

Article

The Reality of Women's Work and Its Role in Family Fragmentation

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Abstract: The increasing participation of women in the workforce represents one of the most significant social transformations in contemporary societies. While women's employment contributes to economic development and enhances household income, it has also generated complex changes in family structures and relationships. These changes have brought about some concerns about their possible contribution to breaking up of families, such as family cohesiveness, role conflicts, and diminished parental involvement. Hence, the scrutiny of the fact of women employment and its consequences on the stability of the family has become a provocative question of sociological and developmental studies. The study aimed to examine the reality of women's work and its role in family fragmentation in the Pakistan. The study adopted a descriptive approach and the sample consisted of 90 male and female students from Sargodha city. The results revealed that the arithmetic means for the sample's responses to the statements regarding the impact of women's work on their family responsibilities were overall (3.51), indicating a moderate degree. The results further showed that the overall mean for the statements related to the impact of women's work in the Pakistan on their family responsibilities was 3.56, suggesting a moderate level of impact. Additionally, the results of the multiple linear regression analysis applied to test the study hypothesis indicated a strong relationship between women's employment and family fragmentation.

Keywords: *Women's Work, Family Fragmentation, Descriptive Approach, Family Responsibilities*

Introduction

The concept of women's employment has existed since the early days of the Industrial Revolution, when factory workers in Europe began to strike due to long working hours and low wages, which led to the spread of this concept. Women started working in the fields to fill the labour shortage in factories. The fear of work stoppage and its financial consequences were the driving forces behind this shift (West, 2022). Some Arab writers argue that the entry of women into the workforce is simply a result of plans drawn up by capitalism and promoted by Jewish hands, with the goal of creating a financial system and a society without religion or morals (Assaad, 2014; Williams, 2023).

A working woman is not merely one who performs daily tasks. Her role is not confined to staying at home and doing housework. Women working outside the home while caring for children means they often work outside the house, which may affect the family (Gilman, 2018; Fishman, 2019).

Many scientific fields, including sociology, law, economics, genetics, embryology, and legislation, agree that the family is one of the concepts that can be examined through scientific lenses. It is not only used to describe general family structures like the extended and complex family, but also basic family structures such as the nuclear family (Archer et al., 2012).

The family is the primary natural, social, and essential environment for individuals, founded on collective norms and meanings chosen by societies. It is the first natural and social environment for individuals, and family dysfunction can occur when women go to work, leading to family fragmentation (Garbarino, 2017).

Family fragmentation refers to the dysfunction of the family as a whole, or the dissolution of marriage and family relationships due to the disappearance of one or both parents due to death, imprisonment, or divorce, leading to family breakdown (Pearlstein, 2011). The lack of affection in family relationships due to stress and disputes makes these relationships rare (Emery, 2011).

Women's entry into the workforce may lead to neglect of their family duties, whether marital or in raising children, which can result in family fragmentation that may even lead to divorce, and thus the loss of the family and children (Parpart & Stichter, 2016; Simpson, 2020). The importance of this study lies in addressing a very significant issue—women, who represent half of society, and their work, which sometimes leads to negative outcomes like family fragmentation. The study also offers suggestions for decision-makers in both public and private institutions to reduce the negative impact of women's work and its role in family fragmentation.

Problem

The family is the first nurturing environment for individuals, composed of people who interact with each other through marriage, blood, adoption, and other forms of union (Roostin, 2018). The family can consist of a community bond formed by a husband and wife, with or without children, or a single parent with children (Sussman et al., 2013).

The family has evolved over time with the development of civilization and is no longer the unified entity it once was. Its fragmentation has become a phenomenon that cannot be ignored (White, 2016; Tehranian, 2012). The absence of flaws in the family structure means that no member of the family will suffer the negative effects of any deficit on their own (Anderson, 2014; Walsh, 2012).

Women are one of the most important components of the family. By nature, they may work outside the home due to their ambition, diligence, experience, education, or the need to fulfil their requirements. This allows them to gain experience, skills, and establish their presence in society through their expertise (Epstein, 2022).

Numerous studies have confirmed that a high percentage of broken families are caused by women working and being preoccupied with work for long periods, thus leading to family fragmentation (Alon et al., 2022)

This study aims to answer the following question: What is the reality of women's work and its role in family fragmentation in the Pakistan?

