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PAKISTANI FEMALE ACADEMICS' CAREER PROGRESSION TRAJECTORIES: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCES OF INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES

Fouzia Sadaf

Pakistani Female Academics' Career Progression Trajectories: A Qualitative Analysis of Influences of Institutional Practices and Structures

Fouzia Sadaf

Thesis Submitted to Durham University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Department of Sociology

Durham University

2022

Declaration

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Acknowledgements

My PhD research journey started at the end of 2016 though my background struggle to reach Durham University had another two-year-long tale. I reached the UK to start an entirely new chapter of life with baggage of fear, uncertainty, lack of confidence and understanding. I experienced many **FIRSTs** of my life, from my first international travelling to my first opportunity to present in front of international academia. In contrast to my background disadvantages, a long list of persons, interactions, and opportunities enable me to develop my PhD research project and explore my potential. Accounting for my journey enablers: from the structural arrangement of the UK higher education institutions and society that directly and directly contribute to smoothly moving on in my journey to individuals whose unconditional support gives me a lifetime ability to trust in the strength of relationships.

The best element of my PhD trajectory is the opportunity to be supervised by Dr Vikki Boliver and Dr Matthew David. They are genuinely sincere and highly patient in enabling me to unlearn prenotions and develop skills to learn, reflect and grow academically and personally. I am blessed that both my supervisors actively and equally engaged in my journey with a combination of different yet significantly enduring and influencing personalities. The most central element of our relationship is the continuity of our academic and social relationships beyond this PhD journey and across the borders.

My husband and two daughters are the second most incomparable sources of support. Without them, all learning, sacrifices, and achievements are meaningless. Their sacrifices, patience, love and trust in me to complete this journey is a constant way of hope. Fayaz's contribution as a househusband to take the lead in performing domestic duties alongside his night work duties creates a unique course of life that women generally, particularly in Pakistan, rarely experience. Azka and Saliha growing so beautifully from little girls to attractive teenagers during this time was

the only glamour in my life. Thank you- Azka and Saliha, for all your patience, sacrifice and understanding even at this young age.

My mother and father- I lost both of them during this most challenging time. Yet, these two persons are the underlying force for me to continue this journey of learning and growth. They were explicit examples and models of integrity, hard work, and genuine commitment to their professional careers and family lives. I am clear that the continuity of their legacy throughout my life is connecting me with them even after they left this world.

Finally, I am incredibly grateful to thirty female professors who agreed to participate in this study and shared the most impressive and distinctive biographies. It is a true joy to learn about their journeys of achievements and struggles.

Pakistani Female Academics' Career Progression Trajectories: A Qualitative Analysis of Influences of Institutional Practices and Structures

Fouzia Sadaf

Abstract

The continuing underrepresentation of women compared to their male colleagues in academic and administrative leadership positions has received considerable attention in the literature, revealing a range of challenges and barriers. Presently, higher education researchers are increasingly focusing on the potentially positive effects of institutional factors on female academics' career progression across the global academy. However, very little was found in the literature on the lives of professionally successful women (e.g., female professors) in Pakistan. The present qualitative PhD research addresses this gap in the literature by exploring the experiences of institutional practices and structures of a sample of thirty female academics on their routes toward a professorial position in public sector universities of the Punjab province (Pakistan).

A constructivist framework, biographical interviewing, and a qualitative data matrix analysis technique were aligned to design theoretical and analytical tools to conceptualise and operationalise choices and decisions related to the research questions, topics covered in the interview guide, and data analysis methods. Motivated by my personal and professional interests in this topic and drawing on theory and contextual considerations, this thesis explores Pakistani female academics' understandings of their academic and career choice formations. Furthermore, female professors' perceptions of the central enablers and hurdles they encountered in their journeys to reach a professorial position were explored. Biographical semi-structured interviews with a sample of thirty female professors produced rich and detailed accounts of the interplay and influence of personal characteristics and circumstances, as well as institutional practices and structures, in

their journeys to reach the position of professor in Pakistani higher education organisations. A qualitative data matrix strategy was employed to organise interview data into explanatory themes and relevant categories of study participants' experiences based on different combinations of illustrative themes. In addition, I created a typology of themes and categories via an abductive coding strategy that involves connecting notions from existing theory with new ones that emerged from the data analysis. Finally, the thematic interpretation of female professors' career progress/trajectory is presented in chronological order, from the initial framing of their academic and career aspirations and decisions, through to entry into an academic career and early career progression experiences, to promotion tracks towards a professorship.

The qualitative analysis has revealed that progressive family patriarchal figures (fathers, brothers, and husbands) and family beliefs regarding girls' education and careers were central sources of familial involvement, encouragement and support, enabling women's academics to participate in public realms of education and professional careers and succeed. In findings, I argue that family networks were supportive rather than oppressive structures – at least in cases where families have progressive family members who facilitate these women to combine childrearing responsibilities alongside the requisites of academic career progress. Furthermore, in relation to exploring what did and did not help female academics' career progression after joining university employment, biographies shared by women repeatedly emphasised their academic talent and performance (e.g. degrees and published work), academic mentors, and accessible professional development opportunities that enabled them to succeed; or supported them in overcoming hurdles resulting from anticompetitive colleagues' behaviours or organisational deficiencies.

The overall findings highlight the significance of family background as a source of various enablers/socio-cultural capital(s), as most women in the study were from advantaged family backgrounds. In contrast, a minority of the academic women studied belonged to relatively less well-off families. Yet, still, they experienced parental encouragement and instrumental support for their academic and career

achievements even as such values and norms are more common in affluent families than in poorer ones. This research integrates and advances higher education career knowledge by suggesting that women's career success is influenced by a combination of different socio-cultural capital(s) linked to the privileged family backgrounds or which ensued from workplace networking and professional development opportunities.

In the concluding discussion, I develop an explanatory model to account for the career success of a sample of thirty female professors in this study. This theoretical explanation comprises institutional elements: 1) positive and progressive forms of patriarchy, 2) resourceful family/social networks, and 3) opportunity for reliable family childcare arrangements sourced from family background and its social environment. Finally, the study findings significantly contribute to policy aimed at widening universities' economic and academic/intellectual capital(s) to enable talented women, even those from less-privileged backgrounds, to perform and progress in male-dominated Pakistani higher education organisations.

Contents

Declaration 3

Statement of Copyright 3

Acknowledgements 4

Contents 9

List of Tables 15

List of Figures 17

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background Literature 18

1.1 Introduction to the Thesis 18

1.2 My Academic Interests and Methodological Preferences for Exploring Female Academics' Career Trajectories 21

1.3 Background Literature: Key Theoretical Approaches, Empirical Studies, and Conceptualisation of Female Professors' Career Journeys 25

1.3.1 Configuration of academic career profession and gendered domestic caregiving 28

1.3.2 Gendered academy & female academics' career outcomes 35

1.4 Female Academics' Career Understanding: A Shift in Research Focus 42

1.5 Women's Academic Career Progression: The Need for Contextual Understanding 52

1.6 Research Gaps and Trends in the Existing Field of Knowledge 60

1.7 Relevance of Studying Female Academics' Career Development 64

1.8 Process of Theorisation & Formulation of Study Questions 65

1.9 Thesis Summary and Structure of Chapters 69

Chapter 2: Methodology 75
2.1 Introduction 75
2.2 Qualitative Research Approach 75
2.3 Biographical Semi-Structured Interviews: Rationale and Benefit Using the Interview Guide 79
2.3.1 Content and designing of the interview guide 81
2.3.2 Sequence of interview topics and structure of interview tool 83
2.4 Sample Design and Strategy of Sample Recruitment 85
2.4.1 Multistage sampling design: study population, sampling frame & selection of study sample 86
2.4.2 Sample Size 92
2.5 Field Experiences 93
2.5.1 Challenges in gaining access to study participants 93
2.5.2 Pilot interview 98
2.5.3 Location/venue & duration of the interview 99
2.5.4 What is going on during interviews? 100
2.5.5 Communication dynamics with study participants and self-reflexivity .104
2.6 Data Analysis Strategies 107
2.6.1 Interview language, translation & transcription 108
2.6.2 Data analysis approach: multistage coding & reflective thematic analysis 108
2.6.3 The coding strategy: from prefigured codes to data-based coding 109
2.6.4 Analytic coding: generating themes & categories 111

2.6.5 Codebook, logistics of coding and visual display of findings.....113
2.7 Conclusion 116
Chapter 3: Professoriate Trajectory: The Role of Family and Personal Preferences in Shaping Women's Educational & Career Choices 118
3.1 Introduction 118
3.2 Study Participants' Family Background Characteristics: A Contextual Understanding of Personal and Familial Influences on Women's Educational Pathways 119
3.2.1 Coding strategy to categorise study participants' family backgrounds ..120
3.2.2 Matrix display and description.....121
3.3 Family Influences and Women's Educational & Career Routes 127
3.3.1 Approach to code, categorise and display attitudinal and belief elements of family influences.....129
3.3.2 Matrices illustrate women's perceptions about the influence of family values and parents' attitudes on their academic and career route selections ..131
3.3.3 Family educational and career values and aspirations for their daughters 136
3.3.3.1 Encouraging & reinforcing attitudes.....137
3.3.3.2 Progressive/ egalitarian attitudes towards women's education compared to typical attitudes in wider Pakistani society 141
3.3.3.3 Linking academic aspirations to family education history.....148
3.4 Family Role in Academic and Career Guidance 157

3.4.1 Approach to code & categorise study participants' experiences regarding family guidance....158
3.4.2 Tables display & description....159
3.4.3 Analytic Interpretation of Family Guidance's Role in Women's Academic and Career Choice Formations....164
3.5 Women's Personal Preferences and the Start of an Academic Career....178
3.5.1 Coding strategy for personal preferences theme....178
3.5.2 Tables display & description....179
3.5.3 Analytic interpretation of the role of motivating preferences in academic career selections....184
3.6 Summary and Concluding Remarks....195
Chapter 4: The Role of Interpersonal and Institutional Elements in Early Academic Career Advancement....201
4.1 Introduction....201
4.2 A coding Scheme for Early Academic Career Experiences....201
4.3 University Leaders and Study Participants' Early Academic Career....211
4.3.1 Supportive role of academic leaders....211
4.3.2 Mixed leadership experiences....216
4.3.3 Negative leadership....220
4.4 Influence of Relations with Colleagues on Study Participants' Early Career Years....224
4.4.1 Positive collegiality....225
4.4.2 Mixed experiences....230

4.4.3 Negative collegiality 232
4.5 Women Biographies related to Workplace Conditions: Professional Development Opportunities, Facilities and Cultural Practices 237
4.5.1 Positive experiences 239
4.5.2 Mixed experiences related to workplace conditions 242
4.5.3 Negative experiences with workplace conditions 246
4.6 Role of Family in Shaping Early Career Outcomes 252
4.6.1 Role of family support in the early years of the academic career journey 252
4.6.2 Mixed experiences 256
4.7 Analytic Interpretation 261
Chapter 5: Promotion Trajectories 272
5.1 Introduction 272
5.2 Coding Methods for Women's Promotion Trajectories 273
5.3 Fast-Track Promotion Trajectory 281
5.4 Slightly Interrupted Promotion Trajectory 286
5.5 Interrupted Promotion Trajectory 293
5.6 Women's Responses to Barriers to their Promotion Trajectory 300
5.7 A Comparative Look at Women's Promotion Experiences and Concluding Remarks 307
Chapter 6: Final Discussion & Conclusion 315
6.1 Introduction 315
6.2 Summary of Key Findings 315

6.3 Implications of Female Professors' Social Background, and University resources for their Career Progression Trajectories 320
6.4 Theoretical & Methodological Relevance & Contribution 325
6.5 Methodological Contribution 330
6.6 Explanatory Model & Concluding Remarks 332
6.7 Practical Implications, Limitations & Future Research Recommendations ...336
APPENDICES 340
Appendix-1: Topics for interview guide 340
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet 342
Appendix 3: Consent Form 344
Project Title: Exploring Career Development: Reflection from Pakistan Drawing upon Female Professors' Career Histories 344
Appendix 4: Participant's Demographic Checklist 345
Appendix 5: Ethics Approval 346
Bibliography 347

List of Tables

Table-1 Gender Representation among Universities in Pakistan (Singh, 2008) 19

Table-2 Percentage of Female Professors across the Global Academy 27

Table-3 A Review of Empirical Studies Examine Female Academics' Career Experiences in Pakistani Universities.....55

Table-4 List of Public Universities in the Province of Punjab 90

Table-5 Selected Universities with Number of Male and Female Professors 92

Table-6 Study Participants' Categories as per their Family Background Characteristics.....122

Table-7 Background Characteristics & Study Participants' Perceptions about the Role of Family's Educational Values in their Academic and Career Choice Formation 133

Table-8 Women's Categories According to their Perceptions and Experiences of Family Educational Values and Attitudes.....136

Table-9 Study Participants' Family Background Categories and Family Role in Advising and Inspiring Women's Academic and Career Choices.....161

Table-10 Women's Categories Based on their Selections for Different Combinations of the Subthemes Related to Different Forms of Family Engagement ..164

Table-11 Study Participants' Family Background Characteristics, the Role of Personal Preferences and Work Opportunities in their Academic and Career Choice Selections 181

Table-12 Women's Categories Based on their Selection for Different Configurations of Influential Personal Preferences 184

Table-13 Categories of Study Participants according to their Varied Experiences regarding the Influence of Interpersonal and Institutional Elements on the Early Years of their Academic Career 204

Table-14 Categorization of Study Participants according to their Biographies about the Influential Elements (boss, colleagues, workplace conditions, and family relations and structures) 265

Table-15 Categorization of Study Participants according to the Relative Contribution of Perceived Enablers of and Barriers to their Promotion to the Professorial Position.....277

List of Figures

Figure 1: Cycle/ Process of Reaching the Core Research Question 24

Figure 2: Outline of the Analysis Plan 115

Figure 3: Key Pillars of Explanatory Model for Academic Women Trajectory towards the Professorial Position 333

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background Literature

1.1 Introduction to the Thesis

The central aim of this PhD study is to advance understanding of the influence of family and university practices and structures on shaping female academics' paths to reach the position of professor in Pakistan. I have conducted biographical interviews with a sample of thirty female professors to analyse these women's experiences and explanations for their trajectories of career progression in public universities in Punjab (the largest province of Pakistan). A review of the literature surrounding women's participation in higher education and the labour economy, particularly in Pakistani society, has underscored some theoretical and empirical areas where my study's findings can extend the existing knowledge field. The number of women who are gaining education and participating in the labour economy of Pakistan, especially in professional careers, is increasing steadily, with persistent gender gaps in career achievements and professional ranks (Nasir, 2005; Maqsood, Maqsood and Raza, 2012; Kaleem and Rathore, 2021).

