

## **Sisterhood Against Patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021)**

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### **A B S T R A C T**

Sisterhood, in the context of feminist theory, refers to the deep bond and solidarity among women that empowers them to support one another and collectively resist systems of oppression. This study examines the portrayal of sisterhood as a form of collective resistance against patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021). Using bell hooks' feminist theory of sisterhood as the primary analytical framework, the research explores how solidarity among female characters functions as an emotional support system and a trigger for collective action. The objectives of the study are to analyze how sisterhood is depicted throughout the movie and to investigate how it leads to collective action to challenge entrenched patriarchal norms within the high school setting. Employing qualitative descriptive methods, including close reading and in-depth analysis of dialogues, scenes, and character interactions, the study finds that sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) is expressed through mutual support, compassion, sharing resources and strengths, unity, and collaboration. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that sisterhood inspires collective action by fostering innovation, motivation, shared experiences, and empowerment through solidarity. This research contributes to feminist literary and criticism by highlighting the role of female solidarity as an effective strategy for resisting systemic gender oppression and promoting social change.

*Keywords:* *sisterhood, patriarchy, collective action.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the feminist movement has been a significant force in fighting for gender equality and justice for women. Feminists believe that gender discrimination is prevalent in all levels of society, creating widespread injustice and limiting women's rights and opportunities. In essence, feminism exists to address the systemic challenges women face while fighting for equality for all genders. Although the movement is inclusive, it is women who have been the most consistent in leading the resistance against the entrenched patriarchal system. As bell hooks (1984) emphasized,

feminism is not just about individual experiences but a collective struggle to end sexist oppression. She argues that to truly end patriarchy, women need to build collective awareness and deep solidarity, which arises from shared goals and a commitment to mutual support, not just superficial relationships.

From the bonds formed among women activists emerged the concept of sisterhood. Ahmad et al. (2023) define sisterhood as a network or community of women united by common interests and goals. This solidarity became a powerful unifying force during the second wave of feminism, strengthening collective efforts to achieve justice and empowerment. Bell hooks (1986) further argues that women are the group most victimized by sexist oppression, which is perpetuated by deep-rooted social structures and cultural norms. This oppression is evident in various aspects of life, including the workplace, educational institutions, and personal relationship, making true equality difficult to achieve. In response, hooks argues that the most effective strategy for addressing such systemic injustice is fostering genuine solidarity and sisterhood and sisterhood among women.

In contrast to ordinary friendship, this form of sisterhood is a deliberate and strategic relationship based on a shared awareness of oppression and a commitment to support each other in fighting against it. Hooks (1984) describes sisterhood as a collective space where women come together to overcome prejudice, fear, and other challenges. She argues that true sisterhood is not merely a biological relationship or shared experiences of oppression, but a political commitment to dismantle sexism. According to hooks, solidarity must be built across racial, class, and sexual orientation differences to show that women are not inherently divided by these differences. Furthermore, she emphasizes that true solidarity among women can only be achieved if they are willing to confront and eliminate the sexism and racism that often divide them.

In addition to building solidarity, sisterhood is essential in creating strong support networks to empower women and help them become more resilient. As hooks (2000) states, sisterhood encompasses sharing experiences and the cultivation of belonging and self-worth. These emotional and psychological bonds are complementary and at the core of feminist resistance. Longman (2018) also shows that the relationships formed among women provide an essential space for healing, empowerment, and mutual support, thus strengthening the role of the feminist movement. Sisterhood transforms the struggle against patriarchy from an individual effort into a collective movement focused on creating a more just and equitable society. By building strong solidarity and mutually reinforced support networks, women can find the courage and strength necessary to confront discrimination and injustice (hooks, 1984).

In response to this phenomenon, the writer conducted a study focusing on *Moxie* (2021), a movie released in 2021 that highlights the concept of sisterhood. *Moxie* (2021)

presents an interesting story about the rise of feminist movements and resistance in a high school environment. The movie follows Vivian, a shy 16-year-old girl who is inspired to challenge patriarchy in her school after learning about her mother's rebellion past. When Vivian anonymously publishes "Moxie," a zine exposing the school's sexist policies and behavior, she creates a platform for other girls to express their experiences of discrimination. The movie emphasizes how this small act grows into a significant solidarity movement, uniting students from diverse backgrounds against the entrenched patriarchy within the school environment.