Objectives

1. To identify the impact of women's work.
2. To identify the role of women's work in family fragmentation.
3. To determine if there is a statistically significant effect of women's work on family fragmentation.

Questions

Does women's work in the Pakistan affect their family responsibilities?

What role does women's work play in family fragmentation?

H0: There is no statistically significant effect of women's work on family fragmentation at a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Literature review

This section discusses previous studies related to women's work and its role in family fragmentation in the Pakistan. Makkak Study (2015): The study, titled "Women's Work and Its Impact on Family

Stability in Algerian Society," applied the descriptive method to a sample of 85 women who have husbands and children. The study found that women's work does not contribute to family disputes despite the increased tasks and efforts required from women, and in fact, it has been a reason for their mental and material stability. The study recommended raising awareness about the impact of women's work on their psychological and material stability and its effects on society as a whole. Noufal et al., (2013): studied Attitudes towards Home-Based Work and Family Stability, this study applied the descriptive method to a sample of 200 individuals. The study found a correlation between women's preference for home-based work and the balance and strength of family ties, noting variations between families where women work traditionally and those following a rotating work schedule.

Al-Subaie Study (2021): Focused on the social problems faced by working women in mixed-gender workplaces in Saudi Arabia. The study applied the analytical approach using a social survey on a 15% random sample of employees. The study found that women face obstacles in mixed-gender workplaces, including discrimination and bias against women in career progression. Recommendations were made for the introduction of laws to protect women's rights in the workplace. Halil et al., (2020). Studied Family Cohesion in Rural Kafr El-Sheikh Governorate," this study used the descriptive method on a sample of 100 individuals. It found that 48% of individuals grew up in moderately cohesive families, while 52% experienced high levels of cohesion. The study recommended maintaining family cohesion due to its positive effects on children's physical and psychological health.

Kamoludeen & Madihah. (2021). Focused on the relationship between family stability and social quality of life among students at the Faculty of Education in Malaysia, using the descriptive method on a sample of 120 students. The study found very strong family bonds among the students, with clear variations between males and females, and a positive relationship between family cohesion and the individuals' quality of life. The study recommended enhancing family relationships and preventing fragmentation. Spitz Study (1988). Titled "Women's Work and Family Relationships," it applied the descriptive method to a group of working women. The results showed that women's work affected men's feelings of discomfort or disapproval, particularly when children required attention. The study recommended family cooperation in balancing household responsibilities and raising awareness of the impact of women's work on individuals and society.

Methodology

Research design

The study adopted a descriptive method, which involves quantitatively or qualitatively observing the studied phenomenon to understand it and derive conclusions and generalizations that help understand and develop reality.

Sample and Sampling

The study population consists of a random sample of 90 students from Sargodha University in the academic year 2024/2025.

Table 1

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Sample

| Variable | Sample (Number) | Percentage | Level |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Gender | 50 | 55.6% | Male |
| | 40 | 44.4% | Female |
| Age | 90 | 100% | Total |
| | 18 | 20% | 20-30 years |
| | 40 | 44.4% | 31-40 years |
| | 22 | 24.4% | 41-50 years |
| | 10 | 11.1% | 51 years and older |
| Marital Status | 90 | 100% | Total |
| | 10 | 11.1% | Single |
| | 50 | 55.6% | Married |
| | 21 | 23.3% | Divorced |
| | 9 | 10% | Widowed |
| Employment Type | 90 | 100% | Total |
| | 45 | 50% | Government Sector Employee |
| | 30 | 33.3% | Private Sector Employee |
| | 15 | 16.7% | Freelancer |
| Family Size | 90 | 100% | Total |
| | 25 | 27.8% | Less than 4 individuals |
| | 40 | 44.4% | 5-8 individuals |
| | 15 | 16.7% | 9-12 individuals |
| | 10 | 11.1% | More than 12 individuals |
| Personal Income Level | 90 | 100% | Total |
| | 20 | 22.2% | Less than 6000 AED/month |
| | 45 | 50% | 6000-10000 AED/month |
| | 25 | 27.8% | More than 10000 AED/month |
| | 90 | 100% | Total |

