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Psychosocial Stress, Job Satisfaction, Motivation and well-being of Professionals in Special Education Centers

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Abstract

In low- income countries professionals in special education centers face unique psychosocial stressors and challenges often overlooked in global research. The current study analyzed the psychosocial stress, job satisfaction and motivation among 150 special educators in Lahore division using a cross sectional survey. A validated questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = .898$) evaluate the important role of intrinsic /extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and psychosocial stress in special education teachers. The outcomes of this study showed intrinsic factors like student rehabilitation ($M = 4.66$), parent cooperation ($M = 4.63$), and student relationships ($M = 4.65$) were most influential, aligning with Herzberg theory. Extrinsic motivators like recognition ($M = 4.06$) and promotion ($M = 2.58$), had less impact, highlights systemic inequalities. While educators were satisfied with colleagues ($M = 3.92$) and work environment ($M = 3.94$), 53% reported promotion dissatisfaction as their primary stressor. In regards of gender, females (44%) experienced job related stress more than males (32%), despite similar motivation and satisfaction levels ($p > 0.05$). An unexpected phenomenon emerged during research that the specific cultural concern revealed the fusion of professional and societal burdens that 39% feared was transmitted disabilities to their own child. The regression analysis evidence the interpersonal relationship ($\beta = .23, p = 0.005$) and workplace condition ($\beta = .22, p = .007$) as significant drivers of satisfaction. A progression of career modified and gender focused on mental health supports to reduce the burnout in demanding educational roles founded by the advocate for context-specific solutions. The current study enhances the mental support to the professionals by connecting the global theories of local experience.

Keywords: Special Education Teachers, Motivation, Job satisfaction,



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psychosocial stressors, mental health

Introduction

Special educators globally experience this proportional psychological social strain with 72% serious strains or 45% face exhaustion because of structured investigation or high level of sentimental expectations (World Health Organization WHO, 2022). Some developed states such as United Nations, 85% of special educators quite their career within inside five years, deficient assistance or exhaustion as main heterogeneous. National Center for Education Statistics in 2021 stated these hurdles escalate in low assets settings: 65% of special educators in growing state's loss of assets to psychological health assets, analyzed to 28% in high income areas reported by UNESCO, in 2023 these gaps highlight outcomes in minority backgrounds.

In Pakistan, mental health between educators stay under studied 41% of special educators report job related strains with female teachers and fairly affect expectations Punjab Special education institutions, demonstrate these themes: 53% of educators reported unhappiness with upgrade policies and 39% anxiety impairments in their children's a distinct strains interlink with work settings outcomes (Khan et al., 2021). In spite of structured difficulties, intrinsic motivators such as students rehabilitation (M=4.66) protection strains, unutilized talent for ethically customized meditations. This present stretch study connect crucial gaps by placing International structure within Lahore divisions' social cultural scenes presenting practical involved to reduce strains educational setting.

Beltran et al., (2023) research stated that the motivation and job satisfaction of professionals working in special education was shaped by the organizational polices, supervisor support, salary equity and intrinsic rewards. In 2022, OECD worldwide 65% of the educator spot the poor promotion polices as a major stress, on the other hand 48% promotes the burnout to inadequate supervisory support. In 2023, UNESCO reported in Pakistan, inequities fire the issues in which 34% had salary disparities and 60% had lack of good mental wellbeing. Khan et al., (2021) study stated that in local educators of Lahore promote the highly dissatisfaction which was 53% and societal stigma was 41% as critical barriers. This study examines the psychological stress, job satisfaction, motivation (intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors) and mental well-being.

Research Gap

Present study diatribe retrieve these gaps by interpreting International model within Lahore's community based, changing analyzing planed disparities (e.g., upgrading slump) regional strains (e.g., somatic fears) to instruct ethnic shape procedure (UNESCO, 2023). Present study on special educators' motivation and job satisfaction mainly emphasize on high-income, western environment, overlooking socio-cultural and structured shades in growing countries. In while Beltran et al. (2023) study investigate psychological depletion in global north areas their structure ignore sources constraints or prejudices stresses prevalent regions like Pakistan in previous research explore extrinsic elements (e.g., salary upgrade but particularly focus on cultural precise stressors such as fear of any impairment transfer report by 39% of Lahore educated (Khan et al. 2022). International studies by (OECD, 2022; WHO, 2022) insufficiently discourse



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gender- based imbalances in societies where female educators experience integrated strains because of society supports charge (Punjab Special Education Department, 2023).

