

**How Stress Affects Work and Self-Efficacy of Female Teachers? An Empirical Evidence from Pakistan****Muhammad Faisal Aziz<sup>1</sup>, Farah Latif Naz<sup>2</sup>, Hassam Gul<sup>3</sup>,  
Muhammad Hamid Nawaz Khan<sup>4</sup>, Seerat Fatima<sup>5</sup>****Abstract**

This empirical study examined the prevalence of work stress among female teachers and how stress affects their self-efficacy and work (performance). As a means of achieving this objective, the study used a correlational model. This study focuses on female teachers in Lahore, Pakistan. To recruit teachers for the sample of this study, convenient sampling method was used, and 382 female teachers were recruited from 18 schools situated in different areas of Lahore. Survey method was used to collect the data. The findings of the study demonstrated that teachers are facing work stress. The findings also revealed that stress in turn is affecting self-efficacy and work performance of the educators to a great extent. Distress caused by work-related stress is common among these female teachers. Teachers are hence vulnerable to depression as they are subjected to stress at work. That leads to low quality of teaching and learning process which further affects the overall standard of education in the schools. This is an alarming situation, and policy makers will have to take immediate steps to mitigate the issue of work stress to female teachers.

**Keywords:** Female teacher, self-efficacy, work (performance), work stress

**1. Introduction**

In addition to endangering the health and effectiveness of female teachers as well as their students' academic achievement, teaching is a high-stress profession. Dealing with the stress of female teachers is therefore an important subject. In general, self-efficacy refers to the ability to cope with stressful and challenging situations (Scholz & Schwarzer, 2005). It was also mentioned by Bandura (1977) that competence anticipation determines how much a person will strive to overcome stressful conditions. The stress of a business's workers determines whether it succeeds or fails. In contrast, self-efficacy significantly increases performance, cognitive, social, and behavioral skills, as well as satisfaction, while stress significantly decreases individual efficiency, decreases job satisfaction, and affects performance (Gümüştekin & Oztemiz, 2005). Female teachers' self-efficacy beliefs increase their position (Demir, 2019), but excessive stress in the profession leads to a decrease in self-efficacy and plans to leave. According to Selye (1976), a stressor is a condition or event that triggers a stress response, both internally and externally. There are physical (e.g., noise, heat, pain) and psychological (e.g., death of a relative, occupational changes, threats to self-esteem) stressors. As early conceptions of stressors developed, they were believed to negatively affect an individual's health.

The discussion that follows focuses on the types, qualities, and types of social experiences that are likely to be considered stressors, as well as issues associated with measuring stressors and determining their impact on health. Exposure to physical stress in many forms has long been acknowledged as detrimental to health. There are several types of trauma, such as chemical poisoning, extreme temperatures, noise, and so on. According to current conceptions of stress, social and psychological pressures are related to health conditions. Most of the current research focuses on psychosocial experiences and life event stresses that have been objectively verified. Experience encompasses a wide range of circumstances and events, including employment, family, social connections, money, health, and transitions (marriage, birth). An objective observer must verify the event or experience in order for it to be included. 'Intrapsychic' events, such as unfulfilled expectations, anticipated future threats, etc., are often not included because they are as likely to be the result of emotional disturbances or stress reactions as their cause. Several studies have examined the factors that influence female teachers' work satisfaction. A significant, inverse relationship exists between job satisfaction and stress (Brewer & McMahan Landers, 2003), a significant, positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and self-efficacy beliefs (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016), and self-efficacy is linked to job satisfaction (Canrinus, & Hofman, 2012).

According to studies, self-efficacy is inversely related to stress. Although self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy are derived from the same sources (Bandura, 1997), their conceptual frameworks differ (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). According to Demir (2019), female teachers' collective competence has a positive influence on their job satisfaction. The importance of self-efficacy as a protective factor in minimizing stress is also essential to be examined and expanded (Makara-Studziska, 2019). In addition to direct behaviors, self-efficacy influences other determinants of action, according to Bandura (1997). Self-efficacy beliefs affect individual stress, while work stress is influenced by work stress.

Efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of handling stress and challenges in general (Scholz & Schwarzer, 2005). A teacher's self-efficacy also influences other beneficial classroom characteristics, such as low stress,

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student achievement, and long-term employment, according to Woolfolk Hoy and Davis (2006). In another study (Brouwers & Tomic, 2010), there was a high level of motivating behavior and performance among female teachers with high work satisfaction, as well as a low level of stress, anxiety, and burnout among them. According to Bandura (1997), female teachers with high levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy do not experience a high level of stress because, as Bandura (1997) states, people with high self-efficacy beliefs don't run from challenges they're facing and are very determined to succeed. Those with low self-efficacy views experience greater stress, worry, and dissatisfaction when performing certain tasks. There has been no research on the relationship between female teachers' self-efficacy, and stress, especially on how stress affects female teachers' self-efficacy in local settings. So, this study aims to fill this gap.

### **1.1. Significance of the Study**

Studying the impact of work stress on self-efficacy and work performance of female teachers are the objectives of this study. A comprehensive review of the work of stress in the workplace is provided in this study. Due to the prevalence of female school teachers, the present study was able to take advantage of a great deal of latitude since teaching is a sensitive profession. Female teachers dominate the teaching profession because they have more time to devote to their families and professional responsibilities. So, such kind of study is more significant for female school teachers and their administration. This study makes it easier for policy makers to take remedial measures to fix the issue of work stress and to increase the self-efficacy and work (performance) of the female school teachers.

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

To study the prevalence of work stress experienced by the female teachers.

To determine whether work-related stress affects the work (performance) and self-efficacy of female teachers.

## **2. Literature Review**

School teachers play a vital role in the success of any educational process. It is possible for stress to affect the performance, attitude, and relationships of female teachers with their coworkers and pupils. In response to a change that necessitates a physical, mental, or emotional response, the body responds to stress. Almost any circumstance or thought that makes a person feel disappointed, furious, worried, or anxious could cause stress (Curtis & Detert, 1981). When leaders provide reward and support to employees, they feel less stressed and their innovative work behavior improves which can lead to better performance (Aziz & Alheety 2019; Aziz & Jahan, 2021). In stress factors, high stresses occur when the situation of a person suddenly changes, or the stress is evident if a person faces constant situation for an extra long period of time which reduces employee productivity (Hammond & Onikama, 1997). In addition to that, stress is also found to be another reason for not starting a new venture by the young graduates (Aziz, et al., 2017). Thus, stress is damaging for employee performance and self-efficacy. The primary causes of negative stress experienced by female teachers must be identified in order to assist them in overcoming it.

There is a possibility that every individual will experience some level of stress during the course of their lifetime. There might be a connection between the environment, attitude, or the demands of the job (Hammond & Onikama, 1997). These scholars have also found that female teachers can suffer from mental and physical melancholy because of negative stress. Perhaps female teachers lack leadership and management skills. Students' bad behavior at school may contribute to stress among female school teachers, since they spend most of their time with their children. (Rieg et al., 2007) explain that modern students are becoming more disciplined, but they all have their own characteristics and attitudes. This may lead to a greater level of stress for female school teachers as a result of their terrible conduct. Furthermore, female teachers are easily distracted by student behavior concerns (Moriarty et al., 2001), which may reduce their focus and increase their stress level. Female school teachers may also experience stress as a result of consistently carrying an excessive amount of work. As a result, female teachers are assigned excessive administrative responsibilities, resulting in increased obligations (Oteer, 2015). During times of stress, some female teachers may feel burdened or intimidated, and as a result, they may engage in demonstrations. In addition to the growing absenteeism, turnover, complaints, and poor performance of female teachers in schools, occupational flaws are also becoming more prevalent among female teachers (Oteer, 2015). Female school teachers might be stressed due to a lack of support from supervisors and principals. Female teachers experience stress and frustration when they believe their school principal cannot provide them with enough assistance, and when their duties or obligations are not exactly their responsibilities (Spector, 1997). It is also possible to cause stress among female teachers when there is a poor connection between them (Rieg et al., 2007). Women with high self-efficacy beliefs report higher job satisfaction, better interpersonal relationships, and more favorable circumstances than those with low self-efficacy beliefs.

