



Sociology & Cultural Research Review (SCRR)
 Available Online: <https://scrrjournal.com>
 Print ISSN: [3007-3103](#) Online ISSN: [3007-3111](#)
 Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



Gender Discrimination and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction among Employed Women: Evidence from District Dir Lower

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study was to analyze the sociological factors affecting job satisfaction among employed women in district Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The nature of the study was quantitative. The data were collected from two union councils i.e. Lajbook and Hayaseri of District Dir Lower. Furthermore, a total of 6 girls' schools were selected from each union council. A sample of 177 respondents was selected from the target population through a well thought questionnaire. The reliability the tool was checked which stood 0.82. A uni-variate analyzed was conducted by SPSS software. To test the association between dependent and independent variables a Chi-sqaure test was also applied. The study found a significant association between job satisfaction with social network, role of education in seeking employment, access to employment information and familial support in securing employment. The study recommends that government should expand access to quality education and vocational training programs for women, especially in rural and underserved areas of KP, launch awareness campaigns focused on educating women about their workplace rights, labor laws, and gender equality, strengthen government initiatives aimed at supporting women's economic empowerment, provide women in KP with training in digital literacy and access to online job platforms and engage local communities and families in promoting the importance of women's work and the value of their economic contributions..

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Job Satisfaction, Employed Women, District Dir Lower.

1. Introduction

1.2 Background

Job satisfaction refers to the level of contentment, fulfillment, and positive emotional response an individual experiences regarding their employment. It reflects how well a job aligns with the employee's expectations, needs, and aspirations. Factors influencing job satisfaction include the nature of the job, work-life balance, compensation, work environment, recognition, and job security. When these factors are effectively addressed,

employees tend to exhibit higher productivity, loyalty, and engagement; conversely, unmet expectations can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and reduced performance (Qanti et al., 2022).

For women, job satisfaction is shaped not only by professional demands but also by social and familial expectations. Work-life balance, opportunities for career growth, and a supportive workplace culture significantly influence women's perceptions of their jobs. Many women prioritize roles that accommodate family responsibilities and provide flexibility, while recognition for achievements and clear career progression pathways are critical to fostering job satisfaction (Andrew, 1995).

Employment, in its broad sense, encompasses engagement in paid work or occupation, where individuals exchange their skills, labor, and time for remuneration. Employment arrangements can vary from full-time, part-time, temporary, or permanent positions to freelancing and entrepreneurial endeavors (Susan, 2020). Women's employment specifically denotes the participation of women in the workforce across various sectors, ranging from formal organizational roles to informal work, agriculture, industry, and entrepreneurship (Rauf, 2022).

The significance of women's employment extends beyond economic contribution; it is closely tied to gender equality, empowerment, and social development. Ensuring equal access to opportunities, fair remuneration, and career advancement for women requires addressing systemic challenges, including discrimination, gender-based wage gaps, and societal expectations about traditional roles. Promoting women's participation in the workforce is not only a matter of equity but also an essential strategy for fostering economic growth and societal development (Abbas et al., 2021).

In Pakistan, only approximately 22% of women are actively engaged in the labor market, a figure that is among the lowest in the region. Women face various barriers to employment, including cultural restrictions, lack of safe transportation, household responsibilities, and limited access to professional networks. Additionally, the methods women use to search for jobs often differ from men, reflecting deeper societal constraints and structural challenges that limit workforce participation (Xu et al., 2021). Understanding these barriers is essential for designing interventions that can enhance women's employment opportunities and improve their overall job satisfaction.

1.2 Social Networks

Social networks, both offline and online, play a pivotal role in facilitating women's access to employment opportunities and career advancement. Networking platforms, professional conferences, mentorship programs, and online tools such as LinkedIn enable women to establish connections with peers, mentors, and industry professionals. These networks provide vital information about job openings, career development programs, and professional insights, helping women navigate their career trajectories effectively (Naseer, 2015; Jafarey, 2007). A strong professional network enhances exposure to opportunities, builds social capital, and can be instrumental in overcoming structural barriers to employment.

1.3 Role of Education

Education is a critical determinant of women's employment and empowerment. By equipping women with knowledge, skills, and competencies, education increases employability, earning potential, and economic independence. Educated women are better positioned to make informed career choices, negotiate fair compensation, and contribute meaningfully to household and societal development (Ajuzie et al., 2012). Moreover, education serves as a tool for challenging gender norms, developing leadership skills, and promoting gender equality. Investing in women's education generates broader social, economic, and political benefits, enabling societies to foster inclusive and equitable development (Teresiah, 2021).

1.4 Access to Employment Information

Access to relevant and timely information significantly enhances women's participation in the labor market. Information about job vacancies, vocational training, professional development opportunities, and market trends empowers women to make informed decisions and compete effectively in the workforce (Timilsina et al., 2024). Access to information also strengthens women's ability to negotiate fair wages, advocate for their rights, and plan career advancement strategically. Despite its importance, gender disparities in information access remain prevalent, limiting women's opportunities and reinforcing systemic inequities (Ajuzie et al., 2012).

