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## Occupational Role Stress of the Public and Private Sector Universities Teachers

Fauzia Khurshid, Ph.D.

Zahir Uddin Butt, Ph.D.

Sufiana K. Malik, Ph.D.

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### Abstract

This study aimed to explore phenomena of occupational role stress among the private and public sector universities teachers. The sample comprised 500 teachers including 250 from public and 250 from private sector universities. University Teachers Stress Inventory (UTSI), developed by Khurshid (2008) was used UTSI questionnaire was used to measure dimensions of university teachers' occupational role stress. The psychometric properties of UTSI questionnaire were determined and yielded that it was a reliable tool. Statistical tests including mean, standard deviation, percentages and correlation analysis were calculated to test the research hypotheses.

The findings indicated that as a whole the university teachers experience moderate to high level of occupational role stress, however, teachers working in the public sector universities experienced higher stress as compared to the private sector university teachers. The key reason for occupational role stress of public sector university teachers was their relationships with their colleagues, whereas for the private sector teachers their workload caused occupational role stress.

The study also explored effects of demographic variables age, gender, marital status, qualification, income, experience, and nature of job contract on teachers occupational role stress.

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It was found that the demographic variables have effects on determining the level of occupational role stress.

**Key words:** Occupational role stress, university teacher, level of occupational role stress, dimensions of occupational role stress.

## **Introduction**

Occupational stress is considered as one of the leading causes of work-related health problems in almost all professions around the world. In the past, there has been considerable research mainly in the developed countries on the nature, causes and effects of occupational role stress on the psychological wellbeing of employees (Ivancevich & Ganster, 1987, French et al, 1982; Hocky 1987).

Previous studies related to the teaching profession have pointed out that teaching may be one of the most stressful of all occupations, following air traffic controllers and surgeons (Truch, 1980). In a study, Cox & Brockley (1984) attempted to make a comparison of teachers with non-teachers and found that 67 per cent of the teachers reported that their work itself was the main source of occupational stress for them, as opposed to 35 per cent of the non-teachers. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) carried out a study on a sample of 700 teachers in the UK. They found that 25 percent of the respondents recorded their job to be “very stressful” and “extremely stressful”. Several multidisciplinary studies have focused on the dimensions of occupational role stress including interpersonal relationships, role ambiguity, role conflict, workload, and lack of resources, students' attitudes towards work and job autonomy (Blase, 1982; Fletcher and Payne, 1982; Fraser, 1998; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978; Okebukola and Jegede, 1989). The implications of such studies helped raise concern on staff reactions to work pressure and the effects of stress on the university teachers' health and wellbeing.

## **Meaning of the term *Stress***

Teachers have a wide variety of meanings when they use the term stress and when they accept or deny the existence of stress in themselves or in their colleagues. Some teachers define stress as anxiety, fear, inability to cope, frustration and unhappiness (Pratt 1979), while others associate stress with personal weakness and professional incompetence (Dunham, 1984).

Fraser (1998) defined teacher occupational role stress as an interactive process that occurs between teachers and their teaching environment.

Trendall (as cited in Verma, 1998) defined teachers' stress as a multi-dimensional concept composed of factors within the individual, the organization, nature of work place and society that leads to the lowering of feelings of personal self-worth, achievement, effectiveness and coping within one's professional role. In this study, occupational role stress is considered as an unpleasant emotion, which manifests itself through tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression. All these emotions are the result of different aspects of working environment and personal lives of the universities teachers (Khurshid, 2008).

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## **Prolonged Occupational Stress in Teaching**

The main reason for conducting research into teacher stress is that prolonged occupational stress in teaching has been found resulting in both mental and physical ill health, ultimately having damaging effects on teacher's professional efficiency. High stress results in the lowering of intellectual ability and functioning, irrespective of one's age, education and background. Stress within teaching profession may not only affect the physical and emotional well-being of a teacher and their families, but it also effects the organization where they are working because it may impair the working relationship with students and colleagues (Bradfield and Fones, as cited in Verma 1998).