Women's workforce participation has increased from 13.4% in 1990 to 25% % in 2018 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Despite a steady increase in female labour force participation in all sectors of the Pakistan economy, but remains very low at 25% compared to countries at the same level of development like 28% in Nepal, 34.4% in Srilanka and 36.4% in Bangladesh (International Labour Organization, 2020). According to a global survey by International Labour Organization (ILO), Pakistan ranks last among 108 countries where the leadership workforce is female, with only 3% of women in middle and upper-level management positions in formal organizations (Wirth-Dominicé, 2015). In addition, Pakistan ranks 153rd out of 156 countries (third to last) on the gender parity related to education, economic, political and health gains, published by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index (2021). Given Pakistan's worst status regarding gender-based gaps in political empowerment, education and economic participation, it is not surprising that almost four out of every five Pakistani adult females do not represent the workforce (Pio and Syed, 2013). Notably, highly qualified women also encounter impediments to their career choice formations and professional growth since only about 25% of

Pakistani women, who have a university degree, work in the formal economy, with only 11% of professionally qualified women occupying professional/managerial positions in their organisational hierarchies. (Grünenfelder, 2013; Sarwar and Imran, 2019; ILO, 2020).

However, a data review on Pakistani women's status reveals that highly educated and professional women remained largely invisible within national and global scholarly debates and the media's focus. Moreover, a small proportion of professional Pakistani women reach their professions' top levels and leadership positions. Such as in academia- socio-culturally considered the most admired field of profession for women in Pakistan, a significant gender disparity exists in the top ranks of university organizational hierarchies, with significantly fewer women in leadership and decision-making/authority positions (Khokhar, 2018). Markedly, a consistent lack of statistical data and theoretical interpretation of women's leadership in universities of Pakistan shows that gender analysis remained absent from policy documents and academic literature debates (Morley and Crossouard, 2016). Among infrequently conducted academic scholarship and statistics, Singh (2008) collected data on female staff in Commonwealth universities, including Pakistan. This rarely available data gave an overview of female academic leaders in South Asia. Pakistan-focused statistics show gender representation across different categories of leadership positions in Pakistani universities. The following table highlights a massive gender gap/disparity for all categories of administrative and academic leadership positions in Pakistani universities.

Table-1 Gender Representation among Universities in Pakistan (Singh, 2008)

Positions	Women	%age	Men	%age
Senior management teams	5	13.2	33	86.8
Deans	7	14.6	41	85.4
Finance Officers/Bursars	0	0.00	15	100
Chief Librarian	5	38.5	8	61.5
Personnel officers	0	0.00	9	100
International officers	1	10	9	77
Professors	78	23	261	78
Head and directors	53	22	188	100
Head of the administration	0	0.00	29	100
Executive Head Vice chancellors	0	0.00	33	86.8

Though this small section of professionally successful women in leadership positions is visible and influential in domestic and professional institutions, they are rarely understood and acknowledged in national and international literature and media (Haeri, 2002). In addition, empirical research related to gender, work, and women's career advancement has been designed to explore why women are underrepresented in the top positions in university hierarchies and other vertically stratified workplaces and why they 'leak' from the 'pipe' of career advancement. Presently, theoretical understanding and empirical examination of the factors and conditions that allow professional women to succeed are increasingly explored and recognised in higher education research. However, the literature on enablers, as opposed to inhibitors, has been collected mainly from western countries (Nguyen, 2013; Karam and Afiouni, 2014; Abalkhail, 2019). Moreover, evidence on the nature, types and relationships between factors influencing women's career achievements within academia is inconclusive (Mishra, 2005; Toyibah, 2020). It requires more empirical data across the global academy to explain cultural, geographical, contextual and historical differences. There are consistent calls in the literature to empirically analyse the importance of local realities and cultural life patterns in shaping and explaining cross-cultural differences in terms of how career accomplishments are achieved, understood and experienced (Moghadam, 2004, Dries, 2011; Lirio et al., 2007; Morely, 2013; Afiouni, and Karam, 2014; McNae and Vali, 2015; Gandhi and Sen, 2021).

Given the theoretical and contextual realism of the current study, an investigation needs to understand the conditions and experiences of those women who reach senior academic and leadership positions. Especially, in-depth qualitative interviews with professionally high achiever female academics offer a rich and insightful understanding of persons, events, processes, and conditions experienced by participants in terms of their influence in shaping women's success in the predominantly patriarchal society of Pakistan. In brief, the theoretical significance of my research is to address the research gap in the academic literature on women's status in Pakistan by studying professionally successful women with a particular focus on the enabling role of institutional structures and practices. Thus, I focused

on exploring the life experiences of a class of women who are small in numbers. However, they are active players in their families, workplaces, and society.

This introductory chapter of the thesis aims to develop an understanding and present arguments for the importance of my doctoral research project and the value of the methodological approach taken to explore the career trajectories of thirty female professors. I organised this chapter into four sections to introduce the topic and lay out the study's purpose and significance. Firstly, I delineate my interest in studying professional women's lives, shaped by my identity as a Pakistani woman and my professional positionality. The second section presents a detailed discussion of major sociological theoretical perspectives and empirical studies in the scholarly field of work, gender, and career development. Then, the rationale for choosing the phenomenon of 'career lives of female academics in Pakistan' for empirical examination is explained, elaborating on its theoretical and contextual significance. The main focus of the analysis of background literature is to identify central theoretical concepts that will be used in theorising the research purpose and study questions and highlight the domains of knowledge that my study is designed to contribute/ expand. Next, I will summarise the literature discussion by positing my research focus and study questions constructed from existing knowledge. Finally, the structure and content of the thesis's subsequent chapters are outlined.

1.2 My Academic Interests and Methodological Preferences for Exploring Female Academics' Career Trajectories

Personal experiences, professional status, academic interests, and methodological predilections have often inspired researchers to examine certain phenomena (Maxwell, 2012; Bryman, 2016). Alternatively, these inclinations refer to academic goals or personal theories that motivate seeking knowledge in one's preferred study area. Similarly, my gendered identity as an educated and professionally engaged woman, and my career as an academician, are the primary sources of my interest in examining the career trajectories of professionally educated women in Pakistan society. This particular class of educated and professional Pakistani women are rarely heard and studied. They are largely invisible in Western literature on women and work and rarely feature in the media, despite their relatively influential status

in their own country (Haeri, 2002; Critelli, 2010). Being a member of a small category of highly educated Pakistani women holding professional positions in the labour economy inspired me to consider posing questions about women from similar educational backgrounds and professional statuses. After deciding on this category of educated and professional Pakistani women, I needed to make decisions about research sites and designs, such as the location of the study, which professions to focus on, and appropriate data collection methods. My academic career and research experiences have helped me answer the above questions.

My interest in scientifically examining Pakistan's professional women led me to refine my focus on a specific category of professionally engaged Pakistan women: female academics employed in public universities. As a result, I have become especially interested in work-life conflict issues faced by female academics. On many occasions of informal and formal interactions at the organisational levels of my university, female colleagues and friends across different academic departments spoke of their concerns about balancing work and family priorities. In particular, female academics in junior positions highlighted challenges to fulfilling the career progression's requirements- obtaining a PhD and conducting and publishing research – due to the constant pressures of family care needs and non-research-related academic tasks such as teaching and student support endeavours and administrative tasks.

These familiar narratives, particularly marked by career advancement struggles, made me realise the importance of a systematic understanding of women's stories, experiences, and thoughts experiencing these challenging and conflicting lifestyles, which have rarely been heard and recognised. Given this background, I designed qualitative interviews for my MPhil project to examine work/family conflict sources and strategies to manage work/family priorities among female academics. While doing a literature review and data collection for my MPhil research, some revelations have developed my interest in exploring the career advancement trajectories of the relatively small proportion of female academics who managed to reach the top of the academic hierarchy for my PhD research project. One of the critical field challenges usually faced by researchers is the accessibility of female participants when they are

recruited from a traditional Muslim society like Pakistan due to gender segregation practices (Rahat, 2020). During my M.Phil. research, despite the accessibility and visibility of my study participants (female academics) compared to other categories of women who are veiled and are restricted in their autonomy and mobility, I found a dearth of academic literature and theoretical silence on professionally successful women's roles and experiences. In contrast, the existing academic literature on the status of Pakistani women focuses almost exclusively on uneducated, poor, and rural women's issues of constrained access to education, economic exploitation, and gender-based violence. I argue that the sporadic presence of professionally educated women may lead to a flawed and incomplete understanding of Pakistani women occupying diversified and varied statuses linked to socio-economic class, regional, historical, ethnic, and cultural differences (Haeri, 2002; Critelli, 2010).

Eventually, a couple of questions in my mind became a reference point from which to pursue my PhD research which seeks to scientifically understand a class of Pakistani women who are visible and accessible in their society and sometimes praised and glorified due to their achievements. However, this class of educated women is rarely represented as one of several kinds of Pakistani women in different forums of information and especially remains largely invisible in the academic literature compared to the dominant presence of women in the lower strata of society. Therefore, in contrast to the established theoretical and methodological knowledge provided homogenous representations of Pakistani women constrained by their patriarchs, I chose to shed light on the life experiences of a particular category of women who managed to succeed in Pakistan's dominantly traditional and patriarchal context.

Moreover, my interest and motivation in studying educated and professionally successful women have been funneled down into manageable and researchable questions during data collection while doing my MPhil research on work/family conflict among female academics. Among other pressures and struggles, I learned that career progression was of the utmost concern to academic women, significantly impacting different aspects of study participants' lives. As a result, after examining work/family conflict among female academics, I became curious to explore the lives

of a group of women who succeeded despite the presence of patriarchy and other structural constraints. The following illustration, inspired by Nadin and Cassell (2004) and Maxwell (2012), has presented an inquiry cycle that begins with initial curiosity and general research questions about the lives of professional women to funnel down to specific and focused researchable study questions:

Figure 1: Cycle/ Process of Reaching the Core Research Question

In addition to the contribution of my academic career to refining my research focus, sociological research traditions to study 'down' compared to study 'up' has also fascinated me to look at the life and experiences of middle class professionally engaged women like myself (Haeri, 2002). In conclusion, my biography inspired me to frame the central focus of my PhD research to fill in theoretical and methodological gaps by exploring the lives of professionally high achievers – women who remain largely invisible in the current academic debates.

The following section will present a detailed introduction to relevant theories and empirical investigations that will be used as lenses with which to explore female academics' career trajectories in Pakistan. Finally, personal theories, curiosities, and systematic considerations from the literature will be combined to position the focus of the study and formulate researchable questions.

1.3 Background Literature: Key Theoretical Approaches, Empirical Studies, and Conceptualisation of Female Professors' Career Journeys

This section describes prior knowledge about female academic career experiences explaining the interplay of gender, work, and women's academic career outcomes. This discussion reinforces the study's focus and aim by briefly describing the prominent literature. The content of this discussion is structured in the following three subsections. First, I will discuss core sociological perspectives and empirical studies in the area of work, gender, and career development used to theorise the topic of my PhD research: female academics' career trajectories in Pakistan. Next, I will introduce emerging research patterns to advance theoretical and empirical understanding of female academics' career routes. Then, after presenting a review of relevant theories and emergent research trends, I position my study within the established ideas by demonstrating the relevance of existing theoretical traditions. Finally, I formulate the study's focus and research questions by identifying theoretical and empirical gaps and making new connections to address the phenomenon posited in this PhD thesis.

Patterns of career progress and professional achievements continue to demonstrate a gender imbalance within the top positions of the organisational hierarchy, which is also the case in the academic profession, wherein 'the higher up the academic rank, the lower the number of women is a persistent global issue (Curtis, 2004; Diezmann and Grieshaber 2019). Statistics show that women in faculty and administrative positions lag behind their male colleagues in promotion, ranks, salaries and professional recognition (Burkinshaw and White, 2017). Gender statistics related to university graduates and academic staff are marked by the continuing rise of women graduating from universities and joining academic careers, reducing gender gaps in higher education, and employment gains across the European Union Member States. The continuous progress of women in higher education leads to a gradual decline in outnumbering of men as graduate students, with more than half of the students (59% of the graduate students) and almost half of the PhD researchers (49%) at higher education institutions are females (European Commission: She Figures, 2019).

