

UNSPOKEN BARRIERS: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF HUSBANDS' JUSTIFICATIONS FOR OPPOSING WOMEN'S POST-MARITAL EMPLOYMENT

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Abstract

This qualitative research paper will examine through the local communities in some parts of the country such as Punjab the psychological and sociocultural reasons based given by the husbands to resist the employment of their wives and how wide or narrow does this resistance extend in regard to the marriage. Analyzing with great depth the 18 emotional and behavioral forces (F1-F18), the research reveals that this patriarchal control is not always the foundation of this resistance but is fuelled by very individual fears, cultural conventions and emotional weakness. A chi-square test was used to determine the level of significance of each of the factors in respect to opposition of husbands. Seven of them are mental overload (F2, $p = 0.0003$), emotional exhaustion (F5, $p = 0.0059$), discomfort within mixed-gender-based environment (F7, $p = 0.0179$), emotional rejection of changing roles (F8, $p = 0.0400$), insecurity (F9, $p = 0.0378$), fear of family neglect (F10, $p = 0.0005$), physical stress symptoms (F13, $p =$ Such results reveal that some of the issues are not statistically significant, but still they are psychologically significant and must be resolved with an expression of empathy, dialog, and socio-educational assistance. The research determines that the opposition to employing women may be a misleading emotional reaction and encourages formulating positive means like education, emotional discussions, counseling and mutual trust-building. This research recommends the need to move away confrontation to loving communication in

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marriages and proposes that both spouses need to rise and explore the emerging gender roles by respecting each other and revealing their knowledge. Conclusively, the results encourage the introduction of a model of gender coexistence where empathy, mutual accountability, and sensitive practice to the redefined roles in society guide the way.

Keywords: *Focus on women work after marriage, Connect to family obligation vs. employment pressure, explore the link between the job status and relationship dynamics, captures the non-economic reasons behind opposition, target males perspectives and emotional /cultural reasoning.*

INTRODUCTION:

In most societies, especially those that are based on traditional or conservative beliefs, the fact that a woman chooses to work away outside her home can at times be a bombardment in the marriage relationship. Education and occupational development of women have evolved greatly over the past decades, nonetheless, some husbands still report feeling uncomfortable with or even unopposed to their wives taking up jobs. This opposition is usually as a result of a blame-game of a mixture of cultural values, psychological inadequacies and social compulsions. There can be cultural or traditional beliefs that state that women major role is in the home and in this respect some men think that the employment style negates their roles that are put in place already. In other instances, there might also be sense of insecurity, ego issues, or even jealousy, particularly when the men are afraid that they will lose control or control the relationship or when they are not comfortable with the concentration of their wives in the co-educational workplaces. Moreover, the family demand of elders or members of the collective, fear of unattended domestic duties, and mistrust and no lines of communication may also bring to disapproval of husband concerning the professional ambitions of his wife. Re-discovering and re-defining all of these aspects in the framework of modern psychology/cultural approach, the study throws a light on the subtle feelings underlying resistance by a husband. It takes it beyond judgment and into the realm of reason--demonstrating that, in some situations, husbands resistance can be based on altruism, heart; or an outright yet paternalistic and well-intended wish to defend his wife and keep the family all together.

The authors Azami et al., (2023) examined the components that led to satisfaction or dissatisfaction among the spouses after marrying women who started work. The research was conducted on the perception of husbands and it

considered important factors like emotional support, financial contribution, time management, and proper roles as the ones that determine the marital satisfaction. Although certain husbands valued the economic, self-developmental impact of getting their wives to work, others raised issue of less time together as a family unit and the disturbance of the established gender roles. The study underlines the necessity of the consideration of cultural and emotional aspects to promote the harmony of the marriage institutions in families with two working parents.

Booth et al., (1984) found that women's employment doesn't directly cause marital instability, but it can contribute to it when paired with low marital satisfaction or traditional gender roles. Financial independence gives women in unhappy marriages more autonomy, making the effect of employment context-dependent. Greenstein, (1995) found that women with egalitarian gender beliefs were more likely to work and face marital disruption, especially when their views clashed with traditional-minded spouses. Gender ideology, are more than employment itself, influenced marital stability. Ashwini, (2018) found that work-life balance positively influences marital satisfaction among working men and women. The study highlighted that women face greater challenges due to traditional domestic roles, and emphasized the need for shared responsibilities and supportive environments to maintain marital harmony.

South, (2001) examined how the timing of wives' employment affects marital dissolution. The study found that the risk of divorce is higher when women begin working early in marriage, especially in already strained relationships. However, long-term employment had a weaker link to divorce, suggesting that time and marital adjustment reduce the disruptive impact of employment. The issue of the post-married work of women is still not expressly accepted in the currently existing Pakistani society and, especially in the province that has made the geographical and cultural route of existence, Punjab. Today, this problem still has ambiguous emotional and social attitudes of either men or husbands. Although economic realities and advance in education have made many women desire to enter into employment after getting married, the opposition of spouses is a major obstacle. A product of these forces can put women into an emotionally compromised position, where inevitably deferring to the expectations placed on them and quashing their own desire to reach high leads to stress, anxiety, depression, and in some cases, sadness.

White & Keith, (1990) examined the impact of shift work on marital quality and stability. They found that nonstandard work hours, especially night shifts, negatively affected communication, emotional closeness, and time spent together, leading to reduced marital satisfaction and increased risk of marital instability. Kandel et al., (1985) examined the stress associated with women's daily social roles, including marital, occupational, and household responsibilities. They found that juggling multiple roles often led to significant

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psychological strain, with role overload and conflicting demands contributing to stress and reduced well-being. Zarra-Nezhad et al., (2010) explored the link between occupational stress and family difficulties among working women. The study found that high job stress often spills over into family life, leading to conflicts, emotional exhaustion, and reduced family satisfaction, highlighting the challenges working women face in balancing professional and domestic roles.

