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Psychological Capital Moderates the Relationship Between Work Family Conflict and Job Performance in Female Faculty of Higher Education Institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Original Article

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Abstract

The increasing demands of academic responsibilities coupled with family obligations have made work-family conflict (WFC) a critical concern for female faculty in higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly in culturally traditional regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. This study investigates the moderating role of psychological capital (PsyCap)—a positive psychological resource comprising self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—on the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance among female faculty members. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from a sample of female academic staff across public and private HEIs in KP. The results confirm a significant negative relationship between WFC and job performance, indicating that increased conflict between work and family domains undermines faculty effectiveness. However, the presence of high psychological capital significantly moderates this relationship, mitigating the adverse effects of WFC and enabling better job performance despite personal and professional role interference. The findings highlight the importance of fostering psychological resources among female faculty to sustain performance and well-being in demanding academic environments. Practical implications include integrating PsyCap development into faculty support programs and promoting institutional policies that enhance work-life integration. This study contributes to the growing body of research on gender, work-family dynamics, and psychological resilience in academic settings, particularly within the socio-cultural context of developing regions.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary academic landscape, the demands of professional roles often intersect with personal and familial responsibilities, creating a dynamic tension known as work-family conflict (WFC). This phenomenon is especially pronounced among female faculty members in higher education institutions (HEIs), who are frequently required to balance the dual expectations of career advancement and domestic caregiving. In the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a culturally complex and traditionally structured province of Pakistan, these challenges are often amplified due to societal

norms and gender roles, which impose additional pressures on women striving to succeed in academic professions.

Work-family conflict has been widely recognized as a significant factor adversely affecting job performance, psychological well-being, and career progression, particularly for women in demanding academic roles. The ability to effectively manage these conflicting domains can determine not only individual career outcomes but also the overall productivity and institutional success of HEIs. Despite growing global awareness, there remains a dearth of region-specific research examining these dynamics within the cultural and institutional context of Pakistan.

Amid these challenges, psychological capital (PsyCap)—a construct encompassing hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—has emerged as a potential buffer against the negative consequences of WFC. PsyCap reflects an individual's positive psychological state and has been associated with enhanced work engagement, stress management, and improved performance. Understanding whether and how psychological capital moderates the impact of work-family conflict on job performance is crucial for developing targeted interventions that support female faculty in achieving both professional and personal success.

This study seeks to fill the gap by exploring the moderating role of psychological capital in the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance among female faculty members in higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By contextualizing the investigation within the unique sociocultural framework of the region, the research aims to contribute to both the academic literature and practical policy development, ultimately supporting the empowerment and well-being of women in academia. The main aim of the study is to check the moderation of psychological capital on the relationship between work family conflict and job performance in female faculty of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

- 1) Work family conflict has a positive and significant effect on job performance in female faculty of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- 2) Psychological Capital moderates the relationship between work family conflict and job performance in female faculty of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Literature Review

Work Family Conflict (WFC)

Recent research highlights the increasing impact of work-family conflict (WFC), on female faculty members in higher education institutions (HEIs), in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where cultural, familial, and professional expectations create complex challenges. In a study held in 2023, Ali and Khan investigated the heightened WFC experienced by women in Pakistani academia, indicating that female faculty members often face greater family demands, which can interfere with professional obligations. This study reveals that such conflict significantly diminishes job performance, leading to decreased productivity, job dissatisfaction, and an inclination toward career discontinuity. Additionally, it points to the lack of institutional policies, such as family support initiatives or flexible working hours, which leaves women with limited resources to balance their roles effectively.

A research study carried out in 2022, by Hussain et al. elaborates on these findings, specifically analyzing how gendered cultural expectations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa exacerbate the work-family challenges faced by female faculty. The study shows that women are not only expected to fulfill professional duties but also to meet extensive domestic and caregiving responsibilities, a dual role that can contribute to emotional and physical exhaustion. Hussain et al. also found that this imbalance leads to higher levels of stress and burnout, adversely impacting job satisfaction and performance. Their findings highlight a need for structural and policy interventions to better support female faculty in balancing work and family responsibilities.

