



---

## INTERDEPENDENCIES OF LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, AND FOREIGN POLICY ON SOCIOECONOMIC LANDSCAPES

*Iqra Hussain*

*Department of Pakistan Studies and International Relations,  
Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Abbottabad, 22620, Pakistan.*

*Shah Muhammad Kamran*

*Mehran University Institute of Science, Technology and Development.  
Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro Sindh, Pakistan.  
[kamran.shah@faculty.muet.edu.pk](mailto:kamran.shah@faculty.muet.edu.pk)*

*Imran Naseem*

*Department of Pakistan Studies and International Relations,  
Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Abbottabad, 22620, Pakistan.  
[drimran.naseem@aust.edu.pk](mailto:drimran.naseem@aust.edu.pk)*

*Muhammad Bahar Khan*

*Department of Pakistan Studies and International Relations,  
Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Abbottabad, 22620, Pakistan*

*Khalid Zaman (corresponding author)*

*Department of Economics, The University of Haripur,  
Haripur Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 22620, Pakistan.  
[khalid\\_zaman786@yahoo.com](mailto:khalid_zaman786@yahoo.com)*

### Abstract

*The labour market dynamics, women's empowerment, unemployment rates, and foreign policy influence Pakistan's socioeconomic circumstances. Understanding the complex interdependencies between these factors is necessary to create effective policies and initiatives that boost economic growth and environmental stability. The qualitative survey, which included university instructors, personnel, Deans, and Directors from numerous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) institutions, raises awareness of women's independence issues. Cultural and societal norms, educational limitations, health inequalities, gender discrimination, and unpaid care giving are the main challenges. Poverty, unemployment, wealth inequality, and educational shortcomings exacerbate these issues. The quantitative section used 5-point Likert scale questions to gather data from numerous scholars,*

---

*educators, and others interested in Pakistan's foreign affairs. The results imply that familiarity with the problem, labour market justice, and diplomatic relationships positively affect Pakistan's women's autonomy. To conclude, Pakistan's socioeconomic realities need inclusive policies that address labour market issues, unemployment, and gender inequity while supporting foreign policy goals. An integrated approach is essential for sustainable and inclusive development, making Pakistan more equal and wealthy.*

**Keywords:** Women's Autonomy; Labor Market Dynamics; Socioeconomic Realities; Gender Inequality; Foreign Policy Impact; Mixed method approach; Pakistan.

## 1. Introduction

The growing number of individuals seeking employment is placing strain on the labor market to provide new work opportunities. In order to meet the needs of Pakistan's burgeoning youth population, there is a need for a significant rise in employment creation. Pakistan has also lagged behind China in structural transformation, which involves transferring people from low- to high-productivity jobs (Begum, 2022). Males have always been expected to support their families. The lady in a "female-breadwinning couple" (FBC) is the breadwinner. Even though men make up a significant fraction of the world's workforce and earn more than women, many women in developed countries are now family breadwinners (Shah, 2024). Early childhood education (ECE) shapes a child's behavior and personality. These traits and acts also impact politics, economics, and society. Azeem Ashraf et al. (2024) found that well-implemented ECE enhances social-emotional functioning, behavioral development, peer relationships, and a variety of daily concerns.

The rural Pakistan's literacy rate is low for numerous socioeconomic reasons. Socioeconomic status strongly affects educational success, underlining the impact of gender, employment, money, resource accessibility, and urban-rural literacy gaps. These findings suggest that rural cities urgently require comprehensive government intervention to increase literacy rates. This intervention should specifically address socioeconomic and gender barriers (Shahzad et al., 2024). Khan et al. (2023) argued that all critical social, political, economic, and geopolitical elements address national integration's complicated dynamics. Politically, the study examines how leadership styles and governance systems affect national unity, emphasizing the need for stable governments and well-considered policies. It further explores how fiscal policies, development programs, and global economic trends affect Pakistan's integration efforts. Age, education, marital status, geography, incentives, and job type all contribute to Pakistan's female pay gap; as women get lower-paying jobs, the gender wage gap persists (Malik & Akram, 2024). Equal rights for men and women are not just a matter of principle, they are essential for women's empowerment and economic success. A recent study (Qaiser et al., 2023) shows that workplace gender equality is not just a goal, it is a necessity for sustainable development. Global youth unemployment is a major issue due to high adolescent unemployment and informal sector occupations. Various studies have concluded that targeted steps are required to improve youth

employment prospects globally (Yeung et al., 2020). Pakistan's labour market is dualistic due to disparities between urban and rural areas and regions. Fragmentation causes compensation gaps and labour shortages due to sector-specific supply-and-demand mismatches. There is a high need for industry-specific modifications and more flexible employment standards to tackle these fundamental issues. Pakistan struggles with educational goals, high dropout rates, curricular inconsistencies, and inadequate teacher preparation, despite the importance of education. To improve education and meet societal needs, major adjustments are needed (Akhtar et al., 2024).

Pakistan's policymakers need to pay more attention to internal migration, making it harder to manage its pros and downsides. Given its pervasiveness in global migration, understanding its implications on employment, poverty reduction, and socioeconomic growth is crucial. Due to lax internal labour mobility restrictions, most migrant workers do not register when they arrive. The value of domestic remittances must be determined and targeted technical and vocational education may help migrants find jobs at their destination (Akram, 2024). Countercyclical fiscal policy stabilizes economic fluctuations. Pakistan's cyclical government expenditure across functional sectors makes countercyclical fiscal measures unfeasible and reduces fiscal policy effectiveness (Irum & Khalid, 2022). Lack of real-world experience and school training contributes to Pakistan's high unemployment. The government must promote youth employment via economic measures (Bari et al., 2021). Infrastructure investment is needed to increase women's workforce and economic development in emerging countries. Addressing gender inequalities, workplace stereotypes, and women's bargaining power is essential for long-term economic growth and discrimination reduction (Heilman et al., 2024). Entrepreneurs are vital to local and national economies, yet little is known about entrepreneurial diversity or women entrepreneurs' challenges. Aparicio et al. (2022) suggest examining institutional frameworks to understand how they affect gender disparity and social mobility among entrepreneurs.

