

An Assessment of Women's Psychological Needs for Higher Education: A Case Study of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to assess the psychological needs of the female students to enter the higher-education level. The research will enable to describe, interpret, understand, analyze, predict and control the changing behavior of today's female students, who have been entering into modern fields of study of natural and social sciences, such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer and information technology, commerce and business, psychology, engineering and public management science, etc, instead of selecting the conservative and orthodox ideological fields of studies by women like: arts, medicines, teaching, nursing, home-economics, etc. The research findings will help explore and understand the dynamic forces to change female behavior in the selection of fields within the domain of a socio-psychological cultural stereo-typed society and to strive to fulfill the desired objectives that arise from psychological needs within the unconducive or unfavorable environment. The research will evolve certain fruitful and meaningful results, create psychological stimulation and will establish the space for the common women in general and female under-graduates in particular to avoid further prejudice and discrimination against them. The reader of this research paper will be positively influenced and motivated to come out of social taboos (boundaries), which have been established by stagnant socio-cultural and conservative ideological society. Furthermore, the research will be an ideal and a motivational force for young female students to select the fields for their career which will best compensate them

INTRODUCTION

It is frequently observed that women have the same psychological needs as intensive as men have, starting from human hierarchy of need of food, water, air, shelter, sex, safety and sleep up to the advanced level of self-actualization need. It is indispensable to explore, understand, assess and interpret the needs, wants of today's female students.

It has been a consensus that no nation/country can sustain/survive and develop in today's rapidly growing and changing world until and unless it achieves growth in each and every sector of the economy. This modern era suggests that the priorities of growth in the sector are continuously changing. Now the every country of the world is engaged to explore all the resources optimally, capitalize those resources by educating and providing skills to human resources in order to achieve a sustainable development and focus on the sectors which will make maximum contribution to the national economy. In this context the trends of the job market are also changing and, simultaneously the choice of disciplines is also quickly changing by the new generations. The dilemma in our country is that our society is composed of certain conservative ideologies aimed at dividing their people by making gender disparities, diversifying their ways into different directions. For instance, the parents desire to educate their sons and counseling them to enter into fields of science and technology, business, etc, with a vision that they will be the future computer scientists, business managers, engineers etc. and that they fulfill their desire to own needs as well those of the parents. In contrast their choice for the female child is to make them a teacher, doctor. This is the thinking of the parents, who are some what educated and have civic sense, although the majority of the parents restrict their female child to be at home.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out to investigate, depict, interpret, understand, evaluate, predict and assess the

psychological needs, skills and capabilities of female students to acquire advanced education. The other key objectives were to encourage women to enter into the labor market and to up-lift the socio-economic condition of the society in general and women in particular. To obtain accurate and authentic information, the two major sources of collecting data and findings were used, as library research and primary research through a questionnaire.

To assess the psychological need sophisticatedly and pragmatically, hundred random samples of female students from different disciplines have been selected, focusing on the fields which have been observed to be conventionally men-dominated, both in educational institutions and in the job market. The two most prominent and renowned institutions were selected from the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, for the primary research.

THE POPULATION AND SAMPLING

1. Institute of Information Technology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro. Selected 50 random samples, aging from 22-25 years from diverse batches (parts) divided into different departments and specializations, as BSIT in telecommunication, information technology, software engineering and BSIT in electronic.
2. Institute of Business Administration, University of Sindh, Jamshoro. Selected 50 arbitrary samples, aging 22-25 years from different batches (parts) both from the honors and pass side, alienated into different specializations, as BBA and MBA: marketing, finance, human resource and management.

THE CHANGING WORLD AND EMERGING TRENDS

Pakistan's present regime is profoundly emphasizing on strengthening and achieving advancement in the industrial and service sector of the country, so as to bring it at par with other developed countries. In this context the intentions are very clear; i.e., to establish new small and medium-size industries as well as to launch mega projects, including small and medium size industries.

