Factors Causing Stress in Conducting Research among Postgraduate Students of Public and Private Sector Universities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors causing stress in conducting research among research scholars of public and private sector universities. A quantitative research method was applied in this descriptive study. The data was collected from research scholars by using a survey technique. The location of the population was Karachi and Jamshoro. One hundred fifty-one scholars were selected as a sample. The results showed that the overall mean score of students was (M=3.6) which indicated the high research stress level in research students of both public and private universities. Students of public universities faced more thesis writing, supervisor relationships, and academic stress than private universities. The stress level in the factors of coursework stress and socio-economic stress was the same in public and private universities. The findings of this study are expected to provide new evidence for higher education institutions and result in certain reforms in public and private sector institutions.

Keywords: *Research, Stress, Socio-economic, coursework, Academic, Emotional Intelligence, Eustress.*

1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, nearly everything is moving quickly, including culture, society, technology, and education. Students are under much stress because of the different tasks that society expects them to play in the contemporary sociocultural, economic, and bureaucratic environments. As a result, modern students experience significantly more stress and anxiety than their predecessors. This is because today's students are regarded as the most capable, particularly in terms of technological proficiency; however, those regarded as capable place unrealistic expectations on them, forcing them to conform. Individuals and society are being badly affected by depression, anxiety, and stress. They can have negative consequences such as impaired normal functioning, burnout, and health issues.

Today the universities find themselves entangled in efforts to complete the syllabus and fail to allocate time to take care of the emotional needs of their students and make them emotionally intelligent. This also led to a decline in the students' performance, achievements, and adaptability.

Therefore, this caused stress among students. The more intense the competition and the higher the desires of parents and teachers, and students tend to develop emotional disorders. Nowadays, stress is the hallmark of everyone's life. The increasingly competitive landscape, technology, and busy lifestyle have brought excessive stress for people in all areas of life. Stress is present everywhere in the modern era of globalization and higher performance demands, and one cannot escape the stress of daily life. Stressful events in daily life have cumulative and harmful effects on the human body. Academic performance and motivation levels can be affected due to stress.

Generally speaking, all stressful events weaken certain emotions of different intensities, which may also affect cognition and performance. Because there are significant differences in this educational system, students transitioning from school to university may have academic, psychological, and social consequences. Students will be exposed to new teaching methods, academic requirements, teacher-student relationships, and student-student relationships. Stress is one of the most important aspects of modern life, and because human life is changing so quickly, this era has been dubbed the "Age of Stress." All communities experience various types of stress, such as mothers who experience stress as a result of child education, employees, and leaders (Hussien & Hussien, 2006). Fears of the future, leaving friends and family, and poor work-life balance can all have an impact on mental health. Higher education is challenging for students due to increasing social and academic pressure. Lawton (2019) stated that 80 percent of tertiary education students reported stress symptoms. According to Ang & Huan (2006), an increase in expectations is one of the factors leading to an increase in stress levels. Thus, the body-induced stress responses are the same; the sources of stress are different so understanding the former will help develop tailored interventions aimed to reduce the stress level of students, which will, in turn, contribute to the individuals' holistic well-being.

1.1 Research Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study i.e. (a). To measure the coursework stress of public and private university students; (b). To assess the thesis writing stress of public and private research students; (c). To compare the supervisor-related stress between public and private university students; (d). To examine the socio-economic stress that research scholars experience at public and private universities; and (e). To find out academic stress between public and private university students. The hypotheses are i.e. (a). H0 1: The stress of coursework is the same for students attending public and private universities; (b). H0 2: Students at public and private universities experience the same level of stress when writing their theses; (c). H0 3: Students at public and private universities have the same level of supervisor-related stress; (d). H0 4: The socioeconomic stress experienced by students at public and private universities is the same; and (e). H0 5: Academic stress is the same for students attending public and private universities. The purpose of the current study is to assess research stress among postgraduate students during research. The current research will assist higher education institutions in better understanding the psychological state of research students. Institutions may design research courses and conduct different seminars to facilitate the research students with knowledge and understanding regarding research.

