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GENDER ROLE CONFLICT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING; A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL TEACHER WORKING IN DISTRICTS OF PUNJAB

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Article Info



Abstract

World is under a swift change in pattern of gender roles and the societal transformation fundamentally based on the evolution of gender roles. However, the complexity of gender roles leads towards the concept of gender role conflict which have multiple consequences on humans especially on their psychological well-being. The purpose of this contemporary study was to explore the impact of gender role conflict on psychological well-being of teachers working in schools due to their job that become more challenging in term of demands and work intensification. It was a quantitative research and researcher used correlational research design to measure the impact of gender role conflict on psychological well-being of school teachers. Researcher selected the sampling by using multistage sampling technique from four districts of Punjab, Pakistan. O'Neil's gender role conflict scale was employed to measure the gender role conflict and psychological well-being of school teachers measured by using Ryff's scales psychological well-being. The data was analyzed using correlation analysis and results showed that gender role conflict has significant negative impact on psychological wellbeing of school teachers. Findings helped in understanding the magnitude of gender role conflict and its impact on psychological well-being of school teachers.



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Keywords:

Gender Role, Gender Role Conflict, Psychological Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

The societal transformation fundamentally based on the evolution of gender roles. Gender roles represent socialized beliefs about how men and women should relate to each other in social fabric of relationships (Batz & Tay, 2018). A traditional gender role refers to a view of relationship in which men are expected to be the primary moneymakers and women are expected to be the homemakers and caregivers (Updegraff et la., 1996; Kaufman, 2000). A key component of societal change is the evolution of gender roles. It is evident that societal progress heavily depends on the gender based expectations, attitudes, and duties (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2021) These changes have their roots in theoretical frameworks that help to explain how and why societies change, making them more than just cultural phenomena (Mensah, 2021). According to functionalist theorists like Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim, society is a complex system whose components cooperate to foster stability and solidarity (Smyth, 2021). The functional view lenses the conventional gender roles of men as breadwinners and women as caregivers.

While based on the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, conflict theory highlights inequality and power shape social systems that establishes standpoint that gender roles serve as instruments of oppression that uphold patriarchal authority. According to Shorrocks (2018) these power systems are being challenged by the change of gender roles, especially through feminist movements. Consequently, this fight has stemmed in legal reforms like equal pay, voting rights, and anti-discrimination laws. George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman created symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes social interaction at the micro level. Gender roles are dynamic, unswervingly acquired and reinforced through language, symbols, and everyday interactions.

Carter and Fuller (2016) state that Gender-related meanings and symbols change along with peer groups, media, and education. Traditional assumptions are challenged, for instance, when males are shown as loving fathers or women in leadership positions. Therefore, more inclusive and adaptable social standards result from these changes in perception, which can have an impact on identity and behavior (Meltzer et al., 2020). Furthermore, a critical perspective through which to view the development of gender roles is provided by feminist theory. Scholars such as Bell Hooks, Judith Butler, and Simone de Beauvoir contend that gender is a social construct that upholds patriarchal authority. Liberal feminism, which tries to achieve equality within preexisting structures, has given way to radical and intersectional feminism, which aspires to completely alter such systems (Lindsey, 2020).

According to Mackay, (2015) significant societal changes, such as the acceptance of reproductive rights, gender-sensitive education, and employment equality, have resulted from the feminist criticism. Furthermore, a more complex perspective of oppression is provided by intersectional feminism, which emphasizes the ways in which gender interacts with race, class, and sexual orientation (Russell et al., 2024). Feminist societies are typically more socially conscious, egalitarian, and inclusive (Okin, 2017).

In the process of child development, individuals begin to build awareness and develop parts of their identities (Basu et al., 2017). Later these different parts of identities intersect and play a role in the development of an individual and the way they perceive themselves and further these identities provide both opportunities and oppressions leading to the overall development of an individual and the way one views the world (Collin, 2000; Mereish & Bradford, 2014; McDermott, 2017). For example, the attitudes

of parents towards the domain of housework, careers, conflict styles, and decision-making processes are highly influential in shaping their children's attitudes (Amato, <u>1996</u>; Herzog & Cooney, <u>2002</u>; Kononova et al., 2017) and, in turn, how they conduct themselves in their own close relationships.

