



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A Comparative Study on Social Support and Stress among Male and Female University Teachers**

Dr. Mahvish Fatima Kashif \*<sup>1</sup> S. R. Afza<sup>2</sup>

1. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan, mahvishfatima79@gmail.com
2. MS Scholar, STEM Education Department, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

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**ABSTRACT**

The world is advancing as humans have been achieving so much with each passing day. The world, which has so much innovation, is also facing issues that cause stress. The teachers who are working all over the world most of the time confront different situations at workplace. Teacher's role in society is crucial. The current study aimed to measure the effect of social support on stress among male and female universities teachers in the private and public universities of Lahore, Pakistan. In order to collect data Scale of Perceived Social Support was used on a sample of 496 male and female universities teachers by using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Regression) were used for the analysis of data. Results of the study indicated that there is a significant effect of social support (supervisor support and coworker support) on stress among male and female university teachers. Moreover, females have high social support than male teachers at the university level.

**Keywords**

Coworker Support, Social Support, Stress, Supervisor Support

**Introduction**

With the achievements that have been taking place for the past few decades the world of achievement is also known to be a world of stress (Riaz et al., 2016). The teachers who are working all over the world most of the time confront different situations at workplace. Teacher's role in society is crucial. Very few teachers found to be satisfied at workplaces and tend to have high enthusiasm. Day by day teachers have to encounter many challenges and immense efforts are required by teachers for performing actively. These work related tasks tend to cause stress and lower performance. Teachers who perceive sense of support at workplace reportedly have higher positive meaning for experience (Chan, 2002). Social support is perceived to encompass that strong positive social relationship maximize the well-being. Social support empowered professional growth that embedded to generate work efficiency of teacher (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). Furthermore, social support perceived to be the protective and optimal factor that lessens the stress among teachers. Lack of social support directly linked with the psychological distress among teachers (Chaplain, 2008). Social support is not only needed in times of crisis or in a difficult situation but also in daily life. Anyone who did not get an adequate amount of social support may confront many issues in social connections and other existing works. Social support at the workplace has a great impact and it is observed that colleagues directly have the capacity to help in providing social support at the workplace. Social

support can take many forms but, social support at the workplace is considered crucial and has a direct impact merely on the routine task and at work life (Cook & Minnotte, 2008). Social support at work has a strong impact on the healthy work environment. In this study the focus is on coworker and supervisor support. Coworker support is characterized by the degree to which people see their colleagues and people who are working in the organization tend to accommodate and support them in a demanding situation. The type of support that is provided by coworkers incorporates care towards the people who have been working together. Substantial help is also can be given by the coworker's important piece of information that can be exchanged for good purposes (Rousseau & Aube, 2010). Supervisor support plays a vital role to boost morale of workers and help to maintain a well psychological mental space. Eisenberger (2002) with some other researchers agreed with fact, how far supervisors support helps to cope with the stress related to the work-life conflict. It is considered by researchers and experts that supervisors are the organizational agents, the health management activities along with organizational activities. Kossek (2011) discernments related to administrator support refers to work-life fulfillment and well-being, recognition for the employee for providing help and care about the employees mental health and adopting constructive behavioral patterns in order to incorporate enthusiastic supportive (Hammer et al., 2008). According to Kagan and Segal (1992) stressors are the factors that trigger stress. A stressor can be any mishap in routine life, change in the activities, for example, beginning work at the new place, or it can be a natural phenomenon that can trigger stress such as earthquake, fires and situational aggravations, that tend to create pressure and uneasiness. Teaching can be an addition for the introduction of stress inside the presence of various different issues for example inaccessibility of social connections, budgetary inconveniences. Social support and stress have been explained by various researchers. Wills (1998) considers that social support might handle different types of stress in various ways. For individuals that are experiencing stress, the people around them can motivate them to do exercises for example working out, counseling by an expert. Hence it is considered that amount of social support is uncommonly important for engaging assorted conducts that can decrease the enormity of anxiety and stress (Riaz et al., 2016). It is the concern of the researchers to know the causes, nature, impacts of stress that are faced by the teachers. Teaching, known to be as a simple and routine work from decades, can be perceived dynamically complex profession now. Hence, this study focused on the effect of social support on stress among male and female university teachers.