## **Teachers' Occupational Stress in Pakistan**

Many of the studies on teachers' occupational stress have been carried out in industrialized and developed societies where conditions may be different from those prevailing in a developing country. Hence, the present study has been prompted by the fact that little is known about the nature of the university teachers' occupational stress in Pakistan. Interestingly the concern over occupational stress among university teachers in Pakistan remained very limited due to the lack of coverage of the subject in the media and other professional platforms. Although a lot of research has been done on the general nature of occupational stress, however, it does not shed light on the state and nature of this phenomenon in education. In Pakistan, most of the researches in the domain of occupational stress were related to the dimensions, such as job satisfaction and motivation (Cochinwala & Imam, 1987).

No empirical study was found addressing the phenomenon of occupational role stress of university teachers in Pakistan. Therefore, it is a need to undertake a study of this nature to explore strongest and most frequently occurring sources and manifestations of stress for the present sample and to explore the role of certain demographic and job related variables in determining the university teachers' occupational role stress. The study will generate empirical data which could be of value to policy and decision makers, and to university administrators and other professional associations in the education sector of Pakistan.

## **Research Aim**

This study aimed to explore the level and dimensions of occupational role stress of teachers working in the private and public sector universities. The study also explored the effects of demographic variables including age, gender, marital status, qualification, income and type of employment on the teachers' occupational role stress.

## **Research Hypotheses**

1. Teachers working in public sector experience higher occupational role stress than teachers working in the private sector universities.

2. Age is negatively associated with occupational role stress.
3. Male teachers experience more occupational role stress than female teachers.
4. Married teachers experience more occupational stress than unmarried ones.
5. Teachers with a Ph.D. qualification experience more occupational role stress than teachers having a Master's or M. Phil qualification.
6. Teachers with low income experience more stress than the teachers of higher income.
7. Contract employment results in more occupational role stress than permanent employment for teachers.

## **Method**

The current study is a descriptive study in which scientific methodology is used to explore the level and dimensions of occupational role stress in the public and private sector universities teachers.

## **Sample**

For this research, the ideal population includes all teachers working in the public and private sector universities of Pakistan, but due to limited time and resources, it was not possible to collect data from all of them.

Therefore, for the convenience of data collection, a stratified random sample of 500 teachers from twenty-public and private sector universities based in Rawalpindi and Islamabad was selected. Among them 282 were men and 218 were women, ages ranged from 25 to 75 years and job experience ranged from 1 year to 40 years. Teachers' qualification level ranged from Master's to Ph.D. and income level ranged from Rs.10, 000 to Rs.200, 000.

Other specifications of the sample were marital status and type of employment. The teachers were contacted at their respective workplace. They were given sufficient information about the purpose of the study. After their consent, UTSI was given to them. They were requested to complete this scale in one sitting. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was provided to them that information collected by them would only be used for research purposes.

## **Instrument**

For the measurement of occupational role stress, University Teachers Stress Inventory (UTSI) was developed by Khurshid (2008) was used in this study. UTSI was consisted of 54 items with five point rating scale, pertaining to six subscales such as, workload stress scale (WLSS), student related stress scale (SRSS), colleagues related stress scale (CRSS), administration related stress scale (ARSS), personal factor leads to stress scale (PFSS) and manifestations of stress scale (MSS). The scores assigned to these categories are ranged from 1 to 5. The present study measured occupational role stress in terms of respondent's scores on 54-items UTSI.

## **Results**

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The psychometric properties of UTSI were determined through alpha reliability coefficients, item total correlations inter-correlations and percentile analysis. The result revealed that all 54 items have positive correlation with the total scale of UTSI. The correlations ranged from .41 to .89. Cutoff scores were determined to categorize three levels of occupational role stress including mild stress, moderate stress and high stress. The score of 122 falls on 25<sup>th</sup> percentile illustrate as mild stress. Score of 143 falls on 50<sup>th</sup> percentile characterized as moderate stress, whereas score of 161 falls on 75<sup>th</sup> percentile and characterized as high stress.