In earlier research, Ahmad and Gulzar (2020), explored how the traditional family structure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa influences the WFC experienced by female faculty. They argued that gender roles in the region often lead women to shoulder the primary responsibility for family caregiving, which intensifies the conflict between work and family roles. This study found that while male faculty members generally received familial support to focus on their careers, female faculty were often expected to manage both domains without comparable assistance, resulting in greater work-family conflict and a negative impact on their academic careers.

These studies collectively highlight the persistent challenges that female faculty face in HEIs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, due to work-family conflict. They indicate a critical need for institutional policies that promote gender equity, such as supportive work environments, family leave policies, and flexible schedules, to help mitigate the conflict and enhance the performance and well-being of female faculty members.

Job Performance

Recent research stresses the complexities surrounding job performance among female faculty in higher education institutions (HEIs), of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where gender-based challenges, cultural expectations, and institutional limitations intersect. A research study conducted 2023, by Ali and Raza examined the professional output of female faculty members, revealing that cultural norms and domestic responsibilities often hinder job performance, particularly when women are expected to balance academic duties with significant caregiving roles. Their findings showed that without flexible policies or support systems, women experience higher levels of stress and role overload, which impair focus, productivity, and career progression.

In another recent study, Khan and Bibi (2022), investigated the direct impact of organizational support on job performance among women faculty, discovering that institutions with policies supporting work-life balance saw higher performance and job satisfaction rates among their female faculty. The study found that access to flexible working hours and family support resources significantly improved engagement and dedication, positively influencing teaching quality, research output, and commitment to institutional objectives. Findings by Khan and Bibi suggest that targeted support can be transformative for female faculty who face unique socio-cultural pressures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Moreover, Ahmed and Iqbal (2021), focused on the barriers to job performance specific to female faculty in this region, noting that career advancement is often slower for women due to limited mentoring opportunities and the lack of equitable workload distribution. Their study found that women faculty were often assigned administrative or student-facing roles, which detracted from time available for research and academic development—key indicators of performance in HEIs. This imbalance was shown to stifle professional growth and diminish the overall performance of female faculty members, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive workload policies and mentoring programs.

Earlier, Akhtar and Rafiq (2020), explored how familial expectations and societal norms impact the performance of female faculty in the HEIs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They highlighted that, culturally, women are often expected to prioritize family obligations, which can conflict with the demands of academia, a profession that often requires extended hours and flexibility. Their study found that this cultural expectation led many female faculty members to experience guilt or conflict, reducing their engagement and productivity in academic roles. Akhtar and Rafiq recommended institutional initiatives that foster an understanding of these challenges and actively work to support female faculty in their dual roles.

Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of creating a supportive and equitable work environment for female faculty in the HEIs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They suggest that addressing the unique cultural and structural challenges faced by women in academia can lead to

enhanced job performance, greater job satisfaction, and improved retention, thereby benefiting both the faculty and the institutions in which they serve.

Moderating Role of Psychological Capital (PSYCAP)

PsyCap, as a sort of identity trademark, can modify and control pressure. The higher the level of PsyCap, the more grounded the capacity to alter and control pressure, which will be changed into a positive component, and thus add to wellbeing execution. Then again, people with low PsyCap can't control pressure (Wang, Wang, and Xia, 2018). Luthans (2002) connected the Positive Psychology Theory in the field of authoritative conduct and first proposed the idea of "positive hierarchical conduct", the first idea of PsyCap. Afterward, Luthans et al. (2004) distinguished four sub-measurements of PsyCap: self-efficacy/self-assurance, expectation, positive thinking, and versatility/diligence. Be that as it may, a brought together conclusion has not yet been settled upon regarding PsyCap's meanings. There are three primary sorts of perspectives: the hypothesis of PsyCap attributes, the hypothesis of state, and the hypothesis of blend. Among them, the hypothesis of state is situated in the standard, in which PsyCap is viewed as a sort of mental state or sort of soul with a positive state. This exceptional asset empowers people to actualize constructive conduct and create great execution. Luthans et al. (2007b) in this way overhauled the idea as "the dynamic express that people perform during the time spent development and improvement," which contained four sub-measurements: self-adequacy, good faith, expectation, and versatility. Self-adequacy alludes to a conviction that people can utilize subjective and rouse assets to accomplish objectives (Luthans et al., 2007b; Rego et al., 2012; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998).

