

Syed, J. & Ali, F. (2006). Emotion regulation and Muslim women at work. In D. Hurst (Ed.), Consequentiality Volume II: Mythology, Theology, Ontology. Florida: Tallahassee, 189-210.

## 11. In pursuit of modesty: emotion regulation and Muslim women at work

by Jawad Syed and Faiza Ali  
Macquarie University  
Australia

### The concept of female modesty

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2004) offers two definitions of modesty: a) freedom from conceit or vanity, and b) propriety in dress, speech, or conduct. The concept has been described as a set of culturally determined values that relate to the presentation of the self to others and is closely related to the concept of *body modesty* that has been defined as the wish or requirement not to expose too much of the human body (Wikipedia, 2004). Modesty may thus be described as synonymous with chastity or purity of manners, “the sweetest charm of female excellence, the richest gem in the diadem of their honour” (Noah Webster, 1828).

The most commonly used term for modesty in the Urdu language (Pakistan’s national language, also widely spoken and understood in India) is *Haya*. Besides modesty, *Haya* denotes many similar concepts such as: *Sharm* (shyness as well as shame), *Ghairat* (honour), *Hijab* (veil), *Iffat* (chastity) and *Ijz* (humility). *Haya* is originally an Arabic word for modesty, a term that has been mentioned in a number of traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, thus signifying its importance in Islam. For instance:

Modesty brings nothing but good...(Al-hayaa laa ha'tiy illa bikhairin) (Bukhari, Muslim).

Modesty is one portion of belief...(Al-hayaa shu'batun min al-iman) (Bukhari, Muslim).

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an is commonly quoted in support of female modesty and the related institution of seclusion for Muslim women:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their (sexual) modesty; and that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty save to their husbands, or their fathers or their husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical desire, or small children who have no sense of sex; and that they should not stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O believers! Turn all together towards Allah, that you may attain bliss. (Qur'an 24:31).

The verse defines a specific code of conduct for a Muslim woman to maintain and guard her modesty in terms of eye contact, dress, ornamentation, and walking style. She is required to lower her gaze as a first step to guard her sexual modesty. She is also ordained to desist from unduly showing her adornment. She must cover her bosom and avoid stamping her feet to reveal what she hides of her adornment. The verse also defines a distinct protocol for a woman's interaction with men who are not her *Mehram* (that is, not within the prohibited category of marriage) (Hu,ssain, 1987:143-157).

The concept of modesty is closely associated with the concept of shame. The Pakistani equivalent of "shame" and "shyness" in the Urdu language is a single word *Sharm*. Despite the distinct nature of the emotions of shyness and shame, *Sharm* may mean both of these terms at the same time, interchangeably or separately, often hard to differentiate. In the first sense (shyness), a woman is generally perceived to be shy or inhibitive by nature. Shyness is considered to be an ornament for women. A woman who is not shy may be perceived as too blunt to be modest. For example, in his poetry, Akbar Allah Abadi (famous Muslim poet during British India) criticizes the modern Muslim woman who chose to be *Shama-e-Anjuman* (club chandelier) abandoning her role as a *Charagh-e-Khana* (candle of her house). In the second-sense (shame), a woman is thought of bringing shame (*Sharm*) to her family and herself if she violates a social or religious norm. A Muslim woman is thus dictated to adopt both of these roles (shyness and shame) by a single powerful word—*Sharm*. The use of one word for two distinct emotions, however, makes it hard to distinguish one set of feelings from the other.

The institution of female modesty has traditionally restricted a Muslim woman's roles and status outside the four walls of her house.

According to leading Muslim theologian of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Imam Ghazali, a Muslim woman should “not leave her spindle or her private apartment, nor look down on the street from her terrace” (Ghazali in Vivification des sciences de la foi). The concept has been more restrictive for women within societies marked by deep-rooted patriarchal customs and traditions such as India and Pakistan. Justice Aftab Hussain, former Chief Justice of Shariat (Islamic Law) Court of Pakistan, relates the following incident of his early college years:

Back in 1934 when I was a student of the Intermediate (First Year) in the Bareilly College, my Professor of English once asked me: ‘Aftab! What is your opinion about girls’ education?’ Promptly I replied: ‘If you wish to make harlots of them, educate them in school.’ The answer did not stun or surprise him. By that time, he had become accustomed to receiving such darts from members of the middle and higher classes among the Muslim Junta... My impromptu answer only articulated the feelings and views of the gentry of the town who had nothing but censure and reproof for that valiant champion of women’s lift. These were days when even my aged grandmother could not think of going out of the residential house even in a veil which covered her from head to toe (Hu,ssain, 1987: 1).

Later in his life, Hussain, by virtue of direct study of the Qur'an, and Sir Muhammad Iqbal (renowned philosopher poet of Muslim India), changed his outlook and vision (p. 2), which was previously obscured by the customary seclusion of women and the inflexible rigidity of *Taqlid* (imitation without questioning) in religious matters. The incident, however, reflects a major issue in Islamic society: the rigid concept of modesty and sexual segregation that is rooted deep in the society (Syed and Ali, 2005).

## Muslim women at work

Women have been traditionally confined in *Chador* (a type of veil, a big cloth to wrap around the body) and *Chardiwari* (four walls of the house) in Pakistani society. Popular idioms, customs and poetry—all signify the sanctity of women as “mothers,” “sisters” and “wives.” Those finding a space for themselves outside the sanctuary of *Chardiwari* are ridiculed and criticized. Following is the non-literal translation of two verses of Urdu poetry. The verses were written by Akbar Allah Abadi almost a century ago in British India and are still popular in the Muslim circles in India and Pakistan.