Pakistan's public sector still has gender inequalities, making it more challenging for women to reach high positions. Businesses must change their culture to promote gender equality and inclusive workplaces (Bishu et al., 2020). Educational policies shape socioeconomic structure, justice, and social mobility. Educational inequality transformation is necessary for revolutionary social change and improved opportunities for everyone (Eden et al., 2024). Most of Pakistan's women work in the informal sector, where they receive low pay and have little social security. Legislation is needed to overcome workplace barriers to women's employment (Khan et al., 2023). Pakistan's rural-urban labour market discrepancies significantly impact sustainable development and employment. Policies must be adapted to improve working conditions and combat inequalities in various regions (Shaikh et al., 2023). Based on the given discussions, the study has the following three objectives, i.e.,

1. To investigate the consequence of labour market dynamics on women's sovereignty in Pakistan.
2. To evaluate the function of foreign policy and diplomatic relations in shaping socioeconomic existences in Pakistan.

3. To examine the relationships between unemployment rates, political stability, and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

The study illustrates the interplay between Pakistan's labour market, foreign policy, and women's independence. The study highlights the condition for exhaustive policy measures considering the effects of labour market justice, diplomatic concerns, and socioeconomic facts. An integrated system is required to improve endurable growth, gender equality, and Pakistan's financial destiny.

## **2. Literature Review**

Domestic migration affects Pakistan's economy more than movement outside, affecting growth, employment, and poverty. Internal migration may boost area development, but it generally involves undocumented migrant labourers who need medical care. Bianchi et al. (2023) examine how reform changed labour markets and how fiscal decentralization affects worker supply. Decentralization may have boosted female labour availability, narrowing the gender gap in employment by expanding nursery school access. Italian towns may exchange government transfers for local property tax money, giving them greater financial independence. Beqiri et al. (2024) examine the dynamics and global trends of labor market inequality, driven by globalization and liberalization. The study assesses the potential for mitigating labor market inequality through legal instruments, particularly legislation. Additionally, it evaluates the impact of migration on employment, considering individuals influx from conflict-affected areas. Current labor market supply and demand trends are analyzed to inform the enhancement of laws and public policies addressing labor market inequality in North Macedonia. Despite specific legal frameworks and legislation, the study finds persistent issues related to gender discrimination. Rahmaningtyas and Adianita (2024) aim to determine how labor, education level, and the open unemployment rate (TPT) influence poverty in Indonesia from 2018 to 2022. The study finds that labor significantly reduces poverty, while the education level and open unemployment rate have a negative but insignificant impact on poverty. Rendon (2022) compares the constraints on job creation posed by flaws in the labor market versus those in the finance sector. The study determines that removing financial barriers can increase long-term permanent employment by up to 69%, whereas eliminating employment protection or termination costs can only increase it by up to 54%. The major finding is that addressing financial flaws leads to more pronounced growth in permanent employment than addressing firing costs.

Vega-Gutierrez et al. (2021) investigate the impact of labor market conditions on corporate capital structure using a sample of 2,892 companies from the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. The study explores the effects of downward wage rigidity and employee rights, finding that the negative impact of downward wage rigidity is mitigated by employers' market power, while the effects of employee rights are non-linear. Overall, the study demonstrates that labor market conditions influence corporate financial decisions beyond firm-level concerns. Mondolo (2022) explores the dynamics of the manufacturing sector, noting a slight increase in markups and a shift in labor market power from employers to employees. The study investigates

these market frictions in a substantial sample of Italian manufacturing companies from 2010 to 2018, attributing the rise in average firm-level wages as the main driver behind the expansion in bargaining power and the positive trend in the labor share. Dos Santos Ferreira (2023) delves into the distinction between classical and Keynesian unemployment equilibria, associating insufficient effective demand with the latter and excessive real wages with the former. The study proposes an alternative approach to addressing cooperation denial and coordination challenges. Belloni and Alexander (2023) highlights the impact of labor market institutions on economic growth and unemployment, revealing a significant negative correlation between economic growth and unemployment, influenced by factors such as employment protection measures and estimation techniques used in OECD economies. Caria et al. (2024) focus on information frictions affecting employers and job-seekers in low- and lower-middle-income urban regions. These include job search expenses, social network limits, and business recruitment costs. The study finds that programs that help employers understand their employees' strengths and weaknesses and lower job search costs are more likely to help people with reasonable expectations and few resources find work. De Clercq and Brieger (2022) examine how cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional variables affect women entrepreneurs' autonomy and work-life balance. When unfavourable external influences are addressed, initiatives to assist women entrepreneurs in becoming more self-reliant in the job while managing their personal and professional lives are only helpful up to a point. Junaidi (2023) examines how crises force women to return to family duties and leave their careers. The study found that government initiatives ignore women's freedom, compelling them to prioritize household duties above professional ones.

Wang and Li (2023) examine working women's cognitive health difficulties despite family-friendly employers. Since cognitive health help rely on spousal gender attitudes and job autonomy, they examine how workplace autonomy affects women's cognitive health. Findings show that traditional marriages pose several risks for women and that gender equality improves their mental health regardless of work level. Abu-Hasan Nabwani (2022) investigates husbands' involvement in domestic chores by comparing their autonomy, human capital, and ethno religious affinity groups as indicators of gender equality. The study finds that husbands of Arab women are 83% less likely to share household tasks compared to husbands of Jewish women. Additionally, within Jewish couples, husbands of secular women are 29% more likely to participate in domestic duties than husbands of traditional-religious women. Interestingly, there is no significant difference in the division of household chores between ultra-Orthodox and secular women within Jewish marriages. Mirza (2022) explores how young, unmarried women in Tokyo navigate labor and reproduction dynamics when making career choices. The study investigates these women's decision-making processes in a dynamic environment where neoliberal principles of individual responsibility intersect with postwar Japanese moral frameworks. Findings illuminate the tensions arising from traditional business practices conflicting with a flexible labor market, leaving women in unstable job situations that hinder family formation even in relatively secure employment. Elsamani and Kajikawa (2024) demonstrate how organizations benefit from telecommuting setups, improving employee

performance and retention rates. The study advocates for pragmatic legislation to support remote work, aligning with increased telecommuting adoption accelerated by the pandemic and advancements in remote work technologies over the last three years. Their findings underscore the potential for telecommuting to enhance labor force participation and social well-being.

