

0633

Stress and early careers: coping strategies of young women academics in Pakistani Universities

Uzma Quraishi¹, Ghazala Norin²

¹University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan, ²Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Background

Background and context: Currently educational reforms are taking place in Pakistan, specifically focusing on teacher education - Teacher Education Standards are developed - National Teacher Education Accreditation Council has also been established alongside other reforms to improve higher education in the country. Although educational policy is now also focusing on improving overall standard of teacher education in the country, the careers of young women academics is not highlighted as a focus. The research and scholarship on teacher education appears to ignore and overlook the experiences of young women academics which can provide and bring in unique dimensions for reform and improvement in teacher education institutions. Some recent research has indicated that young women academics face stress and anxiety primarily because of the authoritarian culture prevalent in teacher education institutions and find it difficult to deal with because of lack of understanding on part of university/institution leadership and policy makers. This body of research, is not primarily focused on young women academics and is not extensively focused on coping strategies. The researchers argue that in order to have sustainable reform to improve the quality of teacher education the early careers of women academics need to be facilitated and the experiences of young academics in their early careers can provide much needed insight into the practice and can identify areas for improvement and reform.

Research Questions

Focus of the Study: The paper focuses on young women academics in their early careers . It has two stages diagnostics and curative stages.

Research questions:

What is the nature of stress experienced by young women academics i teacher education institutions?

What are the coping strategies adopted by these young professionals? And how these strategies can inform the policy makers and university/teacher education leadership?

Methods

Research Design: It integrates findings from analysis of the data collected through both qualitative and qualitative instruments/methodology. Survey scales and semi structured interviews will be used to collect data from the selected sample of 500 and 50 young women academics respectively.

Data Collection and Analysis: All interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed. Data collected through survey questionnaire will be analysed using SPSS.

Frame

The study employs Ivancevich and Matteson's (1980) Stress Diagnostic Survey and Job Stress Scale - Parker and Decotiis, 1983 to understand stress in the selected sample. The study is informed by liberal feminist framework to further identify themes and areas. The participants of the study are selected from 10 leading teacher education institutions representing four major regions of the country.

Research findings

Expected findings: The previous research of both authors has revealed that young women academics face immense stress at the beginning of their careers - some of them are able to cope with the stress by adopting important strategies - which they evolve as their careers progress. It is believed that the study will a) identify the type of stress faced by the young academics b) their coping strategies will provide important insight into the teacher education institutions and c) a model may be evolved to have more effective reforms in teacher education by empowering professionals in the field.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The researchers contend that educational research and policy making must pay attention to the early careers of young women academics in order to encourage quality professional contribute more effectively to the field.

Theoretical implications: The study expects to contribute to educational theory using liberal feminist framework. It will contribute to a) feminist education theory by providing insights into career of young women academics in a developing country b) model for organisational improvement for higher education and c) stress management theory

References

- Aisenberg, N. and Harrington, M. (1988) *Women of Academe Outsiders in the Sacred Grove*, Amherst: The university of Massachusetts Press.
- Casey, K. (1993) *I Answer with my Life: Life Histories of Women Teachers Working for Social Change*: New York & London: Routledge.
- Deem, R., and Morley, L. (2006). 'Diversity in the Academy? Staff Perceptions of Equality Policies in Six Contemporary Higher Education Institutions', *Policy Futures In Education* 4(2), 185-202.
- Dyer C., Choksi, A., Awasty V., Iyer, U, Moyade, R., Nigam, N, Purohit, N. (2002) Democratising Teacher Education Research in India, *Comparative Education*, , Special Number (25): Democracy and Authoritarianism in Education , 38, 3, pp. 337-351
- Guba, E.S. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.
- Harding, S. (1986). *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Ivancevich, J. & Matteson, M. (1980). *Stress and Work: A managerial perspective*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Jacobs, J. A. (1996) 'Gender Inequality and Higher Education' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, pp. 153-185.
- Khan, S. A. (2008) *Gender Issues in Higher education in Pakistan*, Association of Common Wealth Universities (ACU) country report.
- King, E. (2005) *The use of the self in qualitative research*. In J.T.E. Richardson (Ed.), Leicester: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Post-modern*; New York & London: Routledge.
- Lincoln, Y. (2002). *Emerging Criteria for Quality in Qualitative and Interpretive*

Malik, I. H. (1996) 'The State and Civil Society in Pakistan: From Crisis to Crisis' *Asian Survey*, 36, no. 7, July, pp. 673-690.

Morley, L. (1994) Glass Ceiling or Iron Cage: Women in UK Academia. *Journal of Gender, Work and Organization*. Issue 4. 194-204.

Morley, L. (1995) An Agenda for Gender: Women in the University. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. (2) 2, 271-275.

Morley, L. (1997) Change and Equity in Higher Education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. Vol. 18. No. 2, 229 - 240.

Morley, L. (2001). "Subjected to Review: Engendering Quality in Higher Education." *Journal of Education Policy* 16(5): 465-478.

Morley, L. (2001). Producing New Workers: Quality, Equality and Employability in Higher Education." *Quality in Higher Education* 7(2): 131-138.

Morley, L. (2005). "Sounds, Silences and Contradictions: Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education - Clare Burton Memorial Lecture 2003." *Australian Feminist Studies* 20(46): 109-119.

Morley, L. (2005). "The Micropolitics of Quality." *Critical Quarterly* 47(1-2), 83-95.

Parker, D. F. , & Decotiis, T.A. (1983) Organisational determinants of job stress. *Organisational Behaviour and Human Performance*, 32, 160-177.