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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## The Relationship of Sense of Coherence and Work-Family Enrichment with Emotional Exhaustion among University Teachers

<sup>1</sup>Sumbul Azam \* <sup>2</sup> Madiha Azam and <sup>3</sup> Umme Sumaiyya Siddiqui

1. Lecturer, Department of physical therapy, Indus University, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

2. Lecturer, Department of psychology, Iqra University, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

3. Lecturer, Department of psychology, Hamdard University, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

\***Corresponding Author:** Sumbul.azam@indus.edu.pk

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to determine a relationship of sense of coherence and work-family enrichment with emotional exhaustion among university teachers. The primary objective was to investigate the relationship of SOC and WFE with EE among university teachers. Being a teacher, and teaching in particular, is described as an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998) and emotions are described as "a vital aspect of teachers' life". 150 university teachers aged 21 to 60 years recruited from different universities of Karachi. Data was gathered through Antonovsky's Sense of Coherence Scale (13-items, 1987), Olden burger Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and Work family enrichment scale by Carlson et al (2006). The analysis focused on exploring correlations between these variables. The results suggested that there is a significant negative correlation of work family enrichment with emotional exhaustion ( $r=-0.34$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The findings reflects that Emotional Exhaustion has no connection with sense of coherence. For enhancing the awareness on the effect of emotional exhaustion on teacher's productivity the results of the present research could be useful.

**KEYWORDS** Emotional Exhaustion, Sense of Coherence, Work-Family Enrichment

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### Introduction

Being a teacher, and teaching in particular, is described as an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998) and emotions are described as "a vital aspect of teachers' life". However, in the past 15 years, there has been an increase in the number of scientific studies on teachers' feelings. Since then, it has been proven that instructors encounter a range of distinct emotions throughout the course of their careers, especially when imparting knowledge. Regarding the physical and mental health of teachers, emotions are most important (Fredrickson, 1998).

According to Smith and Glenn (1994), a teacher's sense of success is influenced by both internal and external influences, which can either enhance or impede a teacher's effectiveness. The majority of these teaching-related requirements call on teachers to exhibit some emotions while repressing others (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004). Hochschild discussed how in-service employees in particular frequently had to restrain their emotions in order to meet a predetermined norm of job performance (Hochschild 1983).

As Cordes and Dougherty (1993), said that emotional exhaustion occurs when the individuals feel that they are exhausted or lack energy. It is a long-term condition of mental and physical stress brought on by a demanding job, high personal responsibilities, and ongoing stress. Freudenberg (1974) first introduced the term burnout in his article as it is a condition of complete physical and mental stress and tiredness experienced by a person on job and it is a common and major risk for

professionals who work in challenging environments and organizations like free clinics, halfway houses, etc.

Burnout syndrome have following components which are the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and less personal accomplishments. Therefore, teachers experience burnout as they are not in control of how they perform their jobs. They work along with the students to achieve their goals. An important component of burnout is emotional exhaustion, which occurs more frequently in teachers due to emotional labor and student's behavior. It has been confirmed that teachers experience a lot of emotions during their professional lives, especially while delivering lectures (Keller & Frenzel, 2014). Emotions are considered a predictor of teacher's behavior in class (Frenzel, 2014). Emotions are also related to the teacher's psychological well-being and general health (Fredrickson, 1998).

Most studies have demonstrated that social and personality characteristics are important contributors to one's health and well-being. However, the majority of earlier studies emphasized negative elements, such as unfavorable living circumstances, lifestyle factors, and psychological and social stresses. By introducing the notion of sense of coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1988) meant to introduce a different strategy: Which elements are most likely to keep people from getting sick? Antonovsky claims that those with high SOC are more likely to view a situation as challenging rather than hazardous or unmanageable, and as a result, preserve excellent health even when faced with demanding life events. Because of sense of coherence (SOC) importance in the quality of life (QOL) of teachers, it shifted the attention towards it. The sense of coherence is defined as "a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence" that the world is purposeful, manageable, and understandable (Antonovsky, 1988).

**SOC Includes Emotional, Behavioral, and Cognitive Component** The SOC strategy is predicated on the premise that, When faced with difficult circumstances, person with a high sense of coherence can feel driven to handle them (motivation), thought that a person understand the issue (comprehensibility), and think they have the resources to handle the task (Manageability) (Antonovsky, 1998).