1.5 Familial Support

Familial support is a vital factor in women's employment, particularly during the job search and career development processes. Emotional encouragement, guidance, and practical assistance from family members help women navigate the challenges of finding and maintaining employment. Family support can include help with resume preparation, interview readiness, financial assistance for education or training, and leveraging personal networks to identify job opportunities (Huang et al., 2021; Leung et al., 2019). Such support not only enhances women's chances of securing employment but also boosts their confidence and motivation, creating a foundation for sustainable career development.

1.6 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction encompasses the extent to which employees feel content and fulfilled in their work. It goes beyond mere financial rewards to include satisfaction with managers, colleagues, organizational policies, work culture, and the impact of work on personal life. High job satisfaction is associated with increased motivation, engagement, and productivity, whereas dissatisfaction can lead to absenteeism, low morale, and turnover (Montuori et al., 2022). Understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction among women employees is essential for promoting workplace well-being and fostering inclusive organizational cultures.

1.7 Theoretical Framework: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivators (intrinsic factors) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors) as determinants of job satisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl & Maude, 2017).

Motivators include achievement, recognition, responsibility, career advancement, and the nature of the work itself. These factors fulfill higher-order psychological needs and contribute directly to employee satisfaction and engagement.

Hygiene Factors encompass company policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and job security. While essential for preventing dissatisfaction, their presence alone does not generate satisfaction.

Herzberg's theory emphasizes that organizations must focus on enhancing motivators while maintaining adequate hygiene factors to foster a satisfied, motivated, and productive workforce. Neglecting either aspect can undermine employee engagement and organizational performance.

1.8 Justification of the Study

Examining the factors influencing women's employment and job satisfaction provides critical insights into the barriers and facilitators of workforce participation. Social networks, education, access to information, and familial support play interconnected roles in shaping women's career trajectories. Understanding how these factors affect job satisfaction can inform targeted policies and interventions to enhance women's professional development, economic empowerment, and overall well-being. In regions like District Dir Lower, where cultural and structural constraints limit women's workforce participation, such insights are essential for promoting gender equality and sustainable socioeconomic development.

1.9 Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the demographic profile of employed women in District Dir Lower.
2. Assess women's perceptions of job satisfaction.
3. Investigate the institutional and communication structures affecting job satisfaction.
4. Analyze the association between institutional factors and job satisfaction
5. Provide policy recommendations based on study findings to improve women's employment experiences.

2. Literature Review

The review of literature on social networks, education, familial support, and access to information highlights the complex and interrelated factors influencing women's employment and job satisfaction. These variables collectively shape women's ability to engage effectively in the labor market, achieve professional fulfillment, and contribute to broader societal development. Understanding these dynamics is particularly important in contexts like Pakistan, where structural, cultural, and gender-specific barriers continue to restrict women's workforce participation.

2.1 Social networks play a critical role in facilitating women's access to employment opportunities. Research indicates that women often rely on informal, family-centered networks to identify job openings, which contrasts with men's more diverse and professionally oriented networks (Caria et al., 2020). While these networks provide essential support, they may limit exposure to wider employment opportunities. Professional associations, digital labor platforms, and other formal networking spaces, however, offer women avenues to expand their connections, access hidden job markets, and enhance career prospects (Rose, 2005; Agrawal et al., 2015). Characteristics of networks, such as size, composition, and tie strength, further influence employment outcomes, emphasizing the strategic importance of building diverse and robust social connections (Sciara, 2011).

2.2 Education emerges as a pivotal determinant of women's employment and empowerment. It equips women with knowledge, technical skills, and critical thinking abilities

that are essential for competing effectively in the labor market (Choudhary & Rahman, 2009; Ghazi et al., 2008). Beyond improving employability, education enhances women's economic autonomy, enables informed decision-making, and facilitates participation in family and community affairs (Alesina et al., 2013; Mazumdar, 1989). In the context of Pakistan, low levels of educational attainment among women, particularly in regions like Peshawar, significantly limit access to formal employment opportunities and constrain professional growth. Higher education not only enhances job prospects but also empowers women to challenge entrenched gender norms and assert their rights in the workplace, creating a foundation for social and economic progress.

2.3 Access to information is another essential factor affecting women's employment outcomes. Information about job openings, career development opportunities, market trends, and vocational training enables women to make informed career choices and enhances their labor market participation (Raacke, 2008; Chu & Choi, 2010). Inadequate access to such information contributes to lower labor force participation rates, as many women may remain unaware of potential employment opportunities or effective job search strategies (Silva & Rehman, 2021). Bridging this information gap is therefore crucial for promoting economic empowerment, enhancing skills utilization, and fostering gender equality in employment.

2.4 Familial support significantly influences women's ability to engage in the workforce and sustain employment. Emotional encouragement, practical assistance, and financial support from family members can improve confidence, motivation, and the ability to pursue professional opportunities (Ferguson et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2009). Conversely, lack of support or restrictive cultural norms can hinder women's participation in the labor market, limit career progression, and reduce overall job satisfaction (Shinnar et al., 2012; Silva & Rehman, 2021). The literature underscores that supportive family structures, including spousal and extended family encouragement, are essential for women to balance domestic responsibilities with professional ambitions.