The significance of the depiction of sisterhood is further reinforced by previous studies that have examined similar themes in different literary contexts. A relevant study on sisterhood was conducted by Ahmad et al. (2023). This study examines the portrayal of sisterhood in Bollywood movie *Parched*. Using feminist theory by Robin Morgan and bell hooks, the study finds that the bonds between the four female characters create a powerful collective force. Their solidarity enables them to resist violent marriages, social stigma, and gender exploitation, illustrating how mutual support empowers women to pursue collective liberation.

In addition, Lariesto and Gultom (2024) conducted research on sisterhood in the novel *My Sister's Keeper*. The study utilized Abrams' mimetic approach, which views art as a reflection of the universe. The study investigates how women navigate experiences of oppression and familial obligations through solidarity and support. The study shows that the main character struggles for autonomy as she demands medical emancipation from an oppressive family. The solidarity between the female characters allows them to find consolation, understanding, and a sense of empowerment in the face of adversity.

Numerous studies on sisterhood consistently show that struggle against oppression are widespread and ongoing in various societies. *Moxie* (2021) is compelling example of a movie exploring sisterhood as a form of struggle. Although *Moxie* (2021) has received significant attention for its feminist themes, no study has specifically analyzed the portrayal of sisterhood within the movie. Furthermore, this study aims to fill the gap by examining the female characters' experiences in *Moxie* (2021) as they challenge patriarchal within their school environment. This analysis seeks to broaden the understanding of sisterhood as a feminist strategy by applying bell hooks' theory of sisterhood. The study will examines the depiction of sisterhood and how it lead to collective actions against patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021).

## METHOD

This study uses bell hooks' feminist theory of sisterhood as its main analytical framework. This framework focuses on solidarity among women, emphasizing collective empowerment, joint struggle, and the formation of strategic alliances to fight patriarchal

oppression. The main data for this study is the movie *Moxie* (2021). As a teen drama, *Moxie* (2021) explores themes of feminism, activism, and female solidarity in a high school environment. In addition, data for this study were collected by watching *Moxie* (2021) multiple times and noting selected dialogues and scenes. The selected data were systematically organized during the data collection process to ensure accurate and structured documentation of the storylines, language, and character interactions.

After documenting all relevant dialogues and scenes, the compiled data was analyzed using bell hooks' theory of sisterhood. The analysis process used the TEEL (Topic, Evidence, Elaboration, Link Back) strategy to ensure that the findings could be presented clearly and systematically. Each section of analysis begins with a summary of the main aspects of sisterhood discussed, followed by an explanation of the importance of these aspects for character development and feminist resistance efforts in the story. In the final section, this study presents conclusions based on in-depth analysis results. These conclusions summarize the main findings and answer the research questions regarding how sisterhood is depicted and how its role becomes a collective action in resistance against patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section examines how sisterhood is portrayed and how it leads to collective action against patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021). It highlights female characters' transformation from individual frustration into collective action. This analysis will apply bell hooks' concept of sisterhood, a feminist perspective that emphasizes the importance of solidarity among women in confronting the oppressive patriarchal system. To support this analysis, evidence from movie, including selected dialogues and scenes will be presented to illustrate how acts of sisterhood develop into collective action.

### 1. Sisterhood Depicted in *Moxie* (2021)

The writer will examine how sisterhood is depicted in *Moxie* (2021). The analysis will focus on how the collective power of female students emerges in the face of patriarchy in school. This section will analyze scene, dialogue, and character interaction to see how sisterhood is depicted as the foundation for personal empowerment and social change.

#### **Mutual support**

Mutual support refers to the process in which individuals or groups provide each other with assistance, resources, and encouragement, creating sense of shared responsibility and collective strength. This support involves sharing experiences,

strengthening each other's abilities, and working together to achieve common goals. As bell hooks (1984) emphasizes, "Sisterhood is more than friendship or occasional support; it is a political commitment to collective liberation that requires sustained and continuous solidarity among women who share the same goals and beliefs." In *Moxie* (2021), one of the strongest examples of mutual support is seen in the scene where the girls support Kiera's campaign against Mitchell to win a scholarship.