**Comprehensibility** The degree to which a person interprets the stimuli they are presented to as coming from their intrinsic and extrinsic environments, a knowledge which is organized, and consistent, as well as clear is referred to as comprehension. A person with a high sense of comprehensibility anticipates that future stimuli will be predictable, organized, and explicit (Antonovsky, 1998).

**Manageability** The extent to which a person believes that the resources they have are necessary in handling the situation made by the constant barrage of stimuli is referred to as manageability. Some resources that are under control of person or those that are legitimately under the authority of others are referred to as being "at a person's disposal." (Antonovsky, 1998).

**Meaningfulness** The degree to when a person feels that their emotional life makes sense that difficulties are seen as deserving of dedication and effort rather than responsibilities, the problems and demands merit putting effort into them, is referred to as their sense of meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1998).

The definition of Work family enrichment is "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in another role" (Greenhaus, 2006). Enhancement in

Work family is examined bidirectional in nature. If benefits from work applied on family then it is called work- family enrichment (WFE) and if benefits from family applied on work then it is said to be family-work enrichment (FWE). When resources learned in one role help someone perform in another role, this is called enrichment suggested by Greenhaus and Powell. Resources like material resources, psychological and social support and skills and perspectives. There are two pathways to affect other side, one is instrumental path (performance increases) and other is affective path (positive affect). Recent research showing that better attentiveness in one domain is indirectly connected with enhanced participation in another domain through positive affect is an example of the expressive route (Rothbard, 2001). Various terms have been used to explain the beneficial connection among job and family responsibilities, including facilitation (Frone, 2003), enrichment (Greenhaus, 2006), enhancement (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002) and positive spill over (Hanson & Hammer, 2006).

### **Literature Review**

A cross-cultural study on level of display rule perceptions, emotional regulation, and burnout (emotional exhaustion) between US and Chinese service workers was done and it was found that there is an effect on burnout among these workers (Joseph & James, 2013). A research was conducted to examine the impact of background variables of burnout among elementary, intermediate, secondary and university teachers and the result showed that gender, age and type of student influences the teaching style and burnout. Age Educational institution's administration rated high as a contributor to feelings of stress by teachers of all levels of academic system (Byrne, 1991). On the other hand, the level of burnout was experienced significantly higher among the younger teachers in terms of emotional stress and disinterest in their jobs, supported the hypothesis that Burnout and stress are more common in younger and relatively inexperienced teachers (Byrne, 1991).

Emotional exhaustion is most likely to have an impact on sleep wake cycle of the individuals due to varying schedules which may inhibits their personal growth and have a detrimental effect on their standard of living (Zohar et al., 2005a). According to several studies conducted worldwide, SOC can be seen as mitigating the health effects of stressful life events, which means that SOC appears to buffer the impact of recent stressful life experiences (Cohen & Kanter, 2004; Richardson & Ratner's, 2005; Braun-Lewisohn, et. al. 2011). According to studies involving students, SOC has a crucial role in mediating stress and burnout. SOCITS, or coherence in the instructional environment, is an internal tool that trainees can use to cope with challenges in the classroom and which forecasts burnout levels, acting as a buffer against burnout (Bracha, 2014). A research was conducted on link between job satisfaction and coherence to check whether there is a relationship between above-mentioned two variables. The result provides significant evidence supporting the idea that job satisfaction and sense of coherence are strongly correlated (Strümpfer & De Bruin, 2009). On Italian public workers, a research was carried out to look into the connections between turnover rate, personal life happiness, and work-family conflict. Furthermore, the findings back up the idea (Nicoli, 2013). Nowadays women are involved in work as well as family domain. They have to fulfill both responsibilities at a time. A study was done to determine the antecedents and consequences of work-family enrichment in female employees and the result showed that work-family enrichment and its antecedents and effects are positively correlated (Marais & Klerk, 2014).

A survey was conducted on employees of national retailer chain to examine the benefits of the work-family interface by examining the connection between work-family

enrichment and work-family satisfaction outcomes. The result revealed high level of enrichment in work-family dimension and family-work dimension but family to work dimension is higher which means that family roles provided the more resources to enhance their work roles (Jaga & Bagraim, 2011). According to a prior study, work-family conflict has an impact on both physical and psychological health (Greenhaus & Spector, 2006). Stress is one of the most prevalent health issues. Stress can be defined as a response to the possibility of running out of resources or actual resource loss (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). High levels of conflict between work-family have been associated to worker health decline, anxiety, and depression, according to Joseph et al. (2007). Additionally, Vinokur, Pierce, and Buck (1999) discovered that family suffering was linked to work-family conflict.

