A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY IN THE GENDERED EXPERIENCE OF PRECARIOUSNESS OF PAKISTANI ACADEMIA.

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ABSTRACT

The Study is a qualitative inquiry based on phenomenological research design that used 10 cases from different universities to investigate the gendered difference of academia experiencing precariousness. The study used the two major theoretical farming, the first one Career insecurity and Cruel Optimism. The qualitative data is analyzed using QDA miner lite using tree flow diagram and word cloud map. The key finding of the research are the presence of gendered experience of precariousness, that has negative impact on the careers (of Women) with lack of stable income and acceptance of exploitation of situations. Whereas lack of growth and development of career and presence of good life fantasy have less consideration in the study of precariousness of Pakistani Accademia. The key recommendation involves the way individuals, Organization and society can avoid negative impact of precariousness and can help in the development of gendered precariousness instrument.

Keywords: Precariousness, Cruel Optimism, Career Insecurity, Gendered experience and Phenomenological study, QDA miner lite.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of precarious work emerged in recent years as one of the major problems in developed capitalist societies. The definition of precarious work is that the work which is *uncertain, unstable*, and *insecure* and in which *employees bear the risks* of work (as opposed to businesses or the government) and *receive limited social benefits and statutory protections*. The instability of work is not only affecting the jobs all around the world but rather have huge implication on the social and psychological wellbeing of individuals. The social cost of precarious work is inevitable; the impact on family community and culture is quite evident in the research of Vallas & Kalleberg (2018). The two major scholarly debates on precarity of work are from the contemporary social sociologist and economic sociologist. The foremost school of thought sees precarity as the main reason of conflict, which will turn society into non-conformity,

pessimism and rebel. Bauman (2000) sees a new era unfolding in which the solid, stable institutional structures that undergirded industrial capitalism have given way to a new era – one of "liquid modernity" – in which the condition of "precariousness, instability, vulnerability is the most widespread (as well as the most painfully felt) feature of contemporary life conditions. They argue that the precariousness of work in modern society is serving as "political function."

The Economic sociologist identify four major reasons for precariousness of work, which includes De unionization, Financialization, globalization and digital revolution. The idea of precarious work as a loss of social protections or of standard employment relations is useful in analyzing developed advanced capitalist countries, which have histories of social protections and where the idea of standard work still has some normative force. By contrast, in much of

the less developed world, where precarious work has long been the norm, the concept has had less relevance. One of the important points is that Precariousness in many countries is very convoluted. It is disguised into complex layers of norms and values and social setting. (Gallas, 2018)

Academia and Precariousness

Once higher education was for the niche of wealthy elite, who wanted to understand the contemporary world, to make better social understanding. Today's world however is different where higher education is for masses. This globalization of education produced an opportunity of education as "Faux Business". This intention of transforming Academia into mere business created an environment where knowledge and its contribution to better society, is transformed into a medium to get political and economic benefits. This trend has flounder the autonomy of researcher, and transformed research into only instrumental value rather than intrinsic ones. (Geppert and Hollinshead, 2017),(Loher, Strasser, Monterescu and Gallo, 2019) . This trend of universitites to establish their selves as an efficient buinsess models made the accedmaics to proof their worth , which is now mostly identified with their reserch publications and if they lack behind they may lose their jobs.This sense of insecurity caused a vivous cycle in which the the teaching job is shifted to Teacing assistence the Mphil aspiarnts . (Minhaj, 2020). Similar argument is presented by (Gallas, 2018) that the increasing precariousness in accedmia is reflected in the form of termed contract ,low pay , ambigious terms and conditions in employement contrcats , represseive govenance policies to force accedmaics to certain conformity and bleak job opportunitutes if they are out of work. The term associated with this bleak job opportunitites is also vocalised by McKenzie (2017) as causlaization of staff in accedmia negatively affecting the Phd aspriatants in Austrila. Similar observation is made in the reserch work of Allmer (2018) in the scotalnd universitites where autonomy flexiablity of accedmaics where questioned on their empolyment status.The reserch finding of (Izharuddin, 2018) is indicating that there is an establishment of Prercarit in Accedmia, who is expoliating the new aspraiatnt, in highly industrialised accedmia in Masalsyia.Thus

precariosness is nothing new , but a trend evident in many countires today.

Academia in Pakistan

The field of Academia in Pakistan is often on the verge of interpersonal conflicts of Individuals causing immense damage to the policy making in the right direction. The recent turf between Dr Atta –ur-Rehman and Dr Tariq Banuri is a very clear example that the Higher education commission of Pakistan needs to focus its priority in right direction. (Hoodbhoy, 2019). The reserch Culture in Pakistan is devastingly affected because of these Career management policies to gain promotion based on their published reserch papers.Second danunting problem is the securing of funds for reserch . (Zardari, 2014).Both these issues are creating an enviornment where contractual job is a night mare where as , those who are entering the filed are faced with bleak job options.To imparied new entrants prospectives, mediocracy in very field of accedmia is promoted and delibaretly celebarted to bhoost the number game. As one of the prominent Professor of Maths and physcis when resigned shared this respective point of view