Lucy : *"Kiera, you're a much better athlete than Mitchell. Also because we've been told in big ways and in small ways for our whole lives the achievements of men are more important than those of women."*

CJ : *"Yes, and you will win it."*

Kaitlynn : *"Yeah. It's bigger than Kiera. It's for girls everywhere."*

Kiera: *"Let's win this thing."*

Girls : [Cheering] *"Yeah."*

(The girls distributed posters to support Kiera to other students)

Kaitlynn : *"Vote for Kiera. You know you don't want to vote for Mitchell."*

Lucy : *"Hei vote Kiera. How you doing?"*

Meg : *"Vote Kiera, please?"*

(Timecode 01:05:44 – 01:08:10)

When Lucy says Kiera is a better athlete than Mitchell, she directly challenges the entrenched belief that men's achievements are more important than women. The supportive words from Lucy, CJ, and Kaitlynn instill confidence in Kiera and validate her worth. Their decision to distribute posters and openly campaign for Kiera demonstrates mutual support can be a powerful force. This solidarity is not just about choosing friends or taking sides in a competition but a symbol of their shared commitment to fight against the patriarchal norms that oppressed them. This scene shows that mutual support is about providing emotional reinforcement and the courage to act together for real change.

Mutual support is also evident in Claudia's calmer but equally influential actions. Although Claudia often appears quiet and reluctant to get involved in *Moxie*'s activities, her decision to register *Moxie* as an official school club shows how dedicated she is to the movement. By ensuring *Moxie* is officially recognized, Claudia supports and protects her friends from school pressure and helps ensure their voices are heard. As she explains to Vivian:

Claudia : "You're welcome. I caught Shelly trying to tear your guys' posters down, because you never registered Moxie in the office. So I did it. Moxie is now officially a school club and gets access to elite privileges, such as hanging stuff on walls. We might also have to learn how to play chess."

Vivian : "Thank you, Claudia."

Claudia : "I do care, okay? Just have to let me do things my way."

(Timecode 01:08:20–01:08:52)

This scene shows that mutual support can take many forms, depending on each person's strengths and abilities. As hooks (2000) notes, true sisterhood does not require everyone to contribute in the same way but instead values the diversity of how women show care and resistance. *Moxie* illustrates that women's solidarity can manifest in many forms, from overt collective actions to small meaningful actions. This mutual support creates a safe space where women can share experiences, strengthen one another, and cultivate the confidence to challenge unfair systems.

### **Compassion**

Compassion can be defined as the feeling that arises when witnessing the suffering of others and that motivates the desire to help (Goetz et al., 2010). In a social context, compassion is important in creating a supportive community, especially when individuals experience emotional pain or isolation. In *Moxie* (2021), compassion is an essential part of how sisterhood is portrayed, highlighting the importance of care and empathy in building solidarity among women. One example occurs when Emma bravely shares her experience of sexual harassment with her friends. Feeling unheard and alone, she seeks support from Moxie group. The conversation below shows how the girls express compassion and create space for Emma to share her story:

Emma : "I'm the one who reached out for help. Because it felt like Moxie was the only one who was listening."

Girls : "We're listening."

Lucy : "We're here."

Vivian : "I'm sorry you feel alone. You shouldn't have to go through this alone."

Kiera : "What happens to you is important. And we will make sure that your voice is heard."

Girls : "We support you. You are not alone anymore."

(Timecode 01:39:43 – 01:41:09)

The scene illustrates Emma's courage in speaking up and the group's genuine compassion in response. Their words reinforce her feelings and provide emotional support. The girls' empathy helps Emma feel stronger and strengthens their bond,

showing that sisterhood is built on shared commitment to support each other, fight for justice, and confront oppression together. A similar example of compassion is seen in the scene when Vivian approaches Lucy, who is being bullied by Mitchell. Vivian initiates the conversation with clear purpose and genuine concern, showing that solidarity often begins with small but meaningful actions, such as asking how someone is doing when they are in trouble:

Vivian : "Hey, Lucy. Uh, we have English class together."

Lucy : "Vivian, right? You sit in the back."

Vivian : "Yeah, that's me. I just wanted to talk to you about Mitchell."

Lucy : "What's wrong with him? Why do I have to deal with him?"

Vivian : "I know he can be frustrating for you. It's not fair that you have to put up with his behavior."

Lucy : "Yeah! He makes me feel uncomfortable and unsafe."

Vivian : "I totally understand. I think he's just trying to get attention, but that's not right."

Lucy : "So what should I do? Just ignore him?"

Vivian : "I think it might help if you don't respond to him. If you're feeling overwhelmed, just know that I'm here for you. We can support each other."