The identities based on gender have different roles and responsibilities in every society and determine their working patterns. Sometime these working patterns generate role conflict among the gender. Gender role conflict is a state that occurs when gender role expectations and behaviors imposed by the culture have a negative impact and consequences for an individual, or for others with whom the individual interacts (O'Neil et al., 2016). Such negative impacts and consequences may take the form of either the individual feeling inhibited in his ability to achieve his full human potential, or ability of others to achieve their full potential. Research has revealed that gender role conflict is negatively correlated with self-esteem and social intimacy which means it has the opposite correlation where if gender role conflict decreases, self-esteem and social intimacy can increase and vice versa (Pourshahbaz et al., 2020) similarly Gender role conflict had a negative correlation with psychological well-being (Simonsen et al., 2000).

Gender role conflict is empirically and constantly found as connected to variant adverse impacts, including heightened stress levels, anxiety (Liu & Iwamoto, 2006; Hajloo & Moghaddasi, 2016), low self-esteem (Brechan & Kvalem, 2015), depression (Fragoso & Kasubeck, 2000), shame (Cichocka et al., 2016), reduced level of marital satisfaction (Nguyen, 2019), and substance abuse (Monk & Ricciardelli, 2003).

O'Neil, et al. (1986) termed this dissonance gender role conflict, and defined it as a psychological state in which gender roles create negative consequences for an individual or individuals. O'Neil (2006) posited that gender role conflict occurs when sexist or restrictive gender roles result in the restriction, devaluation or violation of self or others.

Whereas, in the process of socialization masculine gender role socialization, which involves sexism, devaluation and subordination of feminine characteristics, and a fear and avoidance of all such things considered feminine, can result in masculine gender role conflict (MGRC). Furthermore, O'Neil (1981) discussed control, power, and competition and stated that rigidly socialized men equate achievement, influence, ambition, and wealth with masculinity. Therefore, to attain necessary levels of achievement and success, many men become obsessed with power, status, and success, a need to control and manipulate others, and develop a pervasive mistrust of others who are viewed as competitors (Kaya et al, 2019).

According to Cole (2019) the rigid gender role are stereotype of men as stoic, tireless, and invincible, particularly in the face of physical health problems, has created a tendency among many men toward ignoring symptoms of both acute illness and chronic health problems. Men with rigid gender roles tend to view illness and infirmity as signs of weakness, associated with femininity. Men traditionally are worse off than women with respect to good nutrition, physical fitness, and the ability to handle stress effectively. On the other hand according to research, Esping-Andersen, (2009); England, (2010) gender roles have changed over the past ten years, and women are more efficacious and expanding their roles and responsibilities from traditional ones. These changes to gender roles have led to the expansion of women's role as the family's economic provider and the conversion of men's role towards family responsibilities and childcare (Oláh et al, 2023). Nevertheless, women still bear a large portion of the responsibility for children's primary care and manage family life while working a full-time job (Cotter et al., 2011).

In the context of traditional professional perspectives teaching jobs are becoming more challenging in terms of effort and time (Currie et al, 2000). Indeed, with growing institutional demands and accountability, work escalation of 50 or 60 hours per week has become the norm in many educational sector (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). The number of men and women teaching in Pakistan has steadily increased, particularly in the past ten years (Sana & Aslam, 2018) This change makes it harder for men and women to participate in key roles by blurring the lines between the gender roles that are associated with them. In contrast, women were supposed to take part in family care duties in conventional roles, while men were expected to regulate women's behavior and public appearance (Moghadam, 2004). However, the responsibilities of one position can become incompatible with those of the other when men and women begin to participate in both.

This study set out to investigate the impact of gender role conflict on psychological wellbeing of school teachers of Punjab. The selection of school teachers as sample is primarily based on their burdensome responsibilities and stressful work environment with multiple tasks, consume their time and apprehend role conflict (Gul et al, 2012). Hence, study findings are significant due to the gender perspective about phenomena. So, the findings provide valuable information for policymakers and administration on how to manage the dual responsibilities, raise women's contribution to the nation's economic growth, and improve teachers' psychological health through various strategies.

Literature review

Gender Role

Gender role attitudes refer to an individual s' perceptions of gender social role norms, behavioral patterns, and the attitudinal tendencies held by them (Dijk & Engen, 2019), and thus different perceptions and attitudes will be generated for different social role divisions.