Urdu:

*Bay Purdah Kal Jo Nazr Aileen Chand Bibyan  
Akbar Zameen Main Ghairat-e-Qomi Say Gad Gaya  
Poocha Jo Un Say Aap Ka Purdah, Who Kya Hua?  
Kehnay Lageen Keh Aql Pay Mardon Kee Pad Gaya*

English Translation (by the author of this paper):

*Yesterday, as I happened to see some unveiled (Muslim) women  
My national (read Islamic) ‘Ghairat’ (honour) was deeply hurt  
(As I) asked them, ‘What happened to your veil?’  
(They) replied, ‘(Our) men have lost their wisdom’ (‘that’s why  
they allowed us to unveil ourselves’)*

These verses are frequently quoted in everyday life in Pakistan as an expression to humiliate unveiled urban woman. The Urdu equivalent of the word “woman” is *Aurat*, which itself means “the hidden thing.” Another similar word used for “woman” in Pakistani society is *Mastoor*, again meaning “the hidden thing.” The concept of seclusion and sexual segregation is thus rooted deeply in the customs and norms of Pakistani society.

This gender segregation exists in almost all possible social and organizational contexts with only a few exceptions in urban settings. Even higher education institutes are no exception. Zubair (2003) reports her experiences as a teacher of English literature in a Pakistani university. Her initial efforts to bring feminist pedagogy and critical literacy awareness into the classroom faced stiff resistance. The resistance shown by her young students “created emotions in the classroom which led to intense debates and discussions about women’s role and women’s space within patriarchy” (p. 165). Zubair identifies three main reasons for students’ initial resistance to express their emotions in the class: a) sex segregation in Pakistani society. Despite mixed-sex classroom in the university, men and women sit in separate rows; b) strong resistance by women to sit and work in mixed-sex groups; and c) resistance by young men from rural backgrounds who felt embarrassed being taught by modern and anglicised women (pp. 165-166). Zubair’s (2003) study offers useful insight about the challenges faced by Pakistani women:

Wajeda, 21, female, comments on the gender divisions and power-dynamics of the classroom and the university: ‘I felt awkward sitting with and talking to the boys when I first came to the university...I still feel awkward sitting with them or sitting next to them because it is not allowed in our religion’ (p. 167).

Farhana, 22, female, in an informal conversation with her ‘modernly’ dressed teacher: ‘Some girls do not like the way you dress...they say she wears tightly-fitted clothes...such clothes do not befit a teacher’s image...a teacher should be simple and decently dressed’ (p. 167).

A female student mentions gender-based training through the Pakistani media:

'This is what is being implanted in our minds through the media...we are being trained from the very beginning to please men, either a father or a brother or a husband or a son...I mean what I want to do for myself I can't, father won't like it, son would think what my mom is up to...Why? This is the training. I'm talking about the training we're given from the very beginning...look at the media advertisements...from every side family life, social set-up...this is the training' (p. 169).

Another female student describes her limited choice for employment:

'I know my father won't allow me to take up employment after marriage...if I've kids...Okay? My priorities do not count. If I prefer not to have children after marriage I'm not allowed to take this decision' (p. 169).

A male student thus describes a practical problem that Pakistani families normally face in case both partners go to work:

'I'll tell you something from my own observation in this regard. My cousins (women) are very well educated and one of them has joined Pak[istan] Air Force and her husband is also a pilot. After the 11 September incident a situation arose in our country for which the whole airbase had to be evacuated, and they were transferred to some other airbase and they were not allowed to have any servant to take care of the baby...because by then she'd given birth to a baby...both husband and wife had to go to their jobs and there was no one...no one left at home to look after the baby. So, I think that it should be decided before marriage whether women are going to take up jobs or not...whether it will affect their marital life or not' (pp. 169-170).

Despite some liberal laws for women in some parts of Islamic society, women's role outside their houses remains highly restricted (Syed and Ali, 2005). Islamic laws and cultural traditions rule a woman "largely according to her age and marital status" (Minai,, 1981:xiv). A patriarchal code of ethics prevails in every sphere of life allowing greater freedom to a woman in her childhood and old age, but with numerous compulsion from her youth to middle age. Her main duty is to produce and care for legitimate heirs to her husband, hence the emphasis on regulating her activities during her reproductive years. This is also reflected in a low female enrollment rate in schools or colleges, especially after puberty, partly because of poverty, but also because of the parents' wish to protect

their daughters' virtue and marriageability (p. 78). The boys in Islamic society "do not have to be supervised very closely, since their sexual behaviour cannot dishonour the family or compromise their chances for marriage" (pp. 83-84). It is thus perceived in the parents' best interest to train their female offspring for her most glorified role, motherhood.

The traditional concept of the separation of male and female space is popular in almost all parts of Islamic society. According to Maududi, a leading Islamic scholar of the twentieth century, it is prohibited for women "to sit in the same gathering together with men and stare at them, or look at them in a manner which may lead to evil results" (Maududi, 1991). Even the educated urban woman, who enjoys more access to education and formal work opportunities, has not escaped "emotionally crippling traditions" prevalent in Islamic society. Thus a woman, who may be entrusted with the construction work and medical treatment, may not be "trusted with her own sexuality." In a bid to retain their patriarchal privileges,

men expect her to be educated and sophisticated and yet chaste and submissive. She cooperates in perpetuating the conflict-ridden image out of desire for security as well as fear of ostracism. Locked in their own certainties and contradictions, men and women try to sort out what they want from the indigestible avalanche of new influences in their lives, and to reconcile them with the old ways that they cannot or will not abandon (Minai, 1981:78-79).