2.5 Job satisfaction is deeply intertwined with these sociological factors. Women's sense of fulfillment at work is influenced by social networks, educational attainment, access to information, and family support. Strong networks provide emotional and professional guidance, creating a sense of belonging and integration in the workplace (Harrison et al., 2006). Education ensures alignment between an individual's skills and job responsibilities, promoting engagement and professional competence (Wong & Ladkin, 2008). Familial support reduces work-family conflict, enhances confidence, and allows women to pursue careers more effectively. Together, these factors contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, which, in turn, affect productivity, retention, and personal well-being (Montuori et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2010).

2.6 The synthesis of these findings highlights the synergistic effects of social networks, education, access to information, and familial support in shaping women's employment outcomes and job satisfaction. Social networks facilitate opportunities and guidance, while education provides the skills and knowledge necessary to capitalize on these opportunities. Access to information ensures informed decision-making and effective engagement in the labor market, and familial support enables women to overcome societal and domestic

constraints. Together, these variables create an environment in which women can thrive professionally, achieve financial independence, and contribute meaningfully to societal development.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study, detailing the scope, sample size, sampling design, data collection tools, conceptual framework, and data analysis methods. The chapter also provides a guideline for future researchers exploring sociological factors affecting women's employment and job satisfaction.

3.1 Universe of the Study

The universe of this study comprised two union councils—Lajbook and Hayaseri—in District Lower Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. From these union councils, a total of six girls' schools were selected from each council, resulting in a total of twelve schools forming the study universe. These institutions provided access to the target population of employed women and female students, who are potential future participants in the labor market.

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Design

A total of **177 respondents** were selected from the population of 238 individuals using the formula proposed by Sekaran (2003). The simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure each member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the study, thereby minimizing selection bias.

Table 1: Number of respondents and sample distribution

S.No	Union Council Lajbook	Population	Sample Size
01	GGHS Lajbook	31	25
02	GGHS RehanPur	26	20
03	GGPS Rahim Abad Lajbook	12	10
04	GGPS Gero Bala	13	10
05	GGMS Dermal Payyan	20	14
06	GGMS Derma Bala	19	13
07	GGPS Landai dara	13	10
08	GGPS Shaker Tangi	15	10
09	GGMS Hayaseri	19	13
10	GGMS Sangoli	18	13
11	GGHS Kadh	27	20
12	GGHS Nari Tangi	25	19
Total		238	177

Source: Field data

SCRR

3.1 Data Collection

For this study a well thought questionnaire was used for the collection of data from the target population. Before the collection of data from the respondents, the reliability the tool was checked which was stood 0.82.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Table 2: Conceptual framework of the study

Independent variables	Dependent variable
Social Network	Job Satisfaction
Role of Education in seeking employment	
Access to Employment information	
Familial Support in securing employment	

3.3 Analysis of Data

To analyze the collected data, A statistical tool for data analysis in social sciences research known as SPSS-V25 was utilized. The uni- variate and bi-variate approaches were applied.

3.3.1 Uni-variate Analysis

For calculating descriptive statistics a uni variate technique was used i.e. background, independent and dependent variables along with frequency distribution of respondents. Following equation was used for data class's percentage.

Data class's percentage = $f/N * 100$ Where,
f = Data class's frequency N = total observations.

4. Results And Discussions

4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents includes age, marital status, designation, monthly family income, family type and family size. These characteristics directly and indirectly affect the phenomena of the job satisfaction among employed women.

4.1. Age of the respondent

Table 4.1 showed the age of the respondents in years. Out of 177 (100%) of the respondents, 63 (35.6%) of them were between 22 to 31years. 70 (39.5%) of the respondents age range were between 32 to 41 years. 25 (14.1%) of the respondents age range were between to 42 to 51 years. 19 (10.7%) of the respondents age range were 52 to 60 years.

4.1. Percentage and frequency distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of their age

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
22 to 31	63	35.6
32 to 41	70	39.5
42 to 51	25	14.1
52 to 60	19	10.7
Total	177	100.0

4.2. Marital status of the respondents

Table 4.2 showed the marital status of the respondents. Out of 177 (100%) of the respondents, 145 (81.9%) of the respondents were married and 32 (18.1%) were single.

4.2 Percentage and frequency distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of their marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	145	81.9
Single	32	18.1
Total	177	100.0

4.3. Designation of the respondents

Table 4.3 illustrates the designation of the respondents. Out of 177 (100%) of the respondents, 75 (42.3%) of them were Primary School Teachers. 25 (14.1%) of the respondents were Senior Primary school Teachers. 28 (15.8%) of the respondents were Certified Teachers. 22 (12.4%) were SST- Secondary School Teachers. 15 (8.4%) were PET-Physical Education Teachers and 12 (6.7%) were PET-Physical Education Teachers.