Conventional Gender Roles Prior to the 20th Century

Gender roles were frequently firmly established in ancient societies, with women usually doing household chores and childrearing and men usually holding positions associated to governing, hunting, and combat (Scarborough et al., 2019) Social structures were shaped by these roles, which were upheld by cultural and religious standards, rural economies and patriarchal structures. Women's roles were mostly restricted to the home in ancient Greece and Rome, when men controlled public life, including politics and education (Scarborough et al., 2019).

Medieval Period

During the middle Ages, religious beliefs and feudal structures had an impact on gender roles (Sauer, 2015). A feudal society developed in which women ran houses and helped with agricultural tasks while males were mostly involved in agriculture, military duty, and government. Gender roles were also significantly influenced by religion and the church, which perpetuated the idea that women should only be used in the home and that males should hold positions of authority. In medieval Europe, women were mostly confined to domestic and supporting duties, but they did have some economic influence through their work in agriculture and commerce (Hadley, 2015).

Biblical and Judeo-Christian Influence: Codifying Gender Norms

The development of organized religion, particularly Judeo-Christian traditions, played a significant role in formalizing and codifying gender roles (Haddad & Esposito, 2020) Biblical narratives, interpreted through specific theological lenses, often positioned men as heads of households and providers, while women were expected to be subservient and focused on domesticity.

The application of scriptural texts became a foundational element in shaping social norms and legal frameworks that reinforced gender-based inequalities. For example, concepts like 'Eve's sin' in the Book of Genesis were used to justify limitations on women's participation in religious leadership and public life (Wheeler, 2017)

The Victorian era saw a further entrenchment of these ideals with the rise of the 'cult of domesticity.' This ideological framework emphasized the home as a sanctuary and designated women as its guardians, confining them to the private sphere and further restricting their access to education and professional opportunities. This period witnessed a systematic suppression of women's rights, with limited legal recourse against domestic abuse and economic exploitation (Vandervoort, 2022).

The Industrial Revolution: Technological Disruption and Shifting Power Dynamics

The Industrial Revolution marked a significant inflection point in the history of gender roles (Foster & Clark, 2018). Technological advancements, such as the steam engine and power loom, automated many tasks previously requiring significant physical strength. This technological shift created new employment opportunities in factories and mills, drawing women into the workforce in unprecedented numbers (Allen, 2015).

Foster and Clark (2018) posited that this influx of women into the labor market did not immediately translate into gender equality. Women were often paid significantly less than men for the same work and faced harsh working conditions and limited opportunities for advancement. The rise of industrial capitalism also created new forms of social stratification. While some women entered the middle class through marriage or inheritance, many working-class women faced extreme poverty and exploitation. This economic disparity fueled social unrest and contributed to the growing momentum of the women's suffrage movement.

The Women's Suffrage Movement: Political Activism and Legal Reform

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the rise of the women's suffrage movement, a global campaign advocating for women's right to vote and participate fully in political life. This movement employed a range of tactics, from peaceful protests and lobbying to civil disobedience and direct action.

Hunter (2021) states that success of the suffrage movement resulted in significant legal reforms, including the enfranchisement of women in many countries. These legal victories represented a major step forward in the fight for gender equality, empowering women to participate in the democratic process and advocate for their own interests. The right to vote served as a catalyst for further reforms, including changes to property laws, divorce laws, and access to education.

Evolution of Gender Roles Through History



The assessment of gender-role socialization has been neglected in literature in general and in counseling psychology in particular (Matud et al., 2019). Given that gender is a central organizing principle in society, "surprisingly little literature provides careful analyses of how gender as a multidimensional construct is related to psychological problems faced by women and men" (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991).

The rise of rationality and human right movement has ascended gender role stress as global phenomenon (Beaglaoich et al., 2020) and Pakistan has no exception evidently experiencing war, migration, and trauma developing mental health issues (Durrani, & Halai, 2018). This increased risk occurs due to traumatic experiences and the necessity for the redefining and reconstruction of gender roles to align with economic, cultural, and social changes (Cole & Ingram, 2020). It has become indispensable, focusing on lowering stigma and discrimination and promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of people and families (Cole & Ingram, 2020). O'Neil (1981) identified six factors characteristic of MGRC that emerge from these behaviors. These behaviors are difficulty with expressing one's feelings in an appropriate manner, and/or denying the rights of others to express their emotions, are characteristic of restrictive emotionality. The implication here is that men will have difficulty openly expressing their feelings that they will be unwilling to give up emotional control, and that being vulnerable will be problematic. Difficulties will be evident

with self-disclosure, recognition of feelings, and processing emotional experiences, all of which are viewed as feminine and to be avoided O'Neil (1981). In addition to restrictive emotionality, rigidly socialized men may tend to feel that physical affection and sensuality of any kind are feminine and inappropriate.

