

CAREER MOBILITY, FAMILY CONSTRAINTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS PREDICTORS OF JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG FEMALE FACULTY AT UNIVERSITIES IN PUNJAB

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Abstract

The present study examined how career mobility is a predictive variable, family ties and career development in determining job performance among female university faculty in Punjab, Pakistan. The data was gathered from 299 female faculty working in both public and private universities by using structured questionnaire and shared via physical copies and Google forms. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha coefficients and all the coefficients exceeded the acceptable level. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The findings show among family constraints, both career mobility and professional development have a stronger positive correlation and influence on job performance. Furthermore, the combined regression model showed that the three predictors collectively accounted a significant amount of variance in the job performance of faculty. The findings underscore the significance of institutional support of professional development and equal career advancement opportunity as well as the necessity of policies to enable the female faculty to balance work and family issues. This paper is a contribution to the body of literature on gender, higher education, and workforce development in Pakistan and has practical implications on policymakers and university administrators aiming at increasing the professional effectiveness of female academic employees.

Keywords: *Career Mobility, Family Constraints, Female Faculty, Job Performance, Professional Development, Punjab*

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1. Introduction

Colleges and universities are very important in the development of a country because they generate skilled graduates, promote knowledge by conducting research and help in the social and economic development. Universities rely on the output of the academic staff especially the faculty who are tasked to teach, conduct research, oversee students and provide academic service. There have been an increase in the number of female students in higher educational institutions which resulted in increased female scholars within universities around the globe (O'Connor, 2023). Despite this development, professional and personal issues continue to affect female faculty in academic institutions in terms of their career advancement and job performance.

Job performance in higher education is the effectiveness of the performance of faculty in their professional responsibilities, such as the quality of teaching, research, student mentoring, and administrative work. When considering academic staff, universities are placing more emphasis on performance outcomes, including research publications, new teaching methods, and institutional involvement (Zhao & Liu, 2024). As a result, the study of what factors affect the job performance of faculty has been a significant field of study in the management of higher education and organizational studies.

Career mobility is one of the most important determinants of academic performance, as it can be defined as a possibility to move up and down the professional ladder or to change professional fields, i.e., to get a promotion, transfer, and leadership position. Career mobility enables faculty to obtain fresh professional experience, expand their academic network, and get leadership skills that can enhance their work as a professional. It is found that career mobility plays an important part in improving the productivity of scholars as well as job satisfaction by helping professionals to grow and gain recognition (Ng, 2020). On the other hand, lack of career development chances can cause decreased motivation and involvement of the academic staff, which impact their performance and job satisfaction.

Another significant factor that affects professional lives of female scholars is the presence of family-related responsibilities and restrictions. Women faculty are normally expected to multi-task, to combine both the professional and family responsibilities such as childcare, care giving and housekeeping. This two-fold task often leads to work-family conflict, which has been extensively reported as a significant problem of women in the academic profession (Greenhaus & Powell, 2020). Work-family conflict is a situation that arises when work and family roles are not compatible, which results in stress and poor performance at the workplace.

Several studies have demonstrated that work-family conflicts may negatively affect the productivity and well-being of female academics; according to (Kossek, 2021),

people reporting high levels of work-family conflicts showed less job satisfaction as well as more work demands than those with low levels of conflict. These pressures in academic institutions can restrict female faculty to engage in research, seek leadership, or even undertake professional development programs.

Besides career mobility and family issues, professional development is significant in improving the skills and performance of academic employees. Professional development is the ongoing process when teachers enhance their teaching skills, research abilities, and professional knowledge with the help of training programs, workshops, conferences, and academic partnerships (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Engaging in professional development activities will help the faculty to embrace new teaching methods, enhance curriculum delivery, and keep pace with the new trends in higher education.