Many studies on Pakistan's women's autonomy have disregarded the intricate link between gender discrimination, cultural norms, economic realities, foreign policy, and labour market dynamics. Few studies have examined how political stability, diplomatic links, and an egalitarian employment market might empower Pakistan's women, including Jafree (2023), Mushtaq and Adnan (2022), and Mazhar (2021). The literature's lack of mixed-methods approaches makes understanding these complex topics harder. To address these gaps, this study examines the labour market, foreign policy, and women's autonomous dynamics. The study examines Pakistan's women's autonomy by integrating quantitative data from a diverse demographic with qualitative perspectives from university academics and staff. It addresses economic and social concerns, diplomatic connections, and workplace gender equality for women. Mixed-methods research improves completeness and comprehension of these issues. The study also reveals that foreign policy affects domestic socioeconomic conditions and empowers women. It proposes legislation to reduce the gender gap, strengthen the labour market, and reduce unemployment to achieve inclusive and sustainable foreign policy. This research enriches women's autonomy discourse by filling these gaps and providing new insights. It guides future research and policymaking.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Mixed Methods Research (Qualitative Aspect)**

To adequately address research issues, the study utilizes qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed approaches use both techniques' strengths to provide a more comprehensive view. Quantitative research designs include surveys and interviews. Qualitative approaches use non-numerical data to get deeper insights and enhance quantitative study. Instead of "yes" or "no" replies, Likert scale survey questions allow respondents to score their agreement or disagreement with specified words. Qualitative research uses textual analysis, interviews, and observations to find significant patterns in an event.

##### **3.1.1. Open-Ended Questions**

Since qualitative research on foreign policy relies on participants' subjective judgments and replies, open-ended questions are crucial. Free-form language allows the researcher to explore the topic based on the respondent's answer. Unlike closed-ended questions typically used to collect qualitative data, open-ended questions are free-form survey inquiries that prompt respondents to provide open-text responses based on their knowledge, feelings, and understanding. These questions allow respondents to offer detailed responses without being confined to a predetermined set of options. The following set of open-ended questions has been proposed to gather substantial insights from university intellectuals, including teachers, Deans, Directors, and other administrative staff from the three universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(KPK), Pakistan: Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST), COMSATS University Islamabad-Abbottabad Campus, Hazara University, and Haripur University.

1. In your opinion, what are the major challenges faced by women in accessing and participating in the labor market in Pakistan?
2. Can you describe the current socioeconomic realities in Pakistan and how they impact individuals' daily lives?
3. How do you perceive the role of foreign policy in shaping Pakistan's economic landscape and employment opportunities?
4. How do you think labor market imperfections contribute to broader issues of inequality and social injustice in Pakistan?
5. Can you share your insights on the relationship between unemployment rates and political stability in Pakistan, particularly in relation to foreign policy decisions?

### **3.2. Mixed Methods Research (Quantitative Aspect)**

#### **3.2.1. Population of the Study**

The collective group comprising highly knowledgeable university teachers, Deans, Directors, and postgraduate students in various universities of Pakistan, is referred to as the "population" of the study. This demographic has shown a strong interest in foreign politics. The study specifically targeted individuals well-versed in various aspects of foreign policy, including the relationship between women's labor force participation and international policy, as well as its economic implications, both positive and negative.

#### **3.2.2. Sample of the Study**

The research employed random selection of a substantial number of university teachers, Deans, Directors, and postgraduate students from various universities and colleges in KPK, Pakistan, encompassing diverse academic backgrounds. These fields included Pakistan studies, International relations, economics, physics, history, computer science, English, sociology, foreign affairs, geography, and political science. The study sampled participants from the University of Haripur, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST), COMSATS University Islamabad-Abbottabad campus, Hazara University, and Government Postgraduate College Abbottabad.

#### **3.2.3. Sampling Technique, Data Collection; and List of Variables**

The study designed a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, using a stratified random sampling technique. The following variables were included in the study:

##### **Dependent Variable:**

- Women Autonomy (WOMAUT): Likert Scale Question: Women should have the right to make independent decisions about their education and career choices.

##### **Independent Variables:**

1. Labour Market Fairness (LMF): The labour market in Pakistan offers fair opportunities for all individuals.
2. Government Policy (GOP): Government policies play a significant role in addressing unemployment issues.

3. Diplomatic Relations (DIPREL): Diplomatic relations with neighboring countries influence employment opportunities in Pakistan.
4. Socioeconomic Disparities (SED): Socioeconomic disparities in Pakistan hinder progress towards achieving gender equality.

### **3.2.4. Multivariate Regression Technique**

Regression analysis encompasses a suite of statistical techniques employed to estimate associations between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Its utility extends to evaluating the magnitude of relationships between variables and forecasting future associations among them. In regression analysis, these factors are termed "variables," facilitating the mathematical discernment of which variables exert influence. The study used multivariate regression analysis on the candidate variables to assess the relationships between the variables. Both demographic and explanatory variables were included to assess their impact on the response variable.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The participants in this study consist of individuals from various departments such as Pakistan Studies, International Relations, History, and Political Science. These participants are intellectually engaged individuals, including postgraduate scholars, professors, students, and private institute teachers with expertise in foreign affairs. They were selected based on their knowledge and experiences related to the topic. Participants were drawn from various academic institutions, including the University of Haripur, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST), COMSATS University Islamabad-Abbottabad campus, Hazara University, and Government Postgraduate College Abbottabad, providing a wide range of perspectives. The participants have diverse backgrounds, including M.Phil scholars, Ph.D. scholars, Ph.D. holders, and some professional degree holders, all with significant expertise in the research topic.