### **Literature Review**

Social support refers to the help that is provided by the social network. Factors such as care and nurturance, instructive support including the substantial physical and material help, and instrumental support considering the required need and exhortation all refer to social support (Taylor et al., 2004). Social support can take shape of emotional support, instructive support, and instrumental support. The foremost common sources of social support are administrators, colleagues, family and companions at workplace (Zhang & Zhu, 2007). Social support at the workplace has a great impact and it is observed that colleagues directly have the capacity that can help in providing social support at the workplace. Social support can take many forms but, in this study, social support at the workplace is considered crucial and has a direct impact merely on the routine task and at work life (Cook & Minnotte, 2008). Coworker support is characterized by the degree to which people see their colleagues and the people who are working in the organization tend to accommodate and support them in a demanding situation. The type of support that is provided by the

coworkers incorporates care towards the people who have been working together. Substantial help is also can be given by the coworker's important piece of information that can be exchanged for good purposes (Rousseau & Aube, 2010). Rieg (2007) stated, newly joined teachers at work consistently highlight the point that the relationship with colleagues, other teachers, students, administrators all these are the source of stress and cause worries. The time duration that a teacher spends in an organization or with students and colleagues has also a very strong relationship with the stress that teachers face (Smethem, 2007). Social support increases the capacity to overcome tensions, anxieties, and other challenges. People possessing social support show high self-esteem and positive opinion about their life (Siklos & Kerns, 2006). Early investigation of personality characteristics of socially supportive people might be considered as more viable for the intervening stress. People having tough personalities utilize social support to intercede the stress and anxiety (Minghui et al., 2018). The literature has been divided into two dichotomies in the form of taxonomy of social support It is structural versus functional support and the other is instrumental support (Beehr & Glazer, 2001). Structural support relates to the presence of others whereas emotional and instrumental support are forms of functional support. Taylor (1998) explains the foundation of conceptualization of social support as a core constructive activity which is useful social support is the interpersonal process that mediated by discussion (Ab-Rashid et al., 2016). Selye presents the concept of stress for the very first time during 1950 is coined the term "Stressor" any outside constraint connected with a life that drives one to encounter stress. Stress is resulted due to any applied force. The term teachers stress first defined by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978). Teacher stress is the encounter of negative feelings that is the outcome while working in that arise due to stress are outrage pressure, restlessness might intercede that recognized stress related to professional obligations. It is the perception related to them that tends to build the situation that arise stress in teachers (Yuh & Choi, 2017). Stress can be caused by many factors such as the environment at school, perception of skills, lack of support from the administration or life events that teacher encounters, and the relationship that the student has with the teacher. Teaching is a twenty-four hours job, other professions give them space and allow the employee to leave tasks at the office but on the other hand, teachers need to provide help whenever it is needed (Klassen et al., 2010). Stress is identified as an interaction between an individual and the environment; it is the relationship between these two. It is not an environmental stimulus or a psychological response. Stress can be defined as a transaction between an environment and an individual (Sánchez, 2014). It has been observed that women experience more level of stress than men because of the fact that they get less time to spend with their children. They are involved in job, so they get less time to give to their family and home (Duxbury & Higgins, 2013). The coping strategies for both men and women were different when the factor of social support was linked with it. Women often use different ways of social support from their bosses in order to build an effective coping strategy for themselves. Social support has the same impact on both the genders on work stress and job exhaustion (Ferguson et al., 2017). Individuals who are privileged to have supporters in the need of times they have higher self-esteem. A distinction is made between the two types of support, the one is perceived social support and the other one is actual support. Both have their major impacts. When an individual anticipate help in the time of need in referred as a perceived social support on the other hand when an individual provided by support in a certain and specific time duration known to be actual support (Helberc, 2009).

