

## Higher Education Teachers as Cultural Transmitters

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the role of teachers of higher education as transmitters of culture based on the opinions of Heads, teachers and MPhil/PhD scholars of government universities of the Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. Using a quantitative approach with stratified sampling, data were collected from respondents through a questionnaire. Descriptive (Mean, Percentage, and SD) and inferential statistics (t-tests, ANOVA) were applied to assess gender and stakeholder differences. Results indicate that gender does not significantly influence views on cultural transmission, as male and female responses were statistically similar across all groups. The findings of the study suggest that academic position rather than gender shapes perceptions of cultural transmission. Teachers, being directly engaged in pedagogy, endorse it more strongly, whereas scholars adopt a more critical stance. The study highlights the need for dialogue between faculty and researchers to reconcile differing perspectives on cultural transmission in higher education. Recommendations include structured discussions to address scholars' reservations and foster a balanced approach to cultural education.

### Key Words

Cultural Transmission, Higher Education, Teachers' Role, Academic Stakeholders, Gender Differences, Pakistan

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## Introduction

Education has a significant role in the growth and advancement of people. It greatly influences their social status in society and is also a key to economic wellbeing and social growth. In a sociological perspective, promotion of education is not an isolated initiative instigated by personal needs; rather, it is motivated and developed by social needs. The educational system of any particular society is important to the society at large. Its main role in traditional societies is passing on cultural heritage to new generations. Nevertheless, in the modern context, education faces an extensive number of new issues and requirements that require adaptation in order to deal with them adequately (Becirović & Akbarov, 2015).

Teachers are not mere vessels of what they overspill; they are cultural alchemists. They are the meeting point of the past, the present and the future and they also share the spirit of a culture but dissimilarly influence its path. A sculptor, molding the young minds like clay, through the stories, traditions and values and keeping the past intact, yet never losing the color (Evans, 2015). Culture is not a series of apartments in a museum, but it is a river which flows within its banks. Imagine just an artist, but not an artist having a batch of canvas or so, but an artist who has a thousand drawing pens in his/her hand and every one of them applying a pen or so of colours to the ever-dancing surface. The cultural identity is this ever-changing movement of change (Taylor, 2023).

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Teachers are the cultural bridges, maintaining the good customs, as well as inspiring rational changes towards the workings of society. They orient the learners to explore the views, traditions and knowledge of their forefathers, and they make them feel proud of their culture. With questioning and analytical strategies, teachers can enable students to apply these traditions in a sensible way, so that they continue to be valuable in the contemporary world (Dewey, [2024](#)).

Teachers are culture brokers as they introduce a possibility of interaction with culture, of its realization and interpretation. They enhance learners to consider traditional knowledge and artistic expressions, as well as evaluate the response of these factors to the contemporary society. Instructors encourage students to actively construct emerging cultural narratives and not lose touch with their roots through the development of cultural awareness and critical thinking (Biesta, [2019](#)).

The teachers play the most important role in maintaining and transmitting cultural assets to the next generations. They streamline transfer of existing social values, traditions, and frames of reference to the learners as cultural brokers. Teaching practices and core lesson material enforces the norms of society, shaping the worldviews of students and placing them in social hierarchies. The mechanism of cultural reproduction tends to support the way the existing power structures have been established by legitimizing the mainstream cultures at the expense of subordinate or alternative perspectives (Feibleman, [2012](#)).

### Research Objectives

The given objectives were achieved through this study

1. To know about the perceptions of stakeholders in respect to teachers as cultural transmitters.
2. To compare the perceptions of stakeholders in respect to teachers as cultural transmitters.

### Significance of the Study

This study holds importance to:

- ▶ Promote self-awareness and gender-sensitive teaching and Encourages inclusive curriculum integration regarding teachers.
- ▶ Aids in policy-making for cultural and gender equity, and Supports teacher training and institutional diversity efforts by Heads of Departments (HoDs).
- ▶ Fill research gaps in gender and cultural pedagogy, and also Benefits education, sociology, and gender studies on respect for the students.

### Literature Review

Cultural preservation and transformation are subjects in reciprocated motion where the educator is the catalysis agent. They facilitate the transfer of community wisdom at the same time as promoting student aptitudes to question the dominating paradigms of culture. Through the interactive pedagogies and critical consciousness raising, instructors guide learners on how to actively reinvent cultural articulations, balancing them with concepts of equal opportunity and justice (Freire, [2020](#)).

