



Career Barriers, Perceived Professional Social Support and Hopelessness Level: A Correlational Study of Private and Public School Teachers of Lahore

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research study was to investigate the relationship between career barriers, perceived professional social support and hopelessness level among female teachers of both private and public sectors. The research was quantitative in nature. An adapted questionnaire comprising of 45 close-ended statements was administered to a sample of 100 schoolteachers, 50 from public school and 50 from private secondary female school teachers in which there were 4 private schools and 4 public schools of Lahore. The sampling strategy used was convenience sampling. Parametric and non-parametric tests were used to examine the data. The study revealed no correlation between career barriers and feelings of hopelessness among private school teachers, although there was a strong relation between career barriers and professional social support among teachers. Among public school teachers, there was no significant relationship found between career barriers and both teacher professional social support and hopelessness levels. Furthermore, when comparing the three parameters between public and private school teachers, the findings revealed a significant difference in terms of career barriers between public and private school teachers. However, no significant difference was found in terms of teacher professional social support between private and public-school teachers. Additionally, there was statistically no significant difference between public and private school teachers in their hopelessness level. It is recommended that workshops, training sessions and seminars should be arranged to provide knowledge to both public and private school teachers about how to overcome career barriers how to develop and have better teacher professional social support and how to reduce the element of hopelessness among them..



Introduction

The present study compares career barriers, teachers' perceptions of professional social support, and levels of hopelessness among teachers working in public and private schools in Lahore. The main goal is to investigate the relationship between career barriers, perceived support from colleagues, and feelings of hopelessness among teachers. The teaching profession is demanding and requires a high degree of abilities and credentials. To ensure efficient job performance, teachers put a lot of effort into their career. However, they frequently face various challenges in advancing their careers, which might have detrimental effects (Inandi, Yaman, & Ataş, 2022).

The public and private education systems, notably in Lahore, also diverge significantly from each other. It is essential to compare teachers from both private and public sectors and determine relationship among career barriers, perceived professional social support, and hopelessness. To improve the teaching profession and the entire educational process, the study attempts to shed light on these variables (İnandı, Yaman, & Ataş, 2022).

Wide-ranging variables, such as gender disparities, inequality, biases, societal norms, and stereotypes, might function as career impediments (Hansen, 2020; Kim & O'Brien, 2018). Barriers to a successful career can also be caused by organizational culture, policies, and occupational prejudice. People who juggle many responsibilities and have a variety of interests in their employment could run into obstacles to career advancement (Akgemci, et al. 2016).

It is important to take into account how teachers perceive their professional social support because this affects both career barriers and teachers' overall job performance. Support from coworkers, classmates, students, bosses, friends, family, and the organisation can be both subjective and objective (Li & Xie, 2022). It is crucial to the development of teachers' professional identities and can enhance their feelings of self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Li & Xie, 2022; Avanzi et al., 2018; Ramzan et al., 2021; Velando-Soriano et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020).

Pessimistic thoughts and unfavourable expectations for the future are psychological traits of hopelessness. It may have negative impacts on people's mental health, resulting in issues including depression and suicide ideation (Boduszek & Dhingra, 2016; Waheed et al., 2022). Hopelessness has a negative impact on teachers' self-esteem, communication abilities, and overall job effectiveness (Balat, et al., 2019).

According to earlier research studies conducted in Turkey, career barriers, perceived professional social support, and levels of hopelessness among female teachers are all related (Klavuz & Nand, 2022). In a similar vein, research in Pakistan has revealed a number of obstacles to women's careers in teaching, including social standards, gender disparity, and a lack of family support (Tatlah, et al., 2018). Comparative studies have also looked at job satisfaction, teaching methods, and variations in English language usage between teachers in public and private schools (Hameed et al., 2018; Rasool, et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2022).