Additionally, female teachers who are confident in their teaching abilities and feel in control of their classroom will be more contented (Bolton, 2018). To maintain the professionalism of female teachers, it is important for them to feel self-efficacious and satisfied with their work. Self-efficacy and work satisfaction are important for improving performance and productivity among female teachers, according to studies. As a result of examining the characteristics of one's job, one develops positive feelings about it. The totality of a number of characteristics, including job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, attendance, and absenteeism, are directly related to work

satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Work happiness is probably also influenced by female educators' expertise (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006; Chan and Ali, 2021). According to Ma and MacMillan (1999), female teachers' competency influences work satisfaction in the classroom. Female teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and work satisfaction have been of particular interest to academics and policymakers for the past thirty years. Albert Bandura (1986) developed the theory of self-efficacy as a motivational strategy. An individual's self-efficacy belief refers to their capability to plan and coordinate the activities necessary to accomplish a particular task (Bandura, 1986). Individuals' self-efficacy is not determined by their skills, but rather by their perception of their ability to influence their performance and behavior (Okutan & Kahveci, 2012). Teaching, for example, is more likely to have self-efficacy beliefs. Female instructors' self-efficacy is viewed as their confidence in their ability to complete class activities or their belief in a student's ability to succeed. A female teacher's personal evaluation of her skills and talents is crucial to the efficiency of the teaching process, while she also provides solutions to problems she faces (Ozdemir, 2008). OECD (2014) found that female teachers with self-efficacy beliefs deliver effective instruction, good classroom management, and high student engagement (Teaching and Learning International Survey, 2013–2014). People with self-efficacy believe they can perform a certain task effectively. In recent years, scholars have increasingly viewed it as a domain-specific concept.

Studies indicate that self-efficacy has a greater impact on human accomplishment in the fields of education, wellbeing, sports, and business (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, self-efficacy beliefs are believed to play a role in behavior mediation, particularly in the context of behavior variance. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the ability of an individual to achieve the goals that contribute to his or her personal happiness. Among the most demanding professions is teaching. Chaplain (2008) reports high levels of stress among female teachers in several nations. Stress management in female teachers is influenced by self-efficacy beliefs. Researchers provided empirical evidence that self-efficacy has a positive impact on teaching and learning, despite speculation that researchers and practitioners might conspire to undermine the effectiveness of self-efficacy. In addition, self-efficacy of female teachers was related to their ability to deal with difficulties and determination (Podell & Soodak, 1993). Self-efficacy views and academic routine are strongly correlated with optimism, professional duty, openness to new teaching techniques, and use of positive teacher-based strategies to address learner challenges (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2004). Academic achievement may be influenced by self-efficacy beliefs. As a result, self-efficacy beliefs serve as directions. As an outcome of higher self-efficacy, female teachers are more likely to experiment with new teaching strategies, plan and organise activities more efficiently, use novel teaching strategies, and have vibrant goals and extravagant aspirations (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). Students' attitudes, temperaments, goal-setting, accomplishments, and failures are influenced greatly by the traits of female teachers. To teach certain subjects, situational elements such as indirect and mastery experiences, pedagogies, and verbal persuasion are used (Shaukat, Sharma & Furlonger, 2013). While female teachers are estimated to be under high levels of professional stress, most of them are motivated by their personal work. Having a high level of job satisfaction is correlated with high levels of job performance. Work satisfaction is a sense of accomplishment resulting from daily tasks. Female teachers' self-efficacy affects their work satisfaction and determines their attitudes, as indicated by Caprara (2003). The nature of daily classroom activities and the presence of supportive colleagues enhance the nature of positive school atmospheres and contribute to job satisfaction for many female teachers (Cockburn & Haydn, 2004). Those who are unsatisfied with their work and feel less successful are more likely to quit, compared to those who are disgruntled. Female teachers are stressed by inadequate preparation time, unfavorable working conditions, and a heavy teaching load, according to Liu and Ramsey (2008). Teachers' self-efficacy, their relationship with students, and their effectiveness decrease when they are stressed. As a result, stress can be defined as the feeling of negative emotions caused by the work of a female teacher. The absence of stress allows female teachers to experience job satisfaction, but stress causes position ambiguity, fewer accomplishments, poor job satisfaction, and conflict with pupils and colleagues (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). One-quarter of female teachers' records indicated that teaching was one of the most stressful occupations in the study on high-stress occupations. According to previous theories, female teachers' job stress is a one-dimensional problem, but other studies indicate that classroom characteristics, work overload, and inadequate preparation time all play a role. In most cases, female teachers who experience various types of stress exhibit undesirable reactions like burnout and turnover. In the same way that emotional fatigue led to the abandonment of teaching, depersonalization diminished personal success. These response behaviors negatively impact their health and career (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

In the light of this review of literature, it is clear that stress is damaging for teachers' performance. It is also viewed that stress and self-efficacy have some established correlation in many countries. So, current study purposes to investigate the prevalence of work stress faced by female teachers and the effect of stress on work and self-efficacy of female school teachers.