Grotti & Scherer, (2014) examined employment instability among couples in six EU countries and found that job insecurity often accumulates within households, affecting both partners. This financial pressure in addition to relationship pressure brought about by this dual instability illustrates the extent to which commonality of employment uncertainty holds family and marital stability. Sperlich and Geyer, (2015) conducted a study about the practice of female roles in household and family activities as influenced by social and family-related factor, which also causes stress on the part of the woman. Their results indicated that inequality in care duties at home and lack of social support raise their stress levels, and therefore, an implication of gender roles in the mental well-being of women.

Hall, (1975) examined how married women experience pressures from work, self, and home across life stages. He found that these conflicting demands influence their career choices and highlight the challenges of balancing personal and professional roles. Moreover, issues related to jealousy and possessiveness can be caused by worries about the behavior of their wives in relations with the colleagues of the opposite sex or by modern working climates. Men can also be pressured by elders or anthropological rules of the society to discourage female employment to avert possible dishonor or animosity. The major fear of such husbands is the neglect of life at home and their job might be perceived to hamper with care giving, kid raising and household duties. This inequality perceived in home care is likely to lead to poor relationships in marriage and discontent. Also, constitution in the marital relationship or distrust may aggravate fears of emotional alienation or loss because of the work-related strains and pressures, or time pressures.

Boles et al., (2001) examined the relationships between work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and job satisfaction. They found that conflicts in balancing work and family roles negatively affect job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for supportive workplace policies to reduce stress and improve employee well-being. Person, (1982) explored the psychological challenges faced by working women, focusing on fears of failure, deviance, and success. The study highlighted how societal expectations and internal conflicts contribute

to anxiety and ambivalence about career achievement, affecting women's professional growth and identity. ARTAR et al., (2022) examined how work-family balance influences interpersonal communication among teleworkers. The study found that better work-family balance enhances communication quality, while imbalance leads to stress and communication breakdowns, affecting both personal relationships and work performance.

Barigozzi et al., (2025) investigated mental load and emotional fatigue among working women, revealing that beyond time constraints, cognitive and emotional demands significantly impact their well-being. This research noted that constant stress that results due to balancing work and family life is required in discussing equality in gender. Westman et al. (2001) discovered that insecurity in the job attributes to burnout which might be transferred among the spouses in the marital couples. This spillover effect has adverse effects on the mental health and general quality of marriages between the two partners, and focuses on the mutual dependency of employment-driven stress. The study by Richardsen et al., (2016) addressed the aspect of work stress in women and discovered that women tend to experience, more and of a different nature, stress compared to men due to a combination of work overload or role overload; gender discrimination and work to family conflict. The study has indicated why gender-sensitive strategies are necessary to control stressful conditions and improve well-being at workplaces.

The present introduction discusses the psychological and marital significance of emotional availability and attentive listening within a marriage, and especially through the male emotional needs which are felt but remain silently unarticulated.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

This study is grounded in several interrelated psychological and sociocultural theories that help explain the underlying dynamics of husbands' resistance to their wives' post-marital employment. Lazarus & Folkman, (1984) **Stress and Coping** Theory provides a foundational lens to interpret the emotional reactions of husbands as adaptive responses to perceived threats to traditional family structures and personal identity. According to this theory, individuals evaluate stressors (e.g., role changes, increased responsibilities, or altered marital dynamics) and respond based on available coping mechanisms. In this case, opposition to the wife's employment may serve as a protective coping strategy.

Additionally, Beck, (1967) **Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression** offers insight into how feelings of insecurity, helplessness, and emotional withdrawal (as reflected in factors such as F11 - emotional disconnection and F12 - identity crisis) can emerge from distorted self-perceptions or perceived loss of control. Many husbands may unconsciously internalize traditional norms

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where being the sole provider affirms their masculine identity; thus, a shift in these roles can trigger psychological distress and maladaptive responses.

The framework also draws from Eagly & Wood, (2012) **Social Role Theory**, which posits that gendered expectations are culturally constructed and deeply internalized. In patriarchal societies, deviations from traditional roles—such as a wife taking up employment—are perceived as threats to social and familial order. This theory explains why statistically significant factors like discomfort in mixed-gender environments (F7), fear of neglect (F10), and resistance to changing norms (F18) provoke strong emotional responses.

Lastly, Blumer, (1986) **Symbolic Interactionism** helps contextualize how meanings are constructed through interpersonal interactions. A husband's "no" may not be a literal rejection of empowerment but rather a symbol of internal conflict, fear of societal judgment, or a misunderstood expression of care. Thus, the resistance is not inherently hostile but often emerges from the symbolic meanings attached to marriage, masculinity, and societal expectations.

A combination of these theoretical views leads us to interpret the statistically significant and the non-significant factors in such a way that the opposition to the employment of wives is a complex psychological, on the one hand, and social, on the other hand, phenomenon. It highlights a necessity of empathy, communications and change of the society to assume a sense of order in which the old values of gender roles are in line with the new ones.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

This is the main point of this study as it is aimed at studying and analyzing the multiple psychological, emotional, social and cultural explanations, which husbands, who do not want them to work after marriage, give. With the help of a set of factors that are reflected in the answers and analyzed using chi-square testing, the researchers hope to find out whether these reasons are actually too dissimilar in husbands of working females and non-working ones. This aim is not to measure opposition only but to experience its more interior emotional and relational aspects.

Such another major objective is to make these justifications through a kind and human understanding; especially that which motivates the female to understand that the resistance of their employment does not always dwell in control, jealousy, or tyranny. In most instances it is a direct result of heartfelt investment, protective type feelings, and love. The study aims at showing the fact that these men are usually divided inside, torn between the feelings of love and responsibility, as well as the demands of the society, and that their rejection can be, in fact, the safeguard of their wives against all kinds of stresses,

overloads, and cultural judgment. Moreover, the research will provide an opportunity to start an empathetic conversation between spouses by illuminating the so-called unspoken barriers, which are not rational as they should be.. In demonstrating the statistically significant and insignificant justifications, the study provides women with understanding of areas of particular concern that are grounded in real experiences and such that is based on inherited beliefs and personal fears. In such a way, the research favors mutual understanding, instead of the blame game, and urges both men and women to collaborate on creating supportive, equal, post-marital relationships.