2. Literature Review

The stress response is the body's reaction to a stimulus known as a stressor that puts the body's integrity or health in jeopardy (Lovallo, 2005). Stress is a person's coping mechanism or response to a stressful experience (Ursin & Eriksen, 2004; Folkman, 2008). In more depth, stress is a syndrome of negative reactions to persistent demands that continue to grow and are intractable by a person's coping mechanisms (Ursin & Eriksen 2004). Stress is a mental condition, in which stressors (or demands) cause an attempt at adaptation or resolution that, if the organism cannot live up to the expectations, causes individual misery (Linden, 2005). Additionally, stress can be viewed as a sequential process in which a person determines whether objective environmental elements are essential for adaptation or are straining or going beyond their capacity for adaptation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Linden, 2005). According to Shapero & Hankin (2009), environmental demands are the most frequent causes of stress. It is an emotional imbalance that various things can bring, including exams, papers, projects, the competitive nature of one's job, financial worries for education, and potential future employment opportunities (Ross et al., 1999).

In today's world, stress is unavoidable because everyone is expected to accomplish more than they are capable of. Everyone in the environment is expected to perform at a very high level in society, and anyone unable to do so will fall into the stress trap (Vermunt & Steensman, 2005). Stress is more than the mental pressure that people experience due to their daily activities. Although it was noted that the education sector was one of the least stressful, it has changed in recent years due to intense competition (Agolla & Ongori, 2009). Every stakeholder in the industry, including students, is under pressure as a result of several factors, such as course load (Talib & Zai-ur-Rehman, 2012), exam preparation (Baldwin et al., 2009), deadline-driven assignments (Misra et al., 2000), project work (Reema & Rashmi, 2019). According to a study by Pappa (2020), stress can catalyze scholarly identity negotiation and professional development when perceived positively. Generally speaking, all stressful events weaken certain emotions of different intensities, which may also affect cognition and performance. Because there are significant differences in this educational system, students transitioning from school to university may have academic, psychological, and social consequences. Students will be exposed to new teaching methods, academic requirements, teacher-student relationships, and student-student relationships. One of the most crucial aspects of modern life is stress, Because human life is changing so quickly, this era has been dubbed the "Age of Stress." Exams, assignments, and other institutional requirements may cause students to feel more academically stressed than usual. These demands may also be beyond their capacity.

Reddy and Karishmarajanmenon (2018) narrated that stress may affect any individual, regardless of their developmental stage. Facts have proved that the parents' expectation is a great stress for children and these expectations become the greater burden that these children could not carry. Nowadays, stress is the hallmark of everyone's life. The increasingly competitive landscape, technology, and busy lifestyle have brought excessive stress for people in all areas of life. Stress is present everywhere in the modern era of globalization and higher performance demands, and one cannot escape the stress of daily life. Stressful events in daily life have

cumulative and harmful effects on the human body. Several studies have shown that attention, concentration, learning, and memory have been affected by stress. According to Segal et al., (2021), one probably can't control their stress if one can't manage their emotions, which can have serious adverse effects on their health. Stress causes several health problems, including high blood pressure, immune system suppression, increased risk of heart attacks and strokes, infertility, and accelerated aging.