Aim and Novelty

The present research analyzes the factors of psychological strains, job satisfaction and motivation between special educators in Lahore, Pakistan, with four aims:

1. Determine intrinsic/extrinsic factors Impacting motivation and satisfaction.
2. Investigate gender differences in interpreted motivation and job satisfaction.
3. Discover psychological strains (e.g., fear of disability transmission) vanished motivation.
4. Future recommendations to enhance professional well-being of special educators.

Literature Review

Bui et al., (2021) examined the relationship between productivity and workplace stress among employees attending a Well-being workshop. The study plotted 186 workers across four worksites using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) for stress and the Health and the Work Questionnaire (HWQ) for productivity. Results showed a significant negative correlation between stress and productivity ($r = -.35$, $p < 0.001$), meaning higher stress led to lower productivity. This was especially strong for work satisfaction ($r = -0.61$, $p < 0.001$). Males reported better supervisor relations than females (8.4 Vs. 6.9. $p = 0.005$), but stress levels did not differ between sexes.

Fishbach and Woolley (2021) research outcomes stated that persistent key for work is intrinsic motivation. When people have intrinsic motivation, they experience and enjoy the work activities by itself which result in the increased interest in work and new goals and achievement. This study state the knowledge on intrinsic motivation which also includes the organizational, cognitive and social psychology. For the internal satisfaction and job satisfaction the intrinsic motivation plays the important role.

Kitsios et al., (2021) explored factors influencing employee performance in the health care sector, particularly in a public hospital in Northern Greece. Analyzing data from 74 employees using ANOVA, they found that strong colleague relationships and a sense of achievement were the main motivators, while rewards and job characteristics played a lesser role. To enhance performance, hospital management should foster a supportive work environment and recognize employee efforts.

Mardanov (2021) study observe the causes of employee happiness and its effects on job satisfaction, job performance and separation; define employee satisfaction as employee happiness at work triggered by employee intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and organizational situation; and consider employee satisfaction as the critical factor affecting job satisfaction. Data was collected by 272 workers at Taiwanese construction and consultancy firms. Both factor of motivation such as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation impact directly on the level of employee satisfaction. Work with happiness and enjoyment makes the significant and positive impact on performance. The study reveals that the origination of the real work process is intrinsic and the completion of the work causes the extrinsic motivation which leads the overall satisfaction of the job.



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Nishumra et al., (2022) studied workplace mental health by analyzing data from 100 office workers over 14 days. Using wristband sensors, behavioral data, and psychological surveys, they developed machine learning models that predicted psychological states with over 80% accuracy. Findings showed that factors like web conferencing, working from home (living room), and break time significantly impacted employee's mental well-being.

Methodology

It is a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to explore the indicators of motivation and job satisfaction between special educators in Lahore, Pakistan. The population size are N=326 special educators (255 female, 71 male) working in government settings or institutes in Lahore division, serving children's who are suffering with any mental disabilities auditory impairments, and visual impairments. The targeted sample was selected through stratified random sampling technique. 46% of the Targeted population are 150 educators which are proportionally divided into age, gender, experience, or district (Lahore, Kasur, Nankana-sahib, Sheikhpura). 77.3% of targeted population are females and 22.7% are males who are teachers, reflecting the gender distribution of population.

Data collection were gathered by using 35 items well developed structured questionnaire with wide range of literature review under the assistance of five panel experts who are serving in special education and psychology for the safeguard of the validity and reliability of the content. The instrument are divided into three parts such as (1) Demographics (age, gender, experience) (2) Job satisfaction 6 items on salary, promotions, (supervisor support) (3) Motivation (24 items on intrinsic/extrinsic factors, e.g. student rehabilitation, recognition using Likert scale (1= very Dissatisfied/unimportant to 5= very satisfied/important) was used to analyze responses. Pre-testing was held by 50 educators who confirmed its reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .882$), which improved to .898 in the final administration.

Quantitative analysis was performed by using SPSS v26, deploying descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations) to emphasize satisfaction and motivation levels and statistics inference (independent t-test, linear regression) to determine gender difference and predictor outcomes relationships stress and anxiety indicators fear of disability transmission were analyzed as secondary mental health outcomes. this present study strictly followed the all ethical guidelines, ethical authority was gained from Punjab special Education Department also protect the privacy of the research participants throughout the whole research procedure or took inform consent from all participants and response rate was also 100%. The purpose of this research has three methodologies and analyze advancement:

1. Cultural adaptation of global framework: Herzberg's two factors theory and job Demands- Resource (JD-R) model are vary to Lahore low -income, paternalistic hierarchy, where organizational biases(e.g., upgrade idleness) or communal stereotype, uplift stressors. Particular cultural elements such as fear or threat of disability transmission (39%) to gain well being hazards, the inconsistency passed over in US-centric by (Beltran et al., 2023).