Lucy : "Thank you, Vivian. It's good to know that I'm not alone."

Vivian : "Of course. We're doing this together. If you ever want to talk or need someone to support you, just let me know."

(Timecode 00:16:40 – 00:17:57)

Vivian's approach shows that compassion involves more than sympathy, it requires active listening and a willingness to stand with others. By acknowledging Lucy's feelings and providing support, Vivian creates a safe space where Lucy feels seen, heard, and valued. This moment shows that compassion in sisterhood is not only about emotional support but also the assurance that someone is ready to help in concrete ways. Vivian's actions calmed Lucy and fostered her courage to reject oppressive behavior. As Goetz et al. (2010) argue, compassion involves recognizing another person's suffering and feeling motivated to help. Vivian embodies this principle with her sincere attitude and concern. In addition, Neff (2011) suggests that compassion for others is closely tied to self-compassion and resilience. When women show compassion in the community, they strengthen each other and reinforce their self-confidence and collective strength to confront injustice.

## Sharing Resources and Strengths

In *Moxie* (2021), sisterhood among female students is clearly depicted through the sharing of resources and powers as a way to confront gender inequality and patriarchal norms in their school. In line with bell hooks' perspective, "Women form bonds with each other based on sharing strengths and resources" (hooks, 1984). She emphasizes that collaboration in exchanging material, intellectual, and emotional resources is crucial for empowering women and challenging dominance. This theme is clearly illustrated in the scene where Vivian, Lucy, Kaitlynn, CJ, and Kiera work together to distribute feminist zines throughout their school. Their collective action demonstrates how shared resources such as information, time, and effort become powerful tools for raising awareness and inspiring solidarity:

Vivian : "Come on, let's start near the hall! We'll distribute them before the teachers arrive."

Lucy : "Make sure the ones in the computer lab get one too. They usually miss out."

(The girls, including Lucy, CJ, Kaitlynn, and Kiera, begin spreading the zines around the school)

Kaitlynn: "Every time we spread the zine, I feel like we're starting a small fire. It's slow, but it's going to get bigger."

Kiera : "It's not just paper. It's our voice."

(Timecode 00:53:49–00:54:37)

This scene shows that zines serve not only as material resources but also as a means of spreading knowledge about gender injustice and feminist ideas. The distribution of zines becomes an act of collective resistance and a way to create a shared purpose. Behind this visible action is an exchange of emotional resources, in which the girls support each other and strengthen their commitment. As Johnson and Smith (2019) explained, sharing tangible and intangible resources among women fosters collective agency and resilience in the face of systemic oppression. Therefore, zines are more than just information; they are symbols of resistance that strengthen trust and deepen solidarity.

Another concrete example of sharing resource can be seen in the secret meeting held by the girls in *Moxie* (2021). In this scene, the girls gather secretly to discuss who might be behind the anonymous Moxie movement and to share personal experiences they have kept quiet about for years. For example, Amaya expresses her disappointment that their sports team did not receive appropriate uniforms despite qualifying for the state finals. At the same time, Kiera shares her discomfort at being objectified by the school's "Best Ass" award. These conversations serve as an emotional and social source that validates each member's feelings and strengthens their solidarity. By sharing their stories, the girls create a space where they feel heard, understand, and not alone in their struggles.

Through this dialogue, they exchange ideas and perspectives that help them develop a shared strategy for action and change.

Amaya : "Come on. We want to talk to you guys. You heard the lady. Follow me."

Kiera : "Okay. How is Moxie?"

Kiera : "No one knows what Moxie wants or what their plan is?"

Lucy : "Yeah, I think that they want our school to be save and fair."

Amaya : "You know what's not fair? Our team went to state final and our uniform suck."

Kaitlynn: "You know what's messed up? I got sent home for wearing a tank top. Meanwhile, Jason is constantly shirtless."

Lucy : "Guys, I'm just glad we're talking about this."

Amaya : "Whoever wrote Moxie is a baddas."

Lucy : "Guys, we just had the official first Moxie meeting."

Vivian : "Hell, yeah!"

(Timecode 00:41:42 – 00:43:08)

The two conversations above show how sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) emerges through the act of sharing resources among the female students. In addition to sharing resources, sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) is also reflected through sharing strengths. This includes emotional support, collective courage, and a willingness to confront injustice. Although blood ties do not bind the girls, their bond transcends ordinary friendship, developing into a bond based on a common goal. As hooks (1984) notes, they build bonds with other women based on shared strength and resources. This idea is clearly illustrated in a scene where each girl openly acknowledges her role in the Moxie movement and takes collective responsibility for their acts of resistance.

