

ASSESSING JOB SATISFACTION OF WORKING WOMEN IN
UNIVERSITIES OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Job satisfaction among working women in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) has emerged as a critical issue due to increasing female participation in academia and administration. This study examined the level and determinants of job satisfaction among working women employed in public and private sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan. Using a quantitative research approach and a structured interview schedule for data collection, the research investigated personal, organizational, and socio-cultural factors that influence women's job satisfaction. The quantitative results indicated that there was a positive relationship between awareness of government initiatives and job satisfaction, and that workplace behaviour related to gender disparity had a significant negative impact. Regression analysis also found that workplace behaviour had the highest correlation with job satisfaction, accounting for a relatively large percentage of the variance in employee satisfaction. The study has theoretical contribution as it was able to validate Herzberg's Two-Factor theory and Social Role theory in the context of Pakistan's academic environment and gave policy recommendations to enhance women satisfaction at work balance. The results also indicated that organizational support, work-life balance, professional development and perceived equity are all important factors that impact job satisfaction. Public-Private Sector contrast of women workers is also explained. The implications for policy, university administration, and future research were included as the final aspect of the study.

Introduction

Job satisfaction is acknowledged as key factors that influence employee productivity, employee commitment and organizational effectiveness. Satisfied employees make a positive difference in teaching quality, research output and institutional reputation in Higher Education Institutions. For women who work, socio-cultural norms and expectations, family obligations, and

gender norms, as well as organizational factors, affect job satisfaction.

The employment of women in higher education in Pakistan has been growing rapidly during the last 20 years. Despite the numerical increase, women still experience problems with unequal career advancement, limited decision-making positions, wage differences and work-family conflict. The situation is especially difficult in the university environment where the combination

of long working hours, pressure to conduct research and administrative duties often clash with domestic expectations.

Job satisfaction is commonly used to indicate the overall happiness and fulfillment of an individual in their work role, responsibilities and organization. It is a mix of cognitive assessment and emotional reactions to a range of job factors, including pay, recognition, leadership, and career development (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Job satisfaction, which is related to the extent to which individuals feel positive about their jobs (Locke, 1976) is the result of internal and external factors. Gender inequality in the workplace, which for women can be experienced as unequal opportunity, evaluation and harassment, as well as a lack of autonomy, can have a significant impact on women's job satisfaction (Clark, 1997).

Academic work for women may be influenced by a combination of factors such as organizational justice, gender issues and socio-cultural norms, which affect their job satisfaction. Research has indicated that women's commitment, motivation and satisfaction with the workplace drops substantially when they perceive inequities in the workplace (Khan & Rehman, 2020). On the other hand, job satisfaction and productivity can be improved through supportive leadership, fair promotion systems and inclusive institutional policies (Imtiaz & Ahmad, 2019).

When a person is not happy, it may increase turnover, burnout or decrease organizational commitment (Kumari & Singh, 2018). It is therefore important to understand the perception of gender disparity among working women, not only to make their working life experiences better, but also to create gender-sensitive Human Recourse (HR) policies and workplace reforms.

However, in Pakistan, cultural norms, patriarchy values and traditional gender roles add to the problem of gender gap in universities and affect institutional practices and decision making. There are subtle forms of discrimination, gender stereotyping, and limited access to leadership positions for women in academia. Such

difficulties can cause increased stress, role conflict, and decreased organizational commitment (Shaukat & Pell, 2015).

In many universities in Punjab, women faculty members are still underrepresented at senior level and have to handle additional domestic responsibilities which impact their work-life balance (Batool, Sajid, & Malik, 2018). These perceptions reveal women's attitudes towards the disparities and offer insight into the organizational culture and society's expectations that affect women's satisfaction and motivation in their work.