In conclusion, this study attempts to offer a thorough examination of the career hurdles, perceived professional social support, and levels of hopelessness among public and private school teachers in Lahore. The study hopes to provide important new understandings into the difficulties teachers confront and how those difficulties affect their professional well-being by contrasting these variables. The findings will have an impact on the creation of interventions and support methods for teachers in both sectors to help them feel supported at work.

Statement of the Problem

According to the report of Alif Ailaan Pakistan District Education Rankings (2016) shows that teachers in Lahore, Pakistan are suffering from various issues which keep them from delivering an effective performance and lifting the learning practice. While teaching is an extremely difficult profession, there is reportedly a large disparity between Lahore's public and private educational sectors. Reports revealed that such issues in Lahore educational sector led to various problems including career barriers and as a result hopelessness among teachers. Research have shown that social support might influence these factors (Santini, et al., 2015). However, it is hard to determine how differently these factors will affect private and public sector teachers. Therefore, this study attempted to carry out a correlational analysis between private and public-school teachers, such that the various effects of career barriers, social support and hopelessness can be shown.

Research Hypotheses

Following were the hypotheses for the present study:

Null hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant correlation between career barriers and professional social support among private school teachers of Lahore.

H₀₂: There is no significant correlation between private school teachers' levels of hopelessness and their career barriers.

H₀₃: There is no significant correlation between career barriers and the social support the public-school teachers receive on the job.

H₀₄: There is no significant correlation between career barriers and the hopelessness level of the public-school teachers.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between career barriers level of private and public female schoolteachers.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference between perceived professional social support level of private and

public female schoolteachers.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference between hopelessness level of private and public female schoolteachers.

Alternative hypotheses

H_a: There is a significant correlation between career barriers and professional social support among the private school teachers of Lahore.

H_a: There is a significant correlation between private school teachers' levels of hopelessness and career barriers.

H_a: There is a significant correlation between career barriers and the social support received by the public-school teachers on the job.

H_a: There is a significant correlation between career barriers and the hopelessness level of the public-school teachers.

H_a: There is a significant difference between career barriers level of private and public female schoolteachers.

H_a: There is a significant difference between perceived professional social support level of private and public female schoolteachers.

H_a: There is a significant difference between hopelessness level of private and public female schoolteachers.

Methodology

Research Design

The basis for this research was a positivist paradigm. The career constraints faced by female secondary school teachers in both private and public schools, as well as their perceptions of professional social support and sense of helplessness, were investigated using a correlational research design.

Close-ended questionnaire

The data were collected by using an adapted questionnaire which was developed by using three different scales. The questionnaire was used for collecting data from both private and public sector teachers. To assess the career barriers of teachers, the Teachers' Career Barriers Scale was utilized that was produced by Inandi and Gilic (2020). The Teacher Professional Social Support Scale, created by Kaner, was used to gather information about teachers' perceptions of professional social support (2007). Meanwhile, to measure the hopelessness levels among teachers, the Beck Hopelessness Scale was employed that was put forth by Beck, Weissman, Lester and Trexler (1974). After these scales were developed, countless studies have adopted these scales or a slightly modified version of them, in order to collect data for research with validity and reliability. The researchers and developers of these scales have themselves used and tested these scales, to ensure their credibility while many other researchers have also tested and utilized them. Consequently, to conduct this research, the permission to use these scales was taken from the relevant researchers, authors, developers and research organizations through emails. The tool was adapted after taking the permission through e-mail from the authors.

Sample Size and Strategy

This study employed convenience sampling technique to select the respondents. The data were collected from the 100 schoolteachers in Lahore. Where there were 50 private secondary female schoolteachers, and 50 public secondary female school teaches of Lahore in which there were 4 private schools and 4 public schools of Lahore.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to determine the normality of the data gathered. The Pearson Coefficient Correlation was used to examine the relationship between the data on the career barriers, teacher professional social support, and private female schoolteachers. The data of the Hopelessness level of private school teachers was not normally distributed for which Spearman Rank Correlation was applied. The data of the all the factors CB, TPSS and Hopelessness level of public-school teachers is normally distributed for which Pearson coefficient correlation was applied.