In a family (read marriage) versus career choice, the career generally loses because society considers a woman's job only peripheral to her primary role as a wife and a mother (Al-Saadawi, 1982; Syed and Ali, 2005). The dilemma indeed becomes more complicated given the growing extinction of extended family in urban societies. Brought up to view housework as a feminine domain and a career as a privilege, a Muslim woman finds it hard to be a successful housewife and a career woman simultaneously. While she functions professionally at work, she readily resumes her traditional feminine role at home to serve her husband (Minai, 1981:217). The educated woman thus pays a high emotional price for giving into the traditional perspectives about her role in the society. Yet, if she decides to carry on both the job and the housework without help, she is too overburdened to reach her creative peak and thus remains bitterly dissatisfied and emotionally perturbed.

## Moral values and social experience

The term *moral* is often equated to behavioural conformance with social standards. The term *guilt* on the other hand is used indiscriminately to refer

to a number of different aversive affective experiences. Aronfreed (1968) argues that specific cognitive structures determine one's qualitative experience of the aversive changes of an affective state, which socialization attaches to its recognition of its own transgressions.

Aronfreed mentions three types of cognitive structures—fear, guilt and shame—that may help in distinguishing among the aversive affective states in reaction to transgressions (p. 243). The structures are not mutually exclusive and may overlap to varying extents. All of these cognitive structures are simultaneously present in every society, but their intensity and incidence would vary with differences in patterns of socialization. For instance, a Muslim girl child by virtue of her social and early childhood experiences is likely to face the aversive state that is simultaneously characterised by fear, guilt and shame, depending upon the nature of her transgression. Her transgression may be a slight one, for instance, not wearing a *Chador* or headscarf in the presence of *Mehram*. Or it may be of a more defiant nature such as her decision to seek formal employment in a male-dominated organization. The higher the intensity of transgression, the higher the likelihood of her feelings of guilt, fear and shame in front of her society and her own person. According to Einarsen et al. (2003), some of these experiences may be personal in origin (such as name calling, insulting or ridiculing) while others may be organizationally derived (such as work type-gender type discrimination, assigning of demeaning work, excessive performance monitoring). However, the interpretation of such experiences and the corresponding feelings of shame and embarrassment remains a highly contextual phenomenon.

There are several types of aversive states that may follow a transgression such as fear, guilt and shame. Fear may be described as a qualitative experience determined by the cognitive orientation of the subject (Aronfreed, 1968:244). The anticipation of being shamed or ridiculed can thus be classified as fear since it signifies a cognitive focus on a source of anxiety. Many reactions to transgression in Western societies (such as the Christian tradition of confession) are equally likely to occur in a cognitive context closer to fear. A Muslim working woman, for instance, remains fearful of the dishonour that she can bring to her family by indulging in anything perceived immodest by her society. She at the same time experiences anxiety and depression about the negative backlash by her mere presence and participation in a supposedly male economic order (Syed and Ali, 2005).

The concepts of guilt and shame are closely associated, despite their significant differences (Harder and Lewis, 1986; Lutwak et al., 2001). As discussed, both may be categorised as aversive states that follow a transgression. Guilt is related to the quality of the transgressor's affective experience as determined by the moral evaluation of transgression. Shame, on the other hand, is related to the transgressor's experience as determined by a cognitive orientation toward the visibility of transgression (Aronfreed,

1968:249). For instance, a Muslim woman who defies social and religious norms by stepping out of her house and doing a job with her male colleagues is vulnerable to both of these emotions. Her moral evaluation of the *transgression* (in view of popular concept of modesty and sexual segregation) makes her guilty of defying religious norms (Syed and Ali, 2005). And due to the visibility of this defiance, she brings shame for herself and for her family.

Shame is a self-referent emotion because of the centrality of individual understanding of the self in this emotional experience (Eisenberg, 2000; McNally, 2003). The concept remains largely under-researched in medical circles despite its vast ability to damage personal identity, creating corresponding feelings of exposure, degradation, situational avoidance, and silence (Lewis, 2004; Davidoff, 2002). The concept is related to negative behavioural experiences including depression, self-degradation, interpersonal anxiety, and perfectionism (Lutwak et al., 2001). Due to existing structural barriers such as restriction on her mobility outside the four walls of her house, a Muslim working woman experiences feelings of shame and related negative behavioural outcomes. By working in the male order of formal employment, she experience “a self conscious awareness that is being viewed, or might be viewed, by others with an unflattering gaze” (Greenwald and Harder, 1998:227). Her feelings of shame make her want to shrink from others (Trumbull, 2003). She suffers from humiliation that accompanies an “undeserved image of oneself,” which “can mobilize a conscious intention to right the wrong” (p. 234). The experience generates the internal concept of self as “no good,” where focus on her own person is completely on “self,” resulting in uncertainty, inability to think clearly, inability to talk, and inability to act (Lewis, 1992:35). Moreover, there is clear clinical and empirical evidence for the link between shame, guilt, depression and anxiety (Ghatalvi et al., 2002; Harder et al., 1992). She thus remains vulnerable to the feelings of shame, guilt, depression, and anxiety—all due to her decision to work outside the four walls of her house.