As a teacher, we can significantly contribute towards preserving the cultural heritage by adopting inclusive pedagogies that appreciate diverse cultures of students. They sensitively embrace conventional wisdom and way of doing things into learning environments, which also cultivates a feeling of appreciation to cultural origins among the students. Teachers assist students in critical thinking about cultural forms and meanings, allowing them to reflect on their own heritage and recognize its role in the modern society ([Dreamson, 2016](#)).

Teachers are significant channels of cultural survival and development as they incorporate aspects of cultural knowledge and practices in their teaching strategies. They instruct those being taught on the study of the festive array of cultural norms and belief systems and bring about a sense of heritage appreciation alongside cultural

identity cognizance. With the help of the dialogue, teachers can enable students to reflect critically and redesign traditional practices, particularly to provide cultural vitality and currency in our globalized world (Zeichner, [2009](#)).

Teachers are the most important mediators between the past cultural ways and the contemporary structure of life in society. They are among those to bridge the gap by providing cultural knowledge and value systems transfer through their teaching methods, taking into account various perspectives and personal experiences. Teachers empower students to question, by differently evaluating cultural manifestations and traditions through helping to think critically, they also foster a sense of multicultural respect as well as the building of the social ties as common denominator and universal connection (Giroux, [2014](#)).

The very work of a teacher is a crucial cultural task, with an educator serving as the vanguard of intercultural learning, which recognizes and synthesizes worldviews. They do so by establishing friendly classrooms where students can study and learn to appreciate cultural diversities. The cultural knowledge and values inculcated in the educators are done through the inclusion of various cultural products of literature, history, and art in the curriculum that facilitates the cross-cultural sensitivity since a bridge of collaboration has been built (Banks, [2015](#)).

Another important role of teachers is because they serve as the facilitators of culture through building an immersion in varied cultures and tradition practices. They induce the establishment of teaching practice which will result in students relating to their ancestry and other groups in a meaningful way. By providing careful selection of the lessons where the students are exposed to how different cultural groups may influence civilization, teachers enhance awareness of their cultural proficiency and build cross-cultural awareness and caring (Knoester, [2015](#)).

Miller and Morrison ([2025](#)) highlighted gender differences in pedagogical approaches to cultural learning. Female educators often use cooperative methods, while male educators lean on structured, directive instruction. This raises questions about the role of gender socialization in shaping teaching styles. Institutions should promote gender-sensitive training to ensure balanced cultural value transmission. Bustamante-Mora et al. ([2024](#)) found gender-based differences in heritage education in rural areas. Female educators emphasize intergenerational learning with elders, while male educators focus on institutional preservation. These complementary approaches show the need for collaborative efforts to enhance cultural heritage education in tertiary settings.

Smith's ([2021](#)) research links place-based pedagogy to greater cultural self-esteem and civic awareness. Female teachers favor experiential, community-based learning, while males prefer structured, content-focused methods. These findings suggest gender plays a role in how cultural heritage is taught and should be considered in curriculum planning. When college faculty integrate moral and cultural values into lessons, they influence students' social norms and identities. Banks ([2021](#)) found that female teachers emphasize compassion and cooperation, while males highlight individual success. Gender thus moderates how values are communicated in education.

Research confirms that pedagogy affects student engagement and learning. Gay ([2018](#)) supports culturally relevant teaching that connects with students' experiences. Women often use narratives and group tasks; men favor structured, analytical discussions. A gender-inclusive model can enhance multidimensional learning. University professors shape intercultural understanding by modeling inclusive perspectives. Deardorff ([2020](#)) notes that female faculty often promote emotional learning and empathy, while males use cognitive, analytical strategies. These contrasting styles reflect broader sociocultural influences on teaching.

Odom et al. ([2021](#)) found female-led courses tend to focus on decolonial and feminist themes, with a personal storytelling approach. Males emphasize structural and economic aspects of culture. Ladson-Billings ([2021](#)) suggests gender-sensitive curriculum planning enhances cultural awareness and academic outcomes. Cultural exploration supports motivation and well-being (McKenzie et al., [2021](#)). Female educators use reflective tools, while males assign research and mentoring tasks. Foulis and Gillen ([2024](#)) found women favor cultural identity mapping, men favor genealogy. Schools should blend both to enrich cultural learning.