Results

Table 1

Relationship between CB, and TPSS, among Private Schools Teachers

Variables	N	CB	TPSS
1. CB scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-.287
	Sig (2-tailed)		.043
	N	50	50
2. TPSS scores	Pearson Correlation	-.287	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	50	50

* $p < .05$; *TPSS: Teacher Professional Social Support; *CB: Carrier Barrier

Table 1 depicts that there is a negative, weak relation between CB and TPSS ($r = -.287$). This implies private school teachers who have career barriers were less likely to have TPSS. The p value (.043) implies that there is a significant linear relation between career barriers and teacher professional social support, therefore the alternate hypothesis is retained.

Table 2

Rank Correlation between CB, and BH, in Private School Teachers

Variables	N	CB	BH
1. CB scores	Spearman Rank Correlation	1	.070
	Sig (2-tailed)		.631
	N	50	50
2. BH scores	Spearman Rank Correlation	.070	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.631	
	N	50	50

* $p < .05$ *BH: Beck Hopelessness; *CB: Carrier Barrier

Table 2 indicates that CB and hopelessness level of the private school teachers have a positive weak rank relation ($r = 0.070$) between them. There is no significant rank relation between CB and hopelessness level as the value of p is greater than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis is retained.

Results of Public School Teachers

Table 3

Relationship among CB, TPSS, and BH in Public Schools Teachers.

Variables	N	CB	TPSS	BH
1. CB scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-.148	-.101
	Sig (2-tailed)		.304	.484
	N	50	50	50
2. TPSS scores	Pearson Correlation	-.148	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.304		
	N	50	50	50
3 BH scores	Pearson Correlation	-.101		1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.484		
	N	50		

Table 3 results indicate that there is a negative and very weak relation between CB and TPSS as $r = -.148$ and negative and very weak correlation between CB and hopelessness as $r = -.101$. This implies that teachers

at public schools who have teacher professional social support were less likely to have hopelessness among them. There is no significant linear relation between CB, TPSS and hopelessness as $p < .05$.

Table 4

Differences in CB and TPSS Among Private and Public Teachers

Variable	Public		Private		<i>t(df)</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
1. CB	42.48	6.82	47.06	6.28	-3.49(98)	.00	-7.18	-1.98
2. TPSS	64.36	10.39	60.38	11.22	1.84(97.43)	.07	-.31	8.27

Table 4 shows the difference between the results for public and private schools for parameters; CB and TPSS. The difference was highly significant ($p = 0.00$) for CB therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. However, the difference was not significant ($p = 0.07$) for TPSS, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5

Results of Man-Whitney Test

Variables	N	Z	P	M
Beck Hopelessness				
Public	50			54.64
Private	50	-1.158	.129	46.36

Table 5 results depict hopelessness level among public and private school teachers. Man-Whitney test was applied to the data and yielded the results as p value = .129 and $z = -1.158$ shows that there was no significant difference in hopelessness between private and public schools.

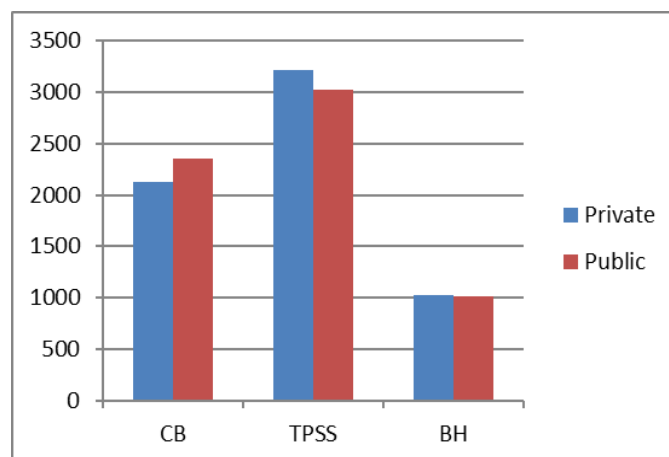


Figure 1 displays the comparison between public and private school teachers. CB is relatively high in public schools as compared to private schools. TPSS is high in private schools as compared to public schools. There is no difference in hopelessness level among teachers of public and private schools.