2. Study by (OECD, 2022) determine merging motivation and mental health this study emphasizes isolated areas by investigated how these stressors like



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workplace schemas arbitrate motivation and satisfaction. For example, intrinsic motivators (e.g., student rehabilitation, $M=4.66$) enhance adaptability, while extrinsic stressors (e.g., upgrade dissatisfaction, $M=2.58$) decay dualism seldom investigate in special education.

3. Gender-Disaggregated Analysis: Distinct studies dealing gender like a dual coefficient, this study determine andocentric value outline differences. Female educators shows higher level job satisfaction (78%vs.74%males) still in-spite of higher level of stress (44%vs.32%)shows that dilemma of society imitation in family responsibilities.

Results

The study examined the working professional's psychological stress, motivation and job satisfaction in the special education teachers. The result outcomes revealed the objectives of the study, indentify the key factors and mental well-beings of professionals working in the special education center. The predictors of job satisfaction were significant in Personal relationship, working condition, policy and management on the other hands, not significant predicator was income. Most commonly stress reported by professionals was workload, fear of disability in their own children due to environment, promotional opportunities. It highlights the area of improvement for special education professionals. The gender had no significant difference in stress in job, level of job satisfaction and motivation.

Table 1: Showed the Job Satisfaction Levels

Factor	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Colleagues	3.92	0.97	Somewhat Satisfied
Work Environment	3.94	0.95	Somewhat Satisfied
Promotions	2.58	1.35	Somewhat Dissatisfied
Supervisors	3.68	1.06	Somewhat Satisfied

In the above table, the staff of special education provider mostly reported the somewhat satisfaction with colleagues the value of means (3.92) and standard deviation ($SD = .97$), and work environments with the value of mean (3.94) and standard deviation ($SD = .95$). On the other hands, the promotion policies had significant dissatisfaction where the value of mean was (2.58) and standard deviation ($SD = 1.35$) was reported.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Job Satisfaction Predictors

Predictor	B	p-value	Interpretation
Interpersonal Relationships	0.23	0.005	Significant Positive
Working Conditions/Environment	0.22	0.007	Significant Positive
Policy & Management	0.19	0.020	Significant Positive
Income	0.01	0.952	Not Significant

The above table showed the result of regression analysis for job satisfaction was revealed the positive and significant predictors of mental well-being among professionals in special education centers of interpersonal relations ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.005$), working condition ($\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.007$), policy and management ($\beta =$



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0.19, $p = 0.020$). it indicated the good mental well-being of that professionals who reported better interpersonal relations and working conditions tended to have better mental well-being and professionals who perceived their organization's policies and management as supportive tended to have better mental well-being. On the other hands, the regression analysis of income ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.952$) was not significant that indicates bad impact on mental well-being among professionals working in special education centers.

Table 3: Top to Least Motivating Factors

S.No	Factor	Mean	SD
1	Rehabilitation of Students	4.66	0.69
2	Relationship with Students	4.65	0.67
3	Parent Cooperation	4.63	0.79
4	Improvement in Student Learning	4.56	0.75
5	Sense of Achievement	4.53	.68
6	Job Security	4.51	.80
7	Relationship with coworkers	4.49	.77
8	Salary	4.49	.85
9	Availability of Resources	4.47	.91
10	Job Status	4.45	.72
11	Students Appreciation	4.43	.86
12	Reward at Annual Result	4.42	.96
13	Working Conditions	4.39	.89
14	Potential of Professional growth	4.39	.87
15	Transparent Promotional Pathways	4.37	1.1
16	Sense of Accountability	4.36	.86
17	Intrinsic motivation Driven by sense of vocation	4.34	.85
18	Reputation as a special Educator	4.33	.97
19	Financial Support for Advanced Education	4.33	1.0
20	Inherent Satisfaction from Job responsibilities	4.24	.90
21	One Time Monetary Award	4.23	.87
22	Relationship with Administration	4.21	.93
23	Supervision by Administration	4.21	.88
24	Job Recognition	4.06	1.03

In the above table, it revealed that the motivation was influenced by the twenty four factors which was ranked by the means score of 5 points on Likert scale. Here are two type of factor take part in motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic factors. Top ranks dominated were intrinsic factors which include the student rehabilitation ($m=4.66$) and parents cooperation ($m=4.63$), and recognition of work by others was extrinsic factors of motivation for job satisfaction such as recognition ($M = 4.06$) and one-time monetary awards ($M = 4.23$). Extrinsic factors were less significant than the intrinsic factors due to systemic issues overshadowing extrinsic rewards. Motivation is necessary and important element in job satisfaction.