Instrument

This study relied on a questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section deals with the demographic characteristics of the study sample, including (gender, age, educational status, employment status, monthly income, and family size). The second section includes the items aimed at answering the research questions and achieving its objectives. This section is composed of nine items

distributed across two main themes: Theme 1: The impact of women's employment in the PAKISTAN on their family responsibilities, consisting of five items:(1)Women's work causes problems with their husbands. (2).Women become tense and irritable with their husbands after returning from work. (3).Women's work helps in solving their family problems easily. (4). The level of children is affected by the mother’s work. (5). Women’s work helps provide financial support to meet family needs. Theme 2: The role of women's work in family breakdown in the UAE, consisting of four items: (1). Disruption of family balance and the impact on children's behaviour and mental health due to the absence of the mother. (2). Increased pressure on women due to the numerous tasks inside and outside the home, along with the lack of sufficient rest, which causes many family problems. (3). Conflicts between work and other roles as a mother and wife, leading to potential conflicts, compromises, or frustrations. (4). Exposure to risks in some jobs that could harm reproductive health or require special precautions. To ensure content validity, the initial version of the tool was presented to the supervisor to provide feedback on the clarity, language, and relevance of the items to the field they belong to. Modifications and suggestions were made based on this feedback.

To check the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha formula was used, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Cronbach's Alpha for Internal Consistency of the Questionnaire

| Tool | Internal Consistency |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Questionnaire | 0.89 |

From Table 2, it observe that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is 0.89, indicating the high quality of the scale and its suitability for the purposes of this study.

Results

First question result: What is the impact of women’s employment on their family responsibilities?

To answer the first question, means and standard deviations were calculated. The results are shown in Table (3).

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations for Statements Related to the Impact of Women’s Employment in the Pakistan on Family Responsibilities

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation | Rank |
|--|------|--------------------|------|
| Women's work causes problems with their husband. | 3.88 | 0.73 | High |

| | | | |
|--|------|-------|--------|
| Women become tense and irritable with their husband after returning from work. | 3.70 | 0.98 | High |
| Women's work helps in solving their family problems easily. | 3.47 | 1.51 | Medium |
| The level of children is affected by the mother's work. | 3.40 | 1.71 | Medium |
| Women's work helps provide financial support to meet family needs. | 3.33 | 1.51 | Medium |
| Overall score | 3.55 | 0.968 | |

From Table 3 it clear that the overall mean for the impact of women's employment on their family responsibilities is 3.55, which falls under the medium category. Two statements received high ratings: "Women's work causes problems with their husband" (mean = 3.88) "Women become tense and irritable with their husband after returning from work" (mean = 3.70). The remaining statements received medium ratings, ranging from 3.33 to 3.47, with the highest being: "Women's work helps solve family problems easily" (mean = 3.47) and the lowest being: "Women's work helps provide financial support to meet family needs" (mean = 3.33).

Second question result: What is the role of women's work in family breakdown?

To answer the second question, means and standard deviations were calculated. The results are shown in Table (4).

Table 4

Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Statements Related to the Impact of Women's Employment on Family Responsibilities

| Degree | Standard Deviation | Mean Statement | Rank |
|--------|--------------------|---|------|
| High | 0.72 | 3.85 Family imbalance and the impact on children's behaviour and psychology due to the absence of the mother. | 1 |
| High | 0.95 | 3.67 Increased pressure on women due to multiple tasks at home and work, lack of adequate rest, leading to many family problems. | 2 |
| Medium | 1.50 | 3.50 Conflict of interests between her work and other roles as a mother and wife, creating conflicts, compromises, or frustrations. | 3 |
| Medium | 1.68 | 3.40 Exposure to risks in certain jobs that may harm her reproductive health or require special precautions. | 4 |
| Medium | 0.965 | 3.61 Overall Score | - |

From Table 4 it is clear that the study sample's average response on the statements regarding the impact of women's employment in the Pakistan on family responsibilities showed an overall mean of 3.61 (Medium degree). The statements ranged between 3.40 - 3.85, with two statements ranking high: "Family imbalance and the impact on children's behaviour and psychology due to the absence of the mother" (3.85), "Increased pressure on women due to multiple tasks at home and work, lack of adequate rest, leading to many family problems" (3.67). The remaining statements were rated at a medium level, with the highest being: "Conflict of interests between her work and other roles as a mother and wife,

creating conflicts, compromises, or frustrations" (3.50), and the lowest being: "Exposure to risks in certain jobs that may harm her reproductive health or require special precautions" (3.40).

