

**GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN
JOB SATISFACTION, PROFESSIONAL STRESS &
WORK FAMILY CONFLICT IN ACADEMIA**

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ABSTRACT

A comparative exploratory approach was adopted in this study to explore gender and institutional (i.e. public and private sector) differences regarding job satisfaction, professional stress, and work family conflict in school, college and university teachers in Lahore. The participants (N= 240) were selected with an equal number of men (n=120) and women (n=120) from all three academic segments i.e. schools (n =80), colleges (n =80) and universities (n =80). Each segment was further subdivided into equal number of public and private institutes. The measures used in the study were: Job in General Scale (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989), Professional Life Stress Scale (Fontana, 1989), Work-Family Conflict Scale (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983). The t-test was employed to examine the differences. The results indicated female teachers scored significantly higher on work-family conflict than male teachers. Further, teachers of public sector scored higher on work-family conflict than teachers of private sector. Thus, it can be concluded that gender and academic institute has significant effect on work family conflict.

Keywords: Academia, Stress, Work family conflict, Job satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the advancement of research on professional/work stress, job satisfaction and work-family conflict in various professions, there is dearth of indigenous researches in this scenario. Hence, present study aimed to find out the gender and institution wise differences on job satisfaction, professional stress, and work-family conflict. The present study included academicians of public and private sector since teaching profession is categorized as one of the stressful professions. Academia or educational institutes are back bone of any nation because they not only educate masses but they also are responsible for building future of nation and of course teachers are most important segment in imparting education and in character building of nation's future that is why this study focused this sample. Comparison of public and private is a long run never ending debate. A lot of researchers compare both the sectors as both have their own pros and cons so far as administration, pay structure, fringe benefits and environment is concerned. That is why these two variables were opted for current study.

Job satisfaction is vital for organizations because it increases employee's productivity and this devotion is beneficial for organizational progress. Thus, it is a positive factor in development of any organization (Kabir & Parvin, 2011). Okpara, Squillace and Erondu (2005) while studying university teachers found out that there were significant gender differences in different aspects of job satisfaction. Women were more satisfied with their work and co-workers whereas men were more satisfied with their pay, promotions and supervision. Kim (2005) while studying gender differences in different institutions indicated that women in public sector are equally satisfied with their jobs as men. Further, Singh, Kaur, and Singh (2015) while analyzing college and university teachers found non-significant association between gender and job satisfaction whereas both the college and university teachers were satisfied with different aspects of job satisfaction. With regard to public and private sector institutions, Macklin, Smith, and Dollard (2006) found significant difference in public and private sector employees on the basis of job satisfaction in academia.). In an indigenous study, Latif, Shahid, Sohail and Shahbaz (2011) evaluated college teachers of public and private colleges in Faisalabad and found out significant differences in their job satisfaction. The public sector teachers outscored private sector teachers significantly. Thus, literature does not illustrate a clear picture of teachers' job satisfaction so far as gender and institutions are concerned. Pakistani studies indicated significant results whereas foreign studies indicated non-significant results.

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The second variable of interest in this study was the professional stress. Stress has become one of the most commonly used words in lay man language along with depression and tension. The “Stringere (to draw tight)” is the root word for Latin word stress. In business circles word ‘job stress/ work place stress/ professional stress’ has gained popularity and a lot of researches are being conducted on reasons and solutions. Stress can be defined as an adaptive response of a person in face of excessive physical and psychological demands (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998). Basically the increased popularity of this term is because negative effects of individual stress are not limited to individual only but it prevails to work place as well and results in higher number of absentees, accidents and stringent environment.

It is estimated that stress costs almost \$200 billion per year to American industry because they face employees’ absenteeism. Employee productivity reduces because of health issues as the employees claim compensation and health insurance and medical expenses. In UK stress costs a loss of 13 million working days or up to £12 billion annually (White, 2006). Research indicates that stress is significant issue for many adults in the labor force. The cost of stress for organizations is high because stress negatively affects employees’ health (Leka, Griffiths, & Cox, 2003). It is difficult for individuals to avoid stress but they must learn how to manage it (Health and Safety Executive, 2000). Work related stress is usually caused by organizational environment (culture of organization), inability to meet the demands of job, time pressure, mismatch between job and capabilities, role ambiguity, work over load, role conflict and imbalanced work and reward (Wainwright & Calnan, 2000), economic crisis, family demands and sociological pressures (Fiedler, Rocco, Schroeder, & Nguyen, 2000).