### **4.1. Qualitative Analysis (Open Ended Questions)**

The study's problem was the subject of five open-ended questions given to a large sample of academic intellectuals. The following were their replies:

#### **Q.1. Challenges Faced by Women in the Labor Market**

Respondents expressed that society's expectations and gender roles affect women's employment participation. Pakistan's women face societal standards, educational barriers, health inequalities, and job insecurity while entering the labour. Without legal protections and childcare, women have fewer employment options. Women have a stricter difficulty earning degrees than men, creating a gender imbalance in employment. They find it more challenging to fill vacancies. Pakistan's healthcare system struggles with mother and infant mortality, treatment access, and child stunting. Women struggle to develop in their careers due to healthcare difficulties. Women confront significant job progression challenges owing to a lack of educational and employment possibilities. Dismantling gender traditions, extending education, enhancing job safety, boosting legal rights, providing childcare, and overhauling healthcare are needed to overcome these difficulties.

#### **Q.2. Socioeconomic Realities in Pakistan**

Pakistan's socioeconomic issues include high unemployment, inflation, and poverty. Many respondents mentioned how these difficulties limit access to healthcare, education, and necessities, affecting their daily lives. Political instability and energy shortages worsen living conditions. Energy and political issues worsen economic issues, which affect lives and well-being. Heat waves, earthquakes, and floods regularly devastate Pakistan, making daily life harder. Food, clean water, healthcare, and education are scarce in Pakistan, where a vast majority of the population lives in poverty. Respondents further stressed that Pakistan faces significant economic imbalance because a few elites control a large portion of the wealth. Due to increased opportunity and resource disparities, society becomes more divided. Systemic barriers prevent poor groups from rising, perpetuating socioeconomic inequity. Security risks, including terrorism, political turmoil, and sectarian strife, endanger populations and hinder investment and economic growth. When people fear for their safety, they often struggle with daily tasks. Despite efforts to level the playing field, Pakistan's rural and underprivileged areas have significant academic discrepancies. Without a good education, socioeconomic disparities grow.

### **Q.3. Role of Foreign Policy**

Most respondents believed solid diplomatic ties and favourable trade agreements boost exports and employment in agriculture, services, and industry. FDI drives economic growth and job creation, and countries with solid diplomatic connections and a business-friendly atmosphere attract more FDI. Foreign policy influences Pakistan's relations with neighbours and regional organizations in infrastructure development and regional trade agreements. Greater industry cooperation boosts employment, consumer markets, and economic integration. Some respondents said diplomatic efforts to settle disputes and promote peace may provide a stable economic growth and employment development environment. Pakistan receives foreign aid and development assistance due to its foreign policy, which influences its connections with donor governments and international organizations. Support programs and technical assistance contributions to infrastructure development, human capital investment, and poverty reduction indirectly affect job chances. An intelligent foreign policy emphasizing economic diplomacy, regional cooperation, and dispute resolution may help Pakistan improve its people's lives, generate employment, and influence the global economy.

### **Q.4. Labor Market Imperfections and Inequality**

Respondent expressed that Pakistan's labour market issues aggravate social inequality. The prevalence of informal employment and labour market system flaws cause a vast wage disparity between the formal and informal sectors. Due to informal workers' lack of social protections, job security, healthcare, pensions, and other benefits, wealth gaps are growing. Job market issues prevent many from taking risks. Youth, women, and people with low incomes are included. Job growth restrictions, workplace discrimination, and unequal training and education maintain inequality. Workers in agriculture and industry, where laws are seldom implemented, get low wages and unsafe working conditions. Migrant workers and children in labour are the poorest, and this practice worsens socioeconomic inequality. Labour market faults that lack social protections leave workers vulnerable to sickness, unemployment, and economic shocks. Without safety nets, people may fall into poverty, aggravate inequality, and break into disadvantage. In

Pakistan's informal labour market, workers' rights and collective bargaining strength are threatened. Informal workers struggle to secure safe working conditions, fair wages, and other rights without unions or advocacy organizations.

### Q.5. Unemployment and Political Stability

Most respondents believe high unemployment and social and economic unhappiness threaten political stability. High unemployment or underemployment in some populations may cause unhappiness, disillusionment, and societal unrest. High unemployment may exacerbate sociopolitical issues, including government, corruption, and security. Radical ideology, labour strikes, and public protests may express displeasure. Maintaining government peace is essential for good foreign policy decisions. Pakistan's capacity to pursue consistent foreign policy objectives depends on its internal stability. A few respondents said political instability may weaken home and international political legitimacy and authority, making foreign policy implementation harder. Pakistan's foreign policy, political stability, and unemployment are interconnected and evolving. High unemployment rates are affected by internal and external factors, including government policy, regional dynamics, and geopolitics. High unemployment threatens political stability and foreign policy objectives. Table 1 shows the key findings of the study based on the given study's themes for ready reference.