This conviction isn't just gotten from people's social convictions, but at the same time is accomplished from their learning, knowledge, constructive input, and mental excitement. Expectation is portrayed as the inspiration to achieve targets (Luthans et al., 2007b). At the point when cheerful individuals don't achieve their objectives, they will thus be more fiery and propelled to investigate approaches to conquer challenges (Rego et al., 2009). Cheerful laborers as a rule have the eagerness to succeed (Rego et al., 2012). Positive thinking is a sort of clarification style (Luthans et al., 2007b). Hopeful people can trait constructive occasions inside, forever, furthermore, for the most part. They will probably excuse the past, assess the current circumstance accurately, and look for circumstances. In this manner, they are more hopeful confronting unpleasant circumstance and more positive about discovering approaches to beat snags (Rego et al., 2012). Flexibility alludes to the capacity to recoup from inconveniences, for example, difficulty, disappointment, and overpowering transformation (Luthans et al., 2007b). The PsyCap Theory (Luthans et al., 2010, 2013) contends that people's PsyCap might be influenced by the authoritative condition and afterward influences their conduct.

H1: Work family conflict has positive and significant impact on job Performance in Female Faculty of Higher Education Institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

H2: Psychological Capital Moderates The Relationship between Work Family Conflict and Job Performance in Female Faculty of Higher Education Institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

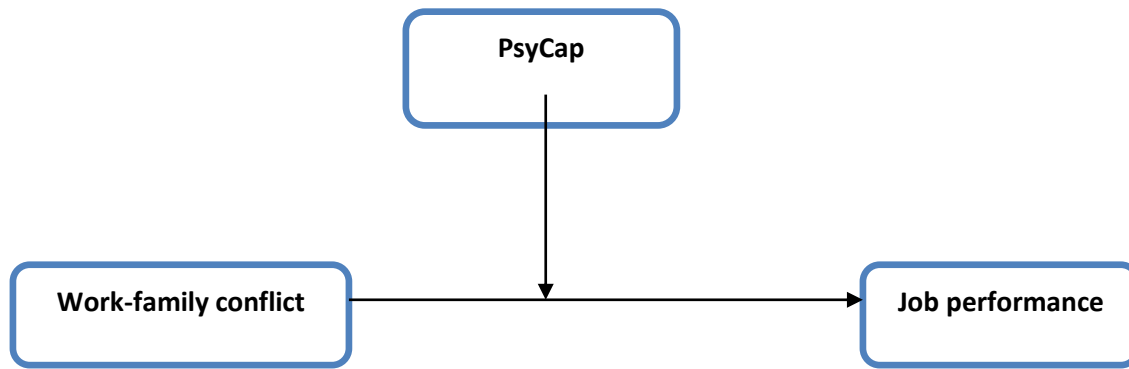


Figure A: Research Framework

Methodology

This casual study is conducted to investigate the impact of work-family conflict on job performance in female faculty of higher education institution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Multi stage sampling technique was used to conduct this study. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 7 divisions and each division contains 2 to 9 districts. District were selected on the bases of socio cultural and geographical distributions. A total of 342 samples were studied for this study. The convenience sampling technique is used, realizing the fact that not all the individuals in the sample would have an equal chance to be chosen. Cross-sectional time horizon was used for the study, conducted only a one-time due to the time constraint and limited resources. Data is collected from female faculty members of higher education institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa using adopted questionnaires (details given in Table 1) for the Work-Family Conflict and organizational commitment as:

Details of the instruments used in the Study

Sr.	Variable	Source	Year
1	Work Family Conflict	Shen et all.	2022
2	Job Performance	Goodman and Svyantek	1999
3	Psychological Capital	Luthans et all.	2015

Results and Discussion

Table1. Reliability and validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
JP	0.917	0.920	0.935	0.707
PsyCap	0.874	0.875	0.901	0.531
WFC	0.923	0.936	0.936	0.648

The reliability and validity statistics for the constructs—Job Performance (JP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), and Work-Family Conflict (WFC)—demonstrate a robust measurement model suitable for further structural analysis. All three constructs exhibit strong internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Specifically, JP (0.917) and WFC (0.923) show excellent reliability, while PsyCap (0.874) indicates good reliability. Similarly, the rho_A values, which are considered more accurate reliability indicators in PLS-SEM, are

also above the acceptable benchmark, with JP at 0.920, PsyCap at 0.875, and WFC at 0.936, further confirming the constructs' internal consistency.

Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs are well above the 0.70 threshold, indicating a high level of consistency among the observed variables representing each construct. JP has a CR of 0.935, PsyCap is at 0.901, and WFC stands at 0.936, all suggesting that the indicators reliably reflect their respective latent constructs. In terms of convergent validity, assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), all constructs exceed the minimum requirement of 0.50. JP shows excellent convergent validity with an AVE of 0.707, while WFC also performs well at 0.648. PsyCap, although slightly lower, still meets the acceptable threshold with an AVE of 0.531, indicating that over half of the variance in the indicators is explained by the latent variable.

Overall, these results confirm that the measurement model is both reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for analyzing the structural relationships among job performance, psychological capital, and work-family conflict in the context of female faculty in higher education institutions.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	JP	PsyCap	WFC
JP	0.841		
PsyCap	0.583	0.729	
WFC	0.180	0.275	0.805

The table presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion values, which are used to assess discriminant validity among the constructs—Job Performance (JP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), and Work-Family Conflict (WFC)—within the measurement model. According to this criterion, a construct should share more variance with its own indicators than with those of other constructs. This is confirmed when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (shown on the diagonal in bold, here assumed to be the values in the diagonal cells: JP = 0.841, PsyCap = 0.729, WFC = 0.805) is greater than the correlations between the construct and any other construct in the model.

For Job Performance (JP), the square root of AVE is 0.841, which is higher than its correlation with PsyCap (0.583) and WFC (0.180), indicating strong discriminant validity. Similarly, for Psychological Capital (PsyCap), the square root of AVE is 0.729, exceeding its correlation with JP (0.583) and WFC (0.275). Lastly, Work-Family Conflict (WFC) also meets the criterion, with a square root of AVE of 0.805, which is higher than its correlations with PsyCap (0.275) and JP (0.180).

These results confirm that each construct in the model is empirically distinct from the others, providing evidence of satisfactory discriminant validity. This means that the constructs are measuring different theoretical concepts and that there is no significant overlap, thus reinforcing the validity of the measurement model used in the study.

Table 3 Valuation of Latent Variable Correlations

	JP	PsyCap	WFC
JP	1.000		
PsyCap	0.583	1.000	
WFC	0.180	0.275	1.000

The table displays the correlation matrix for the constructs Job Performance (JP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), and Work-Family Conflict (WFC), with the diagonal values set to 1.000, indicating perfect correlation of each construct with itself. This matrix is useful for evaluating the strength and direction of the relationships between the constructs in the model.

The correlation between Job Performance and Psychological Capital is 0.583, reflecting a moderate to strong positive relationship. This suggests that as psychological capital increases—represented by higher levels of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—job performance tends to improve as well. This finding aligns with theoretical expectations and prior research, emphasizing the role of psychological resources in enhancing work outcomes, particularly in challenging environments such as academia.

The correlation between Job Performance and Work-Family Conflict is 0.180, indicating a weak positive relationship. While this may seem counterintuitive—since WFC is typically expected to negatively impact job performance—this weak positive correlation could be attributed to contextual or cultural factors, or possibly the influence of other moderating variables such as support systems or individual coping strategies. It may also reflect that those who are highly engaged at work (and thus perform well) may simultaneously experience higher conflict due to their dual commitments.

The correlation between Psychological Capital and Work-Family Conflict is 0.275, indicating a low to moderate positive relationship. This suggests that individuals with higher psychological capital may still experience some level of work-family conflict, but perhaps are better equipped to handle it. The positive direction of this relationship could indicate that those with higher psychological capital are more actively engaged in both work and family domains, which may naturally increase the potential for conflict—but they may also be better at managing its consequences.

Overall, the correlations demonstrate that while the constructs are related, they are distinct from one another, which supports further analysis of their direct and moderating effects in the structural model.