Discussion

The association between career barriers, teacher professional social support, and degrees of hopelessness among secondary female teachers in both the public and private sectors has been the subject of

several studies.

The results of this study showed a weak, negative correlation between career barriers and teacher professional social support in the context of private schools. This shows that the level of teacher professional support tends to decline among teachers in private schools when career barriers rise. Similar to this, Goulet and Goulet (2018) examined the connection between career hurdles for Canadian teachers and methods for supporting their professional development as instructors. According to the study, perceived stress acted as a mediating factor in the relationship between professional support systems and career constraints. According to this study, giving teachers access to professional assistance may help them feel less stressed and less negatively affected by career barriers. These results suggested that teacher professional support networks can be crucial in lowering career barriers and encouraging teachers to pursue desirable outcomes like job satisfaction and career commitment. While enhancing professional support networks may be a crucial tactic for enhancing teacher retention. These results were also published in a study by Yang and Hone (2021), which looked at the relationship between career hurdles and teacher professional social support systems among Chinese college English teachers. According to the authors' findings, increasing professional support may help to lower barriers to employment and advance teacher wellbeing. Another study was carried out by Park and Lee (2020), and it was discovered that among Korean early childhood teachers, professional support systems were positively connected with job satisfaction and career commitment. In this study the authors suggested that if professional social support is provided to teachers, then can help in promoting positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and career commitment.

Additionally, the findings indicated a positive, weak correlation between career barriers and hopelessness levels among private school teachers. This implies that higher levels of career barriers are associated with increased feelings of hopelessness in this group. These findings are similar to Duran et al. (2019) who determined the relationship between career barriers and hopelessness among Turkish teachers. The authors in this research revealed that perceived career barriers had a negative relationship with hope, and positively correlated with hopelessness. They also suggested that interventions aimed at reducing career barriers and enhancing teacher well-being can help in promoting positive outcomes like hope. It is suggested that career barriers negatively impact the mental health and well-being of teachers including the element of hopelessness.

However, when findings of public and private school teachers were compared, the result showed that there is a significant difference in terms of career barriers, which indicated that public school female teachers have more career barriers than private school teachers. Similar findings were reported by Dovidio and Fadel (2017) They conducted research in which public and private school teachers of Lebanese were compared in terms of their perceptions of career barriers. This study revealed that public school teachers reported higher levels of career barriers related to bureaucracy and a lack of resources, whereas private school teachers have higher levels of career barriers related to job security and a lack of opportunities for professional development. A research study was conducted by Karatepe and Agaoglu (2013) in which the career barriers experienced by Turkish public and private school teachers were compared. The result showed that the public- school teachers have relatively higher levels of career barriers related to bureaucratic procedures, insufficient resources and lack of opportunities for professional development, whereas private school teacher has higher levels of career barriers related to workload and job security.

The current study focused on comparing the levels of professional social support for teachers in public and private schools and found no significant differences between the two groups. These results are both consistent and contradict the earlier researches. The results are in line with a previous study, which revealed no significant differences between the instructors in private and public schools in terms of professional social support. Nevertheless, some studies presented contrasting results.

According to a study by Feng and Sass (2018), American teachers in private schools received more coaching and mentorship for their professional growth than those in public schools. Similar to this, Yesilyaprak and Pektas (2015) discovered in their study that instructors in private schools in Turkey receive higher levels of support from school administration and their peers, as well as more possibilities for professional development than teachers in public schools. Another study by Navarro and Ruiz-Esteban (2017) found that private school teachers in Spain have greater access to professional development opportunities and resources than their counterparts in public schools, as well as better levels of support from school administration and peers.