According to the theory of conservation of resources, since the resources of individuals are limited, the resources available for another role will be reduced when spent on one role (Spagnoli, 2018). Therefore, when faced with the coexistence of two or more roles, it will be difficult for individuals to obey one role, which may lead to role conflict (Luhaorg & Zivian, 1995).

Psychological well-being

Despite studies evident that men and women share most psychological characteristics, but most civilizations believe that men and women are fundamentally different and ought to play different roles (Hyde, 2014). Following social norms will frequently have unfavorable effects, which can have an impact on men's physical and mental health as well as other areas of their lives, including their relationships with their families, coworkers, and romantic partners (Cheng, Young & Luk, 2022). This phenomenon, which O'Neil, (2008) refers to as gender role conflict, is a psychological state in which gender roles have some detrimental effects on the individual or on others. Men encounter gender role conflict when they don't agree with gender role standards, when they feel that their ideal and true selves don't align with gender role norms, or when gender-based ideas cause them to lose or limit their values (Taouk et al., 2025)

O'Neil and Denke (2016) emphasize that psychological well-being is defined as all a person requires for their well-being, highlighting the idea that great health is more than just the absence of illness. Individuals who feel better about themselves typically feel happier and think better about their surroundings. Conversely, those who are not in good health perceive their surroundings negatively and feel depressed, angry, and anxious.

Ramaeker and Petrie (2019) stated that GRC is associated with psychological distress, including depression, sexual aggression, self-esteem, and emotional expressiveness. Traditional male roles in society have promoted greater self-reliance in distressing times. Gender disparities in mental health have been regularly documented in research, but studies examining the psychological well-being of men and women have not produced definitive findings (Matud et al., 2019).

Method and Materials

This research employed quantitative research method, grounded in the philosophical foundations of positivism. Accordingly, correlation was employed as research design to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and gender role conflict among Govt. school teachers in Punjab. Study sample was based on (421) males and (405) females teachers, that selected by utilizing the multi-stage sampling technique in four districts (Rahim Yar Khan, Chiniot, Multan, and Okara) of Punjab. Those teachers were inclusively selected who had at least one year work experience in their respective schools.

In this study O'Neil, gender role conflict (1986) questionnaire used to measure the gender role conflict which have (success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior

between individual and conflict between work and family relation) distinct constructs. Whereas, the psychological well-being of teachers was measured by using psychological well-being scale (PWBS) developed by Riff's (2006). It has also six major constructs (autonomy of an individual, environmental mystery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance) that helped researcher to measure the psychological well-being of school teachers. The collected data was analyzed by using Pearson correlation that determine how gender role conflict impacted the psychological wellbeing of school teachers.

Analysis

The study analyzed the relationship of gender roles conflict with psychological well-being of teachers working in public sector schools. Further, the relationship of gender role conflict (Success, Power, Competition, Restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between individual and conflict between work and family relation) components with psychological was discussed. Moreover, the relationship of psychological well-being components (autonomy of an individual, environmental mastery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance) with gender role conflict also discussed in this section. The results of the data analysis were as follow:

Table 4.1: Relationship between gender role conflict and autonomy of an individual, environmental mastery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance

	GRC	AOI	EMOI	PG	PR	PL	SA
GRC	1						
AOI	668 (**)	1					
EMOI	501 (**)	.706 (**)	1				
PG	492 (**)	.488 (**)	.531 (**)	1			
PR	537 (**)	.644 (**)	.452 (**)	.509 (**)	1		
PL	613 (**)	.721 (**)	.503 (**)	.783 (**)	.359 (**)	1	
SA	.721 (**)	.690 (**)	.478 (**)	.591 (**)	.299 (**)	.727 (**)	1

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

GRC = Gender role conflict, **AOI** = Autonomy of an individual, **EMOI** = environmental mastery of an individual, **PG** = Personal growth, **PR** = Positive relation, **PL** = Purpose in life, **SA** = Self-acceptance