Moreover, the recent data by the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 suggests that 41% of women worldwide gained tertiary education compared to 36% of men. In addition, the number of women entering academia to join various academic and administrative positions continues to rise, reducing the gender gap at junior/entry-level faculty ranks (Noble and Mears, 2000; Gardiner et al., 2007; Adler, 2015). Remarkably, women have almost closed the gender-based gaps and are near parity across academic ranks except for professors. However, despite these surges in women's education and careers in academia, progress is not reflected in a comparable rise in the proportions of women in senior academic and leadership positions as women continue to be a minority among senior academics across the global academy (Roos and Gatta, 2009; Bird 2011; Tessens, White, and Web 2011; Burkinshaw, Cahill and Ford, 2018). Such as, women started to be under-represented at mid-career level academic positions (40% of academic staff is female), and further down to only 24% of females are in senior academic and leadership categories in EU countries (European Commission, She Figures, 2019). From reviewing the literature about women in academia, it is evident that gender distribution disparity, including the universal underrepresentation of women in senior academic posts, is a prominent theme in higher education research, and it has been widely researched in many countries around the world (Gallant 2014; Nielsen, 2016; Parker et al. 2018).

International data shows remarkable similarity with a noticeable under-representation of women in the top ranks of the academic hierarchy, including very few women who can achieve academic leadership roles such as president, dean and vice-chancellor (Airini et al., 2011; Morley, 2014). The following matrix is designed to provide a comparative view of the proposition of female academics in the position of professor across the global academy. National-specific variation may exist in different titles used for hierarchically structured academic designations in various higher education systems across the globe. However, the top rank of the academic ladder is universally called the professor and requires standard criteria of powerful published research outcomes. In the following table, academic career statistics clearly demonstrate that women are still strongly under-represented at the professoriate level worldwide (Catalyst, 2020).

Table-2 Percentage of Female Professors across the Global Academy

Country	Percentage of female professors	Year
Netherlands	18.7%	2016
Germany	19.4%	2016
France	21.9%	2016
Switzerland	23.3%	2016
India	27.3%	2019
Canada	28%	2019
United States of America	34.3%	2018
Australia	33.9%	2018
United Kingdom	26%	2018
Ireland	19%	2016
Sweden	25.4%	2016
Pakistan	23%	Singh,2008

Despite women's increasing access to education, employment opportunities, and academic accomplishments, why can fewer women translate their academic and early-career achievements into employment assets and career progression? From reviewing the literature on how women's career in academia is conceptualised and investigated, I draw on and briefly discuss the core sociological perspectives and empirical studies conducted to explain gender disparity in terms of fewer female academics on top ranks across the global academy. Next, I organise these theoretical frameworks into two major themes: 1) gendered university organisation and 2) linear academic career structure. These established theoretical perspectives have been widely used in the contemporary academic enquiry that seeks to understand processes and factors involved in creating gender imbalance with the underrepresentation of women at the higher level of the university hierarchy. These are: 1) Inherit incompatibility between university career expectations and women's domestic role expectations, and 2) Gendered university: organisational culture and norms negatively influence female academics' careers. The common element is that both sociological lenses link structural elements of university organisation, academic

career, and family institution to gendered career outcomes- relatively fewer female academics reaching the top ranks of their profession than their male colleagues.

1.3.1 Configuration of academic career profession and gendered domestic caregiving

Much of the current literature on female academics pay particular attention to gender distribution disparity in academia and its causes. In recent decades, women have made significant achievements in education and many labour market sectors, especially in the higher education economy. However, women cannot translate their academic achievements into employment assets and have not succeeded in advancing to senior academic and leadership positions. A vast body of literature has been published to understand the reasons for the disproportionate clustering of female academics at lower ranks and their poor presence among rungs of professors and other high-profile leadership positions. Sociological theories, including 'ideal work norms', 'linear academic career', and 'traditional gender role socialisation', have theorised that the incompatibility between demands of academic career progression and imbalanced distribution of domestic responsibilities causes more difficulties for academic women in the early years of their university careers. As a result, gendered academic career advancement outcomes as a fewer number of female academies reached the top ranks continue to maintain gender disparity at top-ladder ranks with negative implications for individual faculty members and higher education organizations (Wolfinger, Mason and Goulden, 2004; Williams, 2012; Wilton and Ross, 2017; Ahmad, 2017; Rosewell, 2022).

The linear academic career conceptual model of success in academia is hierarchal and linked to academic excellence in research productivity, supposedly gender-neutral meritocratic procedures, and particular work norms (most notably presentism & continuity of service). On the other side, women's gender roles are marked by multiple biographies (childbearing and childrearing) and the expectations of a collective & 'relational' self despite women's participation in professional careers and the paid labour economy(Simpson, 1998; Mavin and Bryans, 2002; O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008; Devine, Grummell and Lynch, 2011; Amsler and Motta, 2019). So this inherited incompatibility between career and care demands

particularly undermines the capacity of women with family care responsibilities to develop intellectual and social capital and to progress into the highest ranks of the academic hierarchy in equal numbers to men (Prober, 2005; Baker, 2010; Barrett and Barrett 2011; Aiston and Jung, 2015).

The linear progress of an academic career has been conceptualised from linear career theory, which defines a career as a lifetime job, usually with a single organisation. It is featured by gradual upward mobility on the organisational hierarchy to seek greater extrinsic rewards in the form of senior designations (O'Leary, 1997). This model was initiated during the 1950s and 1960s in the cultural milieu that supported the social norm of the male-as-breadwinner family structure (Sullivan et al., 2009). Globally, academic career has also been linearly structured in upward progress to senior academic positions. In addition, a range of professional traits has been identified as structural features attached to the academic profession and have substantially influenced how university academics plan and pursue their career trajectories. For example, as an academic, one is responsible for fulfilling multiple roles- teaching, research and services as the requirements of his/her academic career and professional responsibilities towards his/her work organisation (university). For university-based academics, attaining intellectual and social capital (s) means earning a doctorate, refining writing, flourishing as a researcher, developing collaborative skills, acquiring teaching confidence, and regular publishing (Forgasz and Leder, 2006; Jenkins, 2020). Social capital signifies connections that can be used to gain access to information, advice, social support for career promotion, and collegial research networking in academia (Bourdieu, 1988). Higher education studies have found the gendered nature and implications of social capital networks in terms of male domination and control of these influential social networks that largely contribute to male academics' career achievements and promotion (Perna, 2005; Šandl, 2009; Rhoads and Gu, 2012).

Furthermore, this structure-led perspective characterises the academic career pathway as a pipeline having an entry point leading to the top levels. Progress from entry to the top levels of this academic career pipeline is a linear process that moves through hierarchically structured academic designations, for example, lecturer to full

professor, with some variations across countries (Monroe and Chiu, 2010; Mason, Wolfinger and Goulden, 2013; Diezmann and Grieshaber 2019). However, promotion links to the performance of rigours, rigid, sequential, tightly coupled and time-bound academic tasks of scholarly publications, funded projects, international research collaborations, and professional and organisational responsibilities of teaching and research (Perna 2001; Baker 2012; O'Connor and O'Hagan, 2016; Sutherland, 2017). Even entry to the academic career pipeline depends on competitive academic records in achieving a PhD and research outputs. In addition, striving for career tasks and extrinsic rewards are defined as ideals of an academic career that an academician should embrace to succeed across the different phases of the academic career ladder (O'Neil et al., 2008; Thornton, 2013). The linear structures of academic career progression have been sustained and strengthened (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). However, with the rise of dual-earner family structures and the growing participation of women in full-time professional careers, including women's entry into academic careers, tension appears to grow between these conventional, male-oriented career structures and traditional gender role ideologies regarding family life. For example, the institutionalised values of outright commitment to work and academic career success downplay women's age-specific matters of marriage, childbearing and childrearing (O'Laughlin and Bischoff, 2005; McKie et al., 2013). On the other side, choosing not to adopt ideal norms of a linear career due to the pluralistic nature of women's responsibilities outside of work has made it challenging for female academics to reach the upper levels of the career ladder. (Hall, 2002; Heslin, 2005). Consequently, the standardisation of academic demands and ideal work norms as a criterion to evaluate career performance and pursue success has engendered and exacerbated unequal gender career outcomes, with fewer women with care duties being in the top positions of the professoriate and senior academic leadership (Pagano 1993; Knights and Richards 2003; Dubois-Shaik and Fusulier, 2017).

Notably, women's career choices and career patterns cannot be understood without incorporating the dynamics of their unpaid work, which constitutes traditional gender roles regarding domestic care and other familial responsibilities(Forster,

2001; Craig, 2006; Santos and Cabral- Cardoso, 2008). The most significant section of women still adapts its preferences in response to persistent gender asymmetry in the division of family obligations, suggesting a substantial amount of domestic work performed by women (Crompton, Brockmann and Lyonette, 2005; Crompton, 2006; Nishaat, 2017). Many empirical enquiries have drawn on ideal academic norms, traditional domestic responsibilities, and linear career progression theories to examine gender differences and inequalities in academic career progress (Jacobs and Winslow, 2004; Metcalf, 2010; Monroe and Chiu, 2010; Sallee, 2012; Pyke 2013). These studies have identified the negative influence of academic career structure, emphasising becoming ideal scientists for career promotion and culturally structured domestic care duties on female academics' aspirations and capacities to reach the upper ladders of university hierarchies. Pyke (2013) conducted qualitative interviews with female academics to understand the interaction between academic career norms, family role allocations and women's aspirations and decisions to apply for promotion. Pyke identified unequal care responsibilities, childbearing, time-bound research, and publication demands that cause career interruptions and limit women's aspirations and possibilities for promotion in the Australian higher education system. Similar findings are highlighted by many studies conducted across the global academy and provided supportive evidence on the interactive role of structured gender division of domestic responsibilities and ideal work norms for slowing down women's career progression (Coogan and Chen, 2007; Pritchard, 2010; Savigny,2017).

In contrast to cross-sectional studies designed to understand gender differences in career achievements specifically a given time frame, Baker (2012) conducted qualitative interviews with university academics across two countries and over two decades to understand enduring and changing academic practices, gender relations at work and home and gender career gaps. In this longitudinal analysis, Baker argued that the intensified career demands play a defining role in shaping academic career decisions and maintaining gender imbalance in career promotion. In addition, Baker observed that academics with PhDs from prestigious institutions who are ready to work long hours, publish, network and travel widely, and bring research

grants to their universities while working full-time until retirement have always been rewarded and promoted. Also, it was found that these career patterns were typical for men with supportive wives at home who took on the burden of family care. In contrast, faculty members, who were unable or unwilling to schedule their lives according to ideal academic norms, reported facing professional disadvantages such as delayed and inhibited promotion outcomes. In most cases, these were women, especially mothers, who remained clustered around junior ranks and non-linear career paths due to the constant and equally important pressures of career and family life. Especially in dual-earning academic couples, women largely stayed employed through non-tenure-track and part-time positions or secured work at less research-intensive universities because they were the primary family care provider.

Ahmad (2017) recently conducted a systematic and structured literature review of published research literature on the interaction between family formations, domestic care, and the structure of academic career progression. This review of relevant articles indicated that academic career progression is consistently associated with ideal academic norms, especially publishing- a significant contributing factor to success. Empirical inquiries reviewed in this study also identified a structural conflict between ideal work norms and family caregiving, making the upbringing of young children alongside advancing through the pipeline challenging and incompatible, particularly for women.

Higher education research examining women's career transition and progress also noted that tenured female academics are more likely to be childfree, single, and/or divorced than their male counterparts. The busy career-building years from graduation to secure tenure are also the primary reproductive years for women. So, the collision between the timing of the reproductive clock and the fast academic career track is the defining factor in shaping gendered decisions about marriage and fertility. Many empirical investigations show that academic men and women continue to make divergent choices about marriage and parenting, including delaying marriage, childbearing and limiting the number of children. In most cases, it is female academics who make such compromising choices until they complete their doctorate, find a permanent job, or earn tenure because these time-bound career

demands often coincide with women's most fertile years (Gatta and Roos, 2004; Jacobs and Winslow, 2004)

Gender career gaps linked to unequal division of domestic responsibilities by gender have been addressed in several investigations designed to examine female academic career experiences across the global academy. Much of the literature on gender career gaps shows that fewer academic mothers reached the top of the academic hierarchy compared to unmarried women and academic fathers (Drago and Colbeck 2003; Ginther and Hayes 2003; Ginther and Kahn 2004). The leading explanations provided by a substantial body of studies explicate that patterns of parental responsibilities are considerably gendered in terms of females shouldering all or most of the burden of extended labour for domestic care compared to their husbands and male colleagues (Perna 2001; Goldin 2004; Mason and Ekman 2007; Barrett and Barrett 2011; Thornton 2013) . The evidence collected through quantitative and qualitative examinations demonstrates that domestic labour is still distributed along relatively traditional lines among academics. For example, the male career and earning potential continue to be prioritised over the female's career. In particular, when employed women become mothers, they assume family care duties and place their childrearing responsibility before their careers, whereas this is rare among male colleagues and husbands (Karataş- Özkan and Chell, 2015).