Educators serve as cultural models influencing students' social norms. Cosme (2021) found female teachers model cooperation; males emphasize leadership. Li et al. (2024) note students seek females for identity issues and males for career advice. Mentorship programs should balance these roles.

Cruz et al. (2024) observed that female teachers prefer community-based storytelling, while males use institutional case studies. Universities should integrate both participatory and analytical methods. According to Dei (2025), this supports epistemic diversity and inclusive learning.

Students connect history and culture to understand societal development. Trueba (2022) emphasized the role of historical awareness. Female teachers focus on social history; males on political history. Dunn and Badaszewski (2023) found differing sources used, reinforcing the gendered nature of historical education.

Critical thinking is key to historical-cultural analysis. Hewlett et al. (2024) stress challenging power structures in education. Female teachers more often highlight marginalized voices than males. These gendered approaches shape how students view cultural evolution and representation over time.

University curriculum teaching regional traditions and ancestral knowledge targets cultural identity strengthening and improvement of societal interaction. As Stimac (2022) points out, instructors who inculcate native epistemologies in their academic programming are essential to shielding the living cultural heritage. This activity underscores the proficient gender mediated instruction in which women educators pay more emphasis on horizontal-intergenerational telling and group activity compared to men recollating on the chronological important occasions and their ruler accounts.

Experimental reports have demonstrated that female teachers were more likely to address the macroaggression and implicit bias in multicultural classrooms in comparison to males, whereas males were inclined to micro cultural systems and policies (Fonagy, & Allison, 2023). In other words, gender has a say in illuminating intercultural education, both in content and delivery. To have the best of the cultural knowledge culturally sensitive training services should be integrated into the educational institutes so as to make the teachers inculcate the method of handling cross-cultural problems both at the interpersonal and the structural level.

The introduction of cultural awareness into higher education curricula equips students with the knowledge needed to face a world that is gradually becoming globalized, by developing an ability to think critically about the norms of society. According to Sleeter (2018), culturally inclusive curricula fight off stereotyping and enhance equity. Gender also determines how the curriculum is shaped; women teachers can inculcate intersectional analysis whereas a male teacher can introduce structural cultural studies, which represent varying pedagogical interests.

Besides, the cultural authenticity of teachers influences students. Farag et al. (2023) assert that a teacher should lead by example and do what he or she teaches. Women teachers could show cultural care, and men teachers could place a focus on cultural resilience. Such sexist ways of role-modeling influence the cultural socialization of students. Integrating the customary practices into academia will advance the learning process and authenticate the indigenous knowledge. Figlio et al. (2022) suggested decolonization of education as a matter of cultural inclusion. Gender also comes out where female teachers can emphasize communal rituals whereas male teachers can emphasize traditional governance systems; that is, they follow gender differences in the cultural roles in the society.

## Research Methodology

The study employed a Quantitative Research Design with a stratified sampling technique to ensure representation across different stakeholder groups (Heads of Departments, teachers, and MPhil/PhD Scholars) from five public universities in Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The population comprised 864 respondents, including 654 students (320 male, 334 female), 176 faculty members (134 male, 42 female), and 34 HoDs (31 male, 3 female). Using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table, a sample of 403 respondents was selected, consisting of 248 students (121 male, 127 female), 123 teachers (93 male, 30 female), and 32 HoDs (29 male, 3 female). Data was collected

through a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire, measuring perceptions of higher education teachers as cultural transmitters. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics i.e. Independent Samples t-test (for comparison in the views of male and female respondents) and ANOVA (to compare the views of Heads of the Departments, Teachers, and MPhil/PhD Scholars) were applied via SPSS to analyze gender-based differences in responses, ensuring robust and statistically validated findings.