According to Maslach and Jackson (1986), high level of emotional exhaustion was perceived by female as compared to the male. According to Thomas and Cathleen (1984), the perception of burnout among the male and female colleagues yielded that there are differences between genders on both emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishments subscales. There was found to be a difference in frequency and intensity of responses where the female coaches were reported to have substantially increased levels of emotional exhaustion along with those significantly poor levels of personal achievement while male coaches have opposite level. A study was done to look at how gender impacted the role of work-family enrichment and its effects, however the results showed that gender had no impact on the relationship. Findings reported that support of family, work place support, work life balance support and job characteristics predicted work-family enrichment while job characteristics and family support predicted family-work enrichment (Baral & Bhargav, 2011).

## Material and Methods

### Research Design

The present study is primarily a quantitative study with a correlational survey design. Three self-report structured questionnaires have been utilized to determine the variables.

### Participants

A total of (N=150) participants, comprising of both male (N=69) and female (N=81) was selected from different public and private universities by the convenient purposive sampling from the resident of Karachi, Pakistan. The inclusion criteria for participants included that they should be teaching in any public or private university, they able to speak and read English language and they have at least 1-year full time teacher experience in university.

### Measures

Following are the measure that were used in the current study.

**Informed consent** Firstly, consent form were signed by the participants. The participants received a brief explanation of the study's objectives, confidentiality and their right to discontinue participation at any time. Moreover, if they want to know about the research result they can contact us on our email address provided on form.

**Demographic form** A self-developed demographic sheet was used to gain information regarding the age, gender, grade, education, marital status, family structure, socioeconomic status, no of family members of the participants.

**Sense of Coherence Scale (Antonovsky, 1998)** This scale was designed to measure the sense of coherence of an individual. The 13 elements on the SOC Questionnaire are divided into three categories: comprehensibility (5 items), manageability (4 items), and meaningfulness (4 items). The response options are scored on a semantic scale from 1 to 7, with 1 and 7 denoting extreme emotions in response to questions (and statements) about how one experiences life (for example, "do you ever feel like you can't get through to people?" is rated from 1 to 7. 1 indicates "never have this feeling" and 7 indicates "always have this feeling". The questionnaire yields a total score between 13 and 91 points. Test-retest correlations for a year vary from 0.69 to 0.78, while the Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, and ranges from 0.70 to 0.95.

**Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti, 1999)** The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory in English was used to assess the Emotional exhaustion. Eight of the 16 items in the OLBI gauge the exhaustion component of burnout and eight calculating the burnout disengagement dimension. There are four items on each subscale that are positively and negatively worded. Participants were asked to rate the items on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 in order to reply (strongly disagree). Responses were recorded in all instances so that high scores would signify extreme levels of fatigue and disengagement. The subscales for exhaustion (Cronbach's = 0.87) and disengagement (Cronbach's = 0.81) were both acceptable.

**Work-Family Enrichment Scale (Carlson et al., 2006)** Workplace along with family enrichment were assessed using a multidimensional 18-item scale that was created by Carlson et al., (2006). This scale has three items for each sub dimension and nine items total for the two dimensions: work- family enrichment (WFE) and family-work enrichment (FEW). Responses will be recorded on a Likert scale which consist of five-points 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Internal consistency was evaluated by Cronbach's alphas for WFE (0.94) and FWE (0.95) which were reliable.

**Procedure:** Permission to administer the scales was taken from the authors by emailing them. This survey was conducted online via a Google form. Participants were given a consent form first to achieve their agreement for their participation in the research. This was informed to the participant that they have the right to discontinue the research at any time and without giving a reason. Participants were debriefed in the consent form about the actual topic of the research and informed them that participant's personal record and their identification would strictly keep under confidential, used for only research purpose and will not be disclosed under any circumstances. The demographic form was supplied to make sure the participant met the requirements for inclusion, and then the participants received the questionnaire and the instructions.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N=150)**

Scales	No. of items	$\alpha$	M	SD	SKs	K	Range	
							Actual	Potential
Sense of Coherence	13	0.60	57.82	8.350	.0086	-0.159	13.91	36.79

Work Family Enrichment	9	0.903	36.52	6.442	-0.652	1.264	9.45	9.45
Emotional Exhaustion	8	0.70	18.34	3.589	-0.33	0.117	8.32	9.29

Note:  $\alpha$  = Coefficient of Alpha, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SK= Skewness, K= Kurtosis

Table includes the alpha reliability of all the scales of our study, and most of the alpha reliability is valid and strong. We will see the Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness value, Kurtosis value along with the Actual and Potential Ranges in the table above as well, and based on the information we have, we can concluded that data is normally distributed.