Vivian : "You know what? If you're going to expel somebody, expel me. Okay? It's me. I started Moxie. I am Moxie."

Lucy : "Then expel me, too. I started the Moxie Instagram, and I did that proudly. I got you."

Kaitlynn: "I protested the dress code. I wear what I want no matter what my body looks like, and I'm never changing. So expel me!"

Amaya : "I tripped Bradley in his dumb ass pirate costume. That's feminism there. And I do not feel bad about it. Moxie forever."

(Timecode 01:38:40–01:39:42)

In this moment, each girl claims her agency and shows that the support of the others amplifies her strength. Vivian's leadership is immediately followed by Lucy's solidarity, Kaitlynn's rejection of dress code restrictions, and Amaya's fearless protest. Their

statements reflect a shared responsibility and collective empowerment. These actions illustrate hooks (1984) assertion that solidarity is not merely support but a shared commitment to beliefs and common goals that define true sisterhood.

*Moxie* (2021) generally shows how sisterhood grows through the ongoing sharing of resources and strengths. Whether distributing zines to spread feminist ideas or uniting against the patriarchal system, the movie shows that solidarity is built through collaboration and mutual care. As bell hooks explains, "Solidarity is not support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build sisterhood" (hooks, 1984). The actions of these girls illustrate how when women unite to share what they know, what they have, and who they are, they create a powerful community that can challenge injustice and inspire others to do the same actions.

### **Unity and Collaboration**

Unity and collaboration in sisterhood grow from mutual trust, shared goals, and a commitment to supporting one another. In true sisterhood, women are not merely individuals but part of a collective power that draws strength from connection and cooperation. They share experiences, listen to one another, face challenges, and celebrate achievements together. This unity creates a safe space where every woman feels heard, valued, and encouraged to grow without fear of judgment. Collaboration within this bond means understanding and appreciating each other's contributions and recognizing that small steps can bring about significant change. When women unite and collaborate, they uplift one another and gain the power to create meaningful change in their communities.

The concept of unity is depicted in *Moxie* (2021) through the supportive interactions between Kiera, Amaya, CJ, Kaitlynn, Lucy, and Vivian as they affirm their shared commitment to the Moxie movement. Recognizing the power of unity, the girls encourage and strengthen each other's commitment to come together. The following conversation illustrates how unity create a strong sense of togetherness.

Kiera : "Cool."

Amaya : "Showing the people what's up. Females gotta stick together. Number one untapped resource, women. Lady power."

CJ : "Star for star baby."

Kaitlynn: "Hey, Vivian. Nice star."

Lucy : "Good morning, and welcome to the revolution. Please tell me you did it."

Vivian : "Yeah, do you like it?"

Lucy : "Yo, I took this picture, and I started the hashtag #MoxieGirlsFightBack. There are more of us than you think."

Vivian : "Oh, that's so cool."

(Timecode 00:34:53–00:35:40)

This scene occurs after the Moxie zine inspires the girls to draw stars and hearts as symbols of unity and resistance. Their enthusiasm demonstrates how collective symbols can strengthen group identity and solidarity. They create a space where every woman feels recognized and supported through humor, affirmation, and encouragement. Lucy's initiative to launch the hashtag #MoxieGirlsFightBack shows how unity can expand the reach of their struggle. This interaction illustrates the feminist perspective that collective experience, emotional support, and collective action are at the core of resistance against systemic gender injustice (Tong, 2009). By uniting, the girls in *Moxie* (2021) demonstrate how solidarity can build the confidence needed to challenge patriarchy.

Sisterhood is also demonstrated through a spirit of collaboration. This collaboration fosters a shared purpose and reinforces the understanding that meaningful change occurs when women act together. One example of collaboration is seen in the scene where students plan a silent protest against the sexist dress code.

Vivian : "Okay, we need real action. These rules about inappropriate clothing' are clearly just targeting us girls."

Lucy : "Yes! If guys wear tank tops, it's no problem. But we get sent home just for wearing short sleeves?"

CJ : "Why don't we all come wearing clothes that 'break the rules' together?"

Lucy : "Like a silent protest. We make a scene but don't say a single word."

Vivian : "I like that. We'll spread the word through the zine, but make sure everyone who joins knows the risks."

