Partially Accepted

Reason: The results show mixed findings regarding education and women's decision-making power. The variable related to understanding or awareness of education did not show a statistically significant effect on decision-making in any of the models ($p > 0.05$). However, the variable measuring confidence in applying educational knowledge in household decisions was found to be statistically significant in some models, particularly in career and healthcare decision-making ($p < 0.05$).

This indicates that education alone does not automatically lead to greater decision-making power. Instead, it is the confidence in using educational knowledge in real-life household situations that plays a more important role.

Therefore, the relationship between education and women's decision-making power is not fully consistent, and H_2 is partially supported by the findings.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine women's

decision-making power in joint and nuclear families in Karachi. The results from the three regression models show that women's decision-making is influenced more by individual factors than by family structure. Overall, the findings suggest that family type (joint or nuclear) does not have a strong or consistent effect on women's decision-making power in any of the three areas studied. This means that simply living in a joint or nuclear family does not automatically increase or decrease women's autonomy.

A more important factor found in the study is women's confidence in using their education in household decisions. This variable was significant in two areas: career decision-making and healthcare decision-making. This shows that education alone is not enough, but when women feel confident in applying what they have learned, they are more likely to produce independent decisions in important areas of life.

Another key finding is the role of community participation. Women who actively take part in local community events or women's groups tend to have more freedom of movement. This suggests that social engagement outside the home helps increase women's independence, at least in terms of mobility and visiting friends or relatives. However, community participation did not show a significant effect on career decisions or healthcare decisions. This means its influence is limited to certain aspects of life and does not affect all types of decision-making equally.

The study also shows that collective decision-making within the household does not have a strong impact on women's individual autonomy. Even when decisions are made together in the family, it does not necessarily mean that women have more personal freedom in different areas of life. Another important point is that education-related awareness alone (without confidence) was not a strong predictor of decision-making power. This suggests that knowing things is not enough; women must also feel empowered to use that knowledge in real situations. Overall, the findings show that women's decision-making power is more closely linked to personal confidence and social participation rather than family structure. The results also suggest that many other factors not included in this study may also influence women's autonomy, such as cultural norms, financial independence, and household dynamics.

Overall, the results showed that individual factors, particularly confidence in using educational knowledge and community participation, had a greater influence than family structure.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study examined women's decision-making power in joint and nuclear families in Karachi. The analysis was based on three areas: freedom of movement, career decision-making, and healthcare decision-making. Data were analyzed using multiple regression models. The results showed that family structure (joint or nuclear) did not have a strong effect on women's decision-making power. Instead, personal factors were more important. In particular, confidence in using education in household decisions was found to be a strong predictor in career and healthcare decisions. Community participation also played a role in women's freedom of movement, but it was not significant in other areas. Overall, the findings suggest that women's autonomy is more closely linked to personal confidence and social involvement than to family type.

Conclusions

The study concludes that women's decision-making power is not mainly determined by whether they live in a joint or nuclear family. This means that simply belonging to a specific family structure does not guarantee more or less autonomy for women. The results also show that education by itself is not enough to increase decision-making power unless women feel confident in applying it. Women who actively participate in community activities tend to have more freedom in movement, but this does not always extend to career or healthcare decisions. In simple terms, women's empowerment in household decisions depends more on individual confidence and social exposure than on family setup.

Implications/Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that policies focused only on family structure may not be effective in improving women's decision-making power. Instead, efforts should focus on strengthening women's confidence and practical use of education. The results also highlight the importance of community engagement. Women who are socially active outside the home appear to have more independence in certain areas. This shows that social networks and community involvement can play a supportive role in empowerment. On a broader level, the study suggests that women's empowerment should be understood as a combination of education, confidence, and social participation rather than being influenced entirely by household structure.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, the sample size was limited to 76 respondents from selected areas of Karachi, so the findings cannot be generalized to all

women in Pakistan. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be influenced by personal bias or social pressure. Third, only a limited number of variables were included in the analysis, so other important factors like income control, cultural norms, and husband's attitude were not examined. Finally, the study used cross-sectional data, so it only shows relationships at one point in time and does not explain long-term changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample to improve generalizability. Studies should also consider adding more factors such as financial independence, cultural influences, and household power dynamics. It is also recommended that future studies use mixed methods, combining surveys with interviews, to understand women's experiences in depth better. From a policy perspective, programs that focus on increasing women's confidence in using education should be encouraged. Community-based initiatives that support women's participation in social activities can also help improve their autonomy in daily life.

DECLARATIONS

Acknowledgments
Not applicable.

Funding
Not applicable, no external funding was received for this study.

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Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate
Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent. All participant data was anonymized to protect privacy.

Data Availability Statement
Anonymized survey data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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