## **Hypotheses**

**Ho:** There is no significant effect of perceived social support (supervisor support and co-worker support) on stress among university teachers.

**Ho:** There is no significance difference in perceived social support (supervisor support and co-worker support) among male and female university teachers.

**Ho:** There is no significance difference in perceived social support (supervisor support and co-worker support) of university teachers in public and private sector.

### Material and Methods

Quantitative research design was utilized in this study. To determine the effect in quantitative study causal comparative research method was selected as it finds differences in existing behavior or status of groups and individuals (Fraenkel, 2009).

### Population

In this research, the population is composed of male and female university teachers in private and public universities in Lahore. The total number of universities recognized by HEC is 32 in Lahore. (12:11 AM/ Dated 17-02-2021) ([www.hec.edu.pk](http://www.hec.edu.pk)). Teachers from 6 universities (3 private and 3 public) were selected as accessible population of the study.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Teachers in Public Universities**

Sr. No.	Name of Universities	Female Teachers	Male Teachers	Total
1	University of the Punjab	221	410	631
2	University of Education	107	142	249
3	Government College University	104	204	308
	Total	432	756	1188

**Table 2**  
**Number of Teachers in Private Universities**

Sr. No.	Name of Universities	Female Teachers	Male Teachers	Total
1	University of Management & Sciences	294	491	785
2	University of Central Punjab	138	265	403
3	Lahore Leads University	28	76	104
	Total	460	832	1292

### Sample

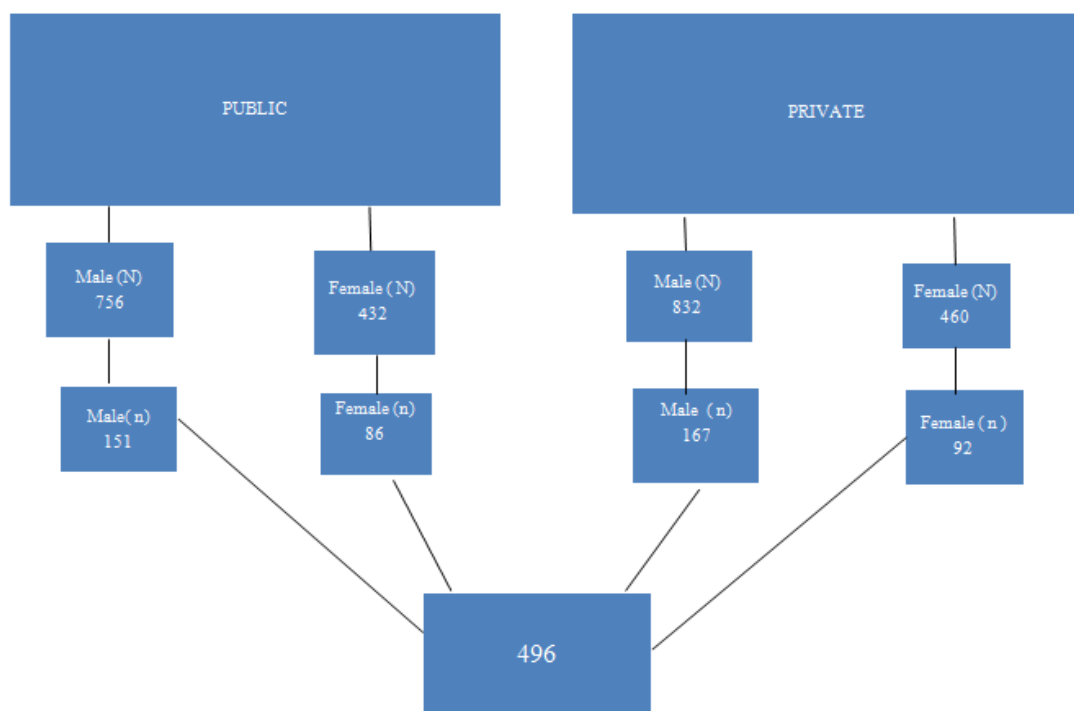
Sample was selected through proportionate stratified sampling. As researcher divides the entire population in subgroups known as strata, all members in sample