This study aims to examine how working women, particularly at Punjab's universities, view job happiness in their individual disciplines and how these perceptions influence their overall job satisfaction. This research is relevant and opportune in the context of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 Gender Equality and Pakistan's national agenda for women empowerment and participation in the labor force (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Literature Review

Saleem, Q. A. (2025) proposed that job satisfaction of the teaching staff fosters employment retention, which subsequently influences teacher performance and the efficacy of their institutions. This study aimed to determine the association between Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Job Satisfaction (JS) among teachers. Discretionary behaviors can influence performance, however, they are seldom considered in assessments. Descriptive correlational study was conducted utilizing a multi-stage stratified random selection approach, wherein participants were picked from public and private sector universities in Lahore, accredited by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. Following data cleansing, statistical analyses were conducted on data from 232 surveys utilizing SPSS. Moderate positive correlations were identified between the components of organizational citizenship behavior (altruism, politeness, sportsmanship,

conscientiousness, and civil virtue) and job happiness. Job satisfaction attributable to the aspects of OCB was quantified at 21.3%, with altruism and civic virtue identified as the sole contributors. Gender, kind of university, job classification, marital status, age categories, academic credentials, teaching experience, faculties, and universities exhibited substantial variations in the organizational citizenship behavior and work satisfaction of university educators. The study's findings provided insights for educational administrators, instructors, and policymakers on the implementation of OCBs inside their organizations and the enhancement of elements contributing to work satisfaction.

Tabasum, Akhtar, Gull, Umar, and Akhtar (2025) conducted a quantitative study involving 301 professional women in Pakistan, employing SPSS and the software program package of AMOS. They discovered that gender role attitudes and workplace discrimination had a significant influence on job satisfaction. Self-esteem completely mediated the role attitude and discrimination satisfaction partially mediated the effect of work-life balance. As well as attitudes/cultural influence, and psychological relationships in satisfaction.

Shah, N. H. (2024) intended to evaluate the job satisfaction of university professors from the perspectives of gender, age, and marital status. The current study was descriptive and data collected by survey methods. 164 teachers of University of Kotli made up the study population. The researcher determined that 113 teachers were to be the sample in the study. The instrument used in this study was a standardized instrument. The data was gathered by the researcher by visiting the university instructors personally. It was revealed that teachers are recognized by immediate supervisors and they provide support as required. Furthermore, the immediate supervisor is appreciative of good teaching and supports improvement of teaching. However, immediate supervisor does not back the teacher (feedback) and immediate supervisor was not open to teacher's suggestions. Also, there is a recommendation that the immediate

supervisors should not give to the teachers any instructions which are of no value to them so that they do not feel bored/ill.

Abid, K. (2024) determined that the efficacy of HEI and the learning outcomes of graduating students are significantly influenced by quality of university professors. The productivity of teachers is contingent upon their experiences of gender prejudice and job satisfaction. This study aimed to elucidate gender prejudice and the determinants of work satisfaction among university academics. Employing a quantitative research methodology with data gathered from 150 presently employed faculty members, we discovered that women exhibited higher workplace satisfaction, and faculty members with greater teaching experience also reported increased satisfaction in the workplace. A robust negative connection was identified between gender prejudice and satisfaction with: (i) workplace policies and training; (ii) friends; and (iii) responsibilities. Ultimately, suggestions are proposed to improve faculty workplace contentment; a nation's advancement depends on its ability to attract and retain higher education staff, ensuring they perform optimally to benefit the progressive young of the country.

Kazmi, S. I. H. (2023) performed a study to investigate factors affecting work satisfaction amid female instructors in Public Sector Universities. This research used cross-sectional approach to investigate the impact of contingent rewards (COR) and perceived organizational support (POS) on job satisfaction (JS). This study's target demographic was Lahore College for Women's University, a public sector institution of higher education for women in Lahore, Pakistan. Data was gathered by self-administered questionnaires and diverse scales or tools to assess work satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and contingent incentives. The demographic information sheet was utilized for data gathering and study regarding the impact of demography on work satisfaction.