**Table 1***Population of the Study*

Southern Districts	Universities	Respondents						Total
		M.Phil./PhD		Teachers		Heads		
		F	M	M	F	M	F	
D.I.Khan	Gomal University	269	302	65	24	11	2	673
Bannu	University of Science & Technology	24	9	14	7	3	0	57
Kohat	Kohat University of Science & Technology	15	14	7	0	8	1	45
Lakki Marwat	University of Lakki Marwat	12	09	19	4	4	0	48
Karak	Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak	0	0	29	7	5	0	41
Total		320	334	134	42	31	3	864

**Table 2***Sample of the Study*

Southern Districts	Universities	Respondents						Total
		M.Phil./PhD		Teachers		Heads		
		F	M	M	F	M	F	
D.I.Khan	Gomal University	101	114	45	17	10	2	289
Bannu	University of Science & Technology	11	5	10	5	3	0	34
Kohat	Kohat University of Science & Technology	5	5	4	0	7	1	22
Lakki Marwat	University of Lakki Marwat	4	3	14	3	4	0	28
Karak	Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak	0	0	20	5	5	0	30
Total		121	127	93	30	29	3	403

## Results and Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through descriptive analysis as Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation, whereas T-test was used to know about the difference between views of the male and female respondents, and ANOVA was used to know about the differences between the views of Stakeholders i.e. Head of Departments, Teachers, and MPhil/PhD Scholars by using SPSS and online calculators.

**Table 3***Transmission of Culture in Perspectives of Respondents (Linked to Objective#1)*

University Stakeholders	Gender	Transmission of Culture														Total
		SA		A		SWA		N		SWDA		DA		SDA		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Departmental Heads	Male	2	6.9	4	13.8	14	48.3	6	20.7	2	6.9	1	3.4	0	0	29
	Female	0	0	0	0	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Teachers	Male	17	18.6	26	27.4	25	26.9	0	0	15	16.3	10	10.8	0	0	93
	Female	5	16.7	8	26.7	0	0	8	26.7	8	26.7	0	0	1	3.3	30
MPhil/PhD Scholars	Male	19	15.7	26	21.5	0	0	45	37.2	0	0	31	25.6	0	0	121
	Female	20	15.7	28	22.0	0	0	48	37.8	0	0	31	24.4	0	0	127

Above table shows what different university stakeholders think about the social role of a teacher in transmission of culture according to gender and agreement level (corresponding to Objective 1). The data will be categorized into three categories; including departmental heads, teachers, and MPhil/PhD scholars.

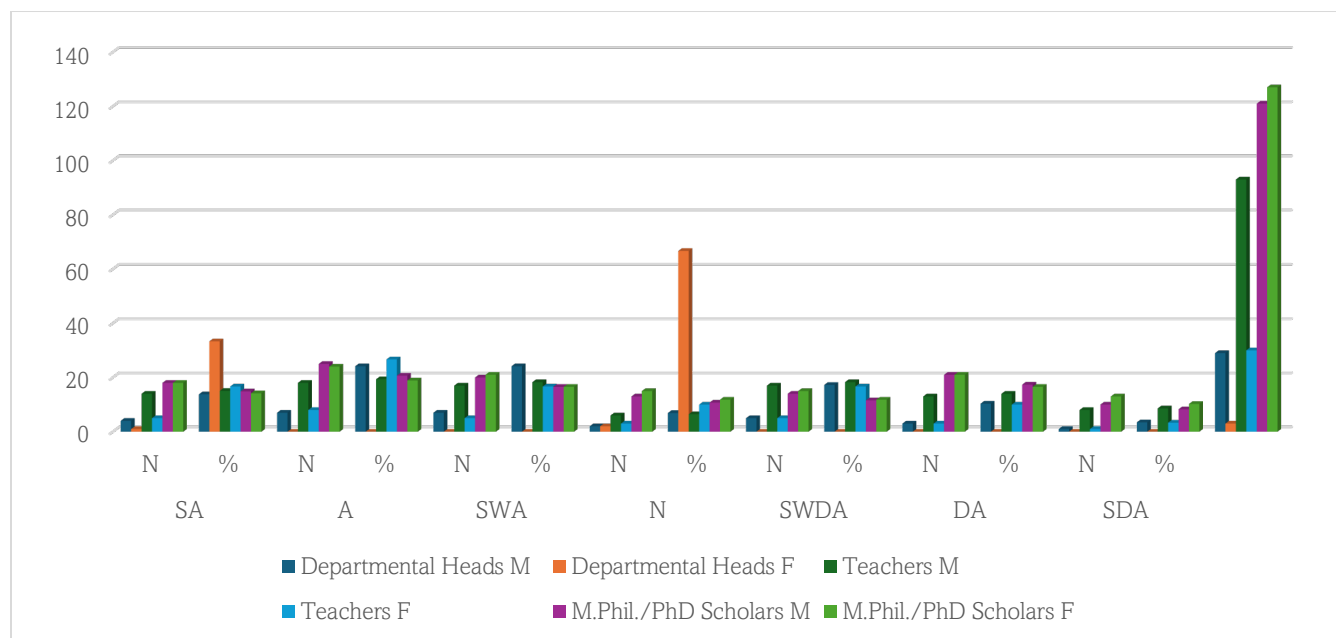
**Departmental Heads:** There were 29 sampled male departmental Heads. Out of these, 2 (6.88%) gave a strong agreement (SA), 4 (13.80%) gave an agree (A), and 14 (48.30%) gave a somewhat agree (SWA) to the statement that teachers have a social role in cultural transmission. In addition, 6 (20.70%) were neutral (N), 2 (6.88%) somewhat disagree (SWDA), 1 (3.44%) disagreed (DA) and there was none (0%) strongly disagreed (SDA). On the contrary, the sample comprised of 3 respondents in the female departmental head group. None of these (0%) strongly thought about or agreed, 1 (33.33%) at least agreed, and 2 (66.67%) were neutral. It is worth noting that not a single female departmental head showed any sign of disagreement.