"I am resigning because the Administration is not just tolerating academic mediocrity but is actively soliciting and promoting." (Reportor, 2020)

The proliferation of censorship and regressive government policies of Pakistan is making life miserable for teachers and professors. These regressive policies are making the work environment in academia more precarious than any other reason; Adding insult to injury is the solution for out of campus online Education due to covid -19 pandemic, till date is an ongoing issue in the academia of Pakistan (Gabool, 2019).
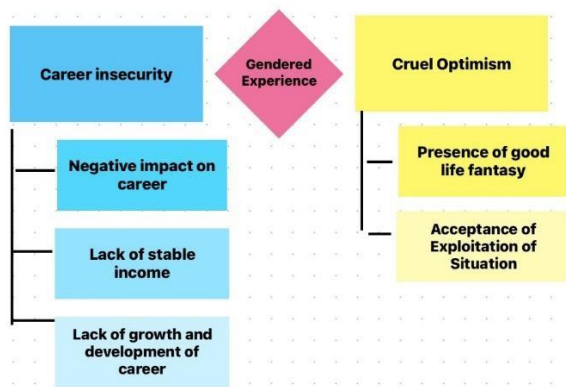
Women in Pakistani Academia

The female participation in work force constituent less than 30 percent of the labor force. The exclusion of women from Decision-making is also very prominent in almost every sector in Pakistan. The child bearing and family responsibilities are often the reason women lack behind in their professional career hugely as compare to their male colleagues. (Finnigan, 2019)The field of education and Academia considered as career choice women can have in the conservative patriarchal society of

Pakistan because "Teachers must be respected as a common slogan among households in Pakistan. Unfortunately, this assumed respect for teacher and academia is good option for Women is tearing down so many ambitious women. This only last resort of an option to carry a career academia is making them more vulnerable to precariousness emerging in this sector. Another impact full aspect-affecting woman in academia is the combination of Capitalism and

Patriarchy, a classic combination to resist change. (Ayaz,Ashraf and Hopper, 2019,)

Research Problem
There is a need to identify the gendered experience of precariousness of in Pakistani Academia.

Research Question
Is there gendered experience in the academia of Balochistan?
Is the career insecurity a factor that makes academia for female precarious?
Is there is Cruel Optimism present that makes academia precarious for women in Balochistan?

Theoretical Framing and Contribution
The theoretical framework for this research project is based on the study result of Bone (2021), that argue that precariousness has become more pervasive because of the nature of Cruel Optimism. Besides, the Career Insecurity is the other factor identified by (McKenzie,2017).

This notion is more complex for women as they already have very limited number of options available to earn an honest living. Academia once considered being a reputable and best option for women to choose as a career is on turmoil since 2002. Hence, introducing the gendered experience is the vital aspect of the thematic Model of this study. The figure 1.1 is the Thematic analysis model of the study-based Career insecurity, Cruel Optimism, and gendered experience lenses.

Research Design
Phenomenological study, Individual Interviews from those Women who are currently working or worked under the conditions characterized as precarious work in academia low income, huge workload, no statuary benefits, and long work hours without pay.

Data Analysis
The research gathered 10 cases from all the universities of Balochistan. The case studies were from the Female visiting lecturers from different university campuses of Balochistan. The case studies were than analysis via QDA miner lite, qualitative software that helped in the creation of tree table based on the codes and its frequency. The second testament that is part of the analysis is word map that visually highlights the most important themes based on the frequency of the codes.

Findings

The key findings of the research are highlighted in figure 1.2. The Tree flow diagram reflects the connection between the key themes and subsequent codes that describe the key findings for the research. The cases percentage reflects the coverage of codes under specific theme, so the negative impact is the highest quoted theme, which is aligned with the key concept of precariousness, followed by gendered

experience of the precariousness in academia. Lack of stable income and acceptance is the second quoted themes in the interviews which provides sustainable insight that there is indeed widespread prevalence of precariousness.

		% Codes	% Cases
Career Insecurity			
	Negative Impact on career	19.7%	90.0%
	Lack of stable income	12.1%	60.0%
	Lack of growth and development	22.7%	40.0%
Cruel Optimism			
	Presence of good life fanatsy	10.6%	40.0%
	Acceptanace of the expolitaion of the situation	21.2%	60.0%
Gender Differences			
	Gendered expereince of Precariousness	13.6%	80.0%

The word cloud map reflects that there is gendered experience of Precariousness that has negative impact on the careers (of Women) with lack of stable income and acceptance of exploitation of situations. Whereas lack of growth and development of career and presence of good life fantasy have less consideration in the study of precariousness of Pakistani Accademia.

The word cloud is an important tool to summarize the major thematic finding of the study that provides support to the proposition of the study i.e. There is gendered experience of precariousness in Pakistani academia, The career insecurity is making academia more precarious; And the Cruel Optimism is one of the factor women in academia is feeling more precariousness.