4.3 Percentage and frequency distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of their designation

Designation	Frequency	Percent
PST- Primary School Teacher	75	42.3
SPST-Senior Primary school Teacher	25	14.1
CT-Certified Teacher	28	15.8
SST- Secondary School Teacher	22	12.4
PET-Physical Education Teacher	15	8.4
T.T-Theology Teacher	12	6.7
Total	177	100

4.4. Monthly income of the respondents

Table 4.4 showed the monthly income of respondents. Out of 177 (100%), 77 (43.5%) of the respondents monthly income were between 30000 to 45000. 54 (30.5%) of the respondents monthly income were between 45,001 to 60,000. 20 (11.3%) of the respondents monthly income were between 60,001 to 75,000. 26 (14.7%) Of the respondents monthly income were between 75, 001 and above.

4.4. Percentage and frequency distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of their monthly income

Monthly income in PKR	Frequency	Percent
30,000 to 45,000	77	43.5
45,001 to 60,000	54	30.5
60,001 to 75,000	20	11.3
75,001 and above	26	14.7
Total	177	100.0

4.5. Type of the family of the respondents

Table 4.5 illustrates the type of family of the respondents. Among 177 (100%) of the respondents, 52 (29.3%) of the respondents were belong to nuclear family while 125 (70.6%) of the respondents were belong to joint family system.

4.5. Percentage and frequency distribution of the sampled respondents on the basis of their family type

Family type	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear	52	29.3
Joint family	125	70.6
Total	177	100.0

(A)Uni-variate Emperical Analysis

4.6 Social Network

Social networks, both online and offline, are vital in shaping women's employment opportunities by providing access to job leads, mentorship, and professional connections. In the context of District Lower Dir, the study indicates that women's networks are largely family-centric and homebound, with 63.8% of respondents agreeing that their social connections revolve primarily around family and local community ties. This reflects the influence of traditional societal roles that prioritize household responsibilities for women, which can limit exposure to broader professional opportunities (Chung & Kim, 2017).

Table 4.6 Social Network

S. No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1	Women's social network is more family centric and homebound.	113 (63.8%)	56 (31.6%)	8 (4.5%)
2	Awareness campaigns have been disseminated to promote women's economic empowerment in your area	45 (25.4%)	106 (59.9%)	26 (14.7%)
3	Role of social networks in disseminating information about job Openings/Promotions	165 (93.2%)	8 (4.5%)	4(2.3%)
4	Social network can enhance your accessibility to digital social relationship	173 (97.7%)	4 (2.3%)	0(0.0%)
5	Social networks, both online and offline, offer valuable opportunities for women to build professional connection	170 (96.0%)	3(1.7%)	4 (2.3%)
6	Rural women lacking professional social relationship skills for seeking jobs	163 (92.1%)	10(5.6%)	4 (2.3%)

4.7 Role of Education in Seeking Employment

Education plays a pivotal role in empowering women to seek and secure employment by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and qualifications needed to enter and thrive in the workforce. It develops both technical and soft skills—such as problem-solving, communication, and leadership—that are highly valued by employers. Beyond skill

development, education increases women's confidence, challenges societal norms, and expands their career options across diverse fields, from healthcare and technology to business and engineering (Chung & Kim, 2017).

The study findings show that 97.7% of respondents agreed that education enhances women's employment opportunities, while 91.5% confirmed that it equips women with essential skills and knowledge for the workforce. Furthermore, 77.4% of respondents highlighted that access to quality education positively influences women's participation in the labor market, bridging the gender gap and improving employability. Education was also seen as a means to reduce gender disparities, with 48.6% agreeing that investing in girls' education contributes to narrowing gender gaps in employment.

Education further acts as a catalyst for breaking traditional gender roles in employment, as noted by 39.0% of respondents. This empowers women to pursue careers based on their abilities rather than societal expectations. Additionally, 63.8% recognized that educational empowerment correlates with increased economic independence, while 85.3% agreed that higher levels of education improve employment prospects. Collectively, these results underscore that education not only enhances women's employability but also contributes to broader social and economic development, facilitating greater autonomy, confidence, and career fulfillment (Melissa et al., 2015; Flap & Völker, 2001; Kumar & Rani, 2024).

Table 4.7 Role of education in seeking employment

S. No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1	Education plays a pivotal role in enhancing skill women's employment Opportunities	173 (97.7%)	0(0.0%)	4(2.3%)
2	Education equips women with the necessary skill and knowledge for the work force	162 (91.5%)	8(4.5%)	7(4.0%)
3	Access to quality education positively influences women's participation in the labor market	137 (77.4%)	16(9.0%)	24 (13.6%)
4	Investing in girl's education contributes to reducing gender disparities in employment	86 (48.6%)	60(33.9%)	31 (17.5%)
5	Education serves as a catalyst for breaking traditional gender roles and norms in employment	69 (39.0%)	57(32.2%)	51(28.8%)
6	Education empowerment correlates with increased economic independence for women	113 (63.8%)	33 (18.6%)	31(17.5%)
7	Higher levels of education lead to great employment prospects for women	151 (85.3%)	22(12.4%)	4(2.3%)

4.8 Familial Support in Seeking Employment

Familial support is a crucial determinant in women's ability to pursue and sustain employment. Supportive families provide emotional encouragement, practical assistance such as childcare or transportation, and guidance in navigating professional opportunities. In

many cases, family members also offer networking opportunities or mentorship, which can facilitate job access and career growth. In societies where cultural norms may restrict women's participation in the workforce, families often act as advocates for education and professional development (Almeida et al., 2020).