Profession and job status too are considered to be the determinants of job stress. Mostly low status workers and high status workers face more stress level. Usually mild stress level professions include journalism, sales and television whereas teaching, security, law, police and medical fields are considered high stress professions. Teaching is considered as a highly stressful occupation. It is at number 4 in 10 highly stressful professions in America (Brinson, 2015). With regard to gender difference on professional stress, Matud (2004) indicated that women suffer more stress as compared to males. Blaug, Kenyon and Lekhi (2007) demonstrated that those who have jobs of nursing, teaching and administration in public sector are more stressed than those who work in private organizations. In an indigenous study conducted by Akbar and Akhtar (2011), it is showed that private education sector is more stressful for faculty members as

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compared to public sector. Bano and Jha (2012) indicated non-significant differences in stress level of public and private sector employees. Further, Sulaiman and Akinsanya (2011) indicated that public sector university teachers were more prone to stress than private sector counter parts but it is basically because the government policies are not favorable to teachers in public sector. It has been seen that teachers' stress results in early retirement, absenteeism of staff from the schools, and they leave their occupation within few years. If teachers feel stress then they show negligence and discomfort towards their occupation (Gugleilmi & Tatrow, 1998). Contemplating these negative consequences, professional stress has been taken as a second variable in the study.

The third variable of interest in the present study is work-family conflict. The work and family are important segments of life and problem at one reciprocates to other as well (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). When involvement in work roles creates problem in participation of family role the result is work-family conflict. Work-family conflict is defined as a source of stress originating from opposing pressure from the work and family domains (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). When demands are not fulfilled then difficulties in work and family roles occur. Work-family conflict is a common problem experienced by large number of employees (Aslam, Shumaila, Azhar, & Sadaqat, 2011).

Studies have demonstrated that women experience more work family conflict in educational institutes (Griep, et al. 2015). Fox, Fonseca and Bao (2011) indicated that both men and women face work family conflict but it is significantly higher in females of educational institutes. Akintayo (2010) also indicated significant gender differences in work family conflict of faculty members. Rahim, Hoque, Mamun and Shahab (2013) indicated that work life conflict is putting more pressure on women to achieve balance. In Pakistani context, Rehman and Waheed (2012) indicated non-significant work family conflict in public and private sector universities' faculty but they also emphasized that this result may be due to the small sample size of study, hence it needs to be explored further. Many negative outcomes occur as a result of interference of work and family life. According to Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) such situation causes job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, difficulty in communication, more absentees in meetings and lower commitment.

Keeping in view the previous literature the objectives set for this study were: First, to explore gender differences in academicians on job satisfaction,

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professional stress, and work family conflict; Second, to identify institution-wise (i.e. Public and Private sector), differences on job satisfaction, professional stress, and work family conflict. There is an abundance of studies relating to job satisfaction, professional stress and work family conflict but this study has its significance in dealing with all segments of academia i.e. schools, colleges and universities which is a unique combination and has never been studied earlier in Pakistan. We did not find any study which encompasses all three types of educational institutes i.e. schools, colleges and universities. Some researchers worked on universities and others on colleges. Hence, this study added all three institutes to add unique contribution in existing literature. This study has its implication for academicians, heads and administrators of educational institutes in understanding gender and institute wise effects on all three factors which are vital for any organization's growth and productivity.

Following hypotheses for this study were framed:

1. There would be gender differences on the variables of professional stress, job satisfaction and work-family conflict.
2. There would be difference in the magnitude of job satisfaction, professional stress and work family conflict between public and private sector teachers.

METHOD

Participants

The sample for present study consisted of teachers (N= 240) recruited from public and private sector schools, colleges and universities. The educational institutes were randomly selected from names of all public and private universities through fish bowl technique and then participants were purposively selected with an equal ratio of men and women in total and in each segment (Table 1). The descriptive statistics for age of the sample is presented in Table 2.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Institution

Institution Type	School (n=80)			College (n=80)			University (n=80)		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Public (n=120)	40	31.25	7.65	40	36.10	11.16	40	39.67	11.18
Private (n=120)	40	29.61	8.83	40	34.75	10.25	40	38.25	8.58

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for the Age of Sample

Gender	Institution Type	Public Sector (n=120)			Private Sector (n=120)		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Female Teachers (n=120)	School (n=40)	20	27.31	5.63	20	27.70	6.11
	College (n=40)	20	29.44	5.12	20	29.1	5.14
	University (n=40)	20	37.45	9.87	20	37.65	7.80
Male Teachers (n=120)	School (n=40)	20	35.00	7.54	20	31.57	10.48
	College (n=40)	20	42.42	11.19	20	40.4	11.05
	University (n=40)	20	41.9	12.20	20	37.45	9.87

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Measures

Job in General Scale (JIGS)

The Job in General Scale (JIGS; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul (1989) was used for measuring job satisfaction. There were total 9 items in the scale. These were basically nine adjectives about job satisfaction and participants were to rate each adjective as "Yes", "No" and "Don't know". The reliability index at different samples as reported by Ironson and colleagues remained .91 to .95.