This study aims at learning the emotional, cultural and psychological factors that make some husbands object to their wives finding employment after marriage. It seeks to discuss how such resistance can be more of a protective instinct, the traditional beliefs or fears that have been left unspoken as opposed to desire to control. The paper aims to emphasise empathy, open interactions and mutual respect as some of the keys to overcome these issues in order to assist couples in dealing with the transforming circumstances of relation between husband and wife with the intent to foster personal and career development of a woman.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What underlying emotional, psychological, and cultural justifications do husbands provide for opposing their wives' employment after marriage?
- To what extent do husbands' concerns for their wives' mental and physical well-being contribute to their resistance to post-marital employment?
- How do protective instincts — such as fear of workplace stress, social exposure, or marital strain — factor into a husband's decision to discourage his wife from working?
- What role does a husband's perception of family harmony and child-rearing responsibilities play in shaping his opposition to his wife's job?
- In what ways do feelings of identity crisis, financial insecurity, or fear of losing authority manifest in husbands' justifications for keeping their wives at home?
- Can the husband's refusal to allow his wife to work be interpreted as an act of emotional attachment and desire for closeness rather than control?
- How do psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., stress, fatigue, anxiety) reflect the internal conflict husbands experience regarding changing marital dynamics due to women's work?

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STATISTICAL HYPOTHESES:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant association between the wife's employment status and the husband's justification for opposing her job.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant association between the wife's employment status and the husband's justification.

METHODOLOGY:

This research employed a quantitative survey-based methodology to explore the justifications husbands offer for opposing their wives' post-marital employment, with a specific focus on emotional, psychological, and social factors. The study was conducted in the province of Punjab, Pakistan, which is not only the most populous region of the country but also culturally diverse in terms of urban and rural family dynamics. A total of 200 married men participated in the study, equally divided between husbands of working women (100) and husbands of non-working women (100). This stratified random sampling approach ensured balanced representation and enabled meaningful comparison across both groups.

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire that covered 18 carefully designed factors (labeled F1 to F18), each representing a distinct potential justification for restricting a wife's employment. These included concerns over stress, family responsibilities, societal judgment, safety, religious obligations, and the perceived impact on children and marital harmony. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each factor on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The survey was administered in both English and Urdu to ensure comprehension and inclusivity, particularly in rural areas. The data collection process spanned from December 2023 to April 2025 and was carried out in Punjab. These locations were selected to provide a mix of urban and semi-urban populations, offering a comprehensive view of the prevailing attitudes. The questionnaires were distributed in person by trained field researchers who were briefed on the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, and ethical protocols. Before beginning the survey, each respondent was informed about the purpose of the research, assured of the anonymity of their responses, and asked to provide verbal consent. In some areas, the assistance of local community contacts was utilized to reach respondents in a culturally sensitive manner and to encourage honest participation.

To test the hypotheses, the Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to determine the association between the employment status of the wife and the

level of justification expressed by the husband on each of the 18 factors. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. All data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27. And also, this cross-sectional survey, conducted by the Bureau of Statistics Punjab, used structured interviews to collect data from women aged 18–64 across urban and rural areas. Stratified sampling was applied to analyze permission-based access to financial accounts by marital status, education, residence, and wealth.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and gave informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Their identities were kept anonymous, and their responses were used exclusively for academic purposes. The research received approval from an academic ethical review board to ensure adherence to proper ethical standards throughout the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Opposition to the post-marriage employment of women in most areas of Punjab province of Pakistan is considered to be a patriarchal objection. However, with a closer insight, we find that a large number of husbands undergo a lot of emotional, physical and psychosocial strain based on the favors and doubts on family disturbance. Such responses, as anxiety and jealousy, as well as such physical discomfort as cramps and shivers might indicate emotional defensiveness and caring more than the open refusal. In this paper, 18 of such reasons (F1-F18) are redefined as inner reasonings and aim to point out at the inner-conflict men struggle with because of changing gender roles. To get at the deeper motives of this resistance they were investigated applying surveys and psychological instruments such as the Manifest Anxiety Scale by Taylor.

Table1: "From Stress to Social Pressure: An Exploratory Study of Husbands’ Underlying Concerns about Wives’ Employment"

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Original Description</i>	<i>Revised Meaning (Study Context)</i>	<i>Justification for Opposing Wife’s Job</i>
<i>F1</i>	<i>Tension, constipation, lack of confidence</i>	<i>Emotional stress from losing control over household dynamics</i>	<i>Husband feels anxious about losing his role as sole authority in the home.</i>
<i>F2</i>	<i>Restlessness, disturbed sleep, mental overload</i>	<i>Mental burden from imbalance in home-work dynamics</i>	<i>Fear that wife’s job will affect family structure and</i>

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			<i>emotional connection.</i>
<i>F3</i>	<i>Fear, weight concerns</i>	<i>Anxiety about wife's exposure to outside influences</i>	<i>Worry about her adopting new values, friendships, or ideologies from the workplace.</i>
<i>F4</i>	<i>Misfortunes</i>	<i>Fear of bad luck or disruption</i>	<i>Cultural belief that women working disrupt family harmony.</i>
<i>F5</i>	<i>Annoyance, hunger, crying</i>	<i>Emotional instability due to overburdened role</i>	<i>Working wife may be stressed and unavailable for family, disturbing peace.</i>
<i>F6</i>	<i>Nausea, warmth in limbs</i>	<i>Psychosomatic stress</i>	<i>Husband may experience physical symptoms due to stress from gender role shift.</i>
<i>F7</i>	<i>Embarrassment, anxiety</i>	<i>Discomfort with wife in public/mixed-gender settings</i>	<i>Concerns over social judgment or wife's interaction with other men.</i>
<i>F8</i>	<i>"No good at all" feeling</i>	<i>General resistance to women's changing roles</i>	<i>No specific logic—just emotional rejection of non-traditional family model.</i>
<i>F9</i>	<i>Fear and unease</i>	<i>Jealousy and insecurity</i>	<i>Husband may feel emotionally threatened or fear losing exclusivity.</i>
<i>F10</i>	<i>Unhappiness, worry</i>	<i>Concern about family neglect</i>	<i>Belief that wife cannot manage both job and home; kids will suffer.</i>