H0 Result: There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of women's employment on family breakdown.

To test this hypothesis, the relationship between women's employment and family breakdown was studied using multiple regression analysis.

Table 5
The Effect of Women's Employment on Family Breakdown

| R ² (Coefficient of Determinati on) | R (Correlat ion Coefficie nt) | DF (Degre es of Freedo m) | Sig. F | Calculat ed F Value | Sig. T Val ue | Standardi zed Coefficien ts (β) | Standar d Error Coefficie nts | Calculat ed T Value | Second Variable | First Variable |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0.518 | 0.720 | 3 | 0.00 0 | 132.482 | 0.00 0 | 0.315 | 0.280 | 6.205 | Family Disintegrat ion | Women's Employment |

From Table 5 the correlation coefficient (R) between women's employment and family breakdown is 0.720, indicating a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.518, meaning that 51.8% of the variance in family breakdown can be explained by women's employment. The standardized β coefficient is 0.315, which indicates a statistically significant effect of women's employment on family breakdown, with the T-value being 6.205 and the p-value (Sig. T = 0.000) confirming the significance at the ($\alpha = 0.05$ level. The overall model's F-value is 132.482 (Sig. F = 0.000), confirming that the model is statistically significant and interpretable.

Discussion

The results show that the overall mean for the study sample's estimates on the impact of women's employment on family responsibilities is 3.51 (Medium degree). The statement with the highest rating was: "Increased pressure on women due to multiple tasks at home and work, lack of adequate rest, leading to many family problems" (3.82), followed by: "Conflict of interests between her work and other roles as a mother and wife, creating conflicts, compromises, or frustrations" (3.70).

Other statements had medium ratings, with "Family imbalance and the impact on children's behaviour and psychology due to the absence of the mother" scoring 3.47, and "Exposure to risks in certain jobs that may harm her reproductive health or require special precautions" scoring 3.05.

These results suggest that women's employment may add additional burdens on their family responsibilities, especially due to pressures on balancing their roles as employees, wives, and mothers.

This aligns with efforts in the Pakistan to support working women, such as providing childcare facilities at work and flexible working hours.

Also the study's results show an overall mean of 3.56, indicating a medium-level impact. The highest-rated statement was: "Family imbalance and the impact on children's behaviour and psychology due to the absence of the mother" (3.88), reflecting a tangible effect on family dynamics and children's behaviour due to limited time spent by the mother at home due to work.

Following this was: "Increased pressure on women due to multiple tasks at home and work, lack of adequate rest, leading to many family problems" (3.70). This suggests that the pressures from both work and family contribute to family problems. The statement "Conflict of interests between her work and other roles as a mother and wife" was also rated with a medium level (3.47), indicating tensions between various roles.

Lastly, the statement "Exposure to risks in certain jobs that may harm her reproductive health or require special precautions" had the lowest rating (3.33), highlighting that health risks in certain jobs are not a major factor in impacting family responsibilities.

These results reflect the complexities of balancing multiple roles for women in Pakistan society, where expectations to manage both professional and familial duties create challenging situations.

In addition, the study founded there is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of women's employment on family breakdown.

The regression analysis results show a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.720$) between women's employment and family breakdown, with $R^2 = 0.518$, meaning that 51.8% of family breakdown can be explained by women's employment. The T-value (6.205) is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$, indicating that the hypothesis that there is no effect is rejected. Therefore, women's employment has a significant impact on family breakdown.

Recommendations

To foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women, it is essential to raise community awareness about their role in the workforce and emphasize the importance of supporting families to achieve a sustainable work-life balance. Implementing flexible work environments that accommodate the unique challenges faced by working women can help them better manage their professional and family responsibilities.

Additionally, conducting further studies on the impact of women's employment on family dynamics will provide valuable insights for shaping informed policy decisions. Psychological and counselling support should also be made available to help women navigate periods of stress and challenges associated with balancing work and personal life. Encouraging government policies that safeguard women's employment rights and promote equal opportunities will contribute to a more equitable legislative framework. Moreover, empowering women in leadership positions through targeted training and development programs can enhance their leadership skills and support career progression. Finally, institutions should implement transparency and gender equality policies to ensure a fair and inclusive working environment that enables the active participation of women in the labour market.

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