**Table 1**  
**Inter-Correlations of the Subscales of UTSI (N=500)**

Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6
WLSS						
SRSS	.64**					
CRSS	.65**	.53**				
ARSS	.37*	.69**	.83**			
PFLSS	.43*	.59**	.80**	.56**		
MSS	.65**	.65**	.83**	.61**	.70**	
Total	.65*	.80**	.83**	.83**	.77**	.89**

\*\*p < .01

Table 1 portrayed inter-correlation of the subscales and total scale of UTSI. Result shows that all subscales have positive correlation with each other and with total scale of UTSI. The highest correlation existed between MSS and total scale of UTSI ( $r = .89^{**}$ ).

**Table 2**  
**Level and Percentages of Stress (N=500)**

Levels of Stress	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	n	Percentages	n	Percentages
Mild Stress	47	18.8%	78	31.2%
Moderate Stress	95	38. %	105	42 %
High Stress	108	43.2%	67	26.8%

Table 2 portrays levels of occupational role stress experienced by the university teachers. The results indicate that public sector university teachers reported experiencing a moderate to high-level occupational role stress, whereas, the private sector university teachers reported mild to moderate role stress. As a whole, the public sector university teachers experience high occupational role stress as compared with the private sector teachers.

**Table 3 Dimensions of Occupational Role Stress**

Dimensions	public sector (n=250)		private sector (n=250)	
	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	27.54	4.95	21.89	6.49
SRSS	25.58	5.45	27.43	5.72
CRSS	34.36	5.38	22.18	7.31
ARSS	26.31	7.49	23.78	9.02
PFSS	22.54	5.71	21.34	6.74
MSS	27.04	6.37	24.33	7.40
Total	163.37	35.35	140.95	42.68

Table 3 indicates scores of five dimensions of occupational role stress. The results show that public sector university teachers have higher mean scores on subscale stress related to colleagues and manifestation of stress scale, while private sector teachers experience higher stress due to students' related issues.

**Table 4 Comparison of Mean SD of the University Teachers Scores on UTSI for Age -Wise. N=500)**

Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)		Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)	
	25-35 years				35-45 years			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	27.14	5.08	27.31	6.42	26.12	4.80	26.97	4.80
SRSS	22.94	4.95	21.82	4.09	25.21	6.98	25.97	6.41
CRSS	23.87	4.94	21.22	4.80	25.28	6.81	25.92	4.26
ARSS	26.02	7.13	23.44	5.52	23.95	8.23	19.75	6.39
PFSS	22.40	5.07	20.88	3.44	23.21	5.82	27.64	8.0
MSS	25.38	3.9	24.57	5.75	24.47	5.35	18.14	6.64
Total	147.75	31.07	139.24	30.02	148.24	37.99	144.39	36.5
	45-55 years				55 years & above			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	28.70	4.04	27.11	3.03	28.77	5.07	29.84	5.79
SRSS	22.02	4.95	24.77	2.95	25.39	5.15	24.59	6.49
CRSS	23.36	3.85	27.82	3.85	25.84	6.10	26.25	5.24
ARSS	22.98	8.31	25.66	6.31	26.37	6.74	27.16	7.97
PFSS	25.77	5.28	23.66	4.28	23.05	7.43	24.59	6.58
MSS	26.32	5.32	26.32	3.32	24.46	7.19	26.34	8.17
Total	149.15	31.74	155.34	15.93	153.88	37.68	163.77	40.24

Table 4 reveals the score of private and public sector teachers on UTSI for the variable of age. Result of both group indicates, gradual increased in stress with the passage of time, older

teachers have more stress than younger. Overall, senior teachers of private sector were more stressful than public sector (public sector M =153.88, private sector M = 163.77).

**Table 5**  
**Gender Wise Comparison of University Teachers Scores on UTSI (N=500)**

Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)	
	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Men</b>				
WLSS	26.80	5.05	35.39	4.61
SRSS	26.12	5.85	20.68	6.47
CRSS	26.83	5.8	20.25	6.09
ARSS	27.80	7.66	21.26	6.83
PFSS	22.22	6.36	20.12	7.38
MSS	25.18	6.89	22.28	6.99
Total	154.95	37.61	139.98	38.37
<b>Women</b>				
WLSS	28.17	4.80	21.22	5.57
SRSS	23.12	5.04	24.08	5.76
CRSS	23.96	4.93	20.59	7.97
ARSS	24.90	7.34	28.41	10.59
PFSS	20.81	5.08	23.55	4.45
MSS	24.92	5.91	28.0	6.55
Total	145.88	33.01	145.85	40.8