Students deal with various stresses, including prospects for social mobility within the system, academic hurdles, financial challenges, and a host of other difficulties. Learners are responsible for overcoming these stressors to achieve excellent results. People may grow tired and uninterested if they do not experience stress because stress is a necessary and unavoidable part of daily life. It is a given because it is connected to uplifting or terrifying events (Yikealo & Tareke, 2018). Based on a person's reaction to stress, an occurrence can be classified as an impediment or a risk (Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Yikealo & Tareke 2018). Rheinberg and Engeser (2018) narrated that while thought-provoking situations can improve performance and motivation, intimidating and painful conditions can result in anxiety, depression, and social dysfunction, which can lead to suicidal ideation (Tang, 2018). According to numerous studies on the subject, male and female students differ in many areas, including how they perceive and handle stress (Misra & Castillo, 2004), how they manage their time, and other aspects (Jogaratnam & Buchanan, 2004). The stresses remained distinct because women are more sensitive to how others react (Sulaiman et al., 2009). Numerous studies indicated no gender-based significant differences among students, despite individual differences (Bhosale, 2014; Omonyi & Ogunsanmi, 2012). However, Abdullah (2009) discovered a sizable difference in the stress levels of male and female pupils. Previous studies have found no apparent differences between males and females in emotional intelligence. According to Kauts (2018), students in the science stream are reportedly more stressed than humanities and business students. According to Baqutayan et al., (2017), stress and emotional intelligence significantly impact postgraduate students' physical and mental health. Various factors, including academic overload, performance pressure, low self-esteem, poor time management, and juggling work at home, cause academic stress among Perdana School of Business postgraduate students (STI Policy). Students in their undergraduate and graduate programs encounter stress for various reasons, including academic, sociocultural, environmental, and psychological (Brand and Schoonheim-Klein, 2009). The majority of low-stress students claimed to have low self-esteem, and nearly half had significant depression levels (Baste & Gadkari, 2014). Findings from research suggest that a higher stress level may be related to subpar academic performance (Sohail, 2013). O'Sullivan (2011) stated that studying and working to finish assignments could be an excellent response to stress. In contrast, productivity and completing assignments and exams could result from stress. Research among university students supports this, demonstrating that eustress is a productive psychological reaction to academic pressures that are viewed as complex (Mesurado et al., 2016), while stress may be a significant factor in the lives of MPhil and PhD students. We are aware of relatively little research that has been done on the topic, with even fewer focusing on how stress affects intellectual identity. Among the numerous problems seen in adolescents experiencing

extreme academic stress include melancholy, anxiety, behavioural issues, and impatience, (Deb & Strodl 2015; Verma et al., 2002).

Hamid and Shah (2018) emphasized the importance of healthy academic interactions between supervisors and research scholars in ensuring the successful completion of research projects. Scholarly identity was impacted by the practicalities of conducting research and financial and employment uncertainty (Ortlieb & Weis 2018). To develop the competencies to do research in their particular professional sector, research students must learn how to conduct research during their MPhil/Ph.D. courses. Research students report feeling stressed out about their coursework at regular periods each semester, with the biggest stress coming from taking and studying for tests, competing for grades, and having a lot of material to learn in a quick time (Abouserie, 1994). Wardi (2016) narrated that students who experience very high stress levels should recommend counseling services to help them complete their thesis. According to Deng (2022), family and academic stress causes depression in students, affecting academic performance and learning outcomes. According to the study by Mackie and Bates (2019), issues with supervisor relationships, university lack of transparency; role conflicts, workload, and financial insecurity are stress factors that affect Ph.D. students. According to Mayo (2019), the student-supervisor dynamic is responsible for up to half of the major influences on depression and anxiety. The significance of excellent supervision for Ph.D. students' satisfaction and (timely) completion is a well-established finding in doctoral education research. Numerous research studies have been conducted on academic stress, political stress, and economic stress at school and job levels. There hasn't been much discussion on the research stress of public and private university students. I chose this topic because I was fascinated to learn and know about the stress faced by research scholars at the university level. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors causing stress in conducting research among postgraduate students of public and private sector universities

3. Method of the study

3.1. Research Design

A clear description of the study objectives and hypotheses is critical because they are the foundation of the entire study and serve as a roadmap for study design and data analysis, allowing them to select the best methodologies to address the topics under investigation (Schober, 2019). The research process could only be fruitful if the researcher chose the best study design (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Self-reporting was deemed appropriate because it is practical and simple to interpret (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). One of the most popular quantitative data collection techniques, self-report surveys, uses a structured approach and pre-established instruments (Lehane & Savage, 2013). The study was descriptive and the survey method was used to get the views of research students (MPhil and PhD) about their stress towards research.