DISCUSSION
Career Insecurity
Impact on Career
The key feature of precariousness is the negative impact as unstable career leads to unstable professional life. This feature is quite evident in the interviews of the study participants as most of the cases participants had worked as visiting or contractual employee for 5 to 10 years. The most important time of the career building has been passed in precarious work in academia. As quoted by one respondent of the case study.

"Working as visiting lecture is not an option anyone would choose but unfortunately the universities are currently interested in hiring on visiting services only."

Lack of Stable Income
The most problematic issue of precarious work is the lack of stable income. The most important hygiene factor that results in motivation is salary, according to two factor theory of Motivation. As one respondent highlighted.

"I asked my Head of department regarding the payment structure of payment for the extra duty assigned to me, to which she replied, Ma'am you cannot ask for Payment. When I argued based on logic, she dismissively stated that the regional director would not allow such payments and if you are that adamant wait let me ask the RD to talk to you. In retrospect, you can guess what would have happen next."

Lack of Growth and Development in Career
This parameter is actually the result of Neo liberal academic practices all around the world. The privatization of organization such as schools' colleges and universities. This practice had transformed the institution for knowledge into business organization who are racing to gain maximum number of students by establishing a fancy world into their universities rather than the true instinct of education. As one of the prominent professors when resigned stated this, "I am resigning because the Administration appears to have only one interest at heart – that to have grand graduation ceremonies."

Similarly, another respondent informed the pessimistic prospective regarding the career growth and development option for visiting lecturers.

"There are now many options available for career growth when the best you can do that is write and publish any research own your own as there is no organizational identity attached with the visiting teacher."

Similar information gathered by another participant of the case for the research.

I was not been able to attend a research conference last year because my university didn't allowed me to go , When I insisted it important ,they ask me to write for non-paid leave, what other option do I have but to leave the conference ."

CRUEL OPTIMISM
Presence of Good life Fantasy

This concept characterized as the distinction between the labor into two categories .The foremost, the insider who has secure pay social status and autonomy and the outsider who is on contract and least autonomy of work. (Afanso, 2014) This idea is highlighted by the research of () as well which translated into the theme of the presence of good life fantasy. The universities in Pakistan are also promoting the idea of good life fantasy as quoting one respondent: The administration has a single answer to all our grievance that if you work hard you will get a better position eventually"

Similarly, the presence of goof life fantasy makes the work more precarious as even after knowing that there is insecure and stable work the teachers in academia are choosing to work her way up quoting another teacher from management school.

"I have been Informed by seniors that you are wasting your time if you think you can work your way up to get a permeant opportunity, but I have been amendment to make it work."

Acceptance of the Exploitation of the Situation

This factor is not new to recognize. The reason individuals engage in precarious work are found to have accepted the nature of their job. There is strong resignation in women in academia to change the path of their careers. If they are lagging behind in their tenure track, they blame their selves rather than their organization even though the real culprit may be the university itself. One of the respondent said "I was not be to attend a research conference last year because my university didn't allowed me to go , When I insisted it important ,they ask me to write for non-paid leave, what other option do I have but to leave the conference ."

I was asked into online system numerous time whether I have completed my credit hours or not, even though I have taken extra credit hours (without any pay) to complete the assessment, where as one of my senior who did not provided services got paid much more than me , because of the nature of her Contract.

Gendered Differences
Gendered Experience of Precariousness

Gender differences this parameter provides a broader horizon regarding the repressive conservative culture of Pakistan in general. The misconception regarding the ideology of Feminism is so deep rooted that even the educated elite of Pakistan did not consider it important. Those female scholars who seems to carry out research in this area or even have nominal association with this concept is consider "TAGGED". It is very troublesome to comprehend, when a feminist seems to raise awareness regarding the exploitation of their job and work environment, they are hushed by their own female counter parts with the argument. "See you are always like this, every other female is working in similar condition, then why is that you have problem "This quote is from an M Phil aspirant who is currently working in the regional campus of National University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The key recommendation based on the study are as follow:

The precariousness that is reflected in the form of Career insecurity is very important for organization, Individual and Society

Organizations will become more gendered, and it will result in mor rigid power structure and that will increase gender gaps in academia.

The precariousness will also lead to mass turnover that increases cost of the organization and by understanding its key factors this cost can be reduced by ensuring permanency of work with equitable income and opportunities for growth and development of career

The Individual will benefit from this study by understanding the adopting cruel optimism will lead to an increase in the precariousness of jobs.

The cruel optimism based on good life fantasy removes the agency of individual specially women, so by tackling the concept of good life fantasy can help individual to gain voice in precarious work.

As society this paper reflect on the nature of working women in the society. Pakistan prefers to maintain status quo and hegemonic power structure, by the proliferation of precariousness in educational institution the women will lose more grounds to eradicate the hegemonic nature of power as Bertrand Rusell argued in his essay on education that the

purpose of education is to provide discipline to individual so that he becomes the member of community. Therefore, the precariousness that is gendered lead to the creation of a community that will abhor gender equality and will provide resistance against any social change.

Further, the study provides substantial potential for the mixed research or the development of gendered precariousness instrument.

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