Table 5 indicates the result of UTSI on the variable of gender. From the table it appears that mean scores of both public and private sectors male teachers are higher on UTSI (public M = 154.95, private M = 139.98) as compared to female teachers.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of Mean SD of the University Teachers Scores on UTSI on Marital Status-Wise (N=500).**

Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)	
	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Married</b>				
WLSS	27.97	4.66	27.71	5.63
SRSS	24.66	5.38	25.57	6.57
CRSS	24.52	5.76	22.81	7.51

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ARSS	25.83	7.61	24.11	9.07
PFSS	22.98	6.32	21.17	7.26
MSS	25.69	6.18	24.60	7.68
Total	151.6	34.61	145.97	43.72

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	Unmarried			
	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	25.91	3.29	26.23	2.45
SRSS	21.98	2.61	19.19	3.54
CRSS	24.12	2.52	19.41	3.67
ARSS	24.55	4.71	22.27	4.32
PFSS	21.88	4.52	21.17	4.52
MSS	25.07	4.51	22.95	3.89
Total	143.51	20.93	131.22	22.39

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Table 6 describes the results of married and unmarried teachers working in the public sector and public sector universities. It described that married teachers of public sectors universities experience higher stress as compared with the unmarried ones (M = 151.6), whereas the mean score of unmarried teachers are low on UTSI (M = 143.51). The unmarried private sector university teachers have lower mean score among all groups (M = 131.22).

**Table 7**

**Mean SD of University Teacher's Scores on UTSI for the Variable Qualification (N=500)**

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Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)		Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
	Masters				M. Phil			
WLSS	26.61	5.48	26.0	4.50	27.51	4.78	27.99	3.99
SRSS	22.79	5.59	20.86	6.22	23.93	6.10	22.85	4.13
CRSS	25.85	4.98	21.27	6.05	23.80	5.40	22.52	5.54
ARSS	25.81	8.41	22.22	7.29	25.60	6.98	23.95	5.25
PFSS	23.75	5.73	20.76	7.98	22.64	5.46	21.51	5.08
MSS	24.16	6.40	21.61	7.31	26.06	6.21	27.75	5.55
Total	148.97	36.59	132.72	39.35	149.54	33.99	146.57	29.54
	PhDs							
WLSS	28.77	4.65	30.50	4.87				
SRSS	23.48	6.10	22.70	3.38				
CRSS	24.36	5.52	23.72	5.53				
ARSS	23.68	7.81	27.98	4.64				
PFSS	20.77	6.11	22.52	2.39				
MSS	22.86	6.22	24.65	3.79				

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Total 143.87 36.41 152.07 24.6

Table 7 shows the mean and SD of university teacher's scores on UTSI for qualification wise. In the public sector, teachers having Master's degree exhibited more stress and in private sector, lowest mean scores were among teachers, whose qualification was up to Master's degree. The teachers whose qualification were up to PhDs displayed higher mean score on UTSI in the private sector (private M = 152.07, public M = 143.87).

**Table 8**  
**Comparison of Mean SD of the University Teachers Scores On UTSI on Income –Wise (N=500)**

Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)		Public Sector (n=250)		Private Sector (n=250)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
	Up to Rs.15000				Rs.15001-25000			
WLSS	27.63	5.10	28.93	5.49	27.30	5.18	30.89	4.10
SRSS	24.20	4.98	23.00	5.33	22.77	5.66	23.64	4.31
CRSS	23.44	5.02	24.09	8.43	25.43	5.84	23.54	4.63
ARSS	25.42	6.08	27.84	10.1	25.10	8.67	26.41	6.83
PFSS	22.98	5.31	23.49	5.03	23.08	5.71	22.89	5.74
MSS	25.39	7.5	27.40	5.86	24.58	6.67	25.05	6.69
Total	149.06	33.99	154.75	40.24	148.26	37.73	152.42	32.3
	Rs.25001-35000				Rs.35000 & above			
WLSS	27.37	3.35	26.89	5.04	28.0	2.35	24.20	6.45
SRSS	20.86	6.76	22.39	6.23	23.90	3.94	18.07	7.79
CRSS	24.35	8.74	22.20	7.53	23.75	3.27	19.03	6.80
ARSS	25.71	4.47	23.58	8.13	21.20	2.39	18.57	6.37
PFSS	20.71	3.71	21.30	6.61	21.68	3.45	18.23	7.78
MSS	23.22	2.65	25.16	7.12	23.41	4.23	19.10	7.11
Total	142.22	29.68	141.52	40.66	141.94	19.63	117.2	42.3