CJ : "I can coordinate with the other girls. Many of them also feel this rule is unfair."

Girls : "Okay!"

(Timecode 00:54:40–00:55:34)

This conversation highlights how collaboration is depicted when Vivian, Lucy, CJ, and the girls plan their strategy and take responsibility for challenging discriminatory policies at their school. Lucy expresses injustice, CJ volunteers to coordinate with other students, and Vivian ensures everyone knows the risks. Their conversation demonstrates how shared anger transforms into concrete action when women trust and rely on one another. As Ahmed (2005) observes, Women's movements often emerge from shared emotional experiences, which are then transformed into collective action through

solidarity and mutual support. These moments of collaboration foster resilience and develop leadership and empowerment among the girls.

Unity and collaboration in this context complement each other and form the foundation for collective empowerment. Unity creates bonds that make women feel safe, valued, and inspired. Collaboration transforms those bonds into meaningful action. By working together, the girls combine their strengths, experiences, and resources to challenge the injustices they face (Matutina, 2023).

## 2. Sisterhood Leads to Collective Action Against Patriarchy in *Moxie* (2021)

This section analyzes how sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) leads to collective action. The movie shows how shared frustration and mutual support empower girls to transform individual struggles into collective action against the patriarchal system. Their collaboration illustrates that women's solidarity is not only emotional support but also a driver of social change.

### Inspiration and Motivation

In *Moxie* (2021), sisterhood plays a crucial role in inspiring and motivating female students to recognize and challenge the patriarchal culture that has long shaped their school environment. This bond of sisterhood becomes a powerful force that transforms feelings of isolation into collective action. One example of this inspiration is depicted in the scene where Vivian discovers her mother's feminist zine from her youth. This moment triggers Vivian's awareness of her mother's rebellious past and connects her to the legacy of feminist resistance:

Vivian : "Hey, Mom, what do 16-year-olds care about?"

Lisa : "Oh, I don't know. When I was 16, all I cared about was smashing the patriarchy and burning it all down."

Vivian : "Well, I can't put that on my application." Vivian : "You know how you're always telling me to keep my head up high? It's from a song you used to play when I was little?"

Lisa : "Yeah. Rebel Girl. Bikini Kill. Why?"

Vivian : "Uh, history project."

(Vivian searches through a box labeled "Rebellion - Lisa" and finds a zine.)

Vivian : [reading] "Because I believe with my whole heart, mind, body that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can and will change the world for real."

Vivian : "This... is amazing."

(She begins writing down ideas.)

(Timecode 00:18:07-00:21:28)

This discovery inspired Vivian and strengthened her belief in the transformative power of sisterhood. Lisa's memories of the zine show how feminist values and activism can be passed down from generation to generation. As bell hooks (2000) notes, feminist solidarity is often sustained through the sharing of stories, histories, and cultural expressions that connect women across time and place. Vivian's enthusiastic reaction and immediate desire to act demonstrate how the spirit of collective struggle can motivate new movements for change.

Sisterhood in the movie also serves as a motivation to empower women to speak up and take action. When women find strength in each other's experiences and values, they build unity that drives collective action. This action is revealed in Lucy's speech during the walkout:

Lucy : *"This school doesn't care about us. They protect guys like Mitchell and tell us to keep quiet. But we're not going to be quiet anymore. We're walking out for Emma, for every girl who's been told to sit down, shut up, or just take it. We deserve to feel safe here. We deserve to be heard."*

(Timecode 01:43:12-01:43:31)

In this moment, Lucy channels her anger and disappointment into a call to action. She mentions the double standard that allows male students to escape from responsibility while silencing girls. Her words express anger and unite her friends towards a common goal of demanding safety and justice. This collective action demonstrates how sisterhood can transform individual experiences of powerlessness into solidarity and coordinated resistance. As Kamini and Komal (2024) emphasize, women's solidarity is critical for sustaining the spirit of struggle and promoting lasting social transformation. The bonds of mutual support and shared goals in *Moxie* (2021) show how sisterhood motivates young women to confront patriarchy and collectively fight for a more equal future.

### **Shared Experiences**

In *Moxie* (2021), sisterhood is also built through the recognition of the shared experience of unfair treatment experienced by many girls in the school environment. When the characters realize that their struggles are not experienced alone, they feel a stronger bond with each other. This transformation shows how an initially silent and shameful experience can turn into a shared strength that inspires them to stand up and create change. One clear example of this shared experience is seen when several girls came together and spoke honestly about the unfair treatment they had kept to themselves for so long. From there, personal experiences turn into reasons to unite and fight injustice together.