Studies have shown that faculty members that participate in professional development initiatives have a higher chance of displaying an increased teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and job performance (Neville & Gertler, 2023). Thus, professional development opportunities can be a key factor in enhancing the professional capacities of women faculty.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The Mobile Career and Job Performance

The concept of career mobility is now a well-known variable in professional development and career promotion in organizations. Career mobility in learning institutions is determined as the freedom of faculty to climb the academic ladder, become administrators or participate in research work. These opportunities will enable the members of the faculty to expand their professional competencies and develop their academic profiles. It has been found that career mobility also leads to increased job satisfaction and professional engagement, which eventually enhances employee performance (Fugate et al., 2022).

Career mobility in universities enables academic employees to enhance their leadership qualities, expand their professional circles, and become more productive in research. The commitment and work engagement are likely to be more demonstrated by faculty members who believe that their institutions give them equal opportunities to advance. Past research has shown that the career advancement opportunities have a positive impact on employee motivation and job performance in academic institutions (Li, et al., 2025).

Career mobility is especially important to female academics as it can offer them a chance to overcome structural constraints that could restrict their career advancement. According to gender and academic career research, women tend to have slower career advancement due to institutional and social influences that may influence their motivation

and performance at work (O'Connor, 2020). Therefore, rational career mobility avenues provided to women faculty may help them get involved in their careers and improve their job performance in higher learning institutions.

Career mobility in the case of higher education can largely be able to impact on the output of the research and performance in teaching. Faculty members are more inclined to be motivated to improve their performance in academics when they have an opportunity to develop professionally. Studies have shown that career development opportunities could positively influence faculty engagement and work output as individuals are encouraged to work harder in their career activities. In addition, institutions that facilitate career advancement by having transparent promotion systems, and professional support mechanisms are more likely to promote greater academic productivity among faculty members.

Career mobility can be even more important to female academics since females tend to encounter obstacles based on gender stereotypes, institutional frameworks, and lack of access to leadership roles. Gender studies and higher education research show that women tend to be underrepresented at high academic levels despite the growing involvement in higher educational institutions (Morley, 2021). Equitable career mobility can thus assist female faculty to contribute better to their professional endeavors, in addition to job performance, and increase their representation in leadership roles in universities.

H1: There is a strong positive impact of career mobility on job performance of female university faculty.

2.2. Family Constraints and Job Performance

Family obligations may also have a serious effect on the work experiences of female employees, especially in those jobs that require high degree of time and productivity. Academic women faculty often juggle between various roles such as teaching, research, administrative and family caregiving. Such roles may lead to role conflicts that interfere with their capability of carrying out their professional tasks (Allen, 2020).

Work family conflict is a situation which arises when work and family roles are incompatible, leading to stress and a lack of engagement in work. Studies in diverse professional domains have always shown that a high degree of work-family conflict correlates with reduced job satisfaction, heightened psychological stress, and reduced job performance (French, 2020). Such issues can be especially important to women in an academic setting, where research output and teaching quality can be very high-pressure.

Sociocultural demands on gender roles in developing countries can enhance the difficulty of work and family life balance. Women scholars can be under more stress to meet family demands and remain productive in their careers. Research carried out in

universities has also discovered that family life might affect the career development, research output, and involvement of women in professional practices (Sharma and Jyoti, 2021). Consequently, the family demands can have a negative impact on the work of female faculty.

Family limitations are one of the most prevalent problems of female professionals, especially those working in the field where high rates of devotion and productivity are demanded. The work and family life balance can be made more challenging by sociocultural expectations of gender roles in developing countries. Women faculty often fulfill several roles at the same time, combining their academic duties with family duties, taking care of the children, running the household, and taking care of the children. These roles overlap and may cause conflicting demands that affect the capability of employees to carry out professional tasks efficiently.

Work-family conflict has been a popular concept in elucidating the way in which competing demands of work and family roles disrupt one another. Empirical studies have shown that work-family conflict is linked to poor job performance and psychological well-being in professionals working in different fields (Shockley, 2021). Women faculty members in academic settings are usually subjected to extra pressures because of expectations concerning teaching, research output, and administrative duties. These stresses can restrict their capacity to devote enough time to work-related activities in case family demands escalate.