**Table 2**  
**Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Sense of Coherence, Work-Family Enrichment and Emotional Exhaustion (N=150)**

	WTR	SOC	EE
WTE	-	0.089	-0.348**
SOC		-	-0.070
EE	1		-

Note: WFE= work-family enrichment, SOC= sense of coherence, EE= emotional exhaustion (\*\* $p < 0.01$ ) (\* $p < 0.05$ )

The correlation between sense of coherence and work-family enrichment with emotional exhaustion was analyzed in table 3. According to the result of the analysis, while there is no connection between sense of coherence and work-family enrichment, there is a strong negative association between emotional tiredness and the two. Emotional exhaustion and sense of coherence have a sluggish negative relationship.

In the light of previous researches it was hypothesized that there is a correlation between sense of coherence and work family enrichment with emotional exhaustion among university teachers. The past researches have provided the evidences that work family enrichment is correlated with emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) but in Pakistan it is still under the research so the aim of our study is to find out the correlation between sense of coherence and work family enrichment with emotional exhaustion among university teachers.

When Pearson product correlation was used, it revealed a high negative correlation between work-family enrichment and emotional exhaustion that is statistically significant. This indicates that if an individual maintain balance between work and family or his/her work facilitates his/her family situation so the individual experiences less emotional exhaustion. Additionally, the findings indicated no connection between emotional exhaustion and a sense of coherence. Feeling of emotionally worn out, having minimal resources at their disposal is known as emotional exhaustion. It is the main characteristic and most obvious aspect of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). One of the researcher refers burnout as the emitting energy and resources that are caused by chronic job stress. To learn more, a study was carried out to determine the relationship between emotional display rule/job focused labors, work family interference and burnout among workers of an organization. The result showed that work family interference is significantly correlated with burn out (Montgomery, 2006). Because of burnout, an individual's enthusiasm, excitement and goal directed behaviors affects. Which lead to the psychosomatic complaints such as exhaustion, ulcer and headache as well as increasing the conflict between families and reducing work-family

enrichment (Azeem & Nazir, 2008). A study supported the results that work place resources, social support, beneficial environment and collaboration helps the individual reducing their likelihood of emotional exhaustion (Jaga & Jeffery, 2012). Women have always been a member of the labor market and have been studied when it comes to the work-family interface (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Tiedje et al., 1990), but more recent research is absent, particularly when it comes to the enrichment of the work-family for female workers. Even today, women are still socialized to fulfil their traditional domestic duties as mothers, wives, and homemakers, but it is unclear how this benefits the female worker in both her personal and professional lives, claim Franks, Schurink, and Fourie (2006). These resources may be transferred to their family when female employees feel more in control of their work and when their job is enriched with opportunities to learn and acquire new skills. Such resources may therefore affect how they feel about managing their family responsibilities and thereby improve their competency as a family member (Baral & Bhargava, 2011).

As Antoniou et al (2006) explained the idea of occupational stress and burnout among elementary and secondary teachers in connection to inequalities in gender and age. The findings showed that much more occupational stress was felt by female teachers, especially when it comes to the interactions with their workload, the progress of their students, their coworkers, and their emotional stress. Role strain theory posits that resources (e.g. time, energy) are limited such that when multiple roles are combined and role demands increase, resources to cope with increased demands are depleted leading to strain (Goode, 1960). This theory provides the underlying logic for understanding the process of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

## **Conclusion**

The research reveals that significantly, there is a considerable negative association of work family enrichment with emotional exhaustion among university teachers. However, work family enrichment is a significant negative predictor of emotional exhaustion among university teachers. Additionally, a research showed that there is no correlation between feeling coherent and emotional exhaustion.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results obtained from the research, the recommendation for a future research study is offered. First, to evaluate the relationship of sense of coherence and work- family enrichment with emotional exhaustion among university professionals, Qualitative studies should be more appropriate to get rich and comprehensive information of emotional exhaustion and their reasons. Second, Sample size should be large and taken from the different cities of Pakistan, so that greater perspective could be seen with respect to cultural differences. Larger data may help in understanding of sense of coherence along with other variables like gender differences, employee rate as well as types of employment. Data should be collected in person, which may give the qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis may help in deeper understanding of the variables and easier to generalized on population.

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