A range of career concessions for family needs has been reported, including career breaks, part-time work and teaching career routes (Cooper, 2019). Such career decisions mostly taken by female academics brought about the 'motherhood penalty' in discouraging pursuing an academic career, reducing average income, publication/research output, rank, and academic promotion chances (Van Anders, 2004; Lutter and Schröder, 2020). Researchers who link variations in career patterns and outcomes to an imbalanced division of household labour have noted/added that the cultural definition of good motherhood commonly impacts and encourages academic mothers – but not academic fathers – to make career sacrifices for their children. One of the vital career scarifications that academic women often make is withdrawing from international travelling and leadership roles (Toader and Dahinden, 2018). Such geographic and professional immobility can lead to limited

career choices, reduced chances of global networking, professional recognition, and infrequent promotions (Baker, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that men's academic visibility in research performance, networking, collaborations, and travelling make them more favourable candidates than women who struggled to be academically active on equal footing due to intersecting career and care burdens.

The gendered career outcomes- women as a minority among senior academic and leadership positions, also result from an incompatibility between women's imbalanced care responsibilities and their research performance. Several empirical investigations have compared academicians' research outcomes- an essential criterion for promotion by gender. Family-related variables such as being married, parenthood, number of children and profession of the spouse have been centred in these academic enquiries in order to understand gender differences in research performance (Suitor, Mecom, and Feld 2001; Sax et al. 2002; Mason and Goulden 2002; Jacobs and Winslow, 2004; Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden 2009; Winslow 2010) . Research performance differences between male and female academics present gendered research outcomes, with males outnumbering women in research outcomes (Cole and Zuckerman, 1984; Maliniak, Powers and Walter, 2013; Nielsen, 2016). These studies exploring and comparing career experiences of academics identify that the marital and parental status affected males and females diversely in their time division for professional tasks of research and publications. Empirical studies conducted to understand how the 'gender' of academics interacts with their research productivity revealed that female academics are more likely than male colleagues to agonise about the implications of childbearing and childrearing for their research output and related benefits (Wilson 1995; Gerdes 2006; Misra, Lundquist and Templer, 2012). It has been found that female academics continue to accommodate the research demands of their academic career in response to gender asymmetry in the division of family obligations (Gerson 1986; Crompton and Lyonette 2005). Especially female academics with young children disproportionately take up the responsibility for childcare, reducing their time, focus, and energy for research productivity (Stack 2004; Fox 2005; Hunter and Leahey 2010).

The higher education literature provides strong evidence for research productivity as crucial criteria to appoint, promote, reward and consider university academics successful. Especially for promotion to the highest ranks, universities continue to reward those academics who publish extensively, do funded research, and engage successfully in professional networking. Men and women competed ostensibly on equal terms for most entry-level positions in universities. However, inequalities exist in the promotional processes as women are often disadvantaged in gaining promotion because of their low profiles in scholarly achievement and research productivity compared to their male colleagues (Link et al., 2008; Bird, 2011). In several studies designed to understand the factors behind gender inequality in achieving progress in the academic career, the women respondents linked unequal division of domestic care to gaps in their academic effectiveness, and research productivity caused them to be a minority in leading positions of the academic hierarchies. Even though women have found a way to reduce family care pressures by sharing housework and childcare with husbands, relatives, or paid workers, the gender asymmetry in the division of domestic work sustains placing the more significant part of domestic care on women's shoulders. Ultimately women's career advancement continues to be inhibited and constrained. Consequently, academic mothers are less likely to seek and less likely to achieve tenure positions, and they more frequently take on non-tenure, part-time positions than male faculty or child-free women (Antle et al., 2011). Consequently, gender discrepancies in household labour translate into gender differences and disparities in scholarly productivity and promotion outcomes.

1.3.2 Gendered academy & female academics' career outcomes

Earlier, I discoursed literature about the influence of incompatibility between academic career demands and family care responsibilities on female academic career trajectories. This section discusses female academics' experiences related to career challenges and barriers resulting from the gendered academy. Walby (2009) and Connell's (1996) sociological interpretations regarding changing forms of gender regimes offer theoretical arguments for the role of public patriarchy and hegemony of masculine values and norms in creating gender inequality in work organisations.

They further argued that back in history: throughout the twentieth century, women experienced enormous changes in terms of access to the public worlds of work, the state, and civil society, which amounted to a change in the form of public patriarchy rather than its disappearance and demise. While women may have escaped some pressures and restrictions from gender-structured obligations and family life, they now start to encounter segregation and subordination in the public sphere (Crompton and Lyonette, 2010). According to Walby, 'women are no longer exclusively restricted to the domestic hearth but have the whole society to roam and be exploited' (1990, p. 201). She further claims that gender inequalities are sustained and deepened through various institutional structures and practices, including the capitalist patriarchy. Together, these feminists' debates argue that domestic patriarchs exploited women in their homes; now, they are being exploited by male-dominated networks in public domains of economy and polity by keeping them underrepresented in positions of power and resources. (Walby, 1986; Sang, 2018).

Linking to theoretical claims by Walby about the role of public patriarchy in retaining gender inequality, Acker (1990) coined the notion of 'gendered organisation' to explicate the connection between male-dominated workplace structures and barriers and career losses that women come along their career routes. She defined that 'an organisation is gendered means that advantages, disadvantages, exploitation, control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (1990, p.19). In simple words, the gendered character of universities refers to ingrained structural practices, biases, institutional culture, and polities that play a part in creating both explicit and invisible barriers for female academics to move up the academic career ladder (Bain and Cummings, 2000; Chanana, 2003; Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Pyke, 2011; Eddy et al., 2017).

From a gendered organisation perspective, the central points of reference are masculine communities of practice operated through the hegemony of patriarchal and masculine norms in public regimes (Tesch et al., 1995; Thomas and Davies, 2002; Acker, 2006; Burkinshaw and White, 2017). A community of practice is a notion that refers to a collection of people who connect around a particular set of norms,

expectations and ways of doing things. The norms that operate in the community of practice are shaped by history, purpose, and mission (Wenger, 1998; Burkinshaw, 2015; Aiston and Fo, 2021). The political milieu of higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly universities, are historically governed by male-dominated communities. The 'gendered university' theorists claim that males' numerical dominance and historical hegemony in academia create, maintain, and strengthen masculine workplace culture, structures, and practices, causing gender career gaps. As a result, women's academics could not be promoted as their male colleagues reached top academic positions (White, 2001).

By employing a gendered organisational lens, many empirical studies pay closer attention to how the masculinist culture of work organisations and management practices shape prospects of women's career advancement and engender disproportionate clustering of female academics at lower academic ranks (Costello, 2012; O'Connor, 2019). Gendered university theory as a structure-led framework conceptualizes certain interlinked and embedded organisational values and norms that act to disadvantage women in their career journey in terms of constraining their chances to be promoted as knowledge leaders and producers in the global academia (Acker, 2006). These structural values and organizational norms are a) standardisation and normalisation of ideal work norms and undervaluing of family care support needs; b) unequal and discriminatory treatment in workloads and promotions; and c) institutional polities and constrained access to research sponsors, professional mentoring, and informal networking (Currie et al., 2002; Knights and Richards, 2003; Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Acker, 2010 Walby, 2013).

First, one of the cultural aspects of a gendered academy is the standardisation of ideal academic norms in the form of pursuance of academic excellence, research competitiveness, and long hours of work without consideration or lack of reflection on family needs of academics. Gendered university theory shares this element with a linear career standpoint. Both perspectives theorise that the institutionalisation of ideal work norms for career success especially linking ideal career performance with the achievement of promotion, rank, and leadership, has further reinforced men's advantage over women by demanding women to follow ideal work norms like men

(Knights and Richards, 2003; Van den Brink and Benschop, 2012; Thun, 2020). However, in most cases, female academics with care responsibilities who need to manage both care and career demands face carer discredits and losses in the promotion (Cook, 2010; Teelken and Deem, 2013; Maddrell et al., 2016). In addition, theoretical and empirical literature argues that the dominance of ideal academic norms brings research productivity and grant acquisition to the forefront for evaluating faculty work for promotion that places greater pressures on faculty and leaders to increase performance at individual and institutional levels (Marginson,2006; Macfarlane,2011; Clarke and Knights, 2015). These changes create new work identities in terms of being more competitive, aggressive, and entrepreneurial, re-orientating academic professionals' responsibilities, functions and priorities (Whitchurch,2006; Baker, 2009; Karataş- Özkan and Chell, 2015). Such structures have further strengthened the norms of presentism and long hours of work to feed these identities. Regarding the gendered outcomes, female academics appear more susceptible than men to the potential adverse effects of these structural changes (Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Crabtree and Shiel, 2018).

Several studies demonstrate a clear gendered- uneven division of responsibilities across the domestic and public regimes, constraining women's academic aspirations and efforts to reach the top positions of university hierarchies. In particular, women's undertaking of a substantial share of 'academic housekeeping'(teaching, administration, and service work) and lack of equal sharing of care responsibilities in families have allowed men to accumulate intellectual capital (research productivity, professional collaboration and influence) that strengthen their opportunities to be selected for higher academic ranks, and academic leadership roles (Baker; 2012; Acker Webber and Smyth, 2016; Guarino and Borden, 2017). On the other side, women who seek an effective balance between family and career demands seem to be handicapped in these settings and professionally more disadvantaged and discriminated against (Acker, 1990; Bain and Cummings, 2000; Vu and Doughney, 2007; McKie et al., 2013; Angervall, 2018).) In contrast, the successful women in academia have taken on ideal work norms by choosing to sacrifice organizational entitlements of flexible work hours and maternity leave and

fitting domestic responsibilities around the institutional demands/ pressures of achieving and retaining scientific and academic capital (White et al., 2010; Socratous, 2018; Huppatz, Sang and Napier, 2019).

It is important to understand that structural changes in higher education institutions introduced through the neoliberal organisation of universities reinforce cultural values and norms of the gendered academy (too much focus on research productivity) with career promotion disadvantages for women. It means the most likely gendered implication of standardisation of ideal academic norms for career success is to privilege academic experiences of research competitiveness (mostly adopted by male academics) and discredit academic performance in the form of teaching, institutional housekeeping/ service work and pastoral care (more often associated with females) (Bagilhole 1993; Bird, Litt and Wang, 2004; Khwaja, Eddy, and Ward 2017). For example, many investigations/studies have focused on understanding how the distribution of academic work is gendered and perpetuates the disadvantageous position of female academics in career progress (Acker and Feuerverger, 1996; Britton, 2017; Macfarlane and Burg, 2019). Academicians assume to perform four main types of academic work: research, teaching, administration, and service. These studies have found that women are disproportionately engaged in teaching, service, and middle-level administrations, whereas males are extensively involved in elite research work (Misra et al., 2011; Acker, Webber and Smyth, 2016; Guarino and Borden, 2017; Heijstra, Steinthorsdóttir and Einarsdóttir, 2017). However, at the time of promotion, research output is given substantial weightage for promotion to upper levels of the academic hierarchy. Consequently, male academics with greater research records have more secured promotion prospects than female academics with extensive experience in teaching and academic service work but are not valued equally (Babcock et al., 2017; Howson, Coate and Croix, 2018).

Second, academic women experience the cultural norms of a gendered academy through the selection and promotion practices in academia. A large volume of studies identifies psychological, social, and structural elements of promotion selection boards that explicitly and implicitly value men candidates and facilitate

their access to the top ranks of academic hierarchy compared to women contestants, who have been undervalued and frequently impeded in reaching the top positions involved authority and decision-making privileges (van den Brink, Benschop and Jansen, 2010; Nielsen, 2016; O'Connor,2020). In addition, several investigations have been carried out into the process of promotion selection boards with gendered promotion implications regarding women disproportionately leaking out the career pipelines. These studies report that promotion selection boards comprise mainly male academics with homo-social effects (Marchant and Wallace, 2013). It is claimed that the procedure was meritocratic and gender-neutral; however,' homosocial' indicates that evaluators in these male-dominated boards preferred to select other males (Ledwith and Manfredi, 2000; Van den Brink and Benschop, 2012; Manfredi, Clayton-Hathway and Cousens, 2019). Some studies also claimed that even in some situations, with two equally competent male and female candidates, women were discredited and even rejected based on the nature and quality of their research (van den Besselaar and Sandström, 2016; Van den Besselaar and Sandström, 2017).

Third, in relation to exploring the contribution of social networks and social capital to women's academic career development, researchers within this field observe that women's access to these networks and their associated benefits is gendered and constrained (Mavin and Bryans, 2002; Thanacoody et al., 2006; O'Connor et al., 2020). They claimed that men are very good at networking, so they routinely mobilize personal network ties to achieve success with clear implications for gender stratification in accessing professional development resources, publication and promotion opportunities (Özkanlı and white, 2009; Bentley, 2012; Nielsen, 2016). Moreover, compared to women academics, men are more likely to avail opportunities for sponsorship, collaborative research projects and co-authorship due to their integration into male-dominated influential and well-established academic and political networks (White, 2010; Santos, Horta and Amâncio, 2021). Many studies have investigated the notion of gendered social capital networking and women's ability to access and share resources from these networks. These studies have found how institutional polities and social capital networks (usually male-dominated) create veiled barriers for women and constrain their progress. These male-dominated

networks implicitly and unconsciously tend to discriminate and exclude women from their circles of resources-sharing and research ventures and make it hard for women to succeed (Howe-Walsh and Turnbull, 2016; Ovseiko et al., 2017).