In this context, there is a chain of financial intermediaries available to assist the human resource to establish self-employment. The present scenario of the country's economy is swiftly shifting towards capitalism.

All the countries including Pakistan have adopted the policy of privatization. The recent privatization of Pakistan Telecommunication, Habib Bank Limited, and several other organizations are the latest examples. Privatization is considered to be the tool to generate maximum revenues from the country's resources so that the country will be strengthened economically and would achieve sustainable economic and social development by providing education equal to international standards to its population and capitalizing its whole human resource efficiently to run on a fast track of development equivalent to the world. Steps have been taken to improve the quality of life of the people, but, unfortunately, there are many dilemmas for our country to potentially capitalize the human resource optimally along with capital and machinery.

The ceremonial root-cause is our conservative psycho-socialization process of the young generation. The psycho-socialization process starts from our home itself, as we have maintained the conventional belief of gender stereo-typed thinking. Fixed beliefs have been hammered into the heads of our children (both sexes), leaving them unable to differentiate between fact and fiction.

GENDER IN-EQUALITY

The sex is natural and gender is a societal concept. Usually gender refers to socially and culturally constructed characteristics, which are then attributed to the different biological sexes. As in our society the girl child has been culturally wearing purple or pink colors and the boy child has been wearing blue or white colors from early childhood and the girl child has been provided dolls to play with and the boy child has been given gun toys to play with. These are the simplest but very meaningful examples of our

society's gender- biased and discriminative philosophy. And, further this philosophy has been mobilized into gender stereotyping.

GENDER STEREO-TYPING

A gender stereo-type is an over-simplified view of the "typical" or ideal characteristics of male and female. For instance, in modern society women may be required to show "feminine" characteristics, such as being gentle, sensitive and non-competitive or submissive. On the other hand, expectation of male characteristics may be physical strength, assertiveness, independence and ambition.

Those who do not conform to such stereo-types may be unfairly labeled as, for instance, the "tomboys" or "wimps", simultaneously; the fields of education, job/career and activities may still be categorized as suitable for female student and male students. These gender stereo-typing results in fewer enrollments of women in the fields of mathematics, physical sciences, engineering, computer science, business studies and allied fields. Consequently, females are under-represented in occupations/professions requiring knowledge of, or qualification in these areas. The extent to which sex differences in performance or representations occur, varies from country to country and culture to culture,. The difference is also in some way related with the social class and ethnic differences as well. For example, in the US black students are as positive or more positive than the white students in mathematics and science, but are less likely to pursue these subjects. Similarly, here are examples that female students are as positive or more positive than the male students in the fields of business administration, marketing, consumer banking, hotel management, psychology, architecture engineering and financial management, etc, which they have proved in different countries but in the same way are less likely to pursue these subjects and fields.

Some native researchers claim that these are not seen as congruent with female sex-role identity. The socio-psychological studies on women suggest that this is because of gender biased stereo-typed socialization of them and subsequently low confidence, low decision- making power and a belief that "success is due to luck and failure is due to lack of ability". As girls would strongly defend the abilities of their sex in general terms but are hesitant about their own potentials.

Let's examine the human needs and desires beyond sex or gender.

A HUMANISTIC APPROACH

It is frequently observed that all human beings have the same needs. As the great Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of need theory suggests: Since there is no cause-effect relationship in human behavior the individual has complete freedom of choice and each person alone is responsible for his or her existence. In a profound sense then; "Life is what you make it". What each of us makes of our existence is upto us. Humanistic theorists also stress that each individual is the chief determinant of his or her behavior and experience. Humanistic psychological studies further suggest that the human being freely makes choices among the possibilities that are open for him or her.

Humanistically speaking this is the tragedy and distortion of what human beings can be, since Maslow regarded this process of becoming self-realized or self-actualization as inherent in human nature, so that human beings have the ability to fulfill their needs (both sexes) but depend upon a conducive environment and an encouraging society.