are selected from each stratum randomly. The sample of study was comprised of 496 male and female teachers of universities in Lahore. The teachers were selected from 6 universities of Lahore (3 public and 3 private).

**Table 3**  
**Sample Size**

Sr. No.	Universities	Population N	Sample n
1	Private	1292	259
2	Public	1188	237
	Total	2480	496

### Sampling Framework



### Procedure for Data Collection

After getting permission from universities data was collected. Data was collected online by finding emails of teachers through university websites. By making a visit to various universities request was made to fill data individually and by using Google forms as well. Teachers were requested to fill the questionnaire online. The consent was taken into account by the participants.

### Instrumentation

For the purpose of collecting data from the sample a questionnaire was used. A general information sheet was used to collect demographic information includes gender, and nature of university. The two questionnaires were used to collect information based on perceived social support and stress. A scale of social support, in order to measure the amount of received social support, was used. The scale consisted of 14 items rated on 5-point Likert response categories. The 2 sub-scales of the main scale were co-worker and supervisor support, developed by Heaney (1991). The scale of perceived stress was consisted of 10 items rated on 5-point Likert scale. This scale was developed by Cohen (1983) in order to identify the measure of stress.

**Table 4**  
**Factors of Perceived Social Support**

Sr. No.	Social Support at work	Item No.
1	Supervisor support	1-7
2	Coworker support	8-14

**Table 5**  
**Scale of Perceived Stress**

Sr. No.	Stress at work	Item No.
1	Perceived Stress	1-10

### Reliability of Scales

In this study the Cronbach alpha value for overall reliability of perceive social support scale and perceive stress scale were 0.79 and 0.62 respectively. The reliability is described below.

**Table 6**  
**Reliability of Perceived Social Support and Perceived Stress Inventory**

Sr. No.	Scales	Cronbach alpha	No of Items
1	Perceived Social Support	0.79	14
2	Perceived Stress	0.62	10

### Data Analysis

Ho: There is no significance effect of perceived social support (Supervisor support and co-worker support) on stress among university teachers.

**Table 7**  
**Regression Analysis: Effect of Social Support on Stress**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815	.664	.662	5.38261

a. Predictors: (Constant), PSSCO, PSS

Table 6 explains the variance in perceived social support (Independent variable) by stress (dependent variable). Here R-square 0.664 describes that social support predicts 66.4% variation in stress. F statistics were carried out to find the overall strength of the model.

**Table 8**  
**Regression Analysis**

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28165.510	2	14082.755	486.073	.000
Residual	14283.458	493	28.973		
Total	42448.968	495			

- a. Predictors (Constant), PSSCO, PSS
- b. Dependent Variables: STRESS

Table 7 indicates good fit of model. It explains that the p-value is  $.000 > 0.05$  which indicates the social support has significant effect on stress.

**Table 9**  
**Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	82.530	1.896		43.532	.000
Supervisor Support	-1.480	.098	-.439	-15.076	.000
Coworker Support	-1.635	.092	-.519	-17.822	.000

a. Dependent Variable: STRESS

Table 8 describes the contribution of independent variables for the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was applied to assess the contribution of independent variables. Beta values of supervisor support (-.439) and coworker support (-.519) shows negative effect on stress. P-values of all factors show significant effect as all values are less than .05.

Ho: There is no significance difference in perceived social support (supervisor support and co-worker support) among male and female university teachers.