Consequently, women more frequently leak out of the pipeline before reaching the highest ranks of academic hierarchy, and male hegemony remains maintained in academia. This section's main objective was to ascertain the focus of background literature and what has been learned about the phenomenon of female careers in academia from prior knowledge. In addition, this review highlighted barriers and challenges that are extensively examined as core attributes of gender inequality and women academics' underrepresentation in top positions of the academic ladder across the globe.

From the review of academic scholarship on gender, work, and women's career advancement, I categorised theoretical perspectives into two sociological claims to discuss connections between institutional structures and gendered academic career outcomes with women's consistent underrepresentation in the top ranks of the academic hierarchy. First, the review of relevant literature highlights a tension between institutionalised and well-established norms of competitive and entrepreneurial academic and research activities and gender role expectations, and traditional routines of family care needs. Data from quantitative and qualitative enquires repeatedly demonstrates that the hierarchically structured and demanding organisation of academic careers has varied implications for male and female academics. It is evident that the inherent clash between the logistics of the promotion clock, the biological clock and gendered expectations of family obligations significantly and differently influences academicians' career decisions and outcomes in terms of leaving the academy or continuing with a slow pace, particularly of those academics who seek to combine work and family caregiving responsibilities (primarily women) (Armenti, 2004; Deutsch and Yao, 2014; Guy and Arthur, 2020). As a result, women are more likely to (have to) choose different career concessions (part-time, career breaks, non-tenure and teaching routes), resulting in slow progress in reaching a professorial position compared to male colleagues.

Second, gendered university perceptive claims that the gendered character of universities in terms of ingrained biased and discriminatory structures, culture, and practices play a part in creating barriers to women academics' opportunities in advancing to the more senior levels of the academic career ladder. This school of thought concludes that men and women remain unequally distributed through the academic hierarchy due to systemic and structural constraints within the profession. Consequently, women's career outcomes cannot be improved until the gender-based discrimination, disadvantages, and organisational processes that serve to maintain cultural sexism, male hegemony and male numerical dominance in academia are addressed (Bagilhole, 1993; Acker and Feuerverger, 1996; Benschop and Brouns, 2003; Savigny, 2014; Eddy and Ward, 2017). From the discussion of background literature, a central understanding emerged is that a considerable scale of sociological knowledge pays particular attention to how the institutional arrangements inhibit the prospects of women's career development with little focus on the enabling contribution of institutional practices, interpersonal relations, and cultural attitudes to female career routes.

1.4 Female Academics' Career Understanding: A Shift in Research Focus

A detailed discussion of background literature that seeks to develop an understanding of factors acted to instigate and maintain gender distribution inequality on top ranks of professoriate has been documented in the previous sections. This discussion provides critical insights into the implications of structural elements of academic careers, family care responsibilities, and university organizations for female academics' career patterns and outcomes. Overall, the evidence presented in the previous sections suggests negative career experiences resulted from the interaction between a configuration of linear career and patterns of imbalanced division of domestic duties and male-dominated university power structures. A large body of research shows that women, who combine full-time academic careers and motherhood, tend to encounter numerous work-family conflicts, increased stress levels, career compromises, and low-profile career outcomes (Friedman and Greenhaus 2000; Forster 2001, Ghazali et al., 2013; Lipton,

2015). The career theorists Currie, Thiele, and Harris (2002); Knights and Richards (2003), and Acker (2010) adopt a dichotomized view of male and female differences in which women are always assumed to be struggling with multiple and often conflicting demands of professional productivity, accountability, and family responsibility. In addition, these structure-led theories illustrate/portray women as a homogeneous group in terms of their relational identity, the multiplicity of life concerns, dynamics of support, and constrained career growth (Wolfinger, Mason and Goulden, 2009; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Dickson, 2019). These sociological approaches result in the empirical literature that focuses on the transitional lives of working women rather than whole lives, on 'victims rather than survivors', undermining the contribution of institutional support, and interventions to shaping women's strength, ability and resiliency exemplified by successful women (White Charles Cox and Cooper, 1997; Gardiner et al., 2007; Doherty and Manfredi, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2013; Manfredi, 2017; Ovseiko et al., 2017; Bhopal, 2020; Park, 2020).

This section presents career success literature to understand the factors that enabled female academics to reach the top positions of the academic hierarchy. Despite all challenges and obstacles discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, women are slowly progressing to achieve career success in male-dominated academic institutions. There is a growing body of literature focused on examining the career success of female academics with an increased emphasis on understanding and analyzing factors that enable them to overcome barriers operating at different levels (O Grada et al., 2015; Wyllie et al., 2019; Zacher et al., 2019). Across the global academy, in response to the call to explore enablers of female academics' career progression, some empirical investigations have been conducted to uncover the elements that both enable and hinder women's advancements to leadership positions in university settings. I chose empirical literature focused on female academics to identify relevant constructs for formulating my study's questions and find gaps where I can contribute through this PhD research to existing knowledge. Some studies have examined both career enablers and barriers to understand what did and did not work for the participants in achieving higher ranks in academic hierarchies. For example, Diezmann and Grieshaber (2019) examined the career paths of

Australian female academics who have achieved professorship- an academic rank predominantly occupied by male academics worldwide. The respondents (both female and male professors N=525) across faculties and universities reported the existence of various kinds of gendered culture in response to a survey questionnaire. In addition, thirty female professors were selected for qualitative interviews from a larger sample. During individual interviews and small focus groups, the women professors identified several catalysts for and inhibitors of success with a particular focus on the impacts of "the boys' club" on their career progression. The researchers also developed five distinctive career routes based on their female respondents' experiences related to doctoral study, critical life events, work-family intersection, and support for these demands.

In addition to structural enablers and barriers, some studies have examined female academics' career routes and identified the prime role of agency and personal elements (e.g., skills, ability, attitudes, preferences) as contributing factors to overcoming hurdles and achieving success (Airini et al.; 2011; Riordan and Louw-Potgieter, 2011; McNae and Vali, 2015; Acker and Wagner, 2019; Macfarlane and Burg, 2019). For example, Gladwin, McDonald and McKay (2014) interviewed eighteen full and chaired professors from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA to explore stories of their academic career success. The study participants cited their a) inherent attraction and passion for academic career and research, b) ability to manage time for research tasks, and c) skills in developing professionally productive networks as the most significant elements that contributed to their career progression trajectories. In addition, hard work, adoption of ideal work norms, and the ability to develop and maintain positive work relations have been reported by women rectors as the vital ingredient of their career success in another qualitative study conducted by Carvalho and Diogo (2018).

In an investigation into personal and environmental factors that led a sample of thirty-six professors (12 women and 24 men) to join academia as a lifetime career, Lindholm (2004) found several interrelated reasons mentioned by the study sample for their decision to join academia. The participants' academic career aspirations and decision-making were dominantly sourced from their fascinations for teaching and

research. However, most of them could not articulate the exact origin of their long-standing passion for a particular field of study and academic career except in a few cases in which participants coupled their personal inclinations with parental and wider family influences and university education experiences. Finally, the author highlighted the need for more empirical work on the potential influence of family socialization and university education, mainly professors and research advisors' role in shaping academic career aspirations and outcomes.

In another study, drawing on background literature and empirical evidence gathered through panel discussion, individual presentations, seminars and questionnaires, Morely(2014) attempted to understand different gender-related issues in higher education institutions across the globe. Female academics in leadership roles from different countries participated to discuss their experiences related to career enablers, impediments, and attraction for academic career leadership roles. The author has also analyzed participants' views about future action to address women's exclusion and disqualification from academic leadership and knowledge production. In a first systematic literature review that examined barriers and facilitators to female academics' journey to a professorship in the UK higher education organization, Westoby et al. (2021) classified six themes explaining obstacles and enablers female academics encounter in their careers. Some of the barriers continue to negatively affect female academics' progression paths that include routine exclusion from male-dominated networks and decision-making bodies, gender-related biased discrimination in recruitment and evaluation processes, everyday sexism, lack of access to institutional support, resources and development opportunities, struggle to balance family and work demands, continuous engagement in less valuable tasks of teaching. However, the partner or husband's increasing role in sharing and supporting family and career needs and institutional initiatives of inclusion, diversity, equality, and family-friendly programs partially address continued bias and an unsupportive environment. In addition, in recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature focused on examining the career lives of academic women who managed family caregiving while achieving and maintaining successful academic careers (Ward and Wolf-

Wendel, 2004). The evidence presented in these studies identifies significantly less negative spillover from family lives to their career due to atypical gender role configuration, living alone or having only independent aged children, and balanced division of household work (Schaer, Dahinden and Toader,2017). These studies further reveal that career success resulted from the supportive role of family-friendly workplace initiatives, affordable domestic help and changing patterns of the family's contribution to support and share domestic and caring responsibilities (Khalid, 2017; Dickson, 2019). In particular, the husband or partner and extended family members have taken a generous share of household and childcare duties. For example, senior women in administrative and faculty roles surveyed and interviewed by Gladwin, McDonald, and McKay (2014) reported multiple enabling factors, including having a balanced sharing of family responsibilities and supportive husbands who shouldered an increasing share of responsibility for caring for young children and ageing parents. In addition, the husband's role as 'trailing spouse' in terms of being willing to move to a new location with few personal career prospects for their wives' career achievements has been recognized as a leading supportive factor in recent literature (Young and Wright 2001; Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2009; Craig and Mullan 2011; Westoby et al., 2021).

Literature related to career obstacles and facilitators is widely collected from Western contexts. However, comparatively little is known about female academics' paths to leadership roles in non-western and developing countries. Nguyen(2013), in her exploratory study on female academics' career progression experiences in a non-western society, examined women's trajectories toward academic leadership and management roles. In her analysis, Nguyen found that family obligations and negative perceptions about female academics as leaders were the main obstacles to attaining leadership positions. However, perceiving oneself as lucky, self-effort, and family support were the primary sources facilitating her study respondents' career journey towards leadership positions.

In addition, social capital as an institutional enabler in terms of having senior colleagues and research advisors has also been examined as a great source of career inspiration and guidance for success. There is a rise in higher education research in

which female academics identified mentors as a significant source of providing different kinds of support for career progression. Noticeably, moral support, guidance in career planning, and support in developing competence awareness, establishing networks, and navigating the research environment are regularly emphasised as key benefits of mentoring relationships with senior academicians and workplace peers (Ballenger, 2010; Kalpazidou and Faber, 2016). In a recent study, Hill and Wheat (2017) examine the significant role of academic mentorship in helping study participants connect with information, resources, and opportunities for career advancement and take up leadership roles. Several studies that explored career enablers analyzed women academics' views about the factors that enable them to succeed. Among other factors, mentorship was believed to be a critical enabler; success was hard to achieve without it. For example, in an investigation into factors that assisted female academics from one of the New Zealand universities in gaining promotion, Murray, Tremaine and Fountaine (2012) found that senior colleagues' role in guiding and encouraging study participants to apply on time for promotion was constantly stated.

Another qualitative study was designed by Van Balen et al. (2012) to examine the relative influence of social, cultural, and intellectual capitals on the career trajectories of pairs of academicians. This study had twenty-one matched pairs of academics who appeared very talented in the early years of their academic employment. Of every pair, one academic continued his/her academic career and became a full professor, whereas the other has left the university career. Comparative qualitative analysis identified the importance of social capital compared to other forms of capital (intellectual and cultural) for their career decision to leave and stay. Cultural capital in the form of qualification and family background did not appear significant to influence stayers' and leavers' career paths as they were similar in their educational background and parental educational status. However, most participants with continued academic careers compared to leavers owe their success and achievements to advice, resources, and connections provided by professional mentors.

Similarly, Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004) highlighted the benefits for mentors and mentees based on a meta-review of empirical studies on the benefits of

mentoring for female academics' careers. Networking, collegiality, professional development, reflection, improved self-belief, support, assistance, and career satisfaction have been reported as critical benefits that mentees gained through both informal and structured mentoring. In addition, several studies found that mentoring has a significant influence on women's career performance enhancement in terms of higher publication rates, and higher success rates in securing external research funding helped them have higher retention and promotion rates (Sambunjak, Straus, and Marui, 2006; Chang, Longman and Franco, 2014; Tran, 2014; Block and Tietjen-Smith,2016). In a systematic literature review of empirical articles published from 1989-to 2014- designed to investigate how mentoring fosters faculty development in higher education, Fountain and Newcomer (2016) revealed multiple benefits for individual and institutional growth. They include- 1) facilitating recruitment, retention, and promotion; 2) building collegiality, positive networking, and professional satisfaction; 3) promoting productivity in terms of peer-reviewed journal publications and successful grant applications; and 4) improving organizational collaborations, stability and growth.

In another study, Bean, Lucas and Hyers (2014) conducted a content analysis of qualitative data and examined evaluative data of the first four years of the Faculty Mentoring Program. The authors found that 100% of the beneficiaries of this program strongly recommended that formal mentoring must be part of the university's culture and organization to provide sustainable forums for guidance, skills, and support for career advancement.