Professional Life Stress Scale (PLSS)

The Professional Life Stress Scale (PLSS; Fontana, 1989) was used for measuring professional stress. There were 24 items in this scale. One item contained 22 common symptoms of stress, 19 items catered professional and personal limitations, interaction with the colleagues at workplace, working environment and time management and were to be scored as 0, 1 & 2. From remaining 4 items one item was to rate yourself from 1 (*least like*) to 5 (*most like*) and 3 items catered others' opinion about the participants (though participants have to rate that as well). It is a self-administered scale and categorizes stress into four levels, (i) Up to 15 = *Non problematic stress*; (ii) 16-30 = *Moderate level stress*; (iii) 31-45 = *problematic stress*; and (iv) 45-60 = *major stress problem*. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of PLSS as reported by Fontana and Abouserie (1993) was .74.

Work-Family Conflict Scale (WFCS)

The Work-Family Conflict Scale (WFCS; Kopleman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983) was to measure work-family conflict. There were total 12 items in this 5-point Likert type scale. Response pattern ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). The greater the score, there is more work family conflict. The reliability coefficient of the scale ranged from was .91 (Esson, 2004).

Procedure

The data was collected from different schools, colleges, and universities. A list of all schools, colleges and universities was acquired and institutions were

randomly selected by random sampling using fish bowl technique. Once the institutions were finalized; the participants were purposively selected after taking formal permission from authorities of academic institutions. Informed consent was taken from all the participants and they were assured the confidentiality and anonymity. First, the demographic form was filled in. Followed by the Job in General Scale, Professional Life Stress Scale and Work Family Conflict Scale were presented one after another and enough time was given to participants to fill out questionnaires. At the end they were thanked for their cooperation.

Scoring & Statistical Analysis

After data collection and scoring of the measures, all the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS; Version 17.0). The *t*-test was utilized to test the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS

Table 3
Gender Differences on the Variables of Job Satisfaction, Professional Stress and Work Family Conflict

Variables	Men (n=120)		Women (n=120)		df	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
JS	20.71	6.19	19.63	6.75	238	1.29	.197
PS	18.71	6.74	19.69	6.85	238	-1.11	.268
WFC	33.91	11.51	37.52	9.10	238	2.69	.01*

Note: Job Satisfaction=JS; Professional Stress=PS; Work-Family Conflict=WFC

**p*<.05

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Table 4:
Differences on the Variables of Job Satisfaction, Professional Stress and Work-Family Conflict between Public and Private Sector Teachers

Variables	Public Sector (n=120)		Private Sector (n=120)		df	t	Sig.
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
JS	20.97	6.17	19.37	6.71	238	-1.06	.28
PS	18.78	7.29	19.62	6.28	238	-.95	.34
WFC	20.98	6.18	19.38	6.72	238	1.92	.05*

Note: Job Satisfaction=JS; Professional Stress=PS; Work-Family Conflict=WFC

* $p < .05$

DISCUSSION

Our first hypothesis was about gender differences in job satisfaction, professional stress and work family conflict in teachers. This hypothesis was partially proved as gender differences in work family conflict proved to be significant and other two variables did not yield significant gender differences (Table 3). Women teachers indicated more work family conflict and it is also in line with previous findings of Higgins and Duxbury (1992) and Geurts, Rutte and Peeters (1999) who indicated existence of work family conflict in both genders but higher level in women. One possible reason for it could be the stereotypical gender roles which put pressure on working women to perform household chores as best as non-working women.

Our second hypothesis was about institution wise differences in job satisfaction, professional stress and work family conflict in teachers. The findings indicate that public sector teachers significantly scored high on work family conflict than private sector teachers (Table 4). The insignificant differences between public and private sector teachers on the variable of job satisfaction and professional stress are evident. The findings regarding differences on work-family conflict are consistent with previous studies (e.g., Fox, Fonseca, & Bao,

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2011; Akintayo). These results seem very logical because private sector teachers have higher income as compared to public sector teachers which may help maintain equilibrium between work and family pressures e.g. one can get assistance in form of maids and servants to do household chores, baby-sitting can be afforded and many such things minimize work family conflicts in private sector teachers.

Conclusion

On a conclusive note our study revealed an intricate relationship of gender and institutions type on work-family conflict. The findings indicate higher work-family conflict in female teachers and public sector teachers. This could be a result of stereotypical gender roles and dual responsibilities on women. Increasing economic pressures the need for dual earning couples is increasing day by day; society is accepting the women in professional roles but is not accepting males doing household chores or sharing the burden of family tasks which makes life tougher for females hence eventually making them more vulnerable to work-conflict.

The study has some limitations which needs consideration when generalizing the findings. This only yielded the sample from the institutes of Lahore and further research can be conducted on urban rural comparison or comparison between metropolitan cities and small cities. Future research can further focus on marital status of participants.

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