**Table 10**  
**Difference in Perceived Social Support of Male and Female Teachers**

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	T	Df	sig
Perceived Supervisor Support	Female	178	19.00	2.86	2.914	494	.003
	Male	318	18.26	2.45		420	
Perceived Coworker Support	Female	178	19.13	3.00	4.585	494	.004
	Male	318	17.90	2.64		412	

Table 9 indicates the result of independent sample t-test. The t-value is 2.914  $> 1.96$  and p-value is  $.003 < 0.05$ . So, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in perceived supervisor support for male and female teachers. Female teachers have 19.00 mean value and male teachers have 18.26 mean value which indicates that women have higher supervisor support. Coworker support result indicates that there is significant difference between male and female university teachers. The t-value is  $4.585 > 1.96$  and p-value is  $.004 < 0.05$ . So, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in perceived coworker support for male and female teacher. Female teachers have 19.13 mean value and male teachers have 17.90 mean value which indicates that female teachers have higher coworker support than male teachers.

Ho: There is no significance difference in perceived social support of university teachers in public and private sector.

**Table 11**

### Difference in Perceived Social Support of Teachers of Public and Private Universities

Variables	University	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Perceived Supervisor Support	Private	237	18.54	2.67	-1.388	494	.203
	Public	259	18.88	2.80		479	
Perceived Coworker Support	Private	237	18.44	2.80	-1.672	494	.080
	Public	259	18.88	3.03		484	

Table 10 indicates the result of independent sample t-test. The t-value is  $-1.388 > 1.96$  and p-value is  $.203 > .05$ . So, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in perceived supervisor support for teachers in public and private universities. The t-value is  $-1.800 > 1.96$  and p-value is  $.080 > .05$ . So, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in perceived coworker support in public and private universities.

### Discussion

The study found out significant effect of social support on stress. This finding was consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Chao (2012) that social support had significant and negative effect on stress. Same results described by Hauck et al (2008) also reported that high social support lessen the level of stress.

Results showed that female teachers have higher perceived social support than male teachers. A study of Maryam et al (2016) also found that social support has positive effect on working women. Women belonged to joint family had high level of social support. A similar study was conducted by Shazia (2016) investigated the problem of stress and its effects on the wellbeing of female teachers. The study revealed that the stress was negatively related with wellbeing. A study was conducted by Ferguson et al (2017) in northern Ontario on the usage of social supports related to teacher demographics, stress factors, job satisfaction, career intent, career commitment, and the perception of a stigma attached to teacher stress. Results of the study concluded that teachers seldom spoke about situations or stress causing events to their health care providers and instead utilized family, friends, fellow teachers, and sometimes their principals. The persistency of which teachers accessed different social support networks did vary depending on stressor. Teachers who frequently talked to their friends about stress had a lower sense of career intent and career commitment. Males were less likely to talk to their various social supports about stress. Moreover, this study found out that teachers in public and private universities have no significance differences in social support. Private universities teachers received more social support than public universities.

### Conclusion

The study tried to find out the effect of perceived social support on stress among male and female university teachers. The lesser work has been done on the comparison between male and female teachers. The study focused on the effect of perceived social support including factors, supervisor support, and coworker support. The research concluded that there is significant effect of perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support on stress among male and female university teachers and female teachers have more perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support than male teachers at university level. The results showed significant difference in perceived supervisor and coworker support



of teachers of public and private universities. It was concluded that teachers working in private sector have higher perceived supervisor support than teachers working in public sector and teachers working in private sector have higher coworker support than teachers working in public universities.

### **Recommendations**

These findings of the study were important as teaching required effectiveness. Results showed that the social support of teachers at university level has a significant effect on stress level. It is crucial as teacher's performance got a decline in teaching and non-teaching tasks. So, it is vital to provide teachers a good substantial support system. The departments could also arrange such seminars that highlight the importance of social support for teachers. Study also showed that male teachers have less social support as compare to female teachers so it is important to explore the reasons for this issue.

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