Lucy : "I don't know who made this zine, but finally someone said it out loud. This place is messed up."

Claudia : "Right? They told me to just 'ignore it' when I complained about Mitchell calling me names in class."

Kiera : "And the dress code? I got sent home for wearing a tank top, but Mitchell walks around in a muscle tee and no one says a thing."

CJ : "It's like they want to control everything about us, what we wear, how we talk, even how we sit in class."

Amaya : "Yeah, and if we speak up, they saw we're being dramatic or angry."

Lucy : "We shouldn't have to pretend anymore. This zine could be our chance to actually do something."

Claudia : "But what if they find out? What if we get in trouble?"

Kaitlynn: "Then we get in trouble together. That's the point, right? None of us are alone in this."

Amaya : "If we all stand up, they can't ignore us anymore."

(Timecode 00:44:08–00:45:00)

In this conversation, Lucy expresses relief that finally someone dares to speak up about the injustices they have experienced. Her words spark a reaction from her friends, who also speak up and share their experiences. Claudia admits that when she tried to report harassment, no one took her seriously. Kiera talks about the unfair dress code that punishes girls but let boys do whatever they want. CJ describes how every little thing they do is constantly watched and judged. And Amaya shares how girls who dare to speak out are always labeled as too dramatic and over. As they listen to each other, it becomes clear that what they once thought were just their private struggles are problems they all face every day. This moment shows how a sisterhood that grows from shared experiences can turn feelings of loneliness into a connection and from that connection, the courage to stand up together. This sisterhood is reinforced later when the students participate in a public demonstration and openly share their stories:

Vivian : "I used to think the things that happened to us were just... part of being a girl. Like getting catcalled, or laughed at, or touched without permission."

Emma : "I stayed quiet because I thought I was alone. I thought no one else felt this scared. This angry."

Kiera : "But we all have. We've all felt ignored. Or unsafe. Or ashamed for something that wasn't our fault."

Amaya : "And now we know – we're not alone. It's not just one girl. It's all of us."

Lucy : "They wanted us to think we were isolated. But we're not. We have each other now. And that means everything."

All : "We believe her. We believe each other."

(Timecode 01:42:09–01:43:15)

In this scene, Vivian reflects on how she used to think harassment was normal in her life as a woman. Emma then admits that she remained silent because she felt scared and alone. One by one, their friends begin to speak up, and slowly, they all realize that this experience is not just a personal problem but part of a larger systemic pattern of injustice that affected them. This shared experience becomes a turning point. As Crain and Matheny (2018) explain, sharing stories in a safe and supportive space can strengthen unity and trigger collective action. Through honesty, courage, and trust in each other, the girls create a community where they can speak the truth and demand change. In this way, their shared experiences transform into a real collective action to challenge the patriarchy embedded in their school.

### **Empowerment Through Solidarity**

Sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) leads to collective action by promoting empowerment through solidarity. This collective response is a form of protest and shows how social solidarity can empower individuals to fight systemic injustice. One of the clearest examples of this action is the protest against the sexist dress code, which started with an anonymous zine distributed by Vivian. The zine directly addresses the unfair treatment of Kaitlynn and calls on students to take a stand together. The following dialogue illustrates a collective awakening to the gender bias embedded in the school's policies:

(The students read the zine calling for a protest.)

Kaitlynn: "Oh, my gosh. It's about me. Listen to this. Hey, *Moxie* girls, have you had enough of these ridiculous, sexist dress code checks?"

Kiera : "They're arbitrary and focus overwhelmingly on girls over boys."

Amaya : "That's true. Double standard."

CJ : "Operating on the idea that girls are responsible for boys' behavior." Claudia: "In protest of this outdated, archaic set of rules, on Thursday come to school in a tank top."

(The next day, all female students went to school wearing tank tops as a protest action called by *Moxie*.)

(Timecode 00:47:40–00:48:07)

The next day, all the girls came to school wearing tank tops. This action becomes a real and unified form of protest and collective resistance. By taking part in this protest, the girls are taking back control of their bodies and challenging the system that has been trying to regulate and silence them. Each tank top worn is not just an item of clothing but

a symbol of courage and rebellion. In addition, it is not just against an unfair dress code but against a broader patriarchal culture that oppresses and blames them. This moment shows that sisterhood is about supporting each other and standing together for change. Their coordinated action was a turning point from separate voices to a loud collective power.