Table 8 explains the differences in mean score of private and public teachers on the variable income. Result indicates that stress decreased with increase in income. Overall teachers of private sector have less stress.

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Mean SD of the University Teachers Scores on UTSI for the variable Type of Employment (N=500)**

Subscales	Public Sector (n=250)	Private Sector (n=250)	Public Sector (n=250)	Private Sector (n=250)
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	Permanent				Contract			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	27.32	4.99	27.96	6.18	27.86	4.86	27.12	4.11
SRSS	23.45	5.73	22.36	6.25	23.91	4.62	22.63	6.07
CRSS	24.51	5.47	23.07	7.68	23.75	5.22	22.41	5.10
ARSS	25.03	7.81	24.15	10.0	26.31	6.60	22.73	4.42
PFSS	22.55	5.97	22.04	6.86	22.14	4.78	20.07	6.15
MSS	24.17	6.50	25.22	7.45	27.97	5.24	23.59	6.57
Total	147.03	36.47	144.09	44.42	151.94	31.86	138.55	32.42

	Visiting			
	M	SD	M	SD
WLSS	31.71	2.2	25.13	3.67
SRSS	24.86	1.77	18.92	6.83
CRSS	25.00	3.1	17.50	4.71
ARSS	25.29	2.9	22.67	6.72
PFSS	26.00	1.4	19.08	5.99
MSS	26.29	1.6	20.54	6.36
Total	159.15	12.97	123.84	34.28

Table 9 indicates the mean and SD of teacher's score on UTSI for work related variables, type of employment. From the results, it is clear that permanent teachers experience least stress in public sector whereas, on UTSI mean scores of visiting faculty members were highest among all (M = 159.15). In the private sector, mean score of public sector, permanent teachers were high and mean score of visiting faculty members was lowest (M = 123.84) on UTSI.

## Discussion

The present study provides valuable information regarding the level and dimensions of occupational role stress among the public and private university teachers. The first aim of the research was to explore the level of university teachers' occupational stress. Both the teachers working on public and private sector universities reported experiencing occupational stress, however, the mean score of the public sector teachers was higher as compared to the private sector (public sector M = 163.37 private sector M = 140.95) on UTSI (Table 4). The results confirmed the research hypothesis 1 and 2 that the university teachers experienced high occupational role stress and the level of occupational stress of public sector university teachers was higher than the private sector teachers.

The second aim of the study was to explore the dimensions of occupational role stress of the university teachers. The teachers of public sector have higher mean score on subscales of stress related to colleagues (M=34.36) and manifestation of stress scale (M=27.04), while the private sector university teachers have higher mean score on subscale student related stress (M=27.43) and manifestation of stress scale (M= 24.33) (Table 4) .

The study also aimed at exploring the relationship of age, gender, marital status, qualification, income level and type of employment on the occupational role stress of the private and public sector universities teachers. In order to find out differences due to these variables mean and standard deviation were computed and the results of the analysis for each variable were as following:

**Age:** The results in table 5 indicated an inverse relationship between the age and occupational role stress. Interestingly, it also indicated a gradual increase in level of occupational role stress with the increase in age of teachers of both public and private sector universities. The senior teachers of the private sector universities reported experiencing more occupational role stress than senior teachers of public sector (public sector  $M=153.88$ , private sector  $M=163.77$ ). The results confirm the research hypothesis 3 that the age is inversely related to the occupational role stress. The literature perused on the relationship of age and occupational stress also indicated an inverse relationship between age and occupational stress.