In addition to the enabling contribution of professional mentors, the importance of institutional support networks in terms of collegiality, peer mentoring, and professional collaborations for developing women's research expertise and career progression is also examined. In their analysis of experiences and trajectories of university faculty career progression, several authors pay particular attention to the positive implications of academic networks for teaching, research collaboration, scholarly practice, and access to career development resources, opportunities and organizational facilities (Akerlind and Quinlan, 2001; Jacelon et al., 2003; Wasburn, 2007; Sorcinelli and Yun, 2007; Fox, 2012; Varkey et al., 2012). Notably, these

networks are decisively central for gaining career advantages in authority and resource sharing (Hadani et al., 2012; Zinovyeva and Bagues, 2015; van Helden, D. L. et al., 2021). In the social field of university, social networks act as channels for academic support and knowledge about opportunities for national and international projects and research collaborations and help obtain access to the financial resources for research (Baker, 2012; Pezzoni, Sterzi and Lissoni, 2012; Friedmann, Childs and Hillier, 2018). They are also significant in recruitment, promotion, and junior staff development (Schrodt, Cawyer and Sanders, 2003; Forret and Dougherty, 2004; Searby and Collin, 2010; Shollen et al., 2014; McNae and Vali, 2015; Zinovyeva and Bagues, 2015). Furthermore, the social attributes of networking illuminate the contribution of 'whom you know, not only what you know in your effort to establish a privileged professional identity. For instance, in a qualitative analysis of different pathways adopted by female academics to reach professorship level, Fritsch (2016) explored that one category of the female professors studied in the study had faster promotion tracks than the other two categories of study participants. For fast-track promotion trajectories, women's strategies for institutional networking have appeared as the leading factor in gaining career advantages of academic recognition, research capital, and smooth promotion. As these women claimed that they consciously focused on academic network centrality and actively participated in male-dominated informal networks and governing boards that both explicitly and implicitly benefited their process of career advancement. For this, they did have to extend extra effort in terms of investing time and willingness to enter into the male-dominated traditional structures of management and governing bodies and boards of universities and extract benefits and resources from them. They also kept on nurturing collegial networking in publication and research productivity and established research partnerships around the globe.

Lastly, this section also presents a brief discussion of literature that examined the sources of enabling factors for university graduates' educational and career progression trajectories. Across the globe, during the past thirty years, social scientists, including sociologists of higher education, did not only find factors supporting academic and career success but have also focused on exploring and

analysing sources of these enabling elements. Sociologically speaking, enabling elements of people's academic and career achievements, either individual (dispositions, preferences, and attributes) or social, are shaped mainly by and socialised within social institutions and a person's positioning in these institutions (Wong and Chiu, 2019). Also, there is theoretical and empirical agreement among social scientists that academic success, especially degree-level achievements, is much patterned and determined by the socio-economic class of graduates (Bathmaker et al., 2016; Thomson, 2016; Abrahams, 2017).

A review of the relevant knowledge has identified that a few studies have used class structures mainly coined by Bourdieu as theoretical resources to analyse the academic career trajectories of female academics. Among this limited number of investigations, Hoskins (2013) draws on the notion of habitus to examine the influence of family class backgrounds and family educational values and dispositions on a sample of twenty-two senior female academics' educational and career trajectories in the British higher education academy. Hoskins employed Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to investigate how female academics' pathways to career success have been shaped by their family class position-exploring the links between family class position and familial expectations and dispositions related to higher education. The study has provided insights into women's professors' construction of career success from different class backgrounds and how women's perceptions are deeply influenced by their class background, familial attitudes towards education, and dispositions. Moreover, a small minority of women professors in the sample were from the working class in which higher education was not part of their family habitus. Analysis of these women's stories has provided insights into the chances and reconfiguration of individual dispositions, allowing the potential and possibility of accessing educational resources that set them on a career path quite different from their parents' employment norms (Hoskins, 2010).

Costello (2020), in her PhD research, used Bourdieu's theoretical notions of field, practice and symbolic violence to provide insights into the influence of cultural norms and conventions of social settings on female academics' decisions to apply for promotion. The dominant group of study participants' family backgrounds is

middle-class/ professional occupations. Analysis of life-history interviews with a sample of nineteen female academics from the elite research university of the U.K. revealed a significant contribution of family life to shaping these women's educational potential, academic interests in science and achievements. Later their intellectual capital and university qualification achievements led them to choose academia and research as a career. However, they were hindered by gendered expectations of taking up more teaching, administration, and student work during their academic job. Comparably, support from mentors built up their social capital, which they used to deal with career inhibitors.

In a recent study, Monserrat and Simmers (2020) searched and analyzed secondary sources of information and documents to conduct a biographical analysis of Pledger's career progression process. Pledger was the first female president of ''The Academy of Management'' (well known for its contribution to developing modern management theory through research and teaching about management and organization). In their review of archival data, the authors found that the first female president successfully cracked the glass ceiling through developing and using human and social capital and reached the top of her profession. In addition, multiple documents revealed supportive evidence for the significant contribution of various forms of social capital like sponsorship and reference letter from seniors to enhance Pledger's human/intellectual capital and career success.

To brief, academic career success literature is informed by studies that point to factors that help or hinder the development of academic women's leadership potential and opportunities for career progression. Three kinds of enablers have been repeatedly noted for career progression from the background literature examined facilitators of academic career advancement. These are a) personal competence and inclinations, b) organizational capital (s), and c) family class background advantages and family cultural values and support. Notably, after a detailed and lengthy review of the relevant literature, I will argue to connect with emerging scholarship focusing on the enabling role of institutional elements (will discuss later in this chapter under the heading of: 'Process of Theorisation & Formulation of Study Questions'). As an alternative to employing a single theoretical frame, I have combined theoretical

themes from a number of sociological perspectives to structure the research questions and topics of the interview guide and analyse my findings accordingly.

1.5 Women's Academic Career Progression: The Need for Contextual Understanding

The focus of this PhD research project evolved from my professional identity, research experiences, and the theoretical gap in the literature. Later, the literature review on women's status in Pakistani society highlighted some critical revelations and research gaps that made me intuitive that questioning and discovering professionally successful women's lives in Pakistan is pragmatically significant. Such as the literature review identified that scholarly knowledge dominantly comprises theoretical discourses and empirical investigations about the lives of suppressed women. Such as poverty and reproductive health problems, conservative and non-egalitarian gender relations in patriarchal and restrictive family structures, economic exploitations, constrained access to participate in education and employment opportunities, and gender-based violence are dominant discourses in the scholarly literature and media representations of the lives of women in Pakistan (Sathar, and Lloyd, 1994; Rabbani Qureshi and Rizvi, 2008; Azid, Ejaz Ali Khan and Almasi, 2010; Haque, 2010; Sadaqat and Sheikh, 2011; Ahmad, 2012; Pio, 2013; Farooq, Kayani and Ahmad, 2015; Hadi, 2017; Murshid and Critelli, 2020). The women represented in these studies and debates belong to poor, uneducated, rural, and gender-stratified segments of the society (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Mumtaz and Salway, 2005; Nasrullah et al., 2009; Jacoby and Mansuri, 2010; Butt and Asad, 2016; Tayyab et al., 2017). With reference to female labour force participation in Pakistan, women work primarily in the home or on the farm. Their participation in work outside these areas, particularly in formal employment where the best-paid work opportunities exist, is meagre. In this regard, theoretical debates and empirical studies consistently find and discuss the contribution of traditional gender roles in families, gender segregation practices, and patriarchal mindsets- reinforced by religious beliefs to constraining/limiting women's career selections, employment participation, and professional achievements. Noticeably, these studies found that in most cases, male

family members do not permit women to work outside the home (Chaudhry and Riffat, 2010; Syed, 2010; Ali, 2013; Manzoor, 2015; Sarwar and Imran, 2019; Mirza and Riffat, 2020; Shah, Bashir and Amin, 2020; Hafeez, Ahsan and Sarwar, 2022). It is interesting to mention here, given the national statistics, that the gender gap in labour force participation (for people aged 15+) is persistent, with women's employment rate remaining almost four times lower than males (Begum Sadaquat and Sheikh, 2011; Amir et al. 2018). Women's labour force participation rate has increased over the years with a fluctuating gender gap: still, only 25% of women are economically active compared to 75% of men. On the other hand, national statistics on women's labour force participation indicate that only 6% of economically active women have acquired education up to degree level (14 years and above education: graduate, postgraduate & professional). Among this 6%, a tiny proportion of females are involved in professional careers and reached the top positions of their careers (Amir et al., 2018; Khokhar, 2018). It means that the sample of this study is drawn from a tiny fraction of total economically active women.

The majority of Pakistani women undoubtedly face different kinds of legal, political and social inequalities, and their oppressed and veiled experiences cannot be trivialized. However, this dominant image of oppressed and victimized Pakistan women appeared to overshadow other images and faces of Pakistani women, including a limited coverage of success stories of women reaching powerful positions, occupying leadership roles, and playing a role in facilitating positive change within university organizations. Notably, Pakistani women's agency and life choices are the product of a complex interplay of caste, class, patriarchy, religion, education, skill, and regional and ethnic locations (Critelli, 2010; Lall, 20211). However, comparatively, limited academic scholarship exists that focuses on analysing variation in women's choices, mobility and decision-making autonomy linked to their biographies and demographies. Especially there is a dearth of theoretical, academic, and empirical focus on highly educated and professionally active women who reach the top ranks and leadership positions of their professions in Pakistan (Shah and Shah,2012; Batool, Sajid and Shaheen, 2013; Morley and Crossouard, 2016).

Given my focus on female academics' career choices and progression trajectories in Pakistani universities, this section discusses academic literature related to the career experiences of academic women in Pakistani academies. A review of the pertinent literature identifies research gaps as minimal theoretical scholarship and empirical research on women's careers in the higher education sector of Pakistan have been conducted. Especially, very few theoretical and empirical investigations are designed in Pakistan, focusing on female academics' experiences related to career opportunities, workplace conditions, promotion, and work-life reconciliation (Quraishi and Kalim, 2008; Shaukat, Siddiquah and Pell, 2014; Fazal, 2020; Farooq, 2020) . Furthermore, a sociological lens has rarely been applied to investigate the lives of academic women who have reached the professorship level in Pakistan's higher education economy. Importantly, there is an imbalance in the existent global scholarly literature on the career lives of women as it embodies women's perceptions and experiences from western contexts and developed countries. Empirical investigations on women's careers in academia have been conducted mainly in the UK, USA, and Australian academic contexts. However, few studies have focused on exploring the career experiences of academic staff in general, particularly female academics in Pakistani higher education organizations. Therefore, I compiled pertinent empirical studies in the following table illustrating aims, methods, respondents studied, and core findings. Lastly, a brief discussion of research gaps in which my proposed PhD study can contribute to strengthening/extending empirical understanding of the understudied phenomenon of professionally successful women in Pakistani academia is presented.

Table-3 A Review of Empirical Studies Examine Female Academics' Career Experiences in Pakistani Universities

Study Participants	Objectives and Methods	Key Findings	Source
Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of ten female lecturers and assistant professors from the public university of Northern Pakistan	Given the traditional background regarding gender roles, this study is designed to examine female academics' perceptions and experiences of work-life interplay and balance	Thematic analysis has revealed some significant understandings regarding participants' work-family intersection experiences, such as: • Most respondents find it challenging to balance family commitments and work responsibilities due to a lack of family support culture and facilities both at family and workplace locations. • They reported separating and scheduling home/work time, securing family support, and utilising time in the workplace more productively as strategies to seek work-life balance. • All study participants' mental and physical well-being is compromised in their efforts to maintain a work-life balance.	Naz, Fazal and Khan (2017).
Narratives of ten female academics in administrative and academic leadership roles were drawn from a larger sample of twenty-three women leaders in public universities.	Qualitative analysis was carried out to explore how study participants construct and maintain their self-identities as female leaders within the dominant masculine leadership discourses in academia?	Empirical data shed light on female academics' voices as leaders, such as: • The societal inclination to devote success to male attributes makes it harder for women to perform their feminine leadership style. • Nevertheless, gender is not perceived as a hurdle in contracting leadership identities. • It is concluded that masculine culture within academic leadership positions must be reduced by developing gender-sensitive policies to induce the celebration of women's leadership styles in academia.	Bhatti and Ali (2021).