Table 4: Gender Differences in Perceptions of Motivation and Satisfaction

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Motivation	Male	34	2.74	1.21	-0.89	0.38



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Satisfaction	Female	116	2.93	1.11		
	Male	34	2.82	1.19	-1.06	0.29
	Female	116	3.04	1.02		

This table shows T-Test results that revealed the no significant differences between the gender based motivation ($t = -0.89, p = 0.38$) and satisfaction ($t = -1.06, p = 0.29$). The mean values for motivation for males was ($M = 2.74, SD = 1.21$) which is slightly lower than the female ($M = 2.93, SD = 1.11$), the minimal difference shows the negligible difference. The mean values for job satisfaction for males was ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.19$) which was also slightly lower than the females values ($M = 3.04, SD = 1.02$). It also shows the minimal difference shows the negligible difference. The outcomes stated that level of motivation and job satisfaction are same in both gender regards their profession in special education centers.

Table 5: Stress and Anxiety by Gender

Stressor	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Job-Related Stress	32	44	41
Fear of Disability in their own children	41	38	39

This table showed the result related to the role play of stressors in job and fear of disability in their own children was significant. Job related stresses are more common in female as compared to male which indicates the more concern of female about the job. On the other hands, male (41%) had scarier about losing the physical strength of working as compared to the female (39%) which is the negligible difference shows the equal concerned about the risk of disability.

Table 6: Key psychosocial Stressors

Stressor	Frequency	%
Promotion Dissatisfaction	79	53
Workload	62	41
Fear of Disability in own children	58	39

The above table results showed the stressor among professionals promote dissatisfaction reported by 79 participants which was 53% of the total sample. These contribute as main stressors in teaching staff. The second frequency workload was reported by 62 professionals which was 41% of the total sample who experience the stress due to workload. The 3rd frequency was fear of disability in their own children due to environment reported by 58 participants which was 39% of the total sample which indicates the risk of physical and mental retardation may impact the working ability of staff. This implies that for specialists in special education centers, the pressures of the work cause a major cause of anxiety.

Summary

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional survey to explore drivers of motivation and job satisfaction and stressor among 150 special educators in Lahore, Pakistan. Results emphasized the educators' commitment to meaningful



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tasks, with intrinsic motivators like student progress ($M = 4.66$), parental teamwork ($M = 4.63$), and student connections ($M = 4.65$) topping the list of influences. In contrast, external rewards such as career advancement ($M = 2.58$) and acknowledgment ($M = 4.06$) played a smaller role, pointing to deep-rooted issues in professional growth opportunities. Despite strong contentment with colleagues ($M = 3.92$) and workplace environments ($M = 3.94$), 53% of respondents flagged promotions as their chief stress trigger. Gender gaps in stress emerged, with 44% of female educators reporting work-related strain compared to 32% of males, even though both groups rated motivation and satisfaction similarly. A distinctive psychological burden—39% feared their children might inherit disabilities—shed light on the blend of cultural and job-related pressures in this underrepresented group.

Conclusion

This research sheds fresh light on the psychological well-being, job contentment, and stress factors impacting staff at special education centers. Findings reveal that while salary holds little sway over job satisfaction, elements like interpersonal bonds, workplace conditions, organizational policies, and leadership play a pivotal role. The study also spotlights key stressors namely excessive workloads, fears of disability transmission, and frustration over stalled promotions as critical threats to professionals' mental health. Notably, no significant gender divides surfaced in levels of stress, motivation, or satisfaction among these educators. Overall, this work deepens our understanding of the complex dynamics shaping the resilience of special education professionals and underscores the urgent need for tailored strategies to bolster their mental health and workplace fulfillment.

Strength

Following are some strength of the study:

1. As the subject of this study, unique population, special education teachers are targeted.
2. A comprehensive approach of the study looks at numerical factors such as motivation, job satisfaction and psychological stress related to professionals.
3. The practical implementation of the current study supports the well-being in the professionals of special education centers.

Recommendations

Following are some recommendations of the current study:

- Promotion channels and career progression framework are implemented.
- Organized the training program based on the mindfulness technique to reduce the stress (MBSR).
- For female professionals, develop the reduction of workload programs.

Limitations and Future Research

Following are some limitations and suggestion for future research:

- Longitudinal designs are recommendation for the future research as cross-sectional data limited the causal inference.



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- In future target the private sector as this study only target the public sectors.
- Explore the fear of disability in detailed.
- By fulfilling the gaps, maintain the professionals mental well-being and students behaviour modification by motivation and job satisfaction in underrepresented region.

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