**Teachers:** 93 male teachers participated in the survey. Strongly agreeing: 17 (18.60); agreeing: 26 (27.40); somewhat agreeing: 25 (26.90). 0% were neutral, 15 (16.30 %) somewhat disagreed with the statement and 10 (10.80 %) disagreed with the statement. 0 percent of the respondents revealed strong disagreement. The distribution of the 30 respondents (female teachers) was somewhat different. Among them, 5 (16.66%) strongly agreed, 8 (26.67%) agreed and none (0%) somewhat agreed. However, 8 (26.67%) answered, I was neutral, 8 (26.67%) somewhat disagree, and only 1 (3.33%) strongly disagree that none of them disagreed.

**MPhil/PhD Scholars:** 121 male M.Phil./PhD scholars participated in the survey. Out of them 19 strongly agreed (15.70%), 26 agreed (21.48%), and none somewhat agreed (0%). Many (45, 37.19%) were neutral. No one (0%) reported somewhat disagreeing, 31 (25.61%) disagreed and no one (0%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, 127 M.Phil./PhD female academicians participated in the investigation. Of these, 20 (15.74%) strongly agreed, 28 (22.04%) agreed, none (0%) somewhat agreed. Just like the males, 48 (37.79%) they were neutral. Not a single one (0%) disagreed, slightly and strongly (24.40%) disagreed.

**Figure 1**

*Teachers as Cultural Transmitters*





**Table 4***Comparison of Stakeholders' Perceptions Concerning Transmission of Culture (Linked to Objective#2)*

University Stakeholders	Gender	Transmission of Culture			Comparison			Stakeholders		
		Numbers	Mean $\bar{X}$	S.D 'S'	Gender					
					t-calculated	t-tabulated	P-value	F-calculated	F-tabulated	P-value
Departmental Heads	Male	29	4.83	1.10	0.7708	$\pm 2.0423$	0.4467	2.29	$\pm 3.02$	0.102
	Female	3	4.33	0.47						
Teachers	Male	93	5.00	1.58	0.9672	$\pm 1.9798$	0.3354			
	Female	30	4.67	1.76						
MPhil/PhD	Male	121	4.39	1.80	0.1744	$\pm 1.9697$	0.8617			
Scholars	Female	127	4.43	1.81						