**Gender:** Another interesting finding was the analysis of the level of occupational stress based on gender. The study found as a whole that level of occupational role stress was higher in male teachers as compared to female teachers both in the public and private sector universities (Male  $M=154.97$ , Female  $M=145.88$ ) (Table 6). The results confirm the research hypothesis 4 that male university teacher experience more occupational role stress than female teachers.

**Marital Status:** The results related to the marital status indicated that mean scores of the public sector married teachers were higher on the total scale of UTSI, whereas mean scores of unmarried teachers were low (married  $M= 143.51$ , unmarried  $M= 131.22$ ) (Table 7). The results confirm research hypothesis 5 that the married teachers experience more occupational role stress than the unmarried ones.

**Qualification:** Qualification was another significant factor that affects the level of occupational role stress of the university teachers. The results show that the master's degree holder exhibit less occupational role stress and the Ph.D. degree holders (PhD  $M= 153.87$ , Master  $M= 148.97$ ) (Table 8). Hence, the results confirm the research hypothesis 6 that the teachers with the Ph.D. qualification experience more occupational stress than teachers having a Master's or M. Phil qualification.

**Income:** The results on income show that the teachers with low income experience more occupational role stress than teachers with higher income level (Higher income  $M= 142.33$ , Low income  $M= 149.06$ ) (Table 9). Another interesting finding regarding the income was that stress was positively associated with occupational stress, as the increase in income resulted in decrease in the level of occupational role stress. Thus, the results confirmed the research hypothesis 7 that teachers with low income experienced more occupational role stress than the teachers of higher income.

**Type of employment:** The results indicated that university teachers with a permanent employment had lowest stress compared to the teachers employed on contract basis (permanent  $M= 147.03$ , contract  $M= 159. 15$ ) (Table 10). Interestingly the contract teachers of public sector

universities had highest mean score (M = 161.94). It reflects that the nature of contract influenced the occupational role stress level of the teachers. The results support the research hypothesis 8 that the contract employment produces more occupational role stress than permanent employment for university teachers.

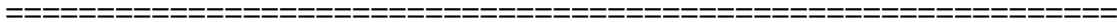
### **Recommendations**

The study provides a glimpse of the level and dimensions of the occupational role stress experienced by the university teachers working in public and private sector universities in Pakistan. The empirical evidence from the present research sample shows a serious concern that a large proportion of university teachers in both the public and private sector in Pakistan reported experiencing high Occupational role stress. Although it is not possible to comment on whether stress among university teachers has been increasing over the years, it is important that the decision makers be aware of this situation.

These findings have several important implications for the university administrations and educational policy makers.

It is recommended that the both public and private sector university management should develop comprehensive stress management strategy and programs for alleviation of occupational stress at the university level to improve the quality of life of teachers. The university management should also provide a more supportive work environment to teachers so they can perform their jobs more effectively.

Currently there are disparities in the pay structure of teachers of public and private sector universities, a balance in the pay structure and attractive benefits for teachers, particularly highly qualified teachers help in dealing with the occupational stress and will attract qualified and experienced people towards this profession. The contract and daily wage employment also seem to be a source of occupational stress causing frustration and disinterest among the university teachers. The university administration should provide stable contracts to the teachers to remove this frustration. Finally, further research is recommended to verify the findings of the current study and contribute towards the development of a sound research database on occupational stress of university teachers in Pakistan.



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Fauzia Khurshid, Ph.D  
Associate Professor  
National University of Modern Languages (NUML)  
Islamabad, Pakistan

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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Fauzia Khurshid, Ph. D., Zahir Uddin Butt, Ph. D. and Sufiana K. Malik Ph. D.  
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[nimra2000@hotmail.com](mailto:nimra2000@hotmail.com)

Zahir Uddin Butt, Ph.D.  
Human Resources Development Consultant  
[zahiruddin.butt@aramco.com](mailto:zahiruddin.butt@aramco.com)

Sufiana K. Malik, Ph. D.  
Assistant Professor  
National University of Modern Languages (NUML)  
Islamabad, Pakistan  
[education\\_peace@yahoo.com](mailto:education_peace@yahoo.com)

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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