H2: Family demands are a major negative impact on job performance of female university faculty.

2.3. Job Performance and Professional Development

The major component of enhancing the performance and skills of academic staff is professional development. Universities commonly conduct professional development programs to boost teaching practice, research capability, and academic leadership of faculty. By engaging in such programs, the faculty can update their knowledge, develop new methods of teaching and improve their research capability. According to (Avalos, 2021), continuous professional learning assists teachers in perfecting their pedagogical methods and embracing new teaching methods that aid in improving learning among students. Similarly, participation in faculty development programs has been associated with increased research productivity and improved academic performance in higher education institutions (Postareff et al., 2020).

Professional development can also offer mentorship, academic networking, and leadership training opportunities to female faculty to help them advance their careers. It was found that faculty members who are actively involved in professional development activities are more likely to exhibit a high level of professional competence and job performance (Van der Heijden et al., 2021). Professional development is therefore deemed

to be a critical aspect in enhancing the professional skills and performance of the university faculty.

Professional development has been considered as one of the most valuable instruments of competency/effectiveness advancement of teachers in the institutions of higher learning. It refers to the continuous process through which the faculty members enhance their knowledge, teaching skills, research skills and professional skills through workshops, training programs, seminars and academic partnerships. Professional development activities contribute to assisting faculty in accepting new teaching practices and improving their academic performance (Stes, 2022).

The context of professional development programs in higher education is generally to improve teaching quality, to improve research, and to improve academic leadership among the faculty. It has also been revealed that more prolific faculty in regard to their involvement in professional development courses will be more likely to exhibit more teaching effectiveness and research productivity (Postareff et al., 2023). These improvements are directly related to the job performance of academic staff.

Mentorship programs, academic networking, and research training programs can empower female academics to move the structural points and boost their professional potential.

Research has demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between the presence of professional development materials and faculty engagement as well as academic success in institutions of higher learning (Van der Heijden et al., 2023).

H3: Professional development positively and significantly impacts the job performance of female university faculty.

Moreover, there is a lack of empirical studies specifically on female university faculty in developing countries. The interplay between sociocultural expectations and professional roles and duties of women is especially significant in a context like Pakistan, where these factors can affect the latter.

Additionally, the Pakistani system of higher education consists of the state and privately-owned universities, typically characterized by institutional resource disparity, administrative policies, professional development prospects and job terms. Such differences in institutions can influence the professional experiences and performance outcomes of female faculty in the sectors. Nonetheless, there has been a paucity of studies that have explored the collective impact of career mobility, family, and professional development on job performance among female faculty in both the public and privately-owned universities.

Thus, this research paper seeks to discuss how career mobility, family limitations, and professional growth predicts the job performance of female university faculty in Punjab. The research aims to add to the growing body of literature on gender and higher

education and offer practical implications to university administrators and policymakers who want to improve the professional performance of female academic staff by exploring the joint effect of these variables.

2.4. Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of career mobility on the job performance of female faculty in Punjab.
2. To assess the effect of family constraints on the professional growth and job performance of female faculty in Punjab.
3. To identify the challenges faced by female faculty in balancing career mobility with family responsibilities in Punjab.
4. To analyze the combined effect of career mobility, family constraints, and professional development on job performance of female faculty in Punjab.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The current research adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the connection between career mobility, family constraints, professional development and job performance among female university faculty. It was a cross-sectional survey method to gather data on the participants at one time. This design is popular in social science research to examine the relationships between variables and to test hypotheses put forward by statistical analysis.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in the study is comprised of female faculty employed in Pakistani universities of the public and private sector in Punjab where women actively participate in teaching and research in the postsecondary institutions. The stratified sampling method was employed so as to select a sample of 300 female faculty in the public and private universities of Punjab, Pakistan where one questionnaire was omitted because of incompleteness of its data. Participation in the study was voluntary whereby the participants completed a structured questionnaire. The two institutional sector faculty enabled the study to have a broader picture on the professional experiences of females in the higher education system in the academic field.