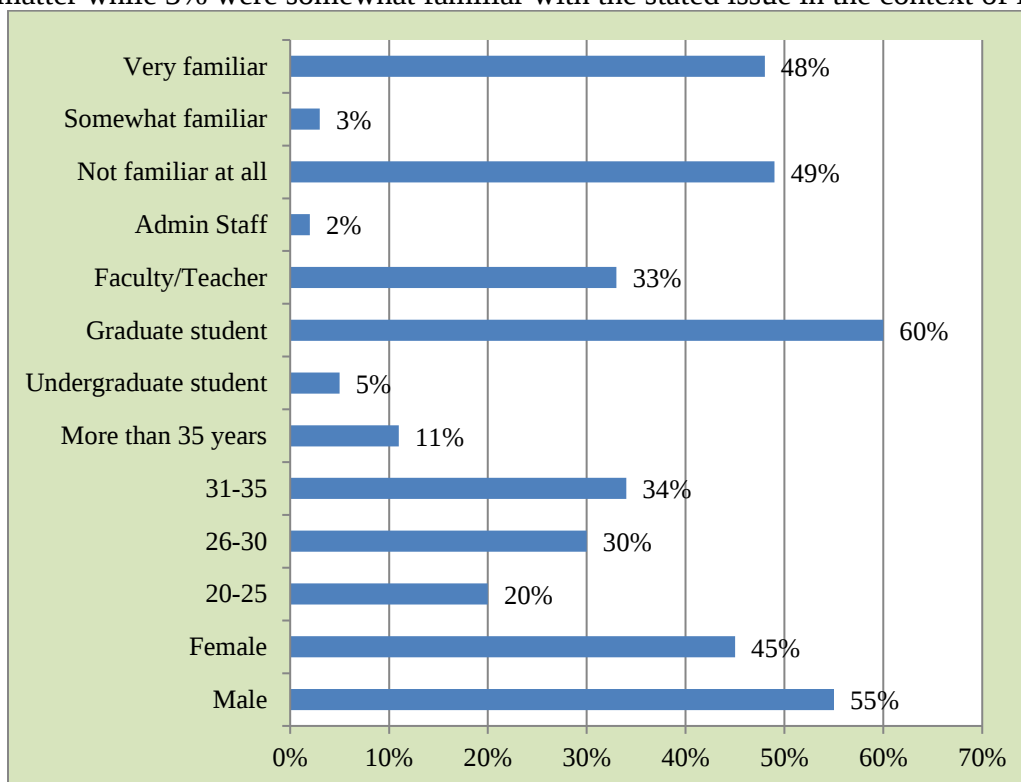
**Table 1: Summary of the Key Findings**

| Theme                                | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Challenges Faced by Women            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural and Societal Norms</li> <li>- Limited Educational Opportunities</li> <li>- Health inequalities</li> <li>- Gender Discrimination</li> <li>- Unpaid Care Work</li> </ul>                                 |
| Socioeconomic Realities              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty, unemployment, income inequality, corruption, infrastructure challenges, and educational disparity</li> </ul>                                                                                           |
| Role of Foreign Policy               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trade Relations</li> <li>- Foreign Direct Investment inflows</li> <li>- Regional Integration, Energy and Infrastructure Projects</li> <li>- Security and Stability, International Aid and Assistance</li> </ul> |
| Labor Market Imperfections           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wage Disparities, Limited Access to Opportunities</li> <li>- Exploitative Working Conditions</li> <li>- Informality and Lack of Representation, Lack of Social Protection</li> </ul>                            |
| Unemployment and Political Stability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic Focus, Nationalist Rhetoric, Economic Considerations, and Security Concerns</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |

Source: Author's survey.

### 4.2. Quantitative Survey (5-Point Likert Scale)

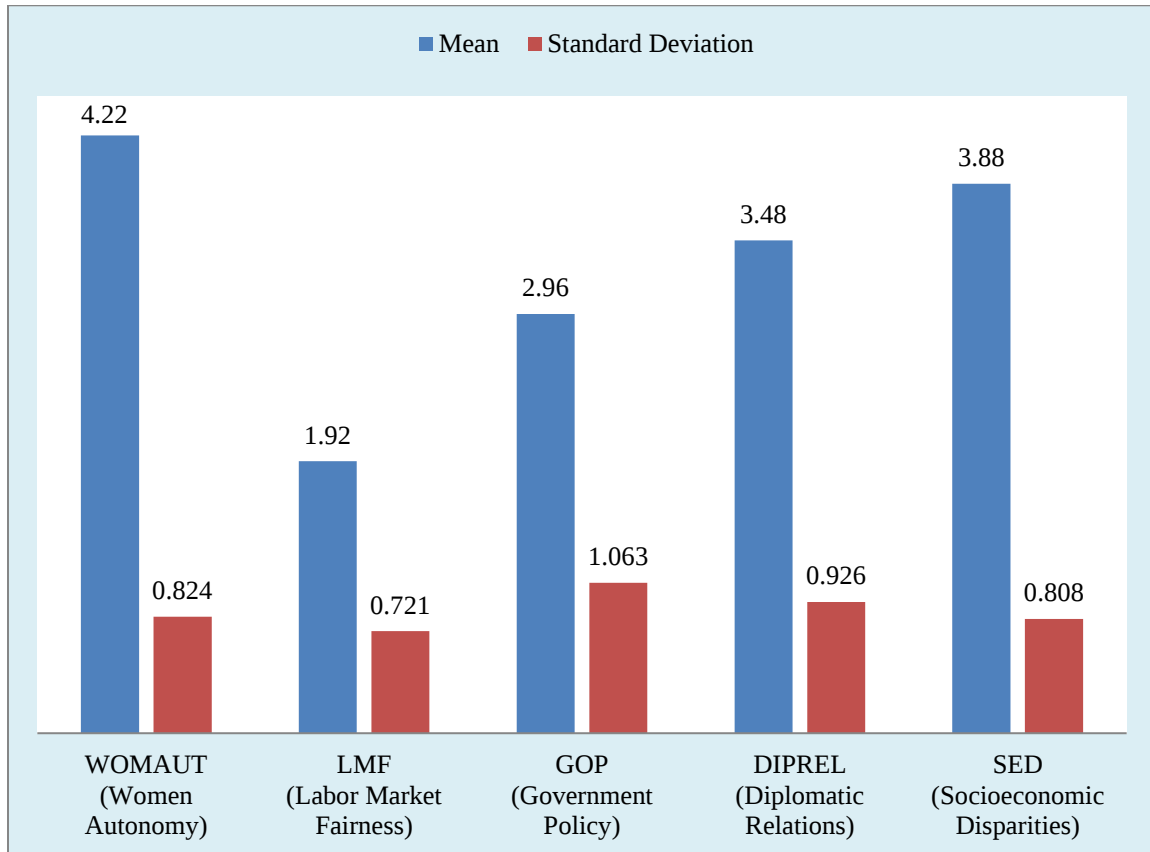
Figure 1 shows the demographic survey of the respondents. There are 55% male respondents and 45% female respondents in this survey. The majority of the respondents are mature adults, with their age brackets predominantly falling between 31-35 years, comprising 34% of the survey. This is followed by the 26-30 age group at 30%, with 20% and 11% of respondents falling in the 20-25 years and over 35 years age brackets respectively. The greater share of respondents are graduate students, comprising 60% of the survey participants, followed by faculty at 33%, undergraduate staff at 5%, and administrative staff at 2%. The topic requires more attention as the majority of respondents were previously unaware of this work; 48% were familiar with the subject matter while 3% were somewhat familiar with the stated issue in the context of Pakistan.



**Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics and Familiarity of Women Labour Force in Pakistan**

Source: Author's survey

Figure 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables. The mean value of WOMAUT is 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.82, indicating that most respondents agree with the statement. The mean value of MLF is 1.92 with a standard deviation of 0.72, indicating that most respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The mean value of GOP is 2.96 with a standard deviation of 1.06, indicating that most respondents disagree with the statement. The mean value of DIPREL is 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.92, indicating that most respondents are neutral. The mean value of SED is 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.80, indicating that most respondents lean towards agreement.



**Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables**

Source: Author's survey

The multivariate regression findings in Table 2 show that knowledge about Pakistan's women's autonomy is positively correlated with a given attitude or outcome. This shows that women's rights and independence make more people support gender equality. Education and awareness are crucial since cultural norms affect gender roles and rights in Pakistan. A deeper understanding of women's agency may influence public opinion, boosting support for policies that empower and protect women. Pakistan's gender equality and reform advocates and policymakers must comprehend these aspects.

**Table 2: Multivariate Regression Estimates**

| Variables | Standardized | t-value | Prob. Value |
|-----------|--------------|---------|-------------|
|-----------|--------------|---------|-------------|

|                              | $\beta$ value |        |       |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| <b>Demographic Variables</b> |               |        |       |
| Gender                       | -0.038        | -0.399 | 0.691 |
| Age                          | 0.057         | 0.609  | 0.544 |
| Educational Background       | -0.002        | -0.023 | 0.982 |
| Familiarity with Topic       | 0.202         | 1.966  | 0.052 |
| <b>Independent Variables</b> |               |        |       |
| <b>LMF</b>                   | 0.363         | 3.752  | 0.000 |
| <b>GOP</b>                   | -0.090        | -0.862 | 0.391 |
| <b>DIPREL</b>                | 0.185         | 1.973  | 0.052 |
| <b>SED</b>                   | 0.002         | 0.019  | 0.985 |
| <b>Statistical Tests</b>     |               |        |       |
| $R^2$                        | 0.225         |        |       |
| Adjusted $R^2$               | 0.157         |        |       |
| F-statistics                 | 0.306         |        |       |
| F-prob.value                 | 0.002         |        |       |

Source: Author's estimate. Note: LMF shows labor market fairness, GOP shows government policy, DIPREL shows diplomatic relations, and SED shows socio-economic disparities.

The analysis suggests that Pakistan's diplomatic connections and fair labour market regulations benefit women. Gender equality advocates state that workplace equality gives women economic freedom and decision-making power (Adeniyi et al., 2024; Zhou, 2023). Fair pay, legal protections, and equal work opportunities help women participate more in politics and public life. International partnerships and alliances may help achieve gender equality by working together, implementing legislation, and building alliances (Barbé & Badell, 2023). Diplomatic pressure to implement women's rights legislation and financial aid for economic, political, and social empowerment is crucial for sound development. The results supported by Ahmad et al. (2024), Aziz (2024), and Baloch (2024), demonstrate that Pakistan's diplomatic ties with its neighbors may boost employment prospects. These linkages may lead to trade agreements, exports, imports, manufacturing, agriculture, and textile employment. Positive diplomatic relations may attract foreign investment in energy, infrastructure, and technology, creating new firms and jobs (Yamada, 2023). Improved diplomatic ties may boost tourism and employment in

the hotel, transportation, and related businesses. Partnerships in energy, water, and infrastructure may produce jobs. Diplomatic relations improve Pakistan's workers' employability by exchanging knowledge and skills (Siddique & Khan, 2023). Diplomatic agreements that enable Pakistani workers to work in neighboring countries may increase their career possibilities. Strong diplomatic links may attract investments, enhance economic growth, create new jobs, and preserve peace and stability. Employment, economic progress, and diplomatic connections with neighboring countries may enhance Pakistanis' lives (Abbas & Ahmed, 2023).

Fair labour laws and good diplomatic relations might change Pakistan's cultural norms and gender roles, which have limited women's freedom. Practices and policies that empower women may achieve gender equality nationally (Arshad et al., 2023). Political leaders and activists fighting for women's rights and empowerment in Pakistan must understand and exploit these components. Ahmed et al. (2024) and Ul-Haq et al. (2023) say Pakistan's employment market may benefit individuals in several ways. Work opportunities boost financial security by providing a steady income. The employment market offers skill upgrades and training to boost talent and competitiveness. Experience and skill allow one to rise in the business world and earn more. Pakistanis are allowed to start their businesses and create jobs. A strong labour market in Pakistan boosts the economy, which benefits individuals and society, according to Aslam et al. (2023). Labour market opportunities assist individuals in escaping poverty, improving their quality of life and social status. Work offers professional advancement, self-confidence, and personal fulfilment (Iqbal et al., 2023).

## **5. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

The study underscores the need for integrated policy frameworks to address the intricate relationships between Pakistan's labour market, women's empowerment, unemployment, and foreign policy decisions. It highlights cultural norms, educational differences, and gender discrimination as significant barriers to women's autonomy. The study also reveals that understanding the issues of Pakistan's women's autonomy, fostering strong diplomatic ties, and ensuring a fair employment market can yield positive outcomes. These complexities can only be effectively addressed through integrated policy frameworks for inclusive and sustainable development, which are crucial for fostering fairness and prosperity.