The essence of shame is a cognitive focus on the appearance that ought not to show. A Muslim woman’s very decision to step out of her house reduces her to a visible object of observation and criticism. She thus experiences shame in addition to fear and guilt by transgressing the Islamic code of modesty. Her feelings of vulnerability to observation are intimately associated with shame. For instance, many Muslim women from elite families in rural areas of Pakistan toss off their *Burqa* (extreme kind of veil covering a woman from head to toe) or Chadors as soon as they reach urban cities of Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad. The same women take care to be clad in their original *Burqa* when returning to their hometowns so that the transgression may remain invisible to their immediate society. Shame and fear are thus closely intertwined in Islamic society, as a cognitive focus on the visibility of transgression will blend with the focus

on its punitive consequences for the transgressor. The phenomenon was clearly witnessed during the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan (Hirschkind and Mahmood, 2002).

Men and women differ in the dominant direction of control that they experience in their interaction with their social environment (Aronfreed, 1968:329). The difference is attributable to their respective status in professional or social organizations (Aronfreed, 1961; Parsons, 1953). Men and women in an Islamic order are expected to observe Islamic values that are somewhat different for both genders. As Doi (1989) explains, the code of modesty is practically more stringent for women than for men due to the evils present in the society. From a psychological perspective, the values that are relevant to the control of conduct (such as modesty in dress and conversation) can be changed substantially when one is in a stressful situation (Lifton, 1961). The values may also be changed due to persuasion (such as religious concepts of modesty and virtue) and by a person's conformity to behavioural demands (such as safeguarding family honour), which are initially discrepant with her personal values and by other ordinary modes of social influence (Brock and Bauss, 1964; Kelman, 1965). While the dimensions of cognitive structures are generally formed throughout the entire course of socialization in a Muslim woman's lifetime, their roots are laid in the early patterns of social interaction in her home and family.

Festinger's (1957) concept of cognitive dissonance offers a relationship between external constraints over one's behaviour and one's exercise of internalised controls. A person is expected to find it distasteful or aversive to have two cognitions that are significantly inconsistent with one another. She will, therefore, be motivated to change one or both of her cognitions so as to balance them out. A modern Muslim woman thus finds it totally Islamic and modest to step out of her house and participate in formal education or employment just like her male counterparts (Zubair, 2003). On the other hand, those who cannot take up this stress sooner or later leave their jobs to find shelter in the haven of their home and solitude.

The above-discussed moral and social dilemma is characterised by a multi-faceted depression for workingwomen in Islamic society. These women feel powerless yet responsible for the events that went wrong in their workplace (and their families). Their guilt for their supposed defiance of the social and religious norms is exaggerated. They thus remain vulnerable to physical symptoms (such as sleeping or eating disorders) and cognitive and affective symptoms (such as passivity, confusion, worthlessness, shame and guilt). Traditional and reformulated psychodynamic theories consider guilt, shame and derision as both distal antecedents and central elements of the disorder (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1991). There is sufficient evidence that females in general are more vulnerable to depression compared to their male counterparts. Nolen-Hoeksema (1987) has offered a biological explanation for this

phenomenon through comparative research on hormonal and genetic factors in males and females. From the affective perspective, a female is generally more accurate in her assessment of interpersonal sensitivity (Hall, 1978). The phenomenon makes a female more vulnerable to the feelings of depression, guilt and shame.

## Morality and emotions

The concept of emotion regulation is complex, and its meaning has drastically changed over time. This meaning is indeed shifting at a rapid rate in our own time (Izard and Kobak, 1991). There are an increasing number of scientists researching the motivational, organizational, and adaptive functions of emotions (such as Barlow, 1988; Rozin and Fallon, 1987). From personal and, by extension, social perspectives, the total suppression of ones' emotions is neither a desirable nor a productive strategy. For instance, nobody would like to be devoid of feelings of sadness at the loss of a dear friend or family member, guilt for wrongdoing, or shame for inappropriate behaviour. However, the appropriateness or inappropriateness of one's moral values and the social experiences that govern one's emotions remain an issue in question.

Social beliefs and attitudes have generally contributed to the idea that emotions should be brought under rather tight control. Religious and philosophical scholars have historically treated emotions as "evil forces that can contaminate or even destroy the mind and soul" (Izard and Kobak, 1991:306). Religion thus categorizes one's regulation and control of "negative emotions" as a sign of piety and goodness. For instance, the Islamic concept of modesty requires Muslims to negate their *Nafs* (Person) and *Hawa* (Personal Greed) to become close to the path of Allah (such as Qur'an 12:53, "Nor do I absolve my own self [of blame]: the [human] soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful"). The Qur'anic ideals of *Taqwa* (Piety) and *Sabr* (Patience) are aimed to create self-restraint and a God fearing state in the lives of the faithful (Qur'an 103:1-3, 2:2). However, not all types of emotions are tabooed in religion. Some negative emotions have been exempted. For instance, the institution of *Tauba* (repentance) in Islam signifies one's guilt over wrongdoing and righteous indignation at moral transgression (such as Qur'an 4:17, "Allah accept the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy"). The nature and intensity of guilt is thus represented by one's conscience, which, in turn, is governed by one's moral values.

The term *conscience* traditionally refers to cognitive and affective processes that represent an internalised governor over an individual's conduct (Aronfreed, 1968:2). The Greeks perceived moral judgment as an

essentially rational phenomenon. For instance, Plato (*The Republic*) and Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics*) did not consider moral judgement in the powerful affective component that is today regarded as indispensable to the internalised control over social conduct. The affective core of morality (in contrast to other value systems) has been discussed by many theorists in the twentieth century (such as Ayer, 1935; Stevenson, 1944; Mackie, 1995). Values are deemed moral when they address the desires and constraints that have direct implications for the welfare of others. Moral values thus convey a sense of attachment and obligation to other human beings, closely associated with the concepts of liberty, responsibility, authority and possession and distribution of material things (Aronfreed, 1968). A general definition of the standards of value to be included within conscience, however, needs certain criteria. Liberally speaking, conscience includes evaluative standards of conduct, that is, behavioural dispositions shaped by one's interaction with the social environment. The concept and applicability of *conscience* is, however, not restricted to moral judgment. For instance, it refers to value orientations that support self-denial of pleasure, effort in the face of adversity, and other self-directive expressions of behaviour commonly known as "Protestant ethics" (Weber, 1930) or "inner-direction" (Riesman et al., 1950). Moral judgement is thus an important component of multiple value systems that are now commonly regarded as the substance of conscience.