The study revealed that 95.5% of respondents acknowledged familial support as critical for entering and maintaining employment. Similarly, the same proportion agreed that strong familial support positively influences women's success and advancement. Lack of support from male family members was reported by 92.1% as a barrier to participation, while 77.4% emphasized that access to family resources and networks impacts employment opportunities. 91.0% highlighted the importance of parental support in pursuing education and training, while 86.4% recognized family responsibilities as barriers to workforce participation. Familial backing also helps women confront workplace challenges, including harassment, as affirmed by 91.0% of respondents (Macintosh & Krush, 2014; Melissa et al., 2015).

In summary, familial support enhances women's ability to pursue education and employment, mitigates barriers, and fosters economic independence. Strong family networks complement formal education and social networks, enabling women to overcome societal and structural challenges in the labor market.

Table 4.8 Familial Support in Seeking Employment

S. No	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1	Familial support is a critical factor influencing women's ability to enter and maintain employment	169 (95.5%)	4(2.3%)	4(2.3%)
2	Strong familial support systems contribute positively to women's success and advancement in the work force	169 (95.5%)	0(0.0%)	8(4.5%)
3	Absence of male family member support can hinder women's participation in seeking employment opportunities.	163 (92.1%)	6(3.4%)	8(4.5%)
4	Access to family resources and networks impact women's access to employment opportunities	137 (77.4%)	28(15.8%)	12(6.8%)
5	Parental support influences women's decisions to pursue education and training for better employment prospects	161 (91.0%)	16 (9.0%)	0(0.0%)
6	Family responsibilities act as barriers to women's full participation in the work force	153 (86.4%)	24 (13.6%)	0(0.0%)
7	Familial support affects women's ability to overcome barriers such as harassment.	161 (91.0%)	12(6.8%)	4(2.3%)

4.9 Access to Employment Information

Access to timely and relevant employment information is essential for women to explore and secure job opportunities. Limited access, often due to lack of professional networks, digital literacy, or awareness of job vacancies, can restrict women's career prospects, particularly in male-dominated sectors. Information about skills development initiatives, job vacancies, labor laws, and government programs empowers women to make informed decisions and improve employability (Melissa et al., 2015; Almeida et al., 2020).

Findings indicate that 96.0% of respondents agreed that access to information is crucial for exploring employment opportunities. 85.3% reported that limited access hinders informed decision-making, while 91.0% emphasized that information about job vacancies and skill development initiatives facilitates workforce entry. Digital literacy and internet access were highlighted by 94.9% as essential for navigating online job markets. Knowledge of workplace rights and labor laws empowers women, with 59.9% agreeing on their importance, while 40.7% acknowledged the positive impact of government initiatives. Furthermore, 72.9% stated that information on government-funded employment support enhances socio-economic status.

Overall, access to employment information is a critical enabler for women's workforce participation, supporting career planning, skills development, and economic empowerment. Both digital access and targeted government programs play key roles in bridging gaps in information availability, especially for women in rural areas.

Table 4.9 Access to Employment Information

S. No	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1	Access to information is crucial for women to explore and pursued verse employment opportunities	170 (96.0%)	7(4.0%)	0(0.0%)
2	Limited access to employment information hinders women's ability to make informed decisions about their career paths and job prospects	151 (85.3%)	22 (12.4%)	4(2.3%)
3	Access to employment information about job vacancies and skill development initiatives facilitates women's entry into the work force	161 (91.0%)	4 (2.3%)	12(6.8%)
4	Digital literacy and internet access play a significant role in improving women's access to employment – information and online job markets	168 (94.9%)	9 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)
5	Information about work place rights and labor laws empowers women to advocate for fair treatment and equal opportunities in employment	106 (59.9%)	68 (38.4%)	3(1.7%)

6	Government initiatives to improve access to employment information , such as public awareness campaigns and online resources, can positively impact women's employment outcomes	71 (40.7%)	72 (40.1%)	34(19.2%)
7	Access to employment information about government-funded initiatives for women's empowerment and employment support enhances women's socio-economic status	129 (72.9%)	29(16.4%))	19 (10.7%)

4.10 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction among women is influenced by opportunities for growth, alignment with qualifications, organizational culture, recognition, and a balance between emotional and logical evaluation of their roles. High job satisfaction enhances retention, productivity, and overall well-being (Greenhaus et al., 2000; Hollar, Kuchinka, & Feinberg, 2022).