Given the conditions, the study gave policymakers short-, medium-, and long-term repercussions.

### **- Short-term Policy Implications**

By linking foreign policy, labour market shortages, unemployment, and women's autonomy, these recommendations aim to improve communication. Focusing efforts may help persons and organizations realize how these concerns influence women's autonomy and are connected. Such efforts are essential to initiate a discourse, raise awareness, and shift cultural and legislative norms surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment. Promote women's and equal rights to the public. Skill development programs are necessary to comprehend Pakistan's complex socioeconomic environment. To better comprehend these challenges, we shall study women's autonomy, foreign policy, labour market deficits, unemployment, and the labour market. Policy assessments are needed to understand Pakistan's complicated socioeconomic

---

processes. Connect unemployed women to resources and opportunities. Hold seminars to guide decision-makers and stakeholders on how to correspond gender-sensitive policies. Create temporary work programs in industries where women can flourish. Include local communities in women's sovereignty awareness campaigns.

**- Medium Term Policy Implications**

Pakistan's foreign policy affects commerce, investment, and global markets. Pakistan wants to expand business ties with various countries, notably in Asia, to improve economic stability and reduce dependence on a few allies. Pakistan is improving its diplomatic relations with its neighbours to attract investment and trade and build solid economic alliances. Skill mismatches, informal employment, and lack of regulation plague Pakistan's labour sector. To address these issues, market-driven skill development and vocational training programs, incentives, and reinforced legal frameworks are needed to formalize enterprises, improve working conditions, and raise job security. Encourage an inclusive policymaking process that brings together public and private institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations to create a long-term economic and social agenda.

**- Long Term Policy Implications**

Pakistan may use reliable labour market information systems to address women's autonomy and labour market problems. Increasing women's access to secondary and postsecondary education and promoting female labour force participation and economic empowerment via gender-friendly policies are pivotal for sustained growth. Safe working conditions, maternity leave, and flexible work schedules empower women to do their jobs efficiently. Create a supportive environment by working with public, commercial, nonprofit, and international partners. Build robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess policy performance, gather data, and solicit feedback to enhance and optimize gender-based outcomes.

## References

- Abbas, H., & Ahmed, N. (2023). Economic development in Pakistan: balancing growth, equity and environmental sustainability. *Pakistan Research letter*, 1(02), 116-124.
- Abu-Hasan Nabwani, O. (2023). Relations of religious affiliation group norms, human capital, and autonomy to Israeli men's participation in household duties. *Family Relations*, 72(4), 1725-1747.
- Adeniyi, I. S., Al Hamad, N. M., Adewusi, O. E., Unachukwu, C. C., Osawaru, B., Onyebuchi, C. N., ... & David, I. O. (2024). Gender equality in the workplace: A comparative review of USA and African Practices. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(2), 763-772.
- Ahmad, I., Farooq, A., & Khattak, I. (2024). To Analyze the Role of CPEC in Fostering Economic Growth in Pakistan: Case Study of Pakistan. *Technical Journal*, 3(ICACEE), 478-490.
- Ahmed, H., Mahmud, M., Said, F., & Tirmazee, Z. (2024). Encouraging female graduates to enter the labor force: Evidence from a role model intervention in Pakistan. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 72(2), 919-957.
- Akhtar, M., Andleeb, Z., & Akhtar, S. (2024). Problems of Education System in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis and Solution. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 8(2), 200-210.
- Akram, N. (2024). Internal Migration in Pakistan: Some Socio-Economic Determinants and Significances. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 58(2), 73-89.
- Aparicio, S., Audretsch, D., Noguera, M., & Urbano, D. (2022). Can female entrepreneurs boost social mobility in developing countries? An institutional analysis. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 175, 121401.
- Arshad, N., Riaz, S., Akram, S., & Aqeel, M. (2023). Quest of Women for Selfhood in Politics: A Role of Stakeholders in Pakistan. *Harf-o-Sukhan*, 7(4), 270-281.
- Aslam, A., Bashir, S., Hayat, S., & Ahmed, I. (2023). Foreign Direct Investment Impact on Employment, Education and Social Development in Balochistan. *International Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 4(4), 414-450.
- Azeem Ashraf, M., Alam, J., & Gladushyna, O. (2024). Teachers' Perspectives on Disruptive Student Behaviors: The Interconnectedness of Environment and Early Childhood Education in Pakistan. *Sage Open*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231221121>
- Aziz, A. (2024). Strategic Dimensions: CPEC's Influence on Pakistan's New Geo-economics Narrative. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 7(1), 136-146.
- Baloch, A., Shahzad, K., Ahmed, W., & Tariq, I. (2024). Dynamics of Foreign Debts, Foreign Direct Investment, Trade Openness, Debt Servicing, and Inflation; Impact on Pakistan's Economic Growth. *Remittances Review*, 9(2), 1906-1921.
- Barbé, E., & Badell, D. (2023). Chasing gender equality norms: the robustness of sexual and reproductive health and rights. *International Relations*, 37(2), 274-297.
- Bari, K. M., Nadeem Sarwar, M., Ali, S., & Musa Kaleem, M. (2021). Investigating the Relationship between Youth Unemployment and Macroeconomic Policies in Pakistan. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(5), 3942-3952.