3.3. Instrumentation

The study data were gathered through a structured questionnaire which had six sections that were used to measure the variables of interest. The questionnaire had questions on career mobility, family constraints, professional development, and job performance.

Career Mobility: Items assessed the perception of faculty about the promotion, career advancement and professional growth in their institutions.

Family Constraints: This question evaluated how family obligations and family roles affected the professional activities of the participants.

Professional Development: Items assessed the accessibility and engagement in training programs, workshops, seminars, and other professional learning experiences.

Job Performance: This sub-test assessed how the participants perceived themselves to be effective in performing their teaching, research and academic duties.

3.4. Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach alpha of career mobility was ($\alpha = 0.709$), which is acceptable when conducting exploratory research (Taber, 2018; Hosen et al., 2023). The internal consistency of family constraints ($\alpha = 0.812$) and professional development ($\alpha = 0.855$) was high, and job performance ($\alpha = 0.710$). These results prove that the instrument is valid.

The content validity was achieved through the review of pertinent literature and consultation of academic experts to ensure the questionnaire items were sufficient to measure the constructs.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The information was collected through handing out questionnaires through physical delivery and through Google Forms to female faculty in the chosen universities in Punjab. The study informed the study participants about the objective of the study and ensured them that the information they provided would be kept confidential and could only be utilized in academic research. The research was optional, and the interviewees were encouraged to provide honest and right responses.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered were analyzed with IDM SPSS Ver. 27 statistical software. The demographic features of the participants were summarized using descriptive statistics that helped to give an overview of the responses. Further, inferential statistical methods were used to test the associations between the research variables. In particular, the correlation analysis was applied to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables, and regression analysis was applied to address the hypotheses about the effect of career mobility, family constraints, and professional development on job performance among female faculty at universities.

4. Conceptual Framework

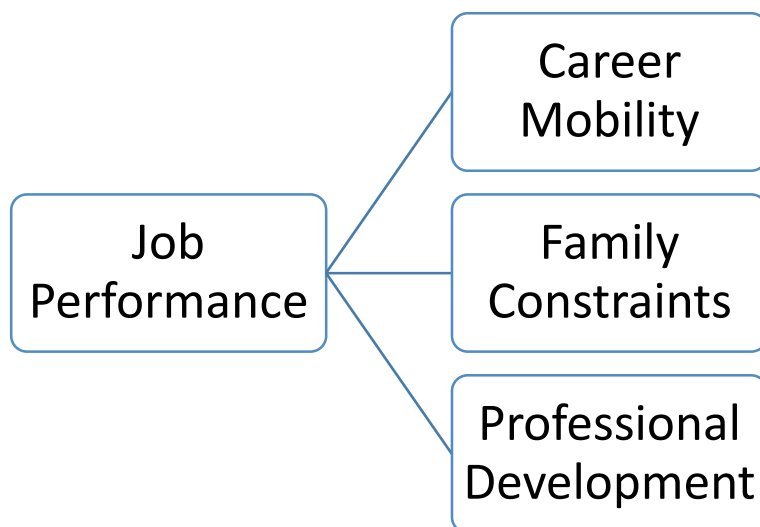


Figure. 1

5. Results and Analysis

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career Mobility	2.71	4.79	3.50	0.38
Family Constraints	1.45	4.55	3.30	0.65
Professional Development	1.58	4.75	3.60	0.58
Job Performance	2.20	4.90	3.70	0.46
N-299				

Table. 1

Results based on descriptive statistics show that there are small variations in means for all variables, and therefore there are no differences in the measures of central tendency. Career mobility variable shows concentrated data with low dispersion as compared to other variables as depicted by the standard deviation. Family constraints show higher dispersion, which means that there is more variance in respondents' answers. Professional development variable reflects the cluster of answers near the mean with moderate dispersion.