The study revealed that 95.5% of respondents felt they had opportunities to grow in their current jobs, while about 49.0% believed that alignment between education and job responsibilities increased satisfaction. 72.3% highlighted the importance of a positive organizational culture, and 95.5% emphasized recognition and appreciation as critical to satisfaction. Furthermore, 67.2% noted that satisfaction should be measured in multiple ways, reflecting its subjective nature, and 57.6% acknowledged that both emotional feelings and logical evaluations are important in shaping overall job satisfaction.

In essence, women's job satisfaction is multifaceted, influenced by professional growth, supportive workplace environments, recognition, and fair treatment. Enhancing these aspects can lead to higher engagement, productivity, and career fulfillment, contributing to both individual well-being and organizational performance.

Table 4.10 Job Satisfaction

S. NO	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1	Do you agree that you have opportunities to grow in your current job?	169 (95.5%)	8 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
2	Do you agree that you a mismatch between educational back ground and job responsibilities can negatively impact job satisfaction?	72 (40.7%)	97 (54.8%)	8(4.5%)
3	Do you agree that working in a job that matches your education lead to higher job satisfaction?	83 (49.0%)	90 (50.8%)	4 (2.3%)
4	Do you agree that a positive organizational culture contributes to higher job satisfaction?	128 (72.3%)	49 (27.7%)	0 (0.0%)
5	Do you agree that job satisfaction should be measured in different ways because it varies among people?	119 (67.2%)	50 (28.2%)	8 (4.5%)

6	Do you agree that both feelings and logical evaluations are important for overall job satisfaction?	102 (57.6%)	29 (16.4%)	46 (26.0%)
7	Do you agree that job satisfaction is influenced by the level of recognition and appreciation employees receive for their work?	169 (95.5%)	8 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)

(B) Bi-variate Empirical Analysis

4.11 Association between Social Network and Job Satisfaction

The bivariate analysis revealed a strong and significant association between women's social networks and their job satisfaction. Social networks, both online and offline, play a critical role in providing emotional support, career guidance, and a sense of belonging, which collectively enhance women's engagement and satisfaction in the workplace. The study found that women's social networks tend to be more family-centric and home-bound, yet this structure still significantly influences job satisfaction ($P=0.000$). Awareness campaigns promoting women's economic empowerment also showed a significant positive association with satisfaction, highlighting the role of information dissemination in boosting confidence and career aspirations.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that social networks facilitate access to job openings, promotions, and digital relationships, all of which are strongly associated with higher job satisfaction ($P=0.000$). Women who leverage professional connections—through mentors, colleagues, and digital platforms—report greater access to resources, recognition, and career opportunities, which enhance their sense of professional fulfillment. Rural women lacking professional networking skills were identified as particularly vulnerable to lower job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of developing both offline and digital networking competencies.

Table 4.11 Association between Social Network and Job Satisfaction

S. No	Statement	Job Satisfaction			Chi-square & P-Value
		Agree	Disagree	Total	
1	Women's social network is more family centric and home-bound.				$\chi^2= 18.104$ $P=0.000$
	Agree	48	8	56	
	Disagree	113	0	113	
	Uncertain	8	0	8	
2	Awareness campaigns have been disseminated to promote women's economic empowerment in your area.				$\chi^2= 48.661$ $P=0.000$
	Agree	45	0	45	
	Disagree	106	0	106	
	Uncertain	18	8	26	
3	Role of social networks in disseminating information about job Openings/Promotions.				$\chi^2= 52.877^a$ $P=0.000$
	Agree	157	8	165	
	Disagree	8	0	8	
	Uncertain	4	0	4	
4	Social network can enhance your accessibility to digital social relationship.				

	Agree	165	8	173	$\chi^2= 63.727^a$ P=0.001
	Disagree	4	0	4	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
5	Social networks, both online and offline, offer valuable opportunities for women to build professional connection.				
	Agree	162	8	170	$\chi^2= 28.361^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	3	0	3	
	Uncertain	4	0	4	
6	Rural women lacking professional social relationship skills for seeking jobs.				
	Agree	155	8	163	$\chi^2= 113.275^a$ P=0.001
	Disagree	10	0	10	
	Uncertain	4	0	4	

4.12 Association between Role of Education in Seeking Employment and Job Satisfaction

The bivariate analysis demonstrates a strong and significant association between the role of education in seeking employment and women's job satisfaction (P=0.000). Education equips women with essential knowledge, technical skills, and soft skills, enabling them to secure employment that aligns with their qualifications and career aspirations. Women with higher education levels are more likely to access diverse and rewarding job opportunities, which directly contributes to greater job satisfaction by fostering competence, confidence, and a sense of professional fulfillment.

The findings indicate that access to quality education significantly enhances women's participation in the labor market and their overall job satisfaction. Investing in girls' education not only reduces gender disparities in employment but also empowers women to pursue leadership roles, higher-paying positions, and careers in non-traditional sectors, thereby improving job quality and satisfaction. Education serves as a catalyst for breaking traditional gender roles, challenging societal norms, and enabling women to make autonomous career choices.