<i>F11</i>	<i>Sadness, upset</i>	<i>Emotional disconnection</i>	<i>Husband feels distant or less important as wife invests time in career.</i>
<i>F12</i>	<i>Confusion, uselessness</i>	<i>Identity crisis</i>	<i>Husband feels loss of masculine identity if not sole provider.</i>
<i>F13</i>	<i>Fatigue, stomach issues</i>	<i>Physical stress reaction</i>	<i>Change in household structure causes physical anxiety symptoms.</i>
<i>F14</i>	<i>Crises and difficulties</i>	<i>Marital/financial tension</i>	<i>Belief that work may lead to more arguments, stress, or less cohesion.</i>
<i>F15</i>	<i>Nightmares, sensitivity</i>	<i>Subconscious stress from norm disruption</i>	<i>Deep mental discomfort about breaking traditional roles.</i>
<i>F16</i>	<i>Headaches, self-consciousness</i>	<i>Social embarrassment</i>	<i>Fear of ridicule from peers or family if wife appears dominant or independent.</i>
<i>F17</i>	<i>Money and business worries</i>	<i>Financial insecurity</i>	<i>Husband fears wife's financial role challenges his control or status.</i>
<i>F18</i>	<i>"Life is strange" feeling</i>	<i>Discomfort with changing norms</i>	<i>General unease with shifting marital/gender expectations—prefers traditional lifestyle stability.</i>

The figures tabulate 18 emotional and psychological reasons that can be used to reveal why there are husbands who oppose the wishes of their wives in taking up jobs after marriage. Instead of considering such resistance as just

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control or patriarchy, it might even be often the result of internal fears, cultural conditioning, and being concerned. Emotional stress (F1), mental overload (F2), health worries (F5, F10, F13) are the factors showing that quite a number of husbands fear the effect on their wives in terms of being emotionally or physically overburdened. Others like F7, F8 and F16 portray the social embarrassment and cultural pressure and F3 and F9 indicate insecurity and fear of distance in emotions. The conditions such as F12 and F17 disclose the issue of identity complications and lack status on financial level, indicating that men can perceive themselves as insignificant when they are not the only financially supporting person. This resistance in the end is usually a misinterpreted show of love, protection, as well as fear of change. Being in knowledge of this fact, the couples learn to substitute confrontation with the peaceful communication that helps to develop empathy and balanced decisions between each other.

The next reasons why the objections of your husband can be guided by deep, yet not always well-grounded, care about the family. The reasons are deeper, though perhaps misconstrued in part, than they may be at first glance which some husbands have when they oppose their wives working.

Percentage of Women Who Need Permission to Work by Age and Marital Status

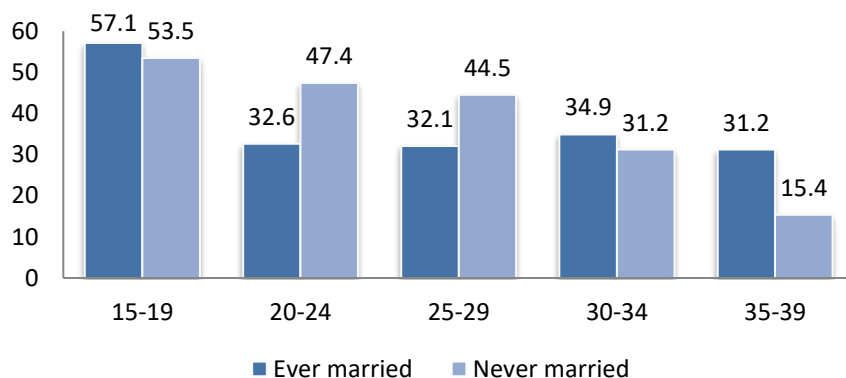


Figure1

The chart shows marital status by age group. In the 15–19 groups, most are ever married (57.1%). In ages 20–29, never married individuals are higher, showing a trend of delayed marriage. By age 30–34, the rates are nearly equal. In the 35–39 group, most are ever married (31.2%) compared to only 15.4% never married, indicating most people marry by their late thirties.

Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Board,

Government of Punjab (2017-18), Women’s Economic and Social Well-Being Survey, Punjab (Volume 1: Baseline Report). Lahore, Pakistan: Government of Punjab.

Table2: Use of Financial Account:

	Proportion of women aged 18-64 years who need permission to operate their financial accounts								Number of never married or currently unmarried women having financial account
	Currently Married Women					Never widow, and Women	married, separated, divorced		
	Required permission from:					Required permission from:			
	Do not required Permission ¹	Husbands	Parents in Law/Parent	Total	Number of currently married women having financial account	Do not required Permission	Any one (Parents/Brother/ Sister etc.)	Total	
Punjab	73.3	3.6	23.1	100.0	1,143	13.8	86.2	100.0	381
Area of Residence									
Rural	66.9	4.5	28.6	100.0	541	15.9	84.1	100.0	159
All Urban	79.1	2.7	18.2	100.0	602	12.3	87.7	100.0	222
Major Cities	82.6	3.5	13.9	100.0	345	(8.0)	(92.0)	(100.0)	125
Other Urban	74.4	1.7	23.9	100.0	257	18.0	82.0	100.0	97