The Maslow's hierarchy of needs model helps us to understand human need more clearly. Prominent psychologist, Abraham Harold Maslow, formulated a theory, which was afterwards was recognized as Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels. Maslow believed that much of human

behavior can be explained by the individual's tendency to seek personal goal that make life rewarding and meaningful. He depicted human being as a "wanting animal" who rarely reaches the state of complete satisfaction; if 'nirvana' exists, it is temporary in Maslow's system as when one personal desire is satisfied or fulfilled, another surfaces to take its place. It is a characteristic of human life that people almost always desire something.

The study of the humanistic theory of psychology depicts the hierarchy of needs as species-wide (not sex-or gender-based) and that the further up the hierarchy a person is able to go, the more individuality, humanness and psychological health he or she will display. His theory also suggests that creative people pursue the development and expression of their special talents, despite serious hardships and social ridicule/social taboos and prejudice. There are people whose values and ideals are so strong that they are willing to suffer hunger or thirst or even death, rather than renounce them (talents and development). Simultaneously, there are female students, who live within the rigid stereo-typed society and within social restrictions for them, but still have the will and desire to satisfy their psychological needs.

LET'S EXAMINE EACH OF MASLOW'S NEED CATEGORY TAKING A PERSPECTIVE FROM FEMALE STUDENTS

1. Physiological needs

The most basic, powerful and the obvious of all human needs is the need for physical survival including, food, drink, oxygen, sex, safety and sleep. In the same context female students have a need to have a sound and hygienic environment, the need to have fresh water at their homes and their institutes, fresh and nutritional food, sophisticated atmosphere for study and a relaxed environment at home or hostel to sleep and relax. Economic instability and poverty may cause unsatisfaction of that need.

2. Safety needs

When the physiological needs are met, the need for safety will emerge. Female students require security for honor and moral respect. Many times many girls have anxiety of not to get (morally/mentally) persecuted and harassed and have the need to have good (formal relations) with teachers, peers and other people at the institute or out side the institute.

3. Love/belongingness/social needs

After physiologically and safety needs are successfully fulfilled/ secured, the third layer of human need is the social. The need to love and to be loved.

For the student, she needs the love and care from friends, encouragement from parents, family members and teachers. This need is concerned especially with human emotions. We can say that the organism is so designed that it needs physical love. In the same way the automobile are so designed, that they need gas and oil, thus human has been called "a social and wanting animal" and can not lead life or survive lonely or isolated.

The unsatisfaction of that need intensively affects women's instincts and emotions. Some psychologists and researchers suggest that the unsatisfaction of that need, especially the love and care from parents and friends, make women affected with the psychological disorders.

4. Self esteem need/ status

When one's needs to be loved and admired, encouraged as well and needs to love others have been reasonably satisfied, the next level is a self-esteem need. The students at this stage want to be recognized by their teachers and their peers. The students having that need have been participating in different kind of seminars, conferences and debates, etc; to make a mark. Imbalances at this level can result in low self-esteem and may possibly stuck them in frustrations. Personal observation and library research findings suggest that root-cause of mental disorders or illnesses in women at this level are usually caused by

less encouragement, especially in female students and that they are associated with female instincts and emotions.

5. Self-actualization need

Self-actualization is the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism.

Speaking generally, it is the vision (ultimate goals) of individuals who then endeavor to make them come true.

The self-actualization need is the most distinctive need. The person striving for this level confirms that (psychologically) all lower needs are satisfied.

According to Maslow self-actualized people have the following unique characteristics:

- These people are spontaneous in their ideas and action.
- They have creative and entrepreneurial skills and are interested in solving ambiguous / complicated problems and issues.
- They are very optimistic about their life and their patterns of life.
- They tend to be altruistic in nature.