### 3. Research Methodology

Quantitative methodologies are used in this study. This study focuses on Lahore's public schools as its target population. Data was collected through survey method by adapting scientific scales. Convenient sampling method was used to select the teachers for the study. Three hundred 382 female teachers from 18 public schools

participated in the study. Prior permissions were taken from the principals of each branch to collect the data. We employed a paper-based survey to collect data on a voluntary basis from female school teachers. Respondents were given 2 weeks to fill the questionnaire considering their busy work routine. Then data was entered and analyzed in SPSS to ascertain the findings of the study.

### 3.1. Measures (Scales)

Work stress was measured using a self-report Scale taken from Antoniou, Polychroni, and Kotroni (2009). Data was collected through a six-point Likert type self-report rating scale, ranging from 1 (no stress at all) to 6 (very high level of stress). The scale has 45 items consisting of different causes of stress related to job conditions. Cronbach's alpha was calculated at .943.

Teachers' self-efficacy was measured using the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001). The scale has further three subscales i.e., student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Cronbach's alpha was .87, .91 and .90 respectively. All the subscales are consisted of 8 items. This is a nine-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal).

Work performance scale was adopted from Kuvaas (2006). This scale was measured by six self-report items. Cronbach's alpha was calculated at .938.

## 4. Data Analysis and Result

**Table 1: Respondents Qualification**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors	122	31.94
Masters	210	54.97
M.Phil.	50	13.09
Total	382	100

Table 1 demonstrates that research participants were requested to furnish qualifying information. The bulk of respondents had master's degrees (290, 55%), while the remainder held M.Phil. (50, 13%) or Bachelor's degrees (122, 32%). The table reflects the categorisation of responders based on their credentials.

**Table 2: Results of Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Test Comparing Male and Female Secondary School Teachers' Stress Levels**

Variables	Overall			<i>x</i>	SD	t-cal	df	t-crit.
	<i>x</i>	SD	N					
Physical Stress	3.29	0.31	382	3.27	0.39	1.465	611	1.850
Mental Stress	2.82	0.49	382	2.79	0.47	1.852	611	1.850
Self-Efficacy	3.45	0.38	382	3.48	0.36	2.873*	611	1.850
Stress on Work (performance)	3.12	0.49	382	3.06	0.49	4.239*	611	1.850
Stress	3.20	0.29	382	3.13	0.28	3.398*	611	1.850

\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$

PHS ( $x = 3.29$ ), MTS ( $x = 2.82$ ), SE ( $x = 3.45$ ), and SoW ( $x = 3.12$ ) are higher than the criteria mean ( $x = 3.20$ ) established for the study. Data also indicate that respondents' stress levels were higher than the study's criteria mean, suggesting a high level of stress among the female teachers. According to the standard deviations, respondents' responses are not very different.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix-Components of Stress**

Components of Stress	PHS	MTS	S-E	SoW
PHS	1			
MTS	0.335**	1		
SE	0.302**	0.424**	1	
SoW	0.247**	0.329**	0.426**	1

\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$

As shown in Table 3, teachers' PHS correlates with MTS ( $r = 0.335$ ), SE ( $r = 0.302$ ), and SoW ( $r = 0.247$ ); MTS correlates with EMS ( $r = 0.424$ ); SoW ( $r = 0.329$ ); and SOS correlates with S-E ( $r = 0.426$ ). In the above findings, it can be seen that there is a positive link between the different stress components, such that an increase in one component leads to an increase in another. And stress is highly correlated with female teachers' self-efficacy and work performance.

## 5. Discussion

Female school teachers were examined in this study for their level of stress. From the analysis of data, it was found that teachers are facing a high level of work stress in the schools. The results of this study contradict those of few previous studies on female school teachers (Mokhtar, 1998; Nwimo, 2005). Nwimo (2005) found low stress levels among the teachers he studied. The results of this study may have been influenced by current economic insecurity, excessive workload, and possible inadequate teaching facilities. But these results are similar to another past study. That study concluded that there is a connection between the stress and the demands of the job performance (Hammond & Onikama, 1997).