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15-19	(48.6)	(24.2)	(27.2)	(100.0)	36	27.1	72.9	100.0	99
20-24	77.0	4.5	18.5	100.0	178	10.7	89.3	100.0	98
25-29	71.2	6.5	22.3	100.0	192	(*)	(*)	(*)	19
30-34	72.1	0.5	27.4	100.0	320	(8.0)	(92.0)	(100.0)	28
35-39	77.5	3.3	19.2	100.0	155	(0.7)	(99.3)	(100.0)	26
40-44	72.7	2.0	25.3	100.0	108	(1.5)	(98.5)	(100.0)	35
45-49	82.9	1.3	15.8	100.0	71	(4.5)	(95.5)	(100.0)	25
50-54	80.6	0.0	19.4	100.0	49	(0.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	29
55-59	(55.7)	(5.6)	(38.7)	(100.0)	34	(0.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	23
60-64	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	0	(*)	(*)	(*)	0
Marital Status									
Never Married	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	0	21.8	78.2	100.0	219
Currently Married	73.3	3.6	23.1	100.0	1,143	(*)	(*)	(*)	0
Widow/ Divorced/ Separated	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	0	2.5	97.5	100.0	162
Education									
None/Pre-school	53.9	6.4	39.7	100.0	263	8.9	91.1	100.0	56
Primary	67.4	9.3	23.4	100.0	95	(9.5)	(90.5)	(100.0)	26
Middle	67.4	1.0	31.6	100.0	84	(13.7)	(86.3)	(100.0)	21
Secondary	81.4	2.6	16.1	100.0	174	(9.6)	(90.4)	(100.0)	41
Higher	82.3	1.9	15.8	100.0	528	16.3	83.7	100.0	237

Disability Status									
No-disability	73.6	3.7	22.7	100.0	1,076	14.4	85.6	100.0	359
Disability	68.8	1.4	29.8	100.0	67	(5.1)	(94.9)	(100.0)	22
Wealth Quintiles									
Poorest	55.0	7.4	37.6	100.0	62	(^{*)}	(^{*)}	(^{*)}	9
Poorer	56.4	8.4	35.2	100.0	88	(15.3)	(84.7)	(100.0)	21
Middle	67.6	1.0	31.3	100.0	146	19.1	80.9	100.0	42
Richer	65.0	7.4	27.6	100.0	210	20.2	79.8	100.0	81
Richest	81.5	1.9	16.7	100.0	637	10.4	89.6	100.0	228

¹**Indicator – Use of Financial Account**

() Figures that are based on 25-49 un-weighted cases

(^{*)} Figures that are based on fewer than 25 un-weighted cases

Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Board, Government of Punjab (2017-18), *Women’s Economic and Social Well-Being Survey, Punjab (Volume 1: Baseline Report)*. Lahore, Pakistan: Government of Punjab.

Table2: "Uncovering Key Barriers: A Chi-Square Evaluation of Husbands’ Justifications against Wives’ Employment after Marriage"

Factor	Chi-Square Value	p-Value	Significant (p < 0.05)
F1	2.362	0.1243	No
F2	12.981	0.0003	Yes
F3	3.460	0.0629	No
F4	0.029	0.8649	No
F5	7.576	0.0059	Yes
F6	3.468	0.0625	No
F7	5.610	0.0179	Yes
F8	4.218	0.0400	Yes
F9	4.312	0.0378	Yes
F10	11.979	0.0005	Yes
F11	2.316	0.1280	No

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<i>F12</i>	<i>0.029</i>	<i>0.8656</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>F13</i>	<i>7.316</i>	<i>0.0068</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>F14</i>	<i>3.460</i>	<i>0.0629</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>F15</i>	<i>0.029</i>	<i>0.8657</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>F16</i>	<i>2.995</i>	<i>0.0835</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>F17</i>	<i>1.078</i>	<i>0.2991</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>F18</i>	<i>14.061</i>	<i>0.0002</i>	<i>Yes</i>

UNDERSTANDING SIGNIFICANT FACTORS ($P < 0.05$):

The data reveals several statistically significant factors (F2, F5, F7, F8, F9, F10, F13, F18) that reflect genuine emotional, psychological, and relational concerns husbands experience when their wives work outside the home. These are not baseless restrictions, but rather signs that many men are struggling to express fears that stem from love, protection, and a desire to maintain family harmony.

F2 – MENTAL OVERLOAD AND HOUSEHOLD IMBALANCE ($P = 0.0003$):

This factor shows a significant association. Many husbands are not worried about their wife’s success — but fear the weight of dual roles may emotionally and physically exhaust her. His concern may arise from watching other women in his family struggle with burnout from juggling job and home.

Suggestion: This issue can be addressed through equitable household task sharing. Both partners should jointly plan routines, prioritize tasks, and support each other’s emotional and physical well-being. Time management tools and family calendars can help align professional and domestic responsibilities, reducing perceived burden.

Understanding Husband Concern: He may worry that the balance of home life will collapse. The emotional weight of managing a house, children, and a job might concern him, especially if he sees you already stretched thin. When a husband sees that a job may overburden his wife — who is already managing the home, children, and relationships — he worries she may become emotionally and physically exhausted. His opposition is a way of saying, “I don’t want you to suffer under pressure.”

F5 – EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY DUE TO OVERBURDENING ($P = 0.0059$):

A husband’s resistance may stem from seeing how societal expectations

place double pressure on working women. He fears his wife will suffer from constant expectations — to excel at work and simultaneously be a perfect wife/mother.

Suggestion: Wives should be supported both at work and home to prevent burnout. Creating a supportive home environment with shared duties, emotional check-ins, and space for self-care can help maintain emotional equilibrium. Husbands can also participate in parenting and caregiving to balance the load.