Qualitative interviews were conducted with twelve female leaders from both public and private sector universities.	A feminist lens is employed to examine women academic leaders' narratives regarding challenges and opportunities.	• Family care responsibilities and male-centric higher education organisational structures constrained these women from achieving and retaining administrative leadership positions. • In contrast, leadership achievements were linked to family support, higher socio-economic status, organisational mentors and networking	Ali and Rasheed (2021).
Ten female academics were interviewed from the public university of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.	Qualitative analysis was employed to investigate perspectives of female academics' career progression experiences.	• Thematic analysis revealed sustained family support networks, women's drive, resilience, and motivation to excel beyond the family responsibilities as key career enablers. • Contrastingly, gender-based discrimination in the workplace environment, the challenging nature of maintaining both work and family duties, and long commuting were highlighted as the main hindrances to the career progression of academic women in this study. • Nevertheless, the interviewees were not discouraged by the prevalent gender disparities across academia and family domains and instead chose to face these barriers with optimism and resilience.	Fazal, Naz, Khan and Pedder (2019).
Both female and male academics in different designations were surveyed and interviewed from public sector universities in Punjab.	Triangulation research methods were employed to understand how and why female academics are hindered from achieving academic excellence and reaching	• Analysis of both survey data and qualitative interviews revealed that women at a considerable level face discrimination, harassment, male-dominated networks and intimidation at workplaces. • Moreover, the prevalence and magnitude of personal, organisational and societal	Yousaf (2018).

	higher/senior academic and administrative positions.	barriers restrict women's capacity to gain the requisite credentials and skills (adequate qualification (PhD), relevant experience and research productivity) for the positions of power and academic excellence.	
Twelve female professors in leadership positions were interviewed.	A qualitative analysis was carried out to understand the career development process and leadership experiences of a sample of 12 female professors through the lens of patriarchy.	The core findings suggest: • Various forms of family support played a significant role for women professors in performing leadership roles in male-dominated universities characterized by patriarchal organisational culture and practices and discrimination against women. • The author concluded that her research would be a foundation for future research aiming to examine the career lives of women in leadership positions in Pakistani higher education institutions.	Rab (2010).
Thirty qualitative interviews were conducted with female academics from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, in addition to analysing official statistics regarding gender distribution in academia.	The researchers drew their analysis from the data obtained from statistics, academic literature, policy documents and 30 qualitative interviews conducted with female academics to understand the dynamics of women's leadership in the higher education sectors of South Asia	• It is highlighted that, in contrast to comprehensive data sets related to gender differences in academic careers in many other countries around the globe, there were few accessible data sets available on the academic staff of universities in Pakistan. • Analysis of qualitative interviews showed that women's absence from senior leadership positions resulted from a combination of factors, including discriminatory recruitment/ promotion procedures, biased rejection and disqualification, and exclusionary networks and practices.	Morley and Crossouard (2016).

		• Alternatively, some women were dissuaded from leadership opportunities as they evaluated them as naïve, unsuitable, and unattractive. • Notably, gender is not a category of analysis in higher education policy research or statistical data related to female academics in the region.	
Statistics regarding female staff in Commonwealth Universities, including those located in Pakistan, were complied.	Quantitative data was gathered regarding female academic leaders in the Southeast Asian region in response to the concern raised by various official statistics about women's absence from senior leadership positions in the regional countries.	• Massive gender gaps are unveiled for all categories of administrative and academic leadership positions in Pakistani universities, with the majority being men. • The survey highlighted that despite the increase in women's representation in university education, there is minimal improvement in women's representation in higher education leadership.	Singh (2008).

The need for understanding women's academics in this current study has drawn upon background literature revealing a gap in sociological analysis of professionally successful Pakistani women's career trajectories. The above table summarises the literature related to women's status in Pakistani academia. As evident in the table, that the influences of various variables related to family demographic, socio-economic, and socio-cultural conditions in shaping women's choices and decisions to join the professional career of academia have rarely/insufficiently been theoretically and empirically examined and analyzed. There is, in fact, hardly any research that has conceptualized the link between social structures (e.g. family class backgrounds) and institutional practices (interpersonal relations, norms) with female academics' progression trajectories along their organizational hierarchy. Especially analytical understanding of experiences of Pakistani academic women from top ranks of university economy in terms of how they formulated their career choices and decisions and chronologically progressed is missing in career literature.

In addition, few sociological studies were previously designed to examine women's careers in Pakistani academia. These studies typically focused on factors causing women academics' underrepresentation in the top academic ranks, except a few investigations explored career enablers. A review of prior knowledge of the field has also revealed that the existing studies did not methodically focus on understanding factors that shaped female academics' educational choices and decisions to join the academic profession. Especially the contribution of the interplay of family's socioeconomic background, cultural values, and institutional elements to women's progress across different phases of their career trajectory has not been focused on and analysed systematically in the existing studies of female academics in Pakistan (table-3 above). Building on a few prior studies, this research attempts to fill the gaps and extend knowledge by not only focusing on various interpersonal and structural enablers and barriers but also including investigating the contribution of women's family socioeconomic status to shape different kinds of enablers of and hurdles to female professors' career progression. My PhD research is, therefore, the first-ever study to examine female professors' career progression in relation to their background conditions by organising interview data into three phases in order to

analyse study participants' views and experiences about what helped and what hindered these women during - 1) their higher education, particularly university education and career choices and decision-making stage; 2) early years of university career development, and 3) academic career promotion trajectory. In brief, the qualitative learnings from this research tend to inform the globally emerging literature on the contribution of institutional elements to women's academically successful career outcomes.

1.6 Research Gaps and Trends in the Existing Field of Knowledge

Literature review as the process of learning from others' work not only connects with pertinent themes and methodologies but also guides me to identify understudied areas through critical analysis of theoretical and empirical work (Ravitch and Riggan, 2012). This current section will discuss theoretical gaps and research trends in the existing literature on gender, career, and women's academic career outcomes to justify my thesis topic's empirical investigation. Discussion of background literature has contributed to the current study in two ways. First, looking into the focus of established thoughts and empirical studies, I identified a few theoretical gaps and emerging research trends that helped outline the study's purpose and potential significance. Second, a review of established theories has connected with major theoretical concepts used to frame the core elements of research questions for the present study. The previous sections introduced core sociological perspectives that have been used to explain the interplay of career, gender and women's professional achievements. These established thoughts and empirical investigations explain career gender gaps connected to the imperious and constraining role of organisational structures and institutional practices. In addition, empirical work on different aspects of female academics' career trajectories, focusing on explanatory factors for gender disparities in terms of fewer female academics reaching the top ladders of the academic hierarchy, is also discussed. A review of scholarly knowledge on women's careers in Pakistani academia also guided me to find gaps and concepts to formulate research focus and study questions.

Firstly, challenges and barriers that constrain female academics' aspirations and efforts to reach top ranks are widely investigated worldwide, confirming that

women's underrepresentation on the professoriate level is an international phenomenon. The literature to date has examined multiple factors that are emphasized/highlighted to be responsible for the patterns of female under-representation at the highest levels of the academic hierarchy. Most studies in the field of gender and academic career development have used the concept of 'organisational deficit' as a theoretical account for the gender career gap in terms of academic women being disproportionately clustered at lower ranks and poorly presented among professors and in other leadership roles in higher education institutions (Park, 1996; Knights and Richards, 2003; Acker and Dillabough, 2007; Batool and Sajid, 2013; Eddy and Ward, 2017). Together, these theoretical frameworks offer explanations to extend our understanding of the role of organisational structures, cultural practices, and policies in creating barriers that constrain women's potential and chances to succeed. In this regard, some prominent sociologists, such as Walby (2009), Acker (2006), Crompton (2006) and Connell (1996), offer theories of 'public patriarchy', 'inequality regimes', ' ideal academician', the 'gendered, and patriarchal university', and 'gendered domestic life' to explain gendered career outcomes in terms of inequalities and differences experienced by women. Overall, these sociological perspectives have found the continuation of women's experiences of male hegemony and cultural sexism from the domestic sphere to the public world of work. As a result, women start to encounter discrimination and subordination in the public domain and pressures and restrictions from gender-structured obligations and domestic life (Crompton and Lyonette, 2010).

Secondly, the landscape of higher education institutions has remained a male-dominated profession in society (Forster, 2001; Benschop and Brouns, 2003). In other words, it is characterised by women being horizontally segregated into feminised fields of studies and vertically located in the lower-ranked positions of lecturers and assistant professors (Baker, 2012; Eddy and Ward, 2017). Hence, the comparative advancement of women in academia over the years indicates that women are not merely helpless victims of gendered organisations but are slowly but surely taking up more leadership and senior academic positions with consistent gender career

gaps (Chesterman, Ross-Smith and Peters, 2003; Van Arensbergen, Van der Weijden and Van den Besselaar, 2012; Fritsch, 2016; Trusson and Rowley, 2022). However, limited attention has been paid to the lives of those female academics who have achieved success and reached the top potions of their university hierarchies.

Thirdly, the initial empirical exploration and analysis of women's career progress substantially focus on the contribution of personal and psychological attributes to their career accomplishments and professional achievements (Akkermans et al., 2013; Blustein, 2013). This competitive ethos perspective is linked to the male working style. It frames success and failure as purely individual efforts and achievements, which seems to undermine the relevance/significance of organisational culture comprised of interpersonal relations and structural arrangements for career success. Instead, career achievements are likely to result from a combination of agentic elements and structural elements (both enablers/facilitators and hurdles) (Creamer, 1995; Thomas and Hollenshead, 2001; Ismail et al., 2005; Tessens, White and Web, 2011; Borges et al., 2013; Moratti, 2020). The higher education institution's structural features and cultural norms, like any other organization, are a combination of enabling and restrictive elements with means of opportunity, modes of possibility and limitation that influence faculty's perspectives and actions, and career trajectories (Morley, 2005; O'Meara and Campbell, 2011). Nonetheless, until recently, the underlying influence of social structures and institutional practices has been inadequately understood regarding the facilitating role these structural features, and cultural elements may play in enabling women to contest challenges and overcome obstacles to their career advancement trajectories (Bailyn, 2003; Marcus, 2007; Lester, 2013; Winchester and Browning, 2015).

Fourthly, current literature trends in this area indicate that research interests rise to shift from negative stories of deprived and constrained career outcomes to positive narratives of success and potential. Engaging in the literature related to women's career development, I came to find emerging trends exploring the supportive and positive role of institutional factors in shaping women's trajectories to the top positions of their career ladders. Such as a growing body of literature focused on

understanding the career success of female academics and exploring the conditions and processes that facilitate a successful career (Hannum et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2018; Chaudhuri, Park and Kim, 2019). Together, these few studies outline different institutional factors contributing to female academics' career success and well-researched implications of personal factors. Some of these career enablers are access to career development opportunities, the role of encouraging and inclusive cultural norms, professional mentors, opportunities for academic networking, a family-friendly working environment, and sources of family support/enabling family structures and networks. Overall, the evidence from these studies suggests that despite all the challenges and obstacles discussed earlier, women are slowly progressing to achieve career success in male-dominated academic institutions.

Fifthly, academic research and systematic understanding of the role of supportive and enabling factors linked to women's socioeconomic background, institutional membership and cultural differences are limited in their implications and conclusions. Moreover, there is increasing emphasis on designing methodological approaches for understanding variations in women's lives and career experiences linked to the variables of their class, race, and cultural differences (Heslin, 2005).

I have found that existing knowledge greatly emphasises the constraining role of institutional values and practice in shaping gender career disparities. I would not want to discount their emphasis on discriminatory outcomes linked to structured forces. However, there is a need to dig out and include positive elements of institutional structures to offer a more comprehensive understanding of varied career development biographies/experiences. In addition, literature on career obstacles and facilitators is widely collected from Western contexts. However, comparatively little is known about female academics' routes to leadership roles in non-western and developing countries like Pakistan. Lastly, sensing gaps in the literature, my study seeks to contribute to the growing research area by examining structural barriers and advancing understanding of structure-linked enabling factors in women's career journeys in the Pakistani higher education workplace. In conclusion, given the theoretical and contextual background realities, it is fascinating to examine what is culturally and structurally specific to Pakistan, making it possible

for this sample of thirty professional women to reach the top positions of their careers.

1.7 Relevance of Studying Female Academics' Career Development

This section will discuss the study's significance by describing how this study will add new and insightful contributions to the existing literature. There are mainly four ways in which this study's potential significance and relevance can be described in terms of its contribution to understanding women's career success in Pakistani society through a detailed analysis of success factors and processes. First, a review of the relevant literature has unpacked a research direction towards exploring career progression biographies in a research background wherein literature is heavily informed by stories of barriers perceived to be responsible for gender career gaps. Second, due to the universal nature of academic careers, the main components of academic career structure and career advancement requirements are quite similar across the global academy. Thus, theoretical themes defining and framing the academic career structure, promotion requirements and career hurdles are studied across higher education systems of different societies. My PhD research project is a test and expansion of these conceptual themes to a rarely studied national context. I used these concepts to formulate different elements and dimensions of questions to explore career development trajectories in different contexts and timescales. Third, this study will likely extend women's career development theory by providing narratives of enabling factors from a society wherein women's career-ship is not their prime identity, with an explicit and broader emphasis on women's domestic and care duties.

Fourth, the rationale behind the focus of this research on contextual reflections is to address the lack of theoretically informed empirical research on Pakistani professional women's lives and their experiences in achieving senior academic and leadership positions. The available literature, and policy documents, suggest that gender differences, particularly gender inequality and women's status in higher education leadership, have rarely been a defining discourse to examine and discuss. Accordingly, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical data on university faculty's work experiences in hiring, promotion, gender relations, higher education reforms,

and work-life balance. Therefore, a literature review identified the missing narratives related to women academics' career experiences in Pakistan, leading me to develop research questions and rationalise the scope of the current study. The present research investigates the factors impacting the career trajectories of a unique subgroup of female academics who reached the top ranks of the professorship. The findings of this research may be helpful in terms of 1) offering ideas regarding support for women who are making career decisions and achieving inspiring successful careers; 2) informing university governance to address the barriers that curtail women's accomplishment of their career goals; 3) and devising/improving strategic plans to address the entrenched gender disparity in academic leadership and broader society.