3.2. Population, Sampling, and Research Tools

In descriptive studies, it is customary to define a study population and then make observations on a sample taken from it (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The total population of this study was 500 research students (MPhil and PhD) enrolled in public and private universities. Gregoire and Valentine (2008) stated that, before a sample can be drawn from a population, it is necessary to have available a 'sampling frame', that is, a mechanism that identifies and locates the sampling units within the population. It may be a 'list sampling frame' whereby a list of each sampling unit has been compiled. The sample size for this study was 151 research students (88 public and 63 private) from sector universities of Sindh province. A simple random sampling technique was used to get the views of research students of public and private universities. In contrast, the positive reaction to stress can include studying and working on completing tasks (O'Sullivan, 2011). Research among university students supports this, demonstrating that stress is a productive psychological reaction to academic pressures that are viewed as difficult (Mesurado et al. 2016). However, stress may be a significant factor in the lives of MPhil and PhD students. We are aware of relatively few studies that have been done on the topic, with even less focusing on the research stress in academic identity. Thus, the present study used a self-explanatory "Research Stress" scale for measuring the stress of MPhil and PhD students. The five factors of the research stress scale were described as coursework stress, thesis writing stress, supervisor relationship stress, socioeconomic stress, and academic stress.

4. Results and Discussion

To obtain the results descriptive and inferential statistics were applied by using SPSC software to analyze the data. The results are found as under:

Table 1. *Mean Score of Factors of Research Stress*

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Coursework Stress	150	3.9	.56
Thesis writing stress	150	3.9	.53
Supervisor related Stress	150	2.2	.41
Socio-economic Stress	150	3.5	.74
Academic stress	150	3.7	.58

Table 1 represents the mean scores for each of the five factors; coursework stress, supervisor-related stress, thesis writing stress, socio-economic stress, academic stress, and overall mean. Data was collected by using a five-point Likert scale.

H0 1: The stress of coursework is the same for students attending public and private universities.

Table 2. *Independent samples t-test Statistics for variable Coursework Stress*

Group Statistics					
	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Coursework stress	Public	88	3.6629	.84719	.04543
	Private	63	3.8228	.66456	.08382

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test

	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CS	-1.298	239	0.19	.20265	.01344	.39186

In the case of the above tables 2 and 3 the mean scores for public university were 3.6629 and private university was 3.8828; the t-value was -1.298 and the p-value 0.19. So, it showed that there were no significant differences in the coursework stress of public and private universities. Hence, *H0 1:* was accepted.

H0 2: Students at public and private universities experience the same level of stress when writing their theses.

Table 4. *Independent samples t-test Statistics for variable Thesis Writing Stress*

Group Statistics					
	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Thesis writing stress	Public	88	3.7230	.66670	.07107
	Private	63	3.3671	.91852	.11572

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
TWS	2.621	149	0.01	.35595	.08672	.62517

In the case of the above tables, 4 and 5 the mean scores for public university were 3.7230 and private university was 3.3671; the t-value was 2.621 and the p-value 0.01. So, it showed that there was a significant difference in the thesis writing stress of public and private universities. Hence, *H0 2:* was rejected.

H0 3: Students at public and private universities have the same level of supervisor-related stress.

Table 6. *Independent samples t-test Statistics for variable supervisor-related Stress*

Group Statistics

	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Supervisor related stress	Public	88	3.4221	.85383	.09102
	Private	63	3.0091	.94722	.11934

Table 7. Independent Samples t-test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SRS	2.752	149	0.01	.41301	.11597	.71005

In the case of the above tables 6 and 7, the mean scores for public university were 3.4221 and the private university was 3.0091; the t-value was 2.752 and the p-value 0.01. So, it showed that there was a significant difference in the supervisor-related stress of public and private universities. Hence, *H0 3:* was rejected.

H0 4: The socioeconomic stress experienced by students at public and private universities is the same.

Table 8. *Independent samples t-test Statistics for variable socioeconomic Stress*

Group Statistics

	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Socio-economic stress	Public	88	3.5250	.74174	.07907
	Private	63	3.4667	.74227	.9352

Table 9. Independent Samples t-test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SES	.476	149	0.63	.05833	-.18389	.30055

In the case of the above tables, 8 and 9 the mean scores for public university were 3.5250 and the private university was 3.4667; the t-value was .476 and the p-value 0.63. So, it showed that there was no significant difference in the Socioeconomic stress of public and private universities. Hence, H*0 4:* was accepted.