Understanding Husband Concern: He may not want to see you overwhelmed. If he notices you crying more, feeling tired, or losing joy, he could interpret your job as the cause and wish to shield you from more stress. He may notice subtle signs: you're more irritable, skipping meals, or crying more frequently. He fears that the weight of trying to "do it all" will rob you of your peace. So, he says no — not because he's against your growth, but because he wants to protect your mental and emotional health.

F7 – MIXED-GENDER ENVIRONMENT ANXIETY ($P = 0.0179$):

This reflects discomfort or protective concern over his wife interacting with unfamiliar men. Rather than being controlling, it may stem from cultural norms or fear for her emotional safety in environments where respect is not guaranteed. He worries not because he doesn't trust his wife, but because he doesn't trust the world.

Suggestion: Encouraging gender sensitivity training and broadening social exposure can reduce discomfort. Trust-building activities and setting relationship goals based on transparency and mutual respect help ease insecurities associated with social interactions outside the home.

Understanding Husband Concern: He might feel uneasy about you working with or being around other men. It's not necessarily about lack of trust in you, but discomfort with what society might say or how he feels being judged. A man who cares deeply might be concerned about your safety, reputation, or dignity in a public setting. His unease is not always about control — it's worry. He may think, "I know the world isn't always kind to women — I want to keep her protected."

F8 – EMOTIONAL REJECTION OF CHANGING ROLES ($P = 0.0400$):

Some men feel threatened by rapid shifts in gender roles. However, underneath this lies a fear of losing relevance in their wife's life. They might think: "If the world praises you and forgets me, will I still matter to you?" This fear of emotional displacement is not hate, but love mixed with insecurity.

Suggestion: Awareness programs and male inclusion in gender equity discussions are essential. Exposure to positive societal change and men who embrace non-traditional roles can help shift deep-rooted resistance and

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normalize women's professional engagement.

Understanding Husband Concern: Sometimes, there's no clear reason — just a gut feeling that “this isn't right.” It may reflect a deep fear of change or loss of the relationship's old identity.

1.1.1. F9 – Jealousy or Insecurity ($p = 0.0378$):

Though this is often misunderstood, a husband's jealousy may be rooted in a deep bond. His protectiveness may seem irrational, but emotionally it means: “I am afraid of losing you emotionally, not just physically.” This fear can be addressed with love and open reassurance — not resentment.

Suggestion: Reassurance and appreciation are crucial. Couples should prioritize emotional intimacy, validate each other's contributions, and set mutual growth goals. Relationship counseling can also help address hidden insecurities and promote emotional maturity.

Understanding Husband Concern: Men are often taught to measure their worth by how needed they are. Your success might make him feel left behind, not because he wants to suppress you, but because he's scared of being unimportant.

F10 – FEAR OF FAMILY NEGLECT ($P = 0.0005$):

This highly significant factor shows that many husbands oppose employment because they worry about children's emotional needs, meal preparation, or home atmosphere being neglected. “Our children need you. I know I do too.” His concern shows how much he values her presence — not how little he values her ambition.

Suggestion: Proactive family engagement, including scheduled family time, can reassure husbands that family needs remain a priority. Encouraging quality over quantity in family interactions and using support systems like childcare or elder care can reduce stress around neglect.

Understanding Husband Concern: He may believe — rightly or wrongly — that a working mother will not have enough time or energy for the home. His objections could be rooted in concern for the children's emotional care or household harmony. He might think, “If she's out working, which will look after the children or give them the love they need?” His concern isn't that you're incapable — it's that he values your presence at home and fears the family might suffer without it.

F13 – PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS ($P = 0.0068$):

Some men feel anxious to the point of physical distress — not from control issues, but from a sense of helplessness in maintaining family order amid

change. His body reflects what his words fail to say.

Suggestion: Physical symptoms should be acknowledged as valid and addressed holistically. Stress-reducing habits like exercise, adequate sleep, and open conversations can ease the transition. Medical and psychological support should also be considered when needed.

Understanding Husband Concern: Changes in family roles can affect his health. His fatigue, stomach issues, or headaches may reflect deeper fears — not anger, but stress he doesn't know how to name. Physical symptoms like headaches or nausea may reflect how deeply he internalizes the stress of changing family roles. These aren't fake or manipulative signs — they're real physical reactions to fear and love, channeled through the body.

F18 – GENERAL DISCOMFORT WITH CHANGING NORMS ($P = 0.0002$):

Perhaps the most telling — this shows that many husbands feel their world is shifting faster than they can emotionally keep up. His reaction is not always anger or dominance. He clings to tradition not to suppress, but to protect what he believes has always worked.

Suggestion: This can be improved by fostering adaptability and open-mindedness. Men should be exposed to inclusive discussions on evolving family structures, and both partners should develop a growth mindset to accept and embrace change in the marital and social landscape.

Understanding Husband Concern: The world is changing fast. Your husband may not be against you working, but the speed at which roles, responsibilities, and expectations are shifting might be overwhelming for him.

UNDERSTANDING NON-SIGNIFICANT FACTORS ($P \geq 0.05$):

These are the factors that do not show a statistically significant difference between husbands of working and non-working women, meaning their feelings or objections likely stem from internal beliefs, personality traits, or cultural norms, rather than are direct experiences of having a working wife.

F1 – EMOTIONAL STRESS & CONSTIPATION ($P = 0.1243$):

Not Significant, This suggests some husbands feel emotionally tense or physically unwell thinking about their wives working. Their discomfort may come from fear of losing household control, not actual experience. Their "no" could be a plea for emotional stability.

Suggestion: To reduce emotional stress, open communication and shared decision-making within the home are vital. Couples should establish clear boundaries and responsibilities, ensuring the husband still feel valued and respected. Counseling or workshops on modern marital roles can help partners redefine authority as cooperation rather than control.

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Understanding Husband Concern: Your husband may feel anxious that his long-standing role as the household leader is changing. This isn't necessarily about ego — it's about feeling displaced or unsure about how he fits into the new family structure.