The above table demonstrates the information about the relation of gender role conflict with autonomy of an individual, environmental mystery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose of life and self-acceptance of teachers working in school of Punjab province. The gender role conflict has a strong negative relationship with autonomy of individual (r = -.668, n = 826, p < 0.01), environmental mastery of an individual (r = -.501, n = 826, p < 0.01), positive relation personal (r = -.537, n = 826, p < 0.01), purpose in life (r = -.613, n = 826, p < 0.01), and self-acceptance (r = -.721, n = 826, p < 0.01), of teachers. However, gender role conflict has a medium level of negative relationship (r = -.492, n = 826, p < 0.01) with personal growth of teachers. This shows that gender role conflict negatively impacted the

autonomy of an individual, environmental mastery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance of school teachers.

Table 4.2: Relationship between gender role conflict and psychological well-being of teachers

	Gender Role Conflict	Psychological Well-being
Gender Role Conflict	1	
Psychological Well-being	574 (**)	1

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level two tailed

The above table depicts the information about the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological well-being of teachers working in four district schools of Punjab. The results show that there is a strong negative relationship (r = -.574, n = 826, p < 0.01) notice between teacher's gender role conflict and their psychological well-being. These results show that when teachers experience gender role conflict their psychological well-being receive negative effects. The results suggested a strong negative relationship between gender role conflict and psychological well-being of teachers working public sector schools of Punjab.

Discussion

It has been determined that globalization, changing demographics, feminist and human rights movements has evolved gender role in a pervasive manner (Eisend, 2019). Therefore, like other cultures Pakistan has no exception in captivating changing in gender roles from traditional to global trends even in varied speed (Rizvi, khan & shaikh, 2014). Research evident that gender roles have changed during the last decade, and women are expanding their roles and responsibilities from traditional ones to become more agentic (Esping-Andersen, 2009; England, 2010). These changes in gender roles contribute to the expansion of women's role in being an economic provider for the family and the conversion of men's role towards family responsibilities and child care. However, despite these changes, women continue to assume significant responsibilities in children's primary care and manage family life despite having a full-time job (Cotter et al., 2008).

Further, in this research study researcher explore the relationship between gender role conflict (Success, Power, Competition, Restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between individual and conflict between work and family relation) and its impact on psychological well-being(autonomy of an individual, environmental mystery of an individual, personal growth, positive relation, purpose of life and self-acceptance) of teachers. The results indicted strong negative relationship between gender role conflict and psychological wellbeing (r = -.574, n = 826, p < 0.01) of teachers. The results indicated the change in gender roles is traditional culture is arduous phenomena impacting individuals' psychological health which has far reaching effects on job performance and as well family life. Nonetheless, the results of this study provide a considerable amount of information about the relationships among male gender-role variables and psychological well-being variables. The results not only confirm previous research, which has suggested that masculinity is strongly related to traditional measures of psychological well-being (Roothman et al., 2003; Salleh & Mustaffa, 2016; Matud et al., 2022) but also suggest that gender-role conflict in men is related negatively to measures of psychological well-being. Similarly results signifies

the facts about women, contribute in amplifying gender role conflict in juggling situation of multiple task from home to workplace .gender role conflict exists when gender roles have negative consequences for People (Yucel & Chung, 2023).

Direction for future research

Further studies in other provinces with varied subcultures can provide a scope of results in investigation of relationships of gender role conflict and psychological wellbeing. Besides, future research on psychological health and gender role conflict could engage university academicians as respondents. However Future research can employ social support and self-efficacy as moderator in gender role conflict and psychological well-being to evaluate whether these constructs help the respondents in reduction or eradication of gender role conflict that later augment the respondent's psychological well-being.

The study findings help in providing lenses for school education department to formulate gender friendly policies to cater the intensity of phenomena. It is indeed specified that female teachers experienced more gender role conflict as compared to the male teachers and primary school teachers experience more gender role conflict as compared to the elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, subject specialist and senior subject specialist. The study results can assist policy makers a guideline for convincing policy designs aligned with prevailing gender roles to reduce conflicts and psychological upheavals. Indeed, societies progress toward more just and equitable institutions when they address and eliminate gender-based disparities, promoting social progress and democratic governance (Tax, 2022). Likewise, it is imperative that organizations and the government take this issue seriously and redefine the idea of gender role allocation by raising awareness in society.

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