Nazneen, A., and Zhang, Y. (2023) studied the job satisfaction of female employees in Lahore,

Punjab, Pakistan's public school system. The study offered an in-depth analysis of the issue by examining 54 Government Girls High Schools in the district and randomly selecting 270 instructors from each institution for the survey via questionnaires. The study's findings indicate that, in certain instances, the sentiments of public-school teachers in Lahore are notably favorable, particularly among female educators. An analysis of the questionnaire responses indicates that these educators are content and satisfied in their professional roles and obligations. The descriptive section of the study provides essential insights into the many factors influencing the found elevated levels of job satisfaction among female educators. When female educators experience work satisfaction, they are more inclined to exhibit motivation, commitment, and engagement in their roles, resulting in improved learning outcomes for students and enhanced organizational performance. The study substantially enhances the comprehension of work satisfaction among female educators in public schools in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. The high levels of work satisfaction expressed by these educators underscore the need of fostering a supportive and empowered environment to sustain the growth and success of the education sector. Consequently, further research and targeted initiatives may leverage these findings to enhance job satisfaction among female educators, so contributing to the overall advancement of the region's educational system.

Anwar, Burfat and Abro (2021) discussed that there was negative correlation between male dominance and women job satisfaction in the investigating job using Chi square tests in Quetta city Balochistan. The authors concluded that less professional development and supervisory opportunities had a negative effect on women's motivation and satisfaction.

Batool and Sajid (2018) described that Job satisfaction is related to productivity, employee retention, and organizational loyalty. Things like job security, respectful treatment, flexible policies, and family support are important

considerations for women who work in developing countries. This study directly related to the factors influenced on job satisfaction.

Fatima, Iqbal, Akhwand, Suleman and Ibrahim (2015) studied the gender variances in job satisfaction of school teachers while governing the impact of some variables on job satisfaction of the school teachers of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and public schools of selected Districts in Southern Punjab in study to further determine the gender differences. Primary data was gathered from 90 individuals (45 females and 45 men) employed by NGOs and schools, serving as the foundation for this research. The research findings demonstrated a substantial positive correlation between the chosen independent factors and the dependent variable. The research findings revealed that in Pakistan, men employees exhibit more job satisfaction than their female counterparts. The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for management to amend their policies, therefore aligning the job happiness of female employees with that of male employees by eliminating disparities in job perks.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1968) classified job-related factors into:

- **Hygiene factors** (salary, job security, working conditions)
- **Motivators** (achievement, recognition, growth)

The absence of hygiene factors causes dissatisfaction, while motivators enhance satisfaction.

Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory suggests that gender-based expectations influence occupational experiences (Eagly, 1987). In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, women are expected to prioritize family roles, which intensifies work-family conflict and affects job satisfaction.

These frameworks guide variable selection and interpretation.

Methodology

The study aimed for assessing of job satisfaction of working women in universities of Punjab, Pakistan. A cross-sectional research design was used. The study population comprised male and female teaching faculty and non-teaching members working in public and private universities of Punjab. A sample of 341 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across disciplines and institutional types.

A self-developed pre-coded interview schedule measuring perceptions of gender disparity (promotion, leadership, pay equity, workplace treatment). The tool was consisted of three categories: (i) Knowledge of working women about the government initiatives (ii) working women's behavior towards gender disparity at

workplace (iii) Level of satisfaction regarding different aspects of job. The socio-economic variables were also included to collect information regarding gender.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, applying descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, correlation, and regression analysis.

Results and Discussion**Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

The socio-economic profile of respondents provides an overview of the study sample and helps to establish the contextual background for interpreting job satisfaction among university employees. The selected demographic characteristics include institutional affiliation, gender, type of work, age, family type, and educational level.

Table 1***Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 341)***

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	170	49.85
	Female	171	50.15
Age (years)	26-35	158	46.3
	36-45	77	22.6
	46-60	71	20.8
	61+	35	10.3
Educational Level	Intermediate	10	2.9
	Graduate	165	48.4
	M.Phil	96	28.2
	PhD	70	20.5

The results show that the male respondents were found to be (49.85%) and female respondents were (50.15%) in gender distribution. Age distribution of results showed that almost half (46.3%) of the respondents were in the age group 26-35 years and 22.6% were aged 36-45 years, implying that the study mainly included younger to middle aged professionals. Education level indicated a very educated population with the majority of subjects having a graduate (48.4%), M.Phil (28.2%), or PhD (20.5%) qualifications. The overall demographic characteristics suggest that the sample is professionally educated and

institutionally diverse and could be used to explore workplace job satisfaction.