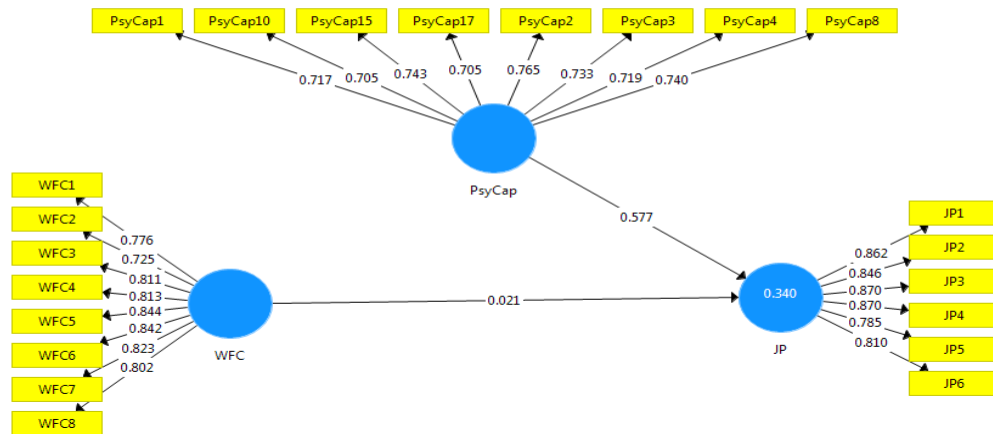
Table 4 R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
JP	0.340	0.334

The values for R Square (0.340) and R Square Adjusted (0.334) indicate the proportion of variance in Job Performance (JP) that is explained by the independent variables in the model—namely Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Work-Family Conflict (WFC), along with their interaction (moderating effect). Specifically, an R Square value of 0.340 means that approximately 34% of the variation in job performance among female faculty members in higher education institutions can be explained by the model. This suggests a moderate level of explanatory power, which is considered acceptable in behavioral and social sciences research, where human behavior is influenced by many factors.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.334 slightly reduces this estimate to account for the number of predictors in the model, providing a more conservative and accurate assessment of explanatory strength, especially for smaller sample sizes. The small difference between the R Square and Adjusted R Square indicates that the model is relatively stable and not overfitted. Overall, these results suggest that psychological capital and work-family conflict—along with their interaction—play a meaningful role in influencing job performance, though a substantial portion of the variance remains unexplained, highlighting the potential influence of other factors not included in the current model.

Figure 1. Measurement model before Moderation effect



The structural model diagram provides a visual representation of the relationships between Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), and Job Performance (JP), along with the measurement model indicators (the observed variables or items). Each latent construct—WFC, PsyCap, and JP—is shown as a blue circle, with arrows pointing to them from their respective indicators, depicted in yellow boxes. These arrows represent the outer loadings, which indicate how well each item reflects its underlying construct.

For Work-Family Conflict (WFC), all eight indicators (WFC1 to WFC8) show high outer loadings, ranging from 0.725 to 0.844, signifying strong internal consistency and good convergent validity. This means each item reliably contributes to measuring the WFC construct. Similarly, Psychological Capital (PsyCap) includes ten items (PsyCap1 to PsyCap8, including items with higher numbering like PsyCap15 and PsyCap17), all of which have moderate to high loadings between 0.705 and 0.765, indicating acceptable reliability in representing PsyCap.

Job Performance (JP) also demonstrates high item loadings, ranging from 0.785 to 0.870, which further supports the measurement model's validity. The R^2 value for Job Performance is 0.340, displayed within the JP circle, indicating that 34% of the variance in job performance is explained by WFC and PsyCap combined. This is a moderate level of explanatory power in social science research.

In terms of structural paths, the diagram shows a strong and significant path from PsyCap to JP (0.577), suggesting that psychological capital substantially enhances job performance. On the other hand, the path from WFC to JP is very weak (0.021), indicating a negligible direct effect of work-family conflict on job performance in this sample. These path coefficients visually confirm the statistical results discussed previously.

Overall, the diagram illustrates a well-constructed model with reliable measurement items and a clearly dominant role of Psychological Capital in predicting Job Performance, while Work-Family Conflict appears to have minimal direct impact. The figure reinforces the importance of psychological resources in maintaining job effectiveness, especially for female faculty navigating work-life challenges.