F3 – ANXIETY ABOUT WIFE'S EXPOSURE TO NEW ENVIRONMENTS ($P = 0.0629$):

Not Significant, although close to being significant, this factor reflects general fear about the wife's interaction with strangers, new ideologies, or male colleagues. The husband's protective instinct may emerge regardless of whether she works or not.

Suggestion: Building mutual trust is key. Husbands should be encouraged to support their wives' professional development and take pride in their growth. Participating in workplace visits, networking events, or couple-based trust exercises can reduce fear and strengthen the relationship.

Understanding Husband Concern: His concern about your exposure to different environments isn't always jealousy. It may be fear that the bond you share could weaken due to new social circles, modern ideals, or workplace friendships.

F4 – FEAR OF MISFORTUNE OR BAD LUCK ($P = 0.8649$):

Not Significant, A deeply rooted traditional belief that women working might bring "bad luck." This has no basis in experience — it's entirely cultural. The husband's "no" may reflect inherited fears rather than practical reasoning.

Suggestion: This fear, often rooted in cultural myths, can be countered through awareness and education. Exposure to success stories of dual-income families, role models, or peer groups with working wives can help debunk irrational beliefs and foster progressive thinking.

Understanding Husband Concern: In some households, working women are perceived to disrupt family peace. This isn't logical, but it is a genuine belief shaped by generations. His resistance might come from a place of fear rather than fact.

F6 – PSYCHOSOMATIC STRESS ($P = 0.0625$):

Not Significant, This again is borderline, suggesting internal anxiety manifests physically (e.g., nausea or tension), likely due to identity crisis or stress about changing family roles. This is more about the husband's internal world than the wife's job.

Suggestion: Stress management techniques such as mindfulness, therapy, or physical activity can help manage psychosomatic symptoms. Men

should be encouraged to express vulnerability and seek emotional support, normalizing the challenges of adapting to evolving gender roles.

Understanding Husband Concern: His physical reactions — such as restlessness or nausea — might be his body's way of dealing with emotional tension. These symptoms reflect genuine inner turmoil, not manipulation.

F11 – EMOTIONAL DISCONNECTION OR SADNESS ($P = 0.1280$):

Not Significant, Husbands may fear losing intimacy or closeness with their wives if they work, even if they haven't experienced it directly. This is based more on imagination than on observed reality.

Suggestion: Maintaining emotional connection requires intentional effort. Regular communication, shared leisure activities, and reaffirming emotional commitment can help couples stay connected. Spouses should celebrate each other's successes and provide consistent emotional support.

Understanding Husband Concern: If your work becomes the center of your energy, your husband might feel pushed aside emotionally. This sadness often turns into resistance, even though he might not say it directly. He may miss the emotional closeness that once existed when you had more time for him. It's not jealousy, but sadness — he fears that your love and attention may now be shared with work, colleagues, or career stress.

F12 – IDENTITY CRISIS OR USELESSNESS ($P = 0.8656$):

Not Significant, No statistical link between wife's job and husband's sense of usefulness, but the emotional reaction persists. Husbands may subconsciously tie their value to being the sole provider.

Suggestion: Redefining masculinity to include emotional strength, supportiveness, and flexibility can help. Programs or role models highlighting diverse male identities, including supportive husbands, can help men adjust their self-concept and feel empowered in new roles.

Understanding Husband Concern: A man rose to believe his value lies in being the sole provider might feel lost when you also start earning. It shakes his self-image, leading him to question his role in your life.

F14 – FEAR OF MARITAL TENSION OR CRISIS ($P = 0.0629$):

Not Significant, while some fear arguments or instability are may increase, if the wife works, the data shows this belief isn't statistically different between working and non-working groups. The fear exists, but isn't driven by reality.

Suggestion: Couples should have joint financial planning sessions and clearly defined budgets to minimize stress. Financial transparency and shared goals can help reduce tension and build financial trust. Consulting a family financial advisor may also help align priorities.

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Understanding Husband Concern: He might fear that your work will bring more stress than benefit — late nights, divided attention, or financial disagreements. This concern is often based on stories or examples he's witnessed.

F15 – NIGHTMARES, SENSITIVITY, SUBCONSCIOUS STRESS ($P = 0.8657$):

Not Significant, These symptoms reflect a deep internal discomfort with changing gender roles — almost unconscious. The husband's opposition here reflects a mental or emotional conflict, not an evidence-based concern.

Suggestion: Therapy and open dialogue can uncover and address subconscious fears. Promoting emotional intelligence and reflective practices helps individuals navigate the mental friction caused by changing norms. Storytelling and social narratives that validate the modern couple can reduce stress.

Understanding Husband Concern: Even without talking about it, his sleep or sensitivity might reflect subconscious stress about how much your role shift will change the foundation of the family.

1.1.2. F16 – Social Embarrassment or Shame ($p = 0.0835$):

Not Significant, Some husbands worry about societal judgment, believing others might mock them if their wife works. This isn't dependent on whether she's employed or not — it's about protecting image and dignity.

Suggestion: Normalizing female employment within social circles through advocacy and discussion can alleviate embarrassment. Couples can engage in community events that support working women to build a positive identity around their relationship dynamic.

Understanding Husband Concern: He may fear that others — family, neighbors, or friends — will look down on him for “letting” his wife work. In many cultures, this can feel like a public insult to his manhood.

F17 – FINANCIAL ROLE THREAT OR MONEY CONCERNS ($P = 0.2991$):

Not Significant, The fear that the wife's earnings might threaten the husband's role as financial head does exist in some minds — but it is not influenced by whether the wife is actually working. It's more of a pre-existing insecurity.

Suggestion: Joint financial literacy education and shared savings or investment strategies can reduce insecurity. When both partners understand and manage finances, the need for control diminishes, and confidence in shared

economic stability grows.

Understanding Husband Concern: Even if you don't mean to, earning your own money can make a man feel less necessary. He may fear you'll no longer need him, financially or emotionally, and that terrifies him.