It is established that the external contingencies of one's social environment, which one generally learns and adopts in one's childhood, exercise profound control over one's personal behaviour through the course of socialization. A person's behaviour is thus governed extensively by internal monitors, which in turn assume many functions of the external controls that originally established one's behaviour in childhood. The term internalisation may be defined as "a process in which an internal cognitive model is formed for the representation of behaviour that was originally overt or public" (Vygotsky, 1962). The term refers to one's adoption of social norms or role as one's own, and to the resulting evaluative control of one's behaviour by some of the most complex functions of cognitive and verbal processes (Kohlberg, 1969). The mechanisms of the internalised control of behaviour are superimposed upon, often displacing the functional characteristics of concrete external events (Aronfreed, 1968). For instance, a girl child in a Muslim family is likely to internalise the *morally right behaviour* as is expected of her by her society. Many such forms of human behaviour as the suppression of emotions, constraints on the manner and place of eliminative functions, are a result of initial acquisitions under conditions of relatively high magnitudes of aversive and other psychological experiences.

There are two types of internal monitors that offer mediation of conditioned affectivity and the control of one's own behaviour (Aronfreed, 1968). The first monitor consists of behavioural cues directly inherent in

one's performance of an act, generally during one's childhood. The second monitor comprises more complex information in cognitive processes related to the capacity to represent and evaluate personal behaviour and the external context. The cognitive control of affective states gradually emerges with advancing development in one's life. Thus, cognition acquires more representational and anticipatory function. The affective states may be further classified into two categories: positive (pleasant) and aversive (unpleasant or painful). Schachter (1964) reported experiments illustrating the quality of a person's affective arousal by information from the social environment. The distinction between positive and negative affective states offers the broad outline of the internalisation process in one's personality. An understanding of the mechanisms of socialization thus needs a general understanding of the affective and cognitive components of learning.

Learning, and subsequently one's conduct, is shaped socially transmitted positive outcomes of one's overt behaviour such as rewards and appreciation (Aronfreed, 1968). However, behaviour-contingent social learning is not the only source of the positive control of conduct. The pleasant affective contexts also serve as a model for imitation in one's childhood. Both of these sources contribute to internalisation by the attachment of affective value to the intrinsic perceptual and cognitive correlates of one's behaviour. Selective positive reinforcement of conduct often increases the chances of relative effectiveness of punishment in the suppression of non-compliance, when both positive and negative incentives serve the same motivational dispositions. Thus, a person's entire experience of internalised behaviour is attributable to both positive and aversive controls. There is, however, some evidence of internalisation in the situational assessment of the suppression of behaviour that is under social prohibition—for instance, in the assessment of the conformity to rules in the absence of external monitoring (such as Sears et al., 1965; Grinder, 1962). In these situations, there is a large component of aversive control.

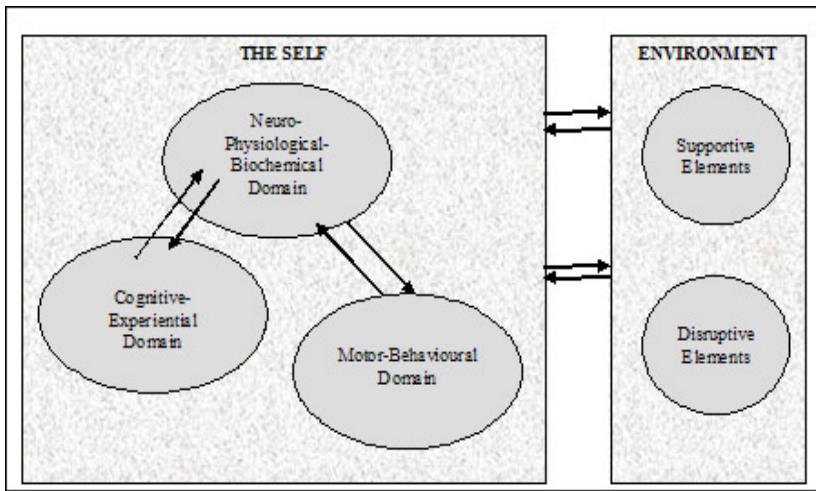
Behavioural suppression has been broadly defined to include "any reduction in the probability of one form of behaviour, relative to the probabilities of other forms, as a result of punishment or other avenues of aversive learning" (Aronfreed, 1968:162). The suppression of an active form of behaviour, such the as confident interaction of a Muslim working woman with her male colleagues, offers an illustration of the internalisation of aversive control over social conduct. The phenomenon explains the typically shy and inhibitive nature of women in Islamic society. Early social experiences of a girl child (for instance, the way she is treated second to her male brother) establish her alternative dispositions, which curtail the development of certain emotions such as aggression, confidence and self-assurance (Whiting and Child, 1953).