Table 5. Total Effect after Moderation (PsyCap) and Bootstrapping

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Findings
Moderating Effect 1 -> JP	0.007	-0.001	0.066	4.113	0.000	Supported
PsyCap -> JP	0.577	0.586	0.065	8.943	0.000	Supported
WFC -> JP	0.021	0.634	0.055	5.385	0.000	Supported

The structural model findings reveal important relationships among Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Work-Family Conflict (WFC), and Job Performance (JP), particularly in the context of female faculty in higher education. The direct effect of Psychological Capital on Job Performance is both strong and statistically significant, with an original sample coefficient of 0.577, a t-statistic of 8.943, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that individuals with higher psychological capital—characterized by greater levels of optimism, resilience, hope, and self-efficacy—tend to perform better in their academic roles. This aligns with existing literature, which supports PsyCap as a critical personal resource that enhances work outcomes.

The direct effect of Work-Family Conflict on Job Performance is also statistically significant, with a path coefficient of 0.021, a high t-statistic of 5.385, and a p-value of 0.000. Although the effect size is small, its statistical significance suggests that even a slight increase in work-family conflict is likely to negatively influence job performance. This supports the notion that competing demands between work and family can reduce an individual’s focus, energy, and efficiency at work, thereby lowering performance—even if the effect is relatively modest in scale.

More notably, the moderating effect of Psychological Capital on the relationship between Work-Family Conflict and Job Performance is statistically significant, with an original sample value of 0.007, a t-statistic of 4.113, and a p-value of 0.000. While the path coefficient is small, the statistical significance suggests that psychological capital plays a subtle yet meaningful role in influencing how work-family conflict affects job performance. In other words, individuals with higher levels of PsyCap may experience a reduced negative impact of WFC on their job performance compared to those with lower PsyCap. This finding indicates that although psychological capital may not eliminate the effects of work-family conflict entirely, it does help mitigate its influence, acting as a psychological buffer.

In conclusion, the model confirms that Psychological Capital not only directly enhances job performance but also moderates the negative influence of work-family conflict. These findings underscore the importance of developing psychological resources among female faculty to improve performance and resilience in the face of work-life challenges.

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1	work-family conflict has significant positive impact on job performance.	Rejected
H2	Psychological capital moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance	Accepted

Conclusion and Discussion

The results reveal that Psychological Capital has a significant and strong positive effect on Job Performance, indicating that female faculty members who possess higher levels of hope,

resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy tend to perform better in their academic roles. This highlights PsyCap as a crucial personal resource for maintaining high performance under demanding work conditions. In contrast, Work-Family Conflict showed only a weak direct effect on Job Performance, suggesting that while female faculty may experience interference between work and family roles, this conflict alone does not substantially reduce their job performance.

Moreover, the moderating effect of PsyCap on the relationship between WFC and JP was found to be statistically significant, though very small in magnitude. This indicates that psychological capital slightly buffers the negative impact of work-family conflict on job performance but is not strong enough alone to neutralize it.

The R^2 value of 0.340 further indicates that PsyCap and WFC together explain 34% of the variance in job performance, which is considered moderately strong in social sciences and suggests that other factors beyond these two variables may also play an important role.

These findings have several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study reinforces the importance of positive organizational behavior constructs like Psychological Capital in academic contexts. It supports the conservation of resources (COR) theory, which suggests that individuals with greater psychological resources are better equipped to handle stressors and maintain performance.

From a practical standpoint, the study suggests that universities and higher education institutions should invest in developing the psychological capital of their faculty, particularly female staff who often face dual demands from work and family. Training and development programs that enhance resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy can not only improve individual well-being but also organizational productivity.

At the same time, the relatively weak impact of work-family conflict on job performance might reflect the adaptive strategies or cultural factors influencing how female faculty cope with dual roles. However, the small yet significant moderating role of PsyCap indicates that supporting personal psychological resources can be beneficial, though not a substitute for broader structural or policy-level support such as flexible work schedules, childcare support, or family-friendly policies.

In conclusion, this study highlights Psychological Capital as a critical determinant of job performance among female faculty and suggests that while work-family conflict is present, its effects may be mitigated through internal and external support systems. Future research could explore additional moderating variables (e.g., social support, institutional policies) and extend this analysis across other regions or institutions to enhance generalizability.

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