- 
- Begum, A. (2022). Employment Generation Challenges and Strategies for Pakistan: A Diagnostic Analysis. *Unisia*, 40(1), 67-102.
- Belloni, R., & Alexander, R. (2023). Labour Market Flexibility and Unemployment: Evidence from Dynamic Panel Models. Online available at: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4671565](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4671565) (accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024).
- Beqiri, A., Kelmendi, J., & Shala, V. (2024). Inequalities in the labour market: A legal perspective on causes and solutions. *Social & Legal Studios*, 7(2), 235-242.
- Bianchi, N., Giorcelli, M., & Martino, E. M. (2023). The effects of fiscal decentralisation on publicly provided services and labour markets. *The Economic Journal*, 133(653), 1738-1772.
- Bishu, S. G., & Headley, A. M. (2020). Equal employment opportunity: Women bureaucrats in male-dominated professions. *Public Administration Review*, 80(6), 1063-1074.
- Caria, S., Orkin, K., Garlick, R., Singh, N., Heath, R., & Andrews, A. (2024). *Barriers to Search and Hiring in Urban Labour Markets*. Technical Report, VoxDev Literature 2024.
- Chaudhary, N., & Dutt, A. (2022). Women as agents of change: Exploring women leaders' resistance and shaping of gender ideologies in Pakistan. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 800334.
- De Clercq, D., & Brieger, S. A. (2022). When discrimination is worse, autonomy is key: How women entrepreneurs leverage job autonomy resources to find work-life balance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 177(3), 665-682.
- Dos Santos Ferreira, R. (2023). Malinvaud's and Keynes's unemployment typologies: do they coincide?. *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672567.2023.2248312>.
- Eden, C. A., Chisom, O. N., & Adeniyi, I. S. (2024). Education policy and social change: Examining the impact of reform initiatives on equity and access. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 11(2), 139-146.
- Elsamani, Y., & Kajikawa, Y. (2024). How teleworking adoption is changing the labor market and workforce dynamics?. *Plos one*, 19(3), e0299051.
- Heilman, M. E., Caleo, S., & Manzi, F. (2024). Women at work: pathways from gender stereotypes to gender bias and discrimination. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 11, 165-192.
- Iqbal, K., Fathoni, T., Wijayanti, L. M., & Purnama, M. N. A. (2023). Economic Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship Training to Advance Youth in Quetta, Pakistan. *International Assulta of Research and Engagement (IARE)*, 1(2), 109-125.
- Irum, A., & Khalid, M. (2022). Exploring Cyclical Behavior of Functional Heads of Public Expenditure in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Economic Studies (PJES)*, 5(1), 215-240.
- Jafree, S.R. (2023). Employment, Informal Sector Work, and Social Policy for Women of Pakistan. In: *Social Policy for Women in Pakistan*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32863-3\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32863-3_7)

- 
- Junaidi, H. (2023). The perishment of the economics sector in women's domestication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, 26(4), 484-498.
- Khan, A. M., Khan, M. Q., & Bilal, M. S. (2023). Reducing Gender Gaps in Pakistan's Labour Market: Policy Options for Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment. *Global Sociological Review*, 8(2), 308-314.
- Malik, A. I., & Akram, N. (2024). Determinants of the gender wage gap in Pakistan. *SN Business & Economics*, 4(2), 26, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43546-024-00623-8>
- Maqsood, H., Che Sulaiman, N. F., Muhamad, S., & Akmal Binti Rohaizad, N. A. (2024). Women's economic underdevelopment in Pakistan: The intersection of gender and female labour force participation. *Human Systems Management*, (Preprint), 1-13.
- Mazhar, U. (2021). Women empowerment and insecurity: Firm-level evidence. *Business Economics*, 56(1), 43-53.
- Mirza, V. (2023). Autonomy and responsibility: Women's life and career choices in urban Japan. *Contemporary Japan*, 35(2), 197-213.
- Mondolo, J. (2022). Product and labour market imperfections in the Italian manufacturing sector: a firm-level analysis. *Economia Politica*, 39(3), 813-838.
- Mushtaq, R., & Adnan, M. (2022). Insights of women political participation in Pakistan (2002-2013). *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 5(2), 249-276.
- Kaiser, H., Rehman, H. U., & Arshed, N. (2023). Role of institutional quality on women's empowerment—A case of highly gender unequal Asian countries. *Poverty & Public Policy*, 15(1), 48-75.
- Rahmaningtyas, V., & Adianita, H. (2024). The Effect of Open Unemployment Rate, Education Level, and Labor Force on Poverty in Indonesia 2018-2022. *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)*, 5(1), 704-714.
- Rendon, S. (2022). Job creation and investment in imperfect financial and labor markets. *Applied Economic Analysis*, 30(89), 73-91.
- Shah, R. (2024). Navigating non-normative roles: Experiences of female-breadwinning couples in Pakistan. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(1), 251-264.
- Shahzad, M. A., Akram, R. M. W., Idrees, M., Rubab, M., Raza, M., & Zehra, A. (2024). Socio-economic Determinants of Low Literacy Rate in Rural Areas of Punjab Pakistan. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 13(1), 246-255.
- Siddique, A., & Khan, K. (2023). Pakistan and the Global South: fostering collaboration and partnerships for shared prosperity. *Pakistan Research letter*, 1(03), 179-186.
- Ul-Haq, J., Arif, M., Hye, Q. M. A., Visas, H., & Cheema, A. R. (2023). Unleashing the potential: Exploring the relationship between trade liberalization and female labor force participation in Pakistan. *Nurture*, 17(2), 60-68.
- Vega-Gutierrez, P. L., López-Iturriaga, F. J., & Rodríguez-Sanz, J. A. (2021). Labour market conditions and the corporate financing decision: A European analysis. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 58, 101431.



- 
- Wang, S., & Li, L. Z. (2023). Double jeopardy: The roles of job autonomy and spousal gender ideology in employed women's mental health. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 18(1), 473-490.
- Yamada, M. (2023). Japan's Relations with Saudi Arabia: The *Evolution* of Energy Diplomacy in Response to the Developmental Shift in the Rentier State. In: Nakamura, S., Wright, S. (eds) Japan and the Middle East. Contemporary Gulf Studies. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-3459-9\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-3459-9_2)
- Yeung, W. J. J., & Yang, Y. (2020). Labor market uncertainties for youth and young adults: An international perspective. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 688(1), 7-19.
- Zhou, S. (2023). Gender Politics and Power Structure: An Analysis of Institutional Barriers to Gender Equality. *Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 2(10), 64-71.
- Zulfiqar, G. M. (2022). Inequality regimes, patriarchal connectivity, and the elusive right to own land for women in Pakistan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 177(4), 799-811.