## Emotion regulation and gender roles

The regulation of emotions has held a prominent place in the scientific inquiry for a long time. Darwin (1872) conducted an extensive study to understand the expression of emotions in humans and animals. Freud's (1926/1977) theory of psychosexual development deals mainly with the struggle between internal emotion impulses and the effort by the individual to regulate these emotions. The absence of emotional regulation results in psychopathology and anxiety. Many researchers today deal with the processes through which emotions are expressed, concealed and regulated. Accordingly, a major debate in emotion theory has been about the role of one construct (cognition) in the regulation of the other construct (emotion).

Irrespective of the nature and the context of emotions, the issue remains: how to handle these emotions (Frijda, 1986). The reciprocal effect of altering cognitive activities through emotional states may be regulatory or dysregulatory depending upon the nature of adaptive effects. Many researchers have studied regulation through modification of emotion (arousal, goals, specific behaviours) by means of cognitive activity (such as Clark and Isen, 1981; Masters et al., 1981). There are two fundamental reasons for emotion regulation: personal (self-regulation) and social (emotion regulation in others) (Masters, 1991:186). The personal regulation resides in one's own person and may not be easily observed by others, except in extremely stressful circumstances. Social strategies, on the other hand, focus on manipulating others' emotional states to achieve a desirable consequence.

Dodge (1989) defines emotion regulation as "the process by which activation in one response domain serves to alter, titrate, or modulate activation in another response domain" (p. 340). The type of regulation is the usual way in which children learn how to control emotional response and to become skilled at it (Kopp, 1989). Figure 11.1 offers a conceptual model for emotion regulation in three forms: inter-domain, intra-domain, and interpersonal emotional regulation. The intra-domain type of emotion regulation also occurs early in life, but deals with the modulation of one aspect of responding in a particular domain according to another aspect of responding in the same domain (Porges, 1991). Campos et al. (1989) suggest the importance of interpersonal emotion regulation that deals with one's interaction and manipulation of one's social environment. One's social and organizational environment comprises many supportive and disruptive forces that have implications for the biological, cognitive and behavioural domains of one's personality.



**Figure 11.1. A conceptual model for emotion regulation.**  
 (Source: Dodge and Garber 1991).

Emotional reactions have been often seen as disruptive, irrational, biased and weak. Emotion thus becomes a deviation from intelligent or sensible, linked to the expressive arenas of life, instead of the instrumental goal orientation that drives organizations (Putnam and Mumby, 1993:36). Contemporary organizational behaviour theory reflects many of the assumptions about masculinity and rationality that are deeply embedded in traditional organizational discourse. Ross-Smith and Komberger (2004) propose that it is the early philosophical and sociological interpretations of reason and rationality that linked masculinity and rationality so closely and inseparably.

## The unexplored dimension of emotional labour

The term emotional labour was first introduced by Hochschild (1983), who defines emotional labour as “the induction or suppression of feeling in order to sustain the outward appearance that produces the proper state of mind in others.” The *labour* “calls for coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honour as deep and integral to our individuality” (p. 7). Hochschild’s research and other subsequent studies in the field of emotional labour have repeatedly highlighted the job-type engenderment of different emotional roles within organizations: for instance, a caring flight attendant’s role by a female and an aggressive bill-collector’s role by a male. The interface between gender and emotional labour is a new area of investigation. Some of the empirical

studies exploring this relationship have resulted in ambiguous findings (Pugliesi, 1999). Simpson and Stroh (2004) have recently used time-tested quantitative measures to evaluate the emotional labour of men and women in professional and managerial jobs. Part of their research was aimed at determining the nature of the interface among gender, emotional expression, and mental well-being. They found that women more often conform to feminine display rules, which require the suppression of negative emotions and the simulation of positive emotions.

	<b>The Traditional Approach</b>	<b>The Contextual Approach</b>
Work role	Work-role specific (people-work such as nurses or flight attendants)	Not necessarily work-role specific
Focus	Job content	Job context
Orientation	Externally oriented—to produce an emotional state in another person	Internally oriented—internal emotional struggle (Not just surface- acting)
Duration	Short termed; lasts only for the duration of contact with the clients	Long termed; as long as societal and organizational circumstances exist
Contact	Face to face or voice to voice contact with the public	Face to face or voice to voice contact with the public as well as the colleagues
Affectivity	The need to produce an emotional state in another person	Not specially aimed at producing an emotional state in others
Control	The employer's control over the emotional activities of employees	Society's as well as organization's control over activities of employees (social and organizational acceptability issue)
Example	Caring business: A nurse is required to display appropriate emotion such as sympathy, and to suppress an inappropriate emotion such as boredom	Islamic society: A Muslim working woman needs to adopt conflicting roles (modest woman and modern woman) at the same time to meet her social as well as organizational requirements

**Table 11.1. Emotional labour—traditional and contextual perspectives.**  
(Source: Adapted from Syed and Ali, 2005).

Men, on the other hand, more often adopted masculine display rules, which require the suppression of positive emotions and the simulation of negative ones. The engenderment of emotional labour is thus institutionalised in job-type and gender-type allocation (or discrimination) in the labour market. The influence of job-emotion match has been indeed acknowledged as a key influence in the selection process in organizations (Arvey et al., 1998; Grandey and Brauburger, 2002). However, in societies

where (far beyond job-type gender-type discrimination) there is a general blackout or taboo on women's employment, emotional interface between a working woman and the organization becomes rather complex. The phenomenon explains the emotional challenge that a Muslim woman faces by defying the "code of modesty" through her decision to work outside the four walls of her house. Her emotional struggle is not dictated by the nature of a specific job. Her very decision to work in a formal organization brings her face-to-face with a highly sensitive religious and social impasse. Both of these roles require her to display (or suppress) two conflicting sets of feelings such as shyness and confidence, fear and strength, and restraint and anger. Due to the Islamic concept of modesty and the related institution of sexual segregation, her organizational experiences generally comprise a blend of differentiating (such as fear and anxiety) and masking emotions (such as restraint and inhibition) instead of integrative ones (such as love, friendliness, pride and pleasure) (Kemper, 1984; Wharton and Erickson, 1993; Mann, 1997).