However, these results are in-line with some other previous studies. As a result of their working environments, female school teachers are under high levels of stress, according to Hanizah (2003). All of the teachers he studied used information technology to perform their duties, but his study subjects still used makeshift methods.

Economic growth is expected to be closely correlated with job stress levels. Hanizah (2003) found that occupational stress is higher when the economy is less developed. According to Tariq and Nadeem (2011), male and female teachers report statistically significant differences in stress levels. Nevertheless, these results differ from Chan, Chen, and Chong (2010) found no significant difference between men and women

The relationship between teachers' reported stress levels and the dimensions of stress was examined using stepwise multiple regression. Each of the dimensions of stress had a significant correlation with the overall level of stress. Accordingly, all dimensions significantly contributed to female teachers' reported stress levels. A strong correlation between work related stress and self-efficacy is also evident from the findings of data analysis. Similarly, it is shown in the data analysis that stress is affecting work performance of the female school teachers. These results are matching with some past studies. As self-efficacy significantly increases performance, cognitive, social, and behavioral skills, as well as satisfaction, while stress significantly decreases individual efficiency, decreases job satisfaction, and affects performance (Gümüştekin & Oztemiz, 2005). There is a possibility that every individual will experience some level of stress during the course of their lifetime. There might be a connection between the environment, attitude, or the demands of the job (Hammond & Onikama, 1997).

## 6. Conclusion Limitations and Practical Implications

This study concludes that female teachers are facing a high-level stress at work. Unlike previous studies on female teachers (Mokhtar, 1998; Nwimo, 2005), in which the level of stress experienced by female teachers was investigated. Those results contradict the current study. Stress levels were low among the teachers studied by Nwimo (2005), for example. However, these findings are similar to the past research conducted by Rieg et al., (2007). Similarly, in another previous study, Hanizah (2003) illustrated that the teachers' work environment contributed to their high levels of stress. Current study reported that high of level stress is prevalent among the female teachers at schools in Lahore. The stress is at high level which might be a consequence of their family and children's responsibilities and the social constraints faced by female employees in the local culture. The level of stress experienced by male and female teachers is different, according to researchers Tariq and Nadeem (2011). The study also reveals that stress affects self-efficacy of female teachers. Empirically it is proved that work stress is correlated with three important elements of self-efficacy (i.e., student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management) of female teachers. These results are similar to some past research including an empirical study conducted by Gümüştekin & Oztemiz (2005). Female teachers with low level of self-efficacy would find it challenging to teach and perform their academic duties with confidence. That is not a positive sign for teaching-learning process at public schools in Lahore.

Lastly, the study also demonstrate that stress affects work performance of female teachers to a great extent. This finding is matching with a previous study reported by Hammond & Onikama (1997). To examine the significance of the relation between teachers' stress levels and their stress dimensions, we used stepwise multiple regression. Stress seems to be a major hurdle in the way of better work performance by the female teachers.

### 6.1. Limitations

There are few limitations of this study. The data was collected from Lahore. There might be different dynamics of stress and self-efficacy in rural areas. Future empirical evidence can be taken from the schools in rural areas as well. Additionally, the study did not consider all workplace characteristics that could have introduced a bias (particularly working hours, subjects taught, and job titles). In general, female educators perform similar functions. Accordingly, differences in job demands and job control are more reflective of an individual's perception of the work environment than they are in studies involving individuals from different occupations. Based on these findings, no generalizations can be made to other populations in the country.

### 6.2. Practical Implications

The study is very useful for public schools' administration in Lahore. They will get the empirical evidence of stress prevailing among female teachers, and they should try to fix this problem by utilizing their resources at optimum level. School administration can also focus on behavioral aspects to reduce the stress level of female employees so they can perform better at work.

Female teachers can also take some steps to manage their stress level by making better schedule, prioritizing tasks and avoiding dysfunctional conflicts. Lastly, policy makers in the ministry of education can also take help

from this study to develop such policies which can help reduce stress among female teachers. That will create better self-efficacy and work performance of female teachers and the outcome can be a better quality of teaching in the public schools and more satisfied female teachers.

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