Statistical hypothesis results: Because a considerable number of factors (8 out of 18) show a statistically significant relationship between the husband's justifications and the wife's employment status, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

BRIDGING THE GAP WITH UNDERSTANDING

These findings reveal that a husband's opposition to his wife's employment is not always an act of suppression—it can, in many cases, be a form of protection. His resistance may stem from fears he cannot articulate, from love he does not know how to express, and from a deep desire to preserve his family's well-being. Rather than viewing this stance as a barrier, it can be understood as a shield—one shaped by emotional vulnerability, cultural conditioning, and a sense of responsibility. When women begin to see this, their response can shift from hurt or confrontation to empathy and understanding. Through gentle and honest dialogue, couples can build a shared future—one that nurtures personal growth while preserving emotional closeness.

Many husbands who resist their wives' participation in the workforce are not inherently against women's independence. Instead, they are navigating an evolving world that challenges the norms they grew up with. Their hesitation often reflects fear of change rather than hatred, and care rather than control. For women, the right to learn, work, and grow is undeniable. Yet, if a husband is hesitant, it helps to look beyond his resistance—to the worries it masks. With open communication, emotional reassurance, and mutual respect, women can show that seeking a job is not about replacing their spouse but about growing alongside him. When both partners walk forward with compassion, tradition and progress do not have to clash—they can evolve together.

THE CORE MESSAGE: HIS “NO” IS NOT ALWAYS A WALL — SOMETIMES IT’S A SHIELD

The core message behind many husbands' opposition to their wives working is often misunderstood. His “no” is not always a wall to block progress — sometimes, it is a shield crafted from love, care, and concern. In many cases, husbands do not object to their wives working because they mistrust them or seek to control them, but rather because they fear the external challenges their wives may face, or they worry that the added burden of managing both job and home may affect their wife's health, happiness, or overall peace of mind. His resistance may be his way of saying, “I want you to rest,” “I don't want to see you stressed or overwhelmed,” “I want our relationship to remain strong and

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close,” or “I want to protect you from the outside world.”

Knowing these deep-rooted fears does not imply that a woman has to abandon her career ideals. Nonetheless, it emphasises the significance of making a step forward using compassionate discourse. When a wife takes seriously the concerns of her husband found not generated out of control or insecurity and when a husband honors his feelings publicly rather than closes down the ambitions of his wife a course of action can be developed together. This goes the route of love, insight, and joint choice-making that permits both companions to respect the requirements of the other and not cast the character of their relationship and family lives.

CONCLUSION:

This research finds out that husbands desire to keep the policy of their wives being unemployed after marriage, especially those living in conservative states such as Punjab, are usually based on emotional weakness, cultural indoctrination and psychological pressure and not any form of pure patriarchal domination. These factors include 18 particular causes (F1-F18) which can be described as fears of losing their powers, emotional overflow, social humiliation, financial vulnerability, identity crisis which help them to be in resistance. These issues present a self preservation and self causality as men are hard pressed to accommodate to changing gender roles. Finally, the results underline that empathy and uninhibited communication between spouses are important in order to embrace each other and grow together in marriages.

Statistically significant factors ($p < 0.05$) of the analysis conducted in this research article demonstrate that husbands frequently oppose and even prohibit marriage-based employment of their wives due to relevant emotional, psychological and relational issues they experience but not due to exercising control and patriarchal dominance. Mental overload (F2) and emotional exhaustion (F5) are indicators of internal struggle of husbands, who find themselves in an environment that changes traditional roles. Discomfort in mixed-gender settings (F7) and fear of family neglect (F10) indicate a significant crisis husbands undergo. Most of these anxieties develop out of tender emotions, chivalry, cultural programming and honest although misguided needs to maintain harmony and spare their partners the physical and emotional stress. Other factors such as insecurity (F9), emotional rejection of the role change (F8) and physical stress symptoms (F13) further demonstrate the emotional burden that men feel in the wake of the changes in their society. Notably, the most-powerful indicator (F18) shows a general uneasiness with fast-changing norms. Such insights indicate that resistance can be considered as an act of weakness

rather than strength. With the support of empathy, communication and shared responsibility, couples can go through transitions, and having both development and emotional security also exist in the framework of the modern marriage.

The discussion of the insignificant issues ($p \geq 0.05$) indicates that most issues expressed by husbands on the reasons as to why their wives should not be employed are not based on practical experiences and significant distinctions between families with working and non-working wives. Rather, such fears tend to arise out of inner doubts, archaic gender conditioning, conventional culture and ingrained personal morals. Such elements of emotional stress (F1), psychosomatic manifestations (F6) or fear to appear in new places (F3) demonstrate that the emotional unease can be based on the imaginary results, but not on the real ones. In the same way, issues such as identity crisis (F12), subconscious stress (F15), or social embarrassment (F16) indicate the psychological and social end pressure, which men are experiencing when promoting their roles in the fast-changing and fast-developing family set-up. Such assumptions are imposed by the cultural discourse and transmitted projections of existence more so than reality.

Although such issues are not considered statistically relevant, they are emotionally true to a person who experiences them. Hence, they should never be incorporated but could only be responded to using empathy, dialogue, and interventions. Outdated beliefs can be broken by education, counseling, trust-building activities and open social exposure. Finally, it is important to grasp the idea that the reactions are not necessarily contrary to female empowerment and focus rather on the personal and social identity crisis. Only in this way, gender harmony and the development of emotionally intelligent relationships to partners can be created in contemporary marriages.

In conclusion, the analysis reveals a multifaceted picture: while some husbands' opposition is rooted in observable challenges introduced by a wife's employment (such as workload imbalance or emotional strain), others stem from fixed traditional ideologies. Recognizing these distinctions is essential for addressing gender inequality in marital roles and designing interventions or counseling strategies to support more equitable family dynamics.



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