The contextual dimension of emotional labour may be defined as *the induction or suppression of feeling in order to sustain the appearance that is appropriate for the social and the organizational contexts*. The labour requires appropriate coordination of mind and feelings to balance conflicting demands of the society and the workplace. Table 11.1 offers a comparison of the traditional and the contextual approaches of emotional labour.

## Conclusions

The popular interpretation of the Islamic concept of female modesty encourages restraint and inhibition and the related emotions of fear, shame and guilt in Muslim women in their interaction with males who are not related to them. Consequently, the concept restricts Muslim women's participation in the formal sector of employment outside the four walls of their houses. These women thus have to regulate their emotions in order to meet the conflicting demands of their social and organizational contexts. We have examined the strong interlink between moral values and the social experiences of Muslim working women and its emotional implications for them. The aversive states—fear, guilt and shame—that follow these women's "transgression" (such as their decision to work outside the *Chardiwari*) restrict their roles and status in the domain of formal work. Their moral evaluation of the transgression makes these women guilty of defiance of the religious norms; and due to the visibility of this defiance, they remain vulnerable to the feelings of shame and embarrassment. Because of her early social experiences as a child (which may curtail the development of certain emotions such as aggression, power and pleasure), a Muslim girl is likely to internalise the *morally right behaviour* as is

expected of her by her society. Many forms of behaviour, such as the suppression of emotions and constraints on the manner and place of eliminative functions, are a result of initial acquisitions under conditions of aversive and other psychological experiences. The phenomenon explains the typically shy and inhibitive nature of women in Islamic society. Finally, we conclude that Muslim women at work experience a different kind of emotion regulation, which is outside the traditional definition of emotional labour. We define the contextual dimension of emotional labour as the induction or suppression of feeling in order to sustain the appearance that is appropriate for the social and the organizational contexts simultaneously. The labour requires appropriate coordination of mind and feelings to balance the conflicting demands of the society and the workplace. The hypothesis has been subsequently verified through our field research in Pakistan, which has been published elsewhere.

## References

- Al-Saadawi, N. "Women and Islam," in *Women and Islam*, Al-Hibri, A., ed. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.
- Aronfreed, J. "The Nature, Variety, and Social Patterning of Moral Responses to Transgression," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 63, 1961, pp. 223-240.
- Aronfreed, J. *Conduct and Conscience: The Socialization of Internalised Control over Behaviour*. New York: Academic Press, 1968.
- Arvey, R., G. Renz, and T. Watson. "Emotionality and Job Performance: Implications for Personnel Selection," *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management*, Vol. 16, 1998, pp. 103-147.
- Ayer, A. *Language, Truth and Logic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Dover Publications, 1935.
- Barlow, D. 1988, *Anxiety and its disorders: The nature and treatment of anxiety and panic*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Brock, T and A. Buss. "Effects of Justification for Aggression and Communication with The Victim of Post-Aggression Dissonance," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 68, 1964, pp. 403-412.
- Campos, J., R. Campos, and K. Barrett. "Emergent Themes in The Study of Emotional Development and Emotion Regulation," *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 25, 1989, pp. 394-402.
- Clark, M. and A. Isen. "Toward Understanding the Relationships Between Feeling States and Social Behaviour," in *Cognitive Social*

*Psychology*, A. Hastorf and A. Isen, eds. New York: Elsevier, 1981, pp. 73-108.

Darwin, C. *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, London: Johan Murray, 1872 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

Davidoff, F. "Shame: The Elephant in the Room," *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 324, 2002, pp. 623-624.

Dodge K. "Coordinating Responses to Aversive Stimuli," *Developmental Psychology*, 25, 1989, pp. 339-342.

Dodge, K. "Emotion and Social Information Processing," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 159-181.

Dodge, K. and J. Garber. "Domains of Emotion Regulation," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 3-11.

Doi, A. *Woman in Shariah*, London: Ta-Ha Publishers, Ltd., 1989.

Einarsen, S., H. Hoel, D. Zapf and C. Cooper. "The Concept of Bullying at Work: The European Tradition," in *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace: International Perspectives in Research and Practice*, S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf and C. Cooper, eds. London: Taylor and Francis, 2003.

Eisenberg, N. "Emotion, Regulation And Moral Development," *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 51, 2000, pp. 665-697.

Festinger, L. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Freud, S. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. New York: Norton, 1977 (Original work published 1926).

Frijda, N. *The Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Ghatavi, K., R. Nicolson, C. Macdonald, S. Osher, and A. Levitt. "Defining Guilt in Depression: A Comparison of Subject with Major Depression, Chronics Medical Illness and Health Controls," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, Vol. 68, 2002, pp. 307-315.

Grandey, A. and A. Brauburger. "The emotion regulation behind the customer service smile," in *Emotions in the Workplace: Understanding the Structure and Role of Emotions in Organizational Behaviour*, R. Lord, R. Klimoski, and R. Kanfer, eds. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Greenwald, D. and D. Harder. "Evolutionary, Cultural and Psychotherapeutic Aspects," in *Shame, Interpersonal Behaviour, Psychopathology, and Culture*, P. Gilbert and B. Andrews, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Grinder, R. "Parental Child Rearing Practices, Conscience, and Resistance to Temptation of Sixth-Grade Children," *Child Development*, Vol. 33, 1962, pp. 803-820.