The varying contexts in which these researches were conducted may be attributed for the disparities that were found. For instance, the quantity and level of professional assistance for teachers may vary depending on the financing, resources, and policies in place at schools in various nations. It's also likely that the variations seen in some researches are due to differences in the teachers' personal traits, such as their levels of experience

or areas of expertise.

The present study did not show any significant differences in terms of teacher professional support between public and private school teachers. But some studies have reported differences in teacher professional support between private and public-school teachers. Further research is needed in this aspect to explore the factors that can help in contributing these differences and also to determine the most effective ways to support the professional development of all teachers, regardless of the school system they work in.

The findings of the present study are in line with the previous research studies that have investigated the levels of hopelessness among both public and private school teachers. Teachers working in different environments with different demands of job and resources, both sectors showed similar levels of hopelessness among them. So, this can suggest that the causes of hopelessness among teachers may be similar across different school systems. In a study by Zhang, Xu, and Feng (2020), which included teachers from both public and private schools, the degree of hopelessness among primary and secondary school teachers in China was estimated. It was discovered that both public and private school teachers reported moderate levels of hopelessness. In a study by Zhang, Xu, and Feng (2020), which included teachers from both public and private schools, the degree of hopelessness among primary and secondary school teachers in China was estimated. It was discovered that both public and private school teachers reported moderate levels of hopelessness.

A study conducted by Chaudhary and Rani (2018) compared the levels of hopelessness among public and private school teachers of India. In this study, the authors found that both the groups reported high levels of hopelessness and showed no significant difference between them in terms of hopelessness level.

The results of this study also have shed light on the need for increased attention and support for teacher's mental health and well-being, regardless of the type of school they work in. In previous studies the high level of hopelessness is reported by teachers which suggested that the different systemic issues within the education sector needs to be addressed to support teachers and also promote their well-being.

Conclusion

The current quantitative research study focused on determining the significant relationship between CB, perceived professional social support and hopelessness level of female teachers of both public and private sectors. Based on the data gathered it is revealed that the career barriers, perception of social support, and hopelessness level among teachers of public and private schools have no significant difference. In public schools, female teachers have more career barriers than private school teachers do. The CB of female teachers are associated with the perception of professional social support. The school authority and administration mostly do not support female while pursuing a career as compared to men. More opportunities and authority are given to men. Female teachers who are motivated and want to have a bright career has less hopelessness among them and more hope for the future.

It is concluded that both public and private female schoolteachers had both positive and negative perspectives about career barriers, teacher professional social support and hopelessness level among them. Teachers in both sectors have been aware of these terms and give their perspectives about them effectively. They believe that to have a better career these terms should be keenly considered. Public school teachers have more career barriers among them as compared to teachers who have professional social support.

Suggestions for Future Research Work

It is vital to emphasize that the present study did not investigate the underlying causes of hopelessness among teachers. Future research is needed to identify the specific factors that contribute to hopelessness in teachers, such as job stressors, lack of support systems, and challenging student behavior. Additionally, future studies could explore the potential differences in the sources and types of support systems available to private and public-school teachers.

Further research is needed to fully understand the nature of the relationship between career barriers and mental health outcomes among teachers, and to develop effective interventions that can help teachers to overcome these barriers and achieve greater success in their careers. By addressing these important issues, researchers and educators can work together to promote a healthier and more supportive workplace environment for teachers.

Further research could explore the relationship of CB, TPSS and Beck hopelessness scale of male and female teachers of both public and private sectors that how these barriers effect the career of the teachers of both male and female teachers, that how teacher professional social support helps teachers have a bright career and how hopelessness among teachers make the demotivate and discouraged them to have a career. Researchers can also investigate the relationship of different subdivisions of these three scales between male female teachers of both the sectors.

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