The impact of the initial protest continues to spread, boosting the students' confidence in their collective power. When they unite to protest the unfair dress code, they build trust in one another and gain self-confidence. Consequently, when a call is made for a walkout to support a friend who experiences sexual harassment, they do not hesitate to respond. The solidarity that develops becomes a strong foundation for further action. Their sisterhood evolves from merely supporting each other to forming a significant movement that boldly confronts injustice. This is clearly evident during the walkout organized by Moxie. Despite the school's principal threatening to punish them, the students still leave the classroom together. This action demonstrates how empowerment through solidarity fosters ongoing collective action.

(Moxie Official's Instagram caption reads: "Tired of what goes on at school? A student wrote a note and said she was raped. WALK OUT at the attendance bell and show your support. Show her she's not alone.")

Mr. Bradley: "*I will read you the school policy. Any student who walks out will be considered to be showing support for the Moxie group which damages school property and is an offense punishable by expulsion. Think about it carefully.*"

(The school bell rings.)

Vivian : "*Come on, get out here!*"

Students: "*Let's go!*"

(All students leave their classrooms and gather on the field.)

(Timecode 01:35:38–01:37:05)

Moxie's Instagram post was a powerful trigger for the students to act. The message not only expressed anger at the injustice but also conveyed empathy and support for victims of sexual harassment. It reminded everyone that victims are not alone and can demonstrate solidarity by standing together. When Mr. Bradley warns that anyone joining the walkout could be expelled from school, it reflects how the school attempts to suppress student voices to protect its image. However, Vivian stood up and encouraged her friends not to remain silent, leading them in the walkout. Her courage to speak out demonstrates how someone who may initially be quiet can become a leader when they feel supported and not isolated. Because of the strength of the sisterhood they built, Vivian found the bravery to step forward.

When the students walked out of the classroom together, it was a protest and a declaration that they would not remain silent in the face of injustice. This action illustrates how the power of sisterhood can empower individuals to confront their fears and unite in the struggle. They show that when one feels supported by others, fear can transform into courage, allowing small voices to merge into a collective action that cannot be ignored. This aligns with Yousafzai and Aljanova's (2025) explanation that collective empowerment begins with individual self-confidence, develops through mutual support within the group, and culminates in decisive collective action. In this case, solidarity transcends mere togetherness and becomes a genuine force for change

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study conducted by the writer on sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) using bell hooks' sisterhood theory reveals that the movie depicts sisterhood as a powerful and transformative force that empowers women to confront patriarchy and systemic gender injustice in the school environment. The movie depicts that sisterhood manifests in various forms, including mutual support, compassion, sharing resources and strengths, unity, and collaboration. These expressions are seen in the characters' actions such as providing emotional encouragement, creating a safe space to share experiences, and organizing collective protests that encourage personal growth and collective strength.

Furthermore, this study concludes that sisterhood in *Moxie* (2021) leads to collective action through innovation, motivation, shared experiences, and empowerment built on solidarity. The female characters channel their shared frustrations into collective resistance, including feminist zine distribution, silent protests, and school strikes. All actions show how emotional bonds and shared goals evolved into a bold and unified movement. Through sisterhood, they can challenge patriarchal norms and inspire each other to become more confident, powerful and actively involved in the work for social change.

The suggestions from this study are intended to provide useful guidance for future researchers interested in exploring the themes of sisterhood, feminism, and resistance to patriarchy in literature and movies. Drawing from the findings, it is advised to utilize bell hooks' theory of sisterhood or other feminist perspectives to examine how female solidarity operates as a strategy to confront patriarchy and systemic injustice. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of how emotional connections, collective efforts, and shared experiences among women contribute to both social and personal transformation. Through feminist theoretical frameworks, researchers can critically investigate the political and social forces that influence women's relationships and foster resistance.

Moreover, the author recommends that future researchers interested in analyzing *Moxie* (2021) explore other perspectives, such as youth culture or media studies, to gain deeper insights into the characters and social dynamics depicted in the movie. Future research can also consider other feminist theoretical approaches or compare *Moxie* (2021) with similar works to provide a broader and more comprehensive understanding of resistance to the patriarchal system.

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