Hall, J. "Gender Differences in Decoding Nonverbal Cues," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 4, 1978, pp. 845-857.

Harder, D. and S. Lewis. "The Assessment of Shame and Guilt," *Advances in Personality Assessment*, Vol. 6, 1986, pp. 89-114.

Harder, D. L. Cutler, and L. Rockart. "Assessment of Shame and Guilt and Their Relationships to Psychopathology," *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 1992, pp. 584-604.

Hirschkind, C. and S. Mahmood. "Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counter-insurgency," 2002, <http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/>. Accessed on 15 September 2004.

Hochschild, A. *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Hussain, A. *Status of Women in Islam*. Lahore: Law Publishing Company, 1987.

Izard, C. and R. Kobak "Emotions System Functioning and Emotion Regulation," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Kelman, H. "Compliance, Identification, and Internalisation," in *Basic Studies in Social Psychology*, H. Proshansky and B. Seidenberg, eds. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, pp. 140-148.

Kemper, T. "Power, Status, and Emotions: A Sociological Contribution to a Psycho-physiological Domain," in *Approaches to Emotion*, K. Scherer and P. Ekman, eds. Hillside, New Jersey: Erlbaum, 1984, pp. 369-384.

Kohlberg, L. *Stage and Sequence: The Development Approach to Moralization*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Kopp, C. "Regulation of Distress and Negative Emotions: A Developmental View," *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 25, 1989, pp. 343-354.

Lewis, D. *Shame: The Exposed Self*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Lewis, D. "Bullying at Work: The Impact of Shame Among University and College Lecturers," *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, Vol. 32, No.3, 2004, pp. 281-299.

Lifton, R. *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*. New York: Norton, 1961.

Lutwak, N., J. Panish, J. Ferrari and B. Razzino. "Shame and Guilt and Their Relationship to Positive Expectations and Anger Expressiveness, *Adolescence*, Vol. 36, No. 144, 2001, pp. 641-653.

Mackie, J. "Rules and Reason," in *Law, Morality and Rights*, M.A. Stewart, ed. Dordrecht, 1995.

Mann, S. "Emotional Labour in Organizations," *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 18, No.1, 1997, pp. 4-12.

Masters, J. "Strategies and mechanisms for the personal and social control of emotion," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 182-207.

Masters, J., E. Felleman and R. Barden. "Experimental Studies of Affective States in Children," in *Advances in Clinical Child Psychology*, B. Lahey and A. Kazdin, A. eds. New York: Plenum, Vol. 4, 1981, pp. 91-114.

Maududi, A. *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islam*. Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1991.

McNally, R. "Progress and Controversy in the Study of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 54, 2003, pp. 229-252.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2004, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <<http://www.m-w.com>> Accessed on 23 December 2004.

Minai, N. *Women in Islam: Tradition and Transition in the Middle East*. London: John Murray, 1981.

Noah Webster, American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828 Edition.

Nolen-Hoeksema, S. "Sex Differences in Unipolar Depression: Evidence and Theory," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 101, No.2, 1987, 257-282.

Parsons, T. "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," in *Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social*

*Stratification*, R. Bendix and S. Lipset, eds. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1953, pp. 92-128.

Porges, S. "Vagal Tone: An Autonomic Mediator of Affect," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 111-128.

Pugliesi, K. "The Consequences of Emotional Labour: Effects of Work Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Well-Being," *Motivation and Emotion*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1999, pp. 125-154.

Putnam, L. and D. Mumby. "Organizations, emotion and the myth of rationality," in *Emotions in Organizations*, S. Fineman, ed. London: Sage, 1993, pp. 36-57.

Riesman, D., R. Denney and N. Glazer. *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Ross-Smith, A. and M. Komberger. "Gendered Rationality? A Genealogical Exploration of the Philosophical and Sociological Conceptions of Rationality, Masculinity and Organization," *Gender Work and Organization*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2004, pp. 280-299.

Rozin, P. and A. Fallon. "A Perspective on Disgust," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 94, No. 1, 1987, pp. 23-41.

Schachter, S. "The Interaction of Cognitive and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 1, L. Berkowitz, ed. New York: Academic Press, 1964, pp. 49-80.

Sears, R., L. Rau and R. Alpert. *Identification and Child Training*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965.

Simpson, P. and L. Stroh. "Gender Differences: Emotional Expression and Feelings of Personal Inauthenticity," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 89, No. 4, 2004, pp. 715-721.

Stevenson, C. *Ethics and Language*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944.

Syed, J. and F. Ali. "The Contextual Dimension of Emotional Labour for Working Women in Pakistan," *Academy of Management Conference*, Honolulu, 5-10 August 2005.

Trumbull, D. "Shame: An Acute Stress Response to Interpersonal Traumatisation," *Psychiatry*, Vol. 66, 2003, pp. 53-64.

Vygotsky, L. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1962.

Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.

Wharton, A. and R. Erickson. "Managing Emotion on the Job and at Home: Understanding the Consequences of Multiple Emotional Roles," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 18, No.3, 1993, pp. 457-486.

Whiting, J. and I. Child. *Child Training and Personality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.

Wikipedia 2004, Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, (Online), Available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Accessed on 23 December 2004.

Zahn-Waxler, C., P. Cole and K. Barrett. "Guilt and Empathy: Sex Differences and Implications for the Development of Depression," in *The Development of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation*, J. Garber and K. Dodge, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 243-272.

Zubair, S. "Women's Critical Illiteracies in Pakistani Classroom," *Changing English*, Vol.10, No. 2, 2003, pp. 163-173.