Reliability Analysis of Study Constructs

Reliability analysis was performed to examine the validity of the measurement scales used in the study. In order to find the reliability of the three major constructs of the instrument, namely awareness of government initiatives, workplace behavior towards gender disparity, job satisfaction, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics of Study Constructs

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Awareness of Government Initiatives (AGI)	11	0.841
Workplace Behavior toward Gender Disparity (WBA)	9	0.855
Job Satisfaction (JS)	16	0.957

The results of the reliability test show that all the constructs in this study have good internal consistency. The awareness of government initiatives scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.841, which is considered acceptable, and the workplace behavior scale also had a high alpha value of 0.855. Job satisfaction scale had the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.957$) indicating high internal consistency of the scale items.

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the measurement instrument used was sufficiently reliable to be used for further statistical analysis. The reliability values were

high, suggesting that the items in each construct were reliable in measuring their respective concepts, thus ensuring the validity and strength of the subsequent correlation and regression analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to report the distribution and central tendency of the major constructs in the study. The analysis gives an overview of the respondents' awareness of government initiatives, workplace behavior on gender disparity and job satisfaction.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Constructs (n = 341)

Construct	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Awareness of Government Initiatives(AGI)	341	2.45	4.18	3.31	0.64
Workplace Behavior toward Gender Disparity (WBA)	341	1.00	2.67	1.63	0.52
Job Satisfaction (JS)	341	1.00	2.88	1.74	0.70

The results show that the respondents had moderate level of awareness about government initiatives towards gender equality with mean score of 3.31 which is comparatively positive level of awareness. Workplace behavior related to gender disparity had lower mean score (1.63) meaning that respondents reported workplace behavioral concerns that were noticeable based on gender related experiences. The mean of 1.74 for overall job satisfaction indicates that on average, the respondents tended to be satisfied, with some variation in their responses as indicated by the standard deviation values.

The standard deviations on all of the constructs were relatively moderate, meaning that there were not very large variations in the responses, and

that there was not a lot of dispersion in the responses, meaning there was consistency in participants' perceptions. Altogether, these descriptive results offer a broad understanding of the variables in this study and lay a groundwork for exploring the relationships of workplace behavior, awareness, and job satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between awareness of government initiatives, workplace behavior in relation to gender disparity and job satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to identify direction and magnitude of relationship between the major variables of the study.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Matrix (n = 341)

Variables	AGI	WBA	JS
Awareness of Government Initiatives	1	-0.291**	0.422**
Workplace Behavior toward Gender Disparity	-0.291**	1	-0.839**
Job Satisfaction	0.422**	-0.839**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

The results of the correlation show that there are statistically significant relationships between all constructs in the study. There was moderate positive correlation between awareness of the government initiatives and job satisfaction ($r = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$) showing that the higher the awareness of workplace gender-related policies and initiatives, the higher job satisfaction among respondents. This indicates that knowledge of institutional and governmental support mechanisms can have a positive impact on employees' satisfaction in the workplace.

On the other hand, workplace behavior related to gender disparity had a very strong negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -0.839$, $p < 0.001$), which means that negative behavioral experiences with regards to gender in the workplace had a significant negative relationship with job satisfaction. Further, there was a

negative correlation between awareness of government initiatives and workplace behavior ($r = -0.291$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased awareness could be associated with relatively reduced experiences of negative workplace behavior. Overall, the correlation results show that the workplace behavioral factors seem to have a significantly higher relationship with job satisfaction than the awareness related factors.

Regression Analysis for Predicting Job Satisfaction

Multiple linear regression was used to investigate the impact of awareness of government initiatives and workplace behavior on gender disparity on the job satisfaction of respondents. This analysis was done to see the extent to which the independent variables explain the variation in overall job satisfaction.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Job Satisfaction (n = 341)

Predictor Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
Constant	2.716	0.134		20.270	<0.001
Awareness of Government Initiatives (AGI)	0.204	0.031	0.194	6.678	<0.001
Workplace Behavior toward Gender Disparity (WBA)	-1.016	0.038	-0.783	-26.939	<0.001

Model Statistics: $R = 0.859$, $R^2 = 0.739$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.737$, $F = 477.840$, $p < 0.001$

The regression model was significant ($F = 477.840$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that the variables that were selected to be predictors of job satisfaction reported a large number of variations in job satisfaction. The R^2 value of the model was 0.739, demonstrating that the model showed about 73.9% of the change in job satisfaction and that awareness of the government initiatives and

workplace behavior are significant factors in workplace satisfaction.