5.2. Relationship between Job Performance and other factors

		meanO1	meanO2	meanO3	meanO4
meanO1	Pearson Correlation	1	.182**	.277**	.172**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.003
	N	299	299	299	299

meanO2	Pearson Correlation	.182**	1	-.058	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.315	.971
	N	299	299	299	299
meanO3	Pearson Correlation	.277**	-.058	1	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.315		.000
	N	299	299	299	299
meanO4	Pearson Correlation	.172**	.002	.697**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.971	.000	
	N	299	299	299	299

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table. 2

The results reveal correlation analysis that was adopted to test the relationships between the variables revealed that professional development has a positive relationship with job performance ($r = .697$, $p < .01$) whereby, the more individuals are involved in professional development functioning, the better the performance outcomes are.

This finding can be compared to the new study that emphasizes the significance of lifelong learning in facilitating academic achievement (Desimone and Garet, 2021). Job performance was weakly, though significantly correlated with career mobility ($r = .172$, $p = .01$), which implied that mobility might be a contributory factor to exposure and experience but not one of the primary determinants of performance. The family constraints did not significantly influence job performance ($r = .002$, $p > .05$), indicating that family commitments do not necessarily affect job performance. This fact is in line with the current literature showing adaptive coping strategies among working women (Hill et al., 2022).

5.3. Impact of other factors on Job Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.699a	.488	.483	.33281

Table. 3

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1	Regression	31.163	4	10.388	93.786
	Residual	32.675	295	.111	
	Total	63.838	299		

Table. 4

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.689	.207		8.167	.000		
	meanO1	-.040	.054	-.033	-.750	.454	.884	1.132
	meanO2	.035	.030	.049	1.159	.247	.954	1.048
	meanO3	.567	.035	.709	16.240	.000	.911	1.098

Table. 5

To investigate the overall impact of independent variables on job performance, multiple regression analysis was performed. The findings indicated that the model was statistically significant ($F = 93.786$, $p < .001$), which means that the independent variables jointly explain the differences in job performance. The model accounted 48.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.488$) which is said to be a significant amount in the social science research. Professional development was also the strongest and only significant predictor ($\beta = .709$, $p < .001$), which suggests that it has a strong positive impact on job performance. Career mobility ($\beta = -.033$, $p = .454$) significant and family constraints ($\beta = .049$, $p = .247$) as weaker significant predictors.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Discussion

The results of this research offer valuable information on the predictors of job performance among female faculty in universities.

The strongest result is that professional development has a strong positive impact on job performance. This confirms the increasing amount of research that highlights the importance of continuous training and skill development to enhance teaching performance and academic output (Kraft, 2021).

Although the career mobility is positively related to job performance, it was not a significant predictor of job performance in the regression model. This implies that mobility is not enough to enhance performance unless there are professional growth opportunities.

This idea is reinforced by recent research that states that the development of skills is more important than structural career mobility (Hosen et al., 2023).

The insignificant effect of family restrictions is an interesting observation. It questions the conventional beliefs that family roles have a detrimental impact on the work performance of women. This finding is consistent with the current studies that propose that adaptive strategies and institutional support help female professionals to cope with work-family balance (Haar et al., 2022).

6.2. Conclusion

Although career mobility and family constraints were deemed as important factors, they did not play a strong significant role in job performance when professional development was present. The results emphasize the need to invest in professional development opportunities to improve academic performance and institutional effectiveness.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be made:
Universities should invest in a lifelong learning program of faculty members.
Institutional policies must be geared towards skill development and not merely career mobility opportunities.
Support systems: The support systems should be solidified to allow the female faculty to juggle between professional and personal.
Future research should also explore the other variables such as organizational support, motivation and workplace environment.

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