Table 4.12 Association between role of education in seeking employment and job satisfaction

S. No	Statement	Job Satisfaction			Chi-square & P-Value
		Agree	Disagree	Total	
1	Education plays a pivotal role in enhancing skill women's employment Opportunities.				
	Agree	165	8	173	$\chi^2= 18.104$ P=0.000
	Disagree	4	0	4	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
2	Education equips women with the necessary skill and knowledge for the work force.				
	Agree	154	8	162	$\chi^2= 48.661$ P=0.000
	Disagree	8	0	8	
	Uncertain	7	0	7	
3	Access to quality education positively influences women's participation in the labor market				
	Agree	157	8	165	$\chi^2= 53.414^a$

	Disagree	8	0	8	P=0.000
	Uncertain	4	0	4	
4	Investing in girl's education contributes to reducing gender disparities in employment				
	Agree	78	8	86	$\chi^2= 8.866^a$
	Disagree	60	0	60	P=0.012
	Uncertain	31	0	31	
5	Education serves as a catalyst for breaking traditional gender roles and norms in employment				
	Agree	43	8	51	$\chi^2= 20.700^a$
	Disagree	57	0	57	P=0.000
	Uncertain	69	0	69	
6	Higher levels of education lead to great employment prospects for women				
	Agree	143	8	151	$\chi^2= 56.782^a$
	Disagree	22	0	22	P=0.001
	Uncertain	4	0	4	

4.13 Association between Familial Support in Seeking Employment and Job Satisfaction

The bivariate analysis highlights a highly significant association ($P=0.000$) between familial support and women's job satisfaction. Familial support—emotional, practical, or financial—plays a critical role in enabling women to enter, sustain, and advance in the workforce. Supportive family members help women manage work-life responsibilities, such as childcare and household tasks, allowing them to focus on professional roles, reduce stress, and achieve higher job satisfaction. Strong familial networks contribute positively to career success by providing guidance, mentorship, and encouragement for pursuing higher education, leadership positions, and promotions, thereby fostering both career growth and fulfillment. The findings emphasize the importance of male family member support, access to family resources, and parental encouragement. Lack of support from male relatives or limited access to family resources can create barriers to employment, reduce career advancement opportunities, and negatively impact job satisfaction. Conversely, families that actively assist with professional development, including navigating education and training, help women overcome structural and cultural barriers, including workplace harassment. Studies confirm that women with strong familial backing experience better work-life balance, are more resilient in facing workplace challenges, and demonstrate higher engagement and satisfaction in their roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kabeer, 2005; Shah et al., 2011; Elder et al., 2010).

Table 4.13 Association between familial support in seeking employment and job satisfaction

S. No	Statement	Job Satisfaction			Chi-square & P-Value
		Agree	Disagree	Total	
1	Familial support is a critical factor influencing women's ability to enter and maintain employment				
	Agree	161	8	169	$\chi^2= 64.264^a$
	Disagree	4	0	4	P=0.002

	Uncertain	4	0	4	
2	Strong familial support systems contribute positively to women's success and advancement in the work force				
	Agree	161	8	169	$\chi^2= 116.215^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	0	0	0	
	Uncertain	8	0	8	
3	Absence of male family member support can hinder women's participation in seeking employment opportunities				
	Agree	155	8	163	$\chi^2= 53.168^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	6	0	6	
	Uncertain	8	0	8	
4	Access to family resources and networks impact women's access to employment opportunities				
	Agree	20	8	28	$\chi^2= 43.827^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	137	0	137	
	Uncertain	12	0	12	
5	Parental support influences women's decisions to pursue education and training for better employment prospects				
	Agree	153	8	161	$\chi^2= 28.532^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	16	0	16	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
6	Family responsibilities act as barriers to women's full participation in the work force				
	Agree	153	0	153	$\chi^2= 53.414^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	16	8	24	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
7	Familial support affects women's ability to overcome barriers such harassment				
	Agree	153	8	161	$\chi^2= 53.427^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	12	0	12	
	Uncertain	4	0	4	

4.14 Association between Access to Employment Information and Job Satisfaction

The bivariate analysis indicates a highly significant association ($P=0.000$) between access to employment information and women's job satisfaction. Access to timely and relevant information about job opportunities, career progression, salaries, benefits, skill development programs, and workplace rights empowers women to make informed career decisions, pursue suitable roles, and achieve higher fulfillment at work. Limited access to such information, on the other hand, hinders career decision-making, restricts opportunities, and can lead to dissatisfaction, underemployment, and job insecurity (Barling et al., 1998; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

The findings show that access to information about job vacancies, skill development initiatives, and digital resources facilitates women's entry into the workforce and enhances

job satisfaction. Digital literacy and internet access further expand opportunities by enabling women to explore online job markets, apply for positions, and develop professional skills, thereby increasing competitiveness and satisfaction in their roles (Parker et al., 2012; Bohlander & Snell, 2016).