Conclusively, these people are not bothered about others and are instinctly satisfied with their potential and abilities. They judge others without prejudices. Self actualized people commonly become the agents of change and make revolutions. And they are also history makers a source of inspiration to others.

For female students, this distinctive need exists as Maslow defined it: "an individual has complete freedom of choice and each person alone is responsible for his or her existence".

As humanistic theorists suggested that each individual is the chief determinant of his or her behavior and experience, to become self-actualized is inherent in human nature.

For female students, there are fewer chances to reach this distinctive level and satisfy that need because the majority has been focused and has strived for the satisfaction of all of their lower level needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents responded in subsequent compartments which are represented in tabular form. The research which was conducted by 100 random samples, from two most distinguished institutions from the University of Sindh, Jamshoro which has been discussed earlier in research design and methodology.

Table - 1

Institute	Reason to Enter in the University	Response	%
Institute of information technology	Less recognition of conventional fields	15	30
Institute of information technology	Majority of females are in conventional fields	8	16
Institute of information technology	Less jobs exist for conventional fields of study	4	8
Institute of information technology	All of the above	23	46
Institute of business administration	Less recognition of conventional fields	30	60
Institute of business administration	Majority of females are in conventional fields	0	0
Institute of business administration	Less jobs are existing for conventional fields of study	10	20
Institute of business administration	All of above	10	20
All	Less recognition of conventional fields	45	45
All	Majority of females are in conventional fields	8	8
All	Less jobs exist for conventional fields of study	14	14
All	All of the above	33	33

In an inquiry of reason to enter the university and choosing their respective fields. 40% of the samples replied that there is less recognition of the conventional fields, 33% responded to all given reasons, 14% suggested that there are less jobs available for conventional fields and 8% signified that the majority of women are already in the said fields.

Table - 2

Institute	Competitive Proficiency	Response	%
Institute of information technology	Equally capable	28	56
Institute of information technology	Less capable	5	10
Institute of information technology	More capable	17	34
Institute of business administration	Equally capable	35	70
Institute of business administration	Less capable	4	8
Institute of business administration	More capable	11	22
All	Equally capable	63	63
All	More capable	9	9
All	Equally capable	28	28

In an inquiry of women proficiency to enter into fields like computer, business etc, which culturally are male-specified and suggested by society, "especially parents of the learners", that these fields are congruent with male sex-role identity.

Table - 3

Institute	Psychological impact on Personality Development	Response	%
Institute of information technology	Positive impact	44	88
Institute of information technology	Negative impact	0	0
Institute of information technology	No impact	6	12
Institute of business administration	Positive impact	41	82
Institute of business administration	Negative impact	5	10
Institute of business administration	No impact	4	8
All	Positive impact	85	85
All	Negative impact	5	5
All	No impact	10	10

In a query of a psychological impact on personality development, the responded replied positively, as they replied in very optimistic mode, as figures bluntly highlight.

Table - 4

Institute	Motives/Drives to Enter in Job Oriented Discipline	Response	%
Institute of information technology	Money	13	26
Institute of information technology	Social status	9	18
Institute of information technology	Both	28	56
Institute of business administration	Money	16	32
Institute of business administration	Social status	10	20
Institute of business administration	Both	24	48
All	Money	29	29
All	Social status	19	19
All	Both	52	52

In an inquiry of motives to select their respective fields, the respondents replied as: 29% had motivation of money, 19% social status and 52% to both money and social status.

Table - 5

Institute	Feminism	Response	%
Institute of information technology	Agree	7	14
Institute of information technology	Strongly agree	35	70
Institute of information technology	Disagree	5	10
Institute of information technology	Strongly disagree	3	6
Institute of business administration	Agree	0	0
Institute of business administration	Strongly agree	31	62
Institute of business administration	Disagree	10	20
Institute of business administration	Strongly disagree	9	18
All	Agree	7	7
All	Strongly agree	66	66
All	Disagree	15	15
All	Strongly disagree	12	12

About the ideology of "feminism" or gender equality, the respondents enthusiastically and devotedly replied, 66% strongly supported the feminism, 15% disagreed upon that, 12% strongly disagreed & 7% approved.