H0 5: Academic stress is the same for students attending public and private universities.

Table 10. *Independent samples t-test Statistics for variable Academic Stress*

Group Statistics

	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic stress	Public	88	3.4636	.82241	.08767
	Private	63	2.9714	.88926	.11204

Table 11. Independent Samples t-test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
AS	3.460	149	0.01	.49221	.21070	.77371

In the case of the above tables, 10 and 11 the mean scores for public university were 3.4636 and private university was 2.9714; the t-value was 3.460 and the p-value 0.01. So, it showed that there was a significant difference in the Academic stress of public and private universities. Hence, *H0 5:* was rejected.

A high prevalence of stress among research students indeed needs attention as it may impair the learning ability which may ultimately affect the quality of research. The mean score of each factor was found to measure the research stress The first-factor 'course work stress' explored students' opinions about the research knowledge, classroom assignments, presentations, research contents, etc. during course work. This factor's mean was (M=3.9), and the standard deviation was (SD=.56), showing that students are stressed throughout the coursework. The second-factor thesis writing stress' explored students' views about the selection of research topic, literature, research gap, research methodology, data analysis, finalizing thesis, etc. The mean for this component was (M=3.9), and (SD=.53), indicating that students experience stress when writing their thesis. Muslich (2013) provides additional evidence that the thesis, which serves as one of the requirements for graduation, is a student-written scientific publication. As part of the thesis-writing process, students must be independent and disciplined to create a schedule for completing the target thesis by conducting field surveys or observations, thinking clearly and logically, and participating in the supervisor's counseling process (Leo, 2013). The third factor supervisor-related

stress' explored students' views about the supervisor's attitude, deadlines, ineffective evaluation, help in the selection of research topics, encouragement, etc. during supervision. This factor's mean was (M=2.2), and SD was (.41), showing that most research students are satisfied with their supervisors. The PhD candidate's personal and academic compatibility with the supervisor is critical, while the doctoral candidate pursues a project closely associated with the supervisor's field of study (Rooij, 2021). The previous study by Le (2021) found that Ph.D. students' satisfaction with the supervisory styles of their supervisors influenced their satisfaction with academic skill development during their Ph.D. candidature. The fourth factor socio-economic stress' explored students' views about family problems, fear of unemployment after a research degree, financial problems, busy life schedule, etc. The mean for this component was (M=3.5), and (SD=.74), indicating that the students are under socioeconomic stress. According to the study of Ortlieb and Weis (2018) research scholars were impacted by the practicalities of conducting research and financial and employment uncertainty. According to the participants' experiences, Ph.D. students work to support themselves and are either working or looking for work. The issue is more challenging if they are married and responsible for a family. Furthermore, the economic situation can be a source of stress for the research students. While the university requires them to attend the faculties full time, they need more free time to manage their home affairs. The fifth-factor academic stress' explored students' views about free access to research journals, GAT subjective/general, the system's procedure, separate libraries of research scholars, etc. The mean for this component was (M=3.7), and (SD=.58), indicating that students experience academic stress while pursuing their research degrees. The overall mean score (M=3.6) and (SD=.31) indicated the student's research stress level is high. The results of Ali (2021) indicate that stress experienced by university students significantly impacts their academic performance. Stressed-out also exhibited greater rates of depression due to issues with concentration fear of failure, and low expectations for the future (Busari, 2012). The stress a person feels depends on the tools they have to handle particular stressful situations and events. It supports the previous study of Thenmozhi (2020), that students studying in both public and private sector institutions experience a high stress level.

To assess the research stress of public and private sector universities, an independent sample t-test was used. The first hypothesis of the study supported the idea that there were no significant differences in coursework stress between students at public and private universities. Public and private university students experience coursework stress due to behavioural issues, a lack of coursework skills, and concerns (Khurshid, 2015). According to Mandal (2019), 20% of the students were "overwhelmed" with the course and research work in public and private institutions, resulting in stress and anxiety. Hence, H_0:1 was accepted. The T-test was also applied to estimate the thesis writing stress of university students from the public and private sectors. The results revealed that students at Public Sector Universities experience more stress than students at private universities students while writing their thesis. Bazrafkan et al, (2016) suggested that Ph.D. students' stress and anxiety are more related to their thesis and supervisors. These problems include choosing a strong thesis idea or topic, unclear thesis instructions, an unstructured research project

by a student, and inadequate auxiliary planning. The thesis is a significant source of stress, consistent with research findings, and causes stress and anxiety among doctoral students as they work on their dissertations. It supports the previous study of Khuram (2021), which found that public-sector university students reported higher stress on writing thesis levels than private institutions. Hence, H_0 2 was rejected.