Table 4.14 Association between Access to Employment Information and job satisfaction

S. No	Statement	Job Satisfaction			Chi-square & P-Value
		Agree	Disagree	Total	
1	Access to information is crucial for women to explore and pursued verse employment opportunities				
	Agree	162	8	170	$\chi^2= 47.467$ P=0.000
	Disagree	7	0	7	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
2	Limited access to employment information hinders women's ability to make informed decisions about their career paths and job prospects				
	Agree	143	8	151	$\chi^2= 118.641$ P=0.000
	Disagree	22	0	22	
	Uncertain	4	0	4	
3	Access to employment information about job vacancies and skill development initiatives facilitates women's entry into the work force				
	Agree	161	0	161	$\chi^2= 115.207^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	4	0	4	
	Uncertain	4	8	12	
4	Digital literacy and internet access play a significant role in improving women's access to employment – information and online job markets				
	Agree	160	8	168	$\chi^2= 44.587^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	9	0	9	
	Uncertain	0	0	0	
5	Information about work place rights and labor laws empowers women to advocate for fair treatment and equal opportunities in employment				
	Agree	98	8	106	$\chi^2= 20.700^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	68	0	68	
	Uncertain	3	0	3	
6	Government initiatives to improve access to employment information , such as public awareness campaigns and online resources, can positively impact women's employment outcomes				
	Agree	63	8	71	$\chi^2= 12.509^a$ P=0.002
	Disagree	72	0	72	
	Uncertain	34	0	34	

7	Access to employment information about government-funded initiatives for women's empowerment and employment support enhances women's socio-economic status				
	Agree	121	8	129	$\chi^2= 53.414^a$ P=0.000
	Disagree	29	0	29	
	Uncertain	19	0	19	

1. Findings, Conclusions, And Recommendations

5.1 Findings

The present study aimed to analyze sociological factors affecting job satisfaction among employed women in District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The research employed quantitative methods to examine participants' demographic profiles, followed by uni-variate analyses. The analysis assessed the association between independent variables—social network, role of education in seeking employment, familial support in seeking employment, and access to employment information—and the dependent variable, job satisfaction, using cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests.

Social Network: Most respondents reported that women's social networks were predominantly family-centric and homebound. Awareness campaigns promoting women's economic empowerment were recognized by some respondents. Many agreed that social networks play an important role in disseminating job-related information, enhancing digital accessibility, providing online and offline professional connections, and that rural women often lack professional networking skills.

Role of Education: The majority of respondents emphasized the significance of education in enhancing skills, employment opportunities, and workforce participation. Education equips women with the necessary knowledge for professional success, reduces gender disparities, challenges traditional gender norms, and increases prospects for higher-paying and fulfilling roles. Education was also found to boost self-efficacy, confidence, and the ability to navigate workplace dynamics, all of which positively influence job satisfaction.

Familial Support: Familial support emerged as a critical factor affecting women's employment and satisfaction. Supportive family dynamics—including emotional encouragement, resource access, and assistance with domestic responsibilities—facilitate entry into and advancement within the workforce. Conversely, the absence of male family member support, family obligations, and limited access to familial networks hinder employment opportunities and job satisfaction. Supportive families also empower women to overcome workplace barriers, including harassment, and encourage pursuit of education and career development.

Access to Employment Information: Respondents highlighted the importance of access to timely and relevant employment information. Knowledge of job vacancies, skill development initiatives, workplace rights, labor laws, and government programs empowers women to make informed career decisions, pursue growth opportunities, and enhance socio-economic status. Digital literacy and internet access further enable women to access online job markets and employment resources, contributing to higher job satisfaction.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that multiple sociological factors significantly influence job satisfaction among employed women in District Dir Lower. Key determinants include social networks (both in-person and digital), education, familial support, and access to employment information. Together, these factors shape women's ability to enter the workforce, pursue meaningful careers, overcome workplace challenges, and achieve higher job satisfaction. The demographic results indicated that the majority of respondents were aged 32–41 years, married, working as primary school teachers, earning PKR 30,000–45,000 monthly, and belonged to joint family systems. These findings highlight the crucial role social networks play in women's job satisfaction, supporting previous studies on both in-person and digital professional networks. Limited access to information was shown to hinder career decision-making and restrict opportunities, resulting in dissatisfaction.

5.3 Recommendations:

Based on the study findings, the following measures are suggested:

- Expand access to quality education and vocational training for women, particularly in rural and underserved areas, through schools, community programs, and online platforms.
- Conduct awareness campaigns educating women about workplace rights, labor laws, gender equality, and protections against harassment.
- Strengthen government initiatives supporting women's economic empowerment, including subsidies for businesses employing women, microfinance programs, and improved job placement services.
- Provide training in digital literacy and access to online job platforms to enable women to explore employment opportunities and skill development initiatives.
- Engage families and local communities to encourage supportive environments for women's employment, reducing social stigma and enhancing work-life balance.
- By addressing these factors, policymakers and stakeholders can improve women's employment outcomes, promote gender equality, and enhance job satisfaction, ultimately contributing to socio-economic development in the region.

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