Of the predictors, workplace behavior towards gender disparity was the most significant negative predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.783$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that negative workplace behavior experiences of gender disparities have a strong negative impact on employee job satisfaction. There was also a statistically significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.194$, $p < 0.001$)

on job satisfaction for awareness of government initiatives, indicating that higher awareness of gender-related policies and institutional protections has a positive effect on job satisfaction. The results overall highlight the fact that workplace behavioral conditions have significantly greater impact on job satisfaction than do awareness factors.

Group Differences in Job Satisfaction by Gender and Age

Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were conducted to further explore differences in job satisfaction by demographic groups. For this purpose, the analyses were conducted to identify whether there were significant differences between job satisfaction based on gender and age categories of the respondents.

Table 6

Differences in Job Satisfaction by Gender and Age (n = 341)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p-value
Male	221	1.72	0.66	-0.770	0.442
Female	120	1.78	0.68		

Age Comparison (One-Way ANOVA)

Variable	F	p-value
Job Satisfaction by Age	60.011	<0.001

The independent samples t-test results indicated no statistically significant difference in work satisfaction scores between male and female respondents ($t = -0.770$, $p = 0.442$). Female respondents had a higher mean score for job satisfaction than male respondents, but the difference was not statistically significant and therefore gender alone was not found to significantly impact the respondents' overall job satisfaction in the current study.

However, the one-way ANOVA exhibited that there was a significant difference between the means of job satisfaction between age groups ($F = 60.011$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that age is an important factor in the difference of satisfaction of employees in the work environment. Post hoc tests revealed that respondents in the older age groups had significantly different levels of job satisfaction than younger age groups, indicating a possible variation in workplace satisfaction based on career stage, professional maturity, and workplace experiences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study focused on the effect of awareness of government initiatives and workplace behavior towards gender disparity on job satisfaction

among the workers of the universities of Punjab in Pakistan. The results presented that the reliability of the measurement scales in the study was good. Descriptive analysis exhibited that the respondents had moderate awareness of government policy on gender equality promotion and the behavioral experiences in the workplace revealed ongoing gender issues in the workplace. The overall results indicate that the job satisfaction of the respondents was relatively satisfactory. The results of the correlation analysis also indicated that there was a positive relationship between awareness of government initiatives and job satisfaction while the relationship between workplace behavior related to gender disparity and job satisfaction was very negative. The regression results gave stronger evidence, showing a significant relationship between awareness and workplace behavior to job satisfaction with workplace behavior being the strongest predictor. Also, demographic comparison showed that there was no significant difference between the job satisfaction of male and female respondents, but there was significant variation among the job satisfaction of different ages. In summary, the study found that the workplace behavior and institutional awareness

are key factors in determining job satisfaction and that negative workplace experiences significantly decreased job satisfaction.

Recommendations

From the study findings, there are some practical recommendations that can be proposed to enhance the job satisfaction among university employees. Schools should focus on making the workplace more inclusive, respectful and equitable by targeting behavior that is linked to gender imbalance with clear institutional policies, complaints mechanisms and periodic monitoring of the workplace. Given the strong relationship between workplace behavior and job satisfaction, workplace training programs, awareness workshops, and professional development sessions should be undertaken to foster positive and respectful workplace interactions and diminish discriminatory attitudes. The positive impact of awareness of government initiatives indicates that institutions need to proactively share information on laws, protections at work and employee rights in terms of gender to help build confidence and awareness among staff. Organizational supports in the universities should also be strengthened by transparent, equal opportunities and fair treatment in workplace practices. Moreover, as there were marked intergenerational variations, age-sensitive workplace support strategies may be considered, as the professional expectations and workplace needs of different age groups are likely different.

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