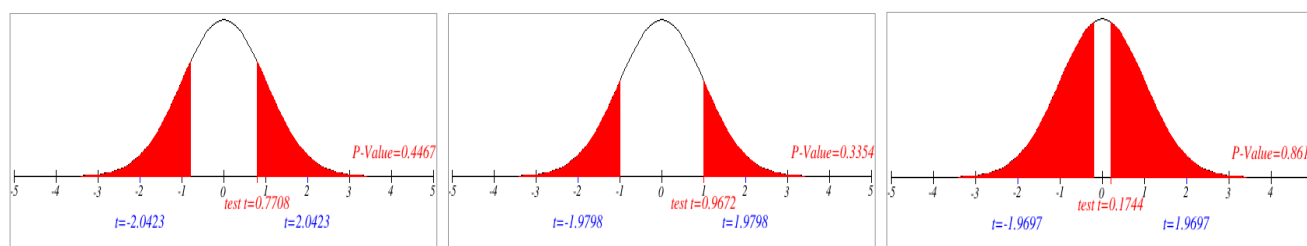
The table shows a comparative study of the overall perception of various university stakeholder groups i.e. departmental heads, teachers, and MPhil/PhD scholars concerning the way culture is transmitted further divided by the group gender. It uses mean scores, standard deviations, independent t-tests (gender) and ANOVA (group) to indicate existence of significant differences.

### Gender-Based Comparisons

The mean score of the male group of Departmental heads (n=29) was 4.83 (SD=1.10) expressed their moderate accord to the statements about cultural transmission, whereas the female group of the Departmental heads (n=3) had a slightly lower mean value of 4.33 (SD=0.47). No statistically significant gender difference was established by the t-test ( $t=0.7708$ ,  $p=0.4467 > 0.05$ ). Likewise, male (n=93) and female (n=30) teachers averaged 5.00 (SD=1.58) and 4.67 (SD=1.76), respectively. Once again gender gap was not significant with t-test ( $t=0.9672$ ,  $p=0.3354 > 0.05$ ). Among MPhil/PhD scholars, the mean was 4.39 (SD=1.80) in the case of male respondents (n=121) and almost the same mean (4.43) with SD (1.81) in case of female respondents (n=127). The t-test ( $t=0.1744$ ,  $p=0.8617 > 0.05$ ) also confirmed that it cannot be said that gender is significant in perceptions within this group.

### Comparison of Stakeholder Groups

Comparison within the categories of stakeholders showed that ANOVA results ( $F=2.29$ ,  $p=0.102 > 0.05$ ) did not show statistically significant differences between departmental heads, teachers, and the scholars. Nonetheless, the descriptive trends gave a consensus with minimal differences, with teachers (mean=4.93) being the most in agreement with cultural transmission followed by departmental heads (mean=4.78) and scholars (mean=4.41). The absence of statistical significance indicates that means differ only a little, but the differences might reflect a random sampling and not indicating actual differences in perceptions.

**Figure 2***Social Role of Teachers at University in Regards to Transfer of Culture*

## Discussions

The two contrasting perspectives in regard to the transmission of culture show the presence of dissensions in education thought. This moderate support by the heads of departments indicates that they have an institutional stake in the preservation of curricular standards (Trueba, [2022](#)) whereas the pragmatic alignment of teachers has its roots in everyday life in the classroom (Sanjakdar & Apple, [2024](#)). Critical theory views are capturing skepticism towards the mainstream culture by scholars Figlio et al. [2022](#)). This triple body of viewpoints draws a parallel to the current ideologies of multicultural education (Banks, [2024](#)), where the traditional forms of conveyance are more frequently put under challenge by the postmodern deconstructions. The same tension emerges most sharply, as recent ethnographic work by Milenkovic ([2024](#)) in adjacent areas of educational experience demonstrates, in post-colonial societies grappling with the problem of maintaining heritage against modernization. This ubiquity of gender neutrality is in line with other feminist research (Crema et al., [2024](#)) showing that the mechanisms of the culture transmission are not gender specific but they may differ in the contents. The results suggest the use of a Wonder ([2022](#)) approach to the critical cultural transmission, which is balanced between preserving cultural materials and being aware of their criticism.

## Conclusions

The study found no major gender differences in stakeholders' views on cultural transmission. However, roles mattered teachers supported it most, while MPhil/PhD scholars were least agreeable, often neutral or opposed. This suggests academic position, not gender, shapes perspectives.

## Recommendations

Because MPhil/PhD scholars are less unanimous (37%) when it comes to how transmission of culture matters in academics, universities ought to stage workshops or discussion parties to demystify its concern to scholars and make it seem inclusive.



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