The third hypothesis deals with the study that there is no significant difference in the supervisor-related stress of public and private sector university students. The result showed that students of Public Sector Universities face more supervisor-related stress than Private Universities. It supports the previous study of Taskeen et al. (2014), which narrated that supervisors usually disappear at the start of a researcher's study at a public university, their attitude changes, researchers are entangled between the research study and supervisor's attitude, and finally, when a research study is accomplished and a researcher has conducted the whole research, his/her research work is rejected by a supervisor because it appears as below the standard thought of supervisor. Wakeford (2006) narrated that many research students at public universities find their original supervisors unavailable or too busy, because of study leave, personal problems, promotion, or retirement which causes stress among students. The association between a student and a supervisor is so important that students cannot afford to leave it to chance. It must be managed. According to Murphy (2009), supervision emphasizes more on the people and is often seen as guidance that has been more supportive, but not effective for all students. Hence, H_0 3 was rejected.

The fourth hypothesis supported the idea that there is no significant difference in the socio-economic stress of public and private sector university students. No significant differences were found according to the results. The socio-economic stress of Public and Private Sector Universities are the same. According to the findings of Wang et al., (2019) stress among Ph.D. students is caused by a variety of socioeconomic factors. It backs up the study of Chaudhry (2012), which found no significant difference in socioeconomic stress levels between public and private universities. According to the study of Thenmozhi (2020), students studying in both public and private sector institutions experience a high stress level. Hence, H_0 4 was accepted. The fifth hypothesis tested that there is no significant difference in the academic stress of public and private sector university students. The result showed that students of Public Sector Universities face more academic stress than Private Universities. According to a previous study by Calizaya et al., (2022), there was a significant difference in academic stress between public and private universities. Public university students face more stress than private sector universities. Edjah (2020) discovered that students experience more academic stress than other types of stress. According to the study by Melaku, (2015) academic stressor domain was the main source of stress among public and private institutions. According to a prior study by Shafiq et al. (2021), students at public universities reported more stress due to the financial crisis than private universities. Academic and institutional stressors are two of the most common stressors encountered in higher education settings. Hence, H_0 5 was rejected.

5. Conclusion

It was concluded that a higher level of stress was found among research students at public and private institutions. The findings depict various coursework, thesis writing, supervisor-related, socio-economic, and academic stressors at public and private universities. Research students can learn to cope with research stress and regulate their emotions with the help of various research conferences and seminars. The findings of this study are expected to provide new evidence for higher education institutions and result in certain reforms in public and private sector institutions.

6. Recommendations

1. Research knowledge of students may be updated through coursework, different workshops, and brainstorming sessions which may release stress towards research.
2. Students may develop a sense of academic achievement and self-confidence rather than distress.
3. Various courses should be designed to manage the socio-economic and academic stress of research students.
4. Stress management training and fostering optimistic thinking should be conducted in both academic and nonacademic students.
5. Future researchers should include dropout M.Phil. and Ph.D. students as a sampling. Moreover, follow-up interviews should be taken with participants, and must know the reasons for dropping the said programs.
6. Universities may need to pay attention to special challenges faced by the M.Phil. and doctoral students during their research studies.

7. Limitations of the Study

Relatedly, the first limitation of this study involves the sample. All participants, recruited from six universities in Sindh province, were from the Education Department. Due to financial constraints and a short period of study only covered public and private sector universities of Sindh. A limitation of the study was that it utilized a self-report survey, which may limit the acquisition of data because the items in self-report surveys limit the response choices of respondents, suggested by (Colton & Covert, 2007).

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