Table - 6

Institute	Self Reliance and Self Dependence	Response	
Institute of information technology	Agree	26	52
Institute of information technology	Strongly agree	1	2
Institute of information technology	Disagree	13	26
Institute of information technology	Strongly disagree	10	20
Institute of business administration	Agree	31	62
Institute of business administration	Strongly agree	5	10
Institute of business administration	Disagree	0	0
Institute of business administration	Strongly disagree	14	28
All	Agree	57	57
All	Strongly agree	6	6
All	Disagree	13	13
All	Strongly disagree	24	24

On a thought of, can a woman live individually and guide her life without any male guardian? 57% said yes, 6% strongly agreed, 13% discarded, 24% strongly rejected and suggested that this is impractical

Table - 7

Institute	The Satisfaction Level From Government Policies For Women's Empowerment	response	&
Institute of information technology	Satisfied	15	30
Institute of information technology	Less satisfied	20	40
Institute of information technology	Complete satisfied	3	6
Institute of information technology	Unsatisfied	12	24
Institute of business administration	Satisfied	20	40
Institute of business administration	Less satisfied	11	22
Institute of business administration	Complete satisfied	0	0
Institute of business administration	Unsatisfied	19	38
All	Satisfied	35	35
All	Less satisfied	31	31
All	Complete satisfied	3	3
All	Unsatisfied	31	31

35% satisfied, 31% less satisfied, 31% unsatisfied & only 3% completely satisfied, with the government's efforts to promote women literacy rate.

CONCLUSION

The personal observational and primary research findings concretely and drastically show that today's female students have potential and are proficient, self-assured and as skilled as male students have been accredited. They are intensively bothered and sensitized about their life and its patterns, and also for their career and future are full of inquisitiveness and enthusiasm. Even though many of them have come from a rigid patriarchal society and environment and from gender stereo-typed mores, which has been

dominating their precincts and restricting them into conventionally conservative socio-cultural development confines.

Further more, the interests, wants and desires of today's female student are shifting and are molded towards the direction where prime opportunities exist (jobs). The major psychological needs documented through the primary research is the need of social status and prestige that is the need of self-esteem and dignity; and the desire of having material things that is need of money and from money the contentment of physiological needs rather in a improved and luxurious mode, and then up-surge to actual psychological need, that is the self stature, self respect and recognition "name and fame". The most fashionable needs in today's young generation are the need of a beautiful house with all amenities, a nice vehicle and a reputed job with a handsome amount of money (compensation). The large segment of girl students had the consent of doing the job, and in those sectors (organizations, companies, firms) which will most recompense them. The majority of students showed their interest in joining the banking sector, multi-national firms; research oriented institutions and NGOs and the firms and companies which will best motivate them. Even some of the female students had the remarkable and feasible plans to launch their own business, "small or medium-sized", through their entrepreneurial and ingenious skills, and with financial support from different resources, especially, from banks and financial institutions, etc.

On the other hand, a small segment of female students has adversely had intensive fear and anxiety regarding their physical, moral, emotional safety and protection. And the strong need of self respect that shows that a portion of students had a rigorous psychological need of wellbeing. Furthermore, the research explored that female learners have a desire to take a part in family affairs (financial support), and rightly have the justification that this is not a time to rely on others, even on fathers, husbands, for the satisfaction of their needs; they have to work parallel with men at the job market. And the aspiration of providing a better and

more conducive environment to their children and for future generation was consensually reflected in the students.

Finally, the personally observational research findings and primary research data from female students consensually reflects the intensive psychological desire of "gender-equality" and "women empowerment". And the research reflects that the dream to make the female self-dependant and socio-economically productive for her self, family, and society and for the nation looked like being within the reach of the women.

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