1.8 Process of Theorisation & Formulation of Study Questions

I aim to examine institutional structures (family, and higher education organisation) as sources of career enablers and barriers. The literature review of academic career success has identified a rise in academic research to explore abilities, skills and strategies that female academics engaged to succeed or overcome the barriers. However, there is little evidence on institutional elements that enabled women to develop and use these skills along their career journeys. Especially, there is little theoretical explanation and empirical evidence for background conditions (family environment and family socioeconomic status) of female academics who reached the top academic rank- a historically male crowded position. In the context of present study, a literature review regarding women in academic careers has guided me in two main ways: 1) situating my focus of study within established theoretical traditions, and 2) finding and mapping the topography of themes to explore through the experiences of participants from a new context (Pakistan). I argue in the thesis that structural theories are the main sources to conceptualise my study focus, research questions and to analyse findings. Also, I claim to focus on the enabling elements of institutional structures compared to the existing literature examined the limiting role of networks/ structural arrangements. So, I have drawn upon structural theories that have offered theoretical concepts to frame research questions and topics of the interview guide for my PhD project to seek an understanding of the career

advancement biographies of female academics. Such as family background/class and networks, workplace conditions, professional monitoring, academic networking, professional development resources and opportunities, features of ideal academician, traditionally structured family roles and gendered academy with biased and masculine workplace conditions were used as the primary themes/mechanisms to theorise en-route career enablers and obstacles. Therefore, by engaging a combination of theoretical themes, this thesis will examine the barriers to female academics reaching the professorial position. It also aims to understand and analyse how their families (environment and socioeconomic background) and work organisations allowed them to develop human and social capitals that play a critical role in their success.

Furthermore, joining the current academic discourses that depart from traditions focused exclusively on barriers and gender disparities, I reconceptualise women's careers to explore the supporting character of institutional factors instead of only looking for institutional constraints. So, based on the theoretical and contextual considerations, I pose the following main research question plus sub-questions to address the focus of my PhD research:

What were the key enablers and hurdles the participants encountered in their journey to reach a professor's position?

1. How did female professors recognise and decide about their academic and career choices? Specifically, how did they formulate their university education and academic career decisions?
2. How did institutional elements (university and family related) impede and support female academics at different career stages of hierarchical progression?

These study questions focus on the potential influence of interaction and processes in women's socio-cultural contexts (their families and university organisations). More specifically, I draw out two main components, the barriers to and support for women who have reached the professorship level. Finally, I will analyse how the barriers and the enablers, at both the domestic and the university levels, shape female academics' perceptions and experiences concerning their career success in Pakistani

academia. The study findings/results will also integrate and extend emerging theoretical discourses, including a focus on highlighting positive experiences that guide me in framing my study's focus on inviting women's professors to share their accomplished biographies. Qualitative research design is the most appropriate method for conducting my PhD research. It aims to document career biographies by listening to women's words about how they have been helped or constrained in their advancement to academic leadership. Semi-structured biographical interviews allow the research participants to discuss their chronological journey to reach the top levels of their professional hierarchies and demonstrate their voices' value.

It is useful to mention here that in the case of current study, women professors are defined as biological females who have been socialized into socially constructed attributes, norms, behaviours, and activities associated with being female in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan. Societies and social groups construct norms and set of expectations related to gender and are learned through the process of socialization. In addition, gender norms vary temporarily and spatially as they are context and time specific and changeable (Gender Equality Commission, 2016). Most of the scholarly debates and empirical studies in the field of gender claim that Pakistani society is characterized by traditional gender norms causing differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. These traditional gender norms are hierarchical and emerged from unequal power structure related to gender that disadvantages mostly women both historically and institutionally (Hadi, 2017; Murshid and Critelli, 2020). However, a typical and homogeneous image of Pakistani women as oppressed members of highly patriarchal society tends to overlook the diversity that exists in the status of women and their life experiences across social classes, region, and rural urban divide. Especially women from educated urban middle class have greater access to educational and occupational opportunities and have assumed greater control of their lives as compared to women who are residing in rural and tribal areas where traditional gender norms have remained relatively unchanged (Shaheed 2001). Given the dominant discourses/accounts of traditional gender relations in terms of

practising power, privilege and possibilities that affects women's progress towards equality and freedom from discrimination, there is a good deal of scope to identify/understand and analyse women's educational and career choices and outcomes linked to their family educational background, occupational class, and rural/urban location. To brief, there is a need for a deeper and nuanced understanding of a certain category of academically and professionally high achieving women's career journeys in relation to configuration, division and distribution of decision-making authority, resources, opportunities, and responsibilities. Therefore, this research aims to explore the career journeys of thirty women who belonged to a unique population which was university qualified and entered professional careers a few decades before when university education and formal career were a rare social practice across the general population of Pakistan.

Given the prime focus of my study is to explore institutional elements that shape academic career progression trajectories of a sample of thirty female professors, I did not posit to examine other aspects of these women's identities (e.g. age, physical ability, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation) in relation to their career progression trajectories. In other words, women sampled in this research are quite a homogeneous category in terms of their professional and social demographics signifying a future opportunity to research/investigate how different/varied categories of women's identities intersect with their career experiences in Pakistani academia.

In the end, I conclude this discussion by emphasising the need to examine how female academics in my study did succeed at the highest level of their career in deep-rooted patriarchal and traditional Pakistani society. Gaps in the current knowledge have already been outlined that present a good deal of scope for the focus of this current research and establish a rationale for the empirical investigation of my PhD topic. Therefore, I theorize to explore connections between personal, professional, and institutional elements and female professors' career choices and progression through biographical semi-structured interviews. These biographies will provide an understanding of potential vital enablers to women's success that is missing in previous research on professionally successful women in Pakistan. Finally, in this

way, my study's findings offer new insights into female academics' lives in Pakistan and, indeed, a better and improved understanding of Pakistani public universities—a way in which success narratives are central themes to explore and analyse.

1.9 Thesis Summary and Structure of Chapters

Drawing on relevant literature and the need to address the lack of theoretical and empirical understanding of Pakistani professional women's lives, the central questions that my thesis addresses are: 1) how do female academics develop their career choices; and 2) how do family and work-based factors facilitate and impede their career advancement? For this, I conducted qualitative semi-structured biographical interviews with a sample of thirty female professors from public universities in Punjab province (Pakistan). Qualitative data matrices are employed as the central data analysis strategy to organise biographical career accounts and life stories into illustrative analytic categories demonstrating various career enablers and barriers. The thesis is organised into six chapters, including the first chapter of the introduction and background literature. The first chapter has presented descriptions related to the conceptualisation process and the framing focus of the inquiry that initially evolved from personally defined questions and contextual relevance for exploring professionally highflyers Pakistani female academics.

In addition, I introduced core existing theoretical paradigms related to gender, work, and women's career development outcomes. These theories mainly explain career gender gaps in connection to the imperious and constraining influence of organisational structures and institutional practices. Next, I presented background information/literature on Pakistani women's status, particularly women's academic careers. Then, gaps and pertinent notions in the current knowledge are outlined that present a good deal of scope to frame this research's questions. Finally, I provided a rationale for how knowledge of the relevant field has been synthesised, applied, and integrated to understand women's career progression in Pakistani higher education.

Chapter two is structured into five interrelated sections to explain how female professors' career trajectories were empirically investigated and analysed. The first section presents a conceptual framework to justify links between my core research questions and the constructivism framework. This framework is chosen as the

preferred philosophical paradigm to operationalize methodological decisions. Then, I describe how a semi-structured biographical interview was designed to collect empirical data on women's career progression trajectories. The semi-structured biographical interview appears as an appropriate methodological approach to seeking answers to research questions focused on exploring how study participants link institutional factors to their career journey toward a professor's position. In addition, the themed biographical conversation offered study participants a venue to frame and make sense of their career success by recollecting a series of chronicles that mark what they think did work, what constrained them, and how they overcame difficulties. I further described the decisions and procedures for selecting data collection methods, study site, sample size and access to study participants.

Given that the study is aimed to reveal what did help or did not help study participants across their career journey, the linear structure of careers in public sector universities constitutes these institutions as a suitable study site to recruit participants for this research. A set of thirty female professors were sampled from four public universities in Punjab province. I also discuss field experiences in terms of approaching my study participants, conducting interviews with them, and reflecting on my positionality as a lecturer in a Pakistani higher education institution. Finally, the means of data analysis strategies (e.g., stage-based coding strategy and qualitative data matrix approach) will be described to organize the data, identify patterns with relevant categories and present thesis findings.

Study participants described/recollected their journeys of career advancement by referring to different combinations of personal, interpersonal, and structural elements as key influencers of their success. Therefore, the analysis of interview data and emergent findings is covered in three chapters (3-5). Chapter three, entitled: The role of family, personal, and structural factors in women's academic and career choices formation', is the first of three themed chapters that analyze and present women's accounts, highlighting/revealing elements that shape their academic and career choices, and the start of a university career. During individual, semi-structured interviews, I asked a couple of questions to understand how the interviewees in this study recalled their academic and career choices and decision-

making processes. In response to these questions: 1) how you decided about your university degree program; and 2) what factors influenced you to pursue an academic career, the study participants provided detailed accounts-describing career-related choices and how decisions were shaped by multiple influences, ranging from personal attributes, through family support to opportunities offered by university teachers, study advisors and academic institutions. This chapter's first section maps out study participants into three broader categories based on their family demographic features, followed by a brief comparison of participants' family socioeconomic backgrounds with that of the general population of Pakistani women. As will be seen, it was evident that, except for three cases, most of the sample was drawn from a small and socioeconomically privileged section of the society regarding women's parents' educational levels, occupation statuses and rural and urban living. Family background information has set the stage to understand and relate the influence of family environment, cultural values, and family members' involvement in shaping women's academic and career aspirations, choices, and achievements.

Progressive gender role attitudes, valuing women's education, reinforcement, active involvement in advising and guiding choices, supporting decisions, and helping in overcoming relational and structural barriers are emerged as dominant narratives and themes to reveal family influence on study participants' journey towards university education, and an academic career. The final section of the first analysis chapter explored and analysed interview talks, highlighting personal preferences' influence on career decision-making. Besides family influences, long-standing passion for a particular academic subject, preference for work/family balance and inspiration for research and writing were coded as three kinds of personal considerations that led women to join academia as their much-aspired life career. In addition to family influences and personal considerations in choosing university employment as a career, analysis of women's narratives related to career choice formation also revealed the contribution of opportunity structures in terms of job offers and multiple work options, which enabled many of the participants' entry to academia without any hurdles and delays. I concluded that findings from the first

chapter contribute to the existing literature confirming connections between different socio-cultural capitals sourced from affluent family backgrounds and children's academic and career success. However, in minority cases, given the absence of social background advantages, the parental will to support their daughters to break away from family constraints and background disadvantages kept these women motivated to succeed against the odds.

The fourth chapter, entitled 'Early career progression experiences', is the 2nd of the three analysis chapters. This chapter presents findings focusing on entry to an academic career and early career progression years, which featured professional development opportunities, struggles to manage work/life priorities, and overcoming relational and institutional barriers. In addition, this chapter maps out study participants into three categories (e.g., largely positive, mixed, and largely negative early career experiences) based on their different voicing combinations of constraining and enabling factors. Analysis of study participants' narratives reveals that most women referred to relational support from the workplace and family as key enablers in achieving success and overcoming barriers. Moreover, career development opportunities and family support for care and career needs were the forms of institutional arrangements and structural elements commonly cited as evidence of institutions enabling contribution to smooth early career experiences in most study cases.

Most of the women in the sample had largely smooth and positive early career development biographies. However, for a smaller set of study participants, lack of research resources (supervisory facility, outdated research infrastructure) and workplace politics resulted in what participants perceived to be an unjust distribution of workplace resources and career delays. Narratives of multiple and mostly negative experiences by a small section of the study sample led me to explore and relate alternative sources of support to explain success in the absence of themed explanations of success. The evidence from the second chapter's results highlights the significance of varied combinations of institutional factors in enabling or constraining success. It is interesting to understand the success of a small set of women who experienced a lack of support but still gained success. Answering how

these women succeeded while experiencing the negative role of different relational and institutional factors reveals that support received from alternative sources (e.g., other colleagues, boss, and family members) and employing agentic traits made it possible for these women to overcome barriers and move to the next phase of their career journey.

Chapter fifth, entitled 'Promotion trajectories,' is the final analysis chapter that has analysed and interpreted study participants' academic career promotion biographies/experiences. The first section described analytic strategies employed to analyse promotion narratives and categorise female academics' experiences into three promotion trajectories (fast-track promotion, slightly interrupted and interrupted promotion journeys). Academic credentials (research performance, PhD, and academic specialisation), structured and regulated promotion boards, and less competitive promotion requirements are specified as central enablers in reaching the professorial position. At the same time, colleagues' uncompetitive tactics and engagement of organisational connections, irregular and delayed promotion boards, and lack of promotion opportunities have been accounted for as sources of interruptions and delays along different promotion stages to professorship. The key findings that emerge are that the accounts given by respondents repeatedly value paper-based credentials (degrees and published works) as evidence of quality, and merit over experience, teamworking, and networks to explain their varied promotion experiences.

This PhD study has detailed descriptions of enabling or constraining factors through stories of women's academic and career choice formation and outcomes. In the final chapter of the discussion and conclusion, the study's focus and research questions have been reiterated in relation to a synthesis of key findings. Then, the research's relevance and significant theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to the sociological understanding of educated and professional women's lives in Pakistan are discussed. In the concluding discussion, I suggest a theoretical model illustrating key ingredients/ elements that clarify career success for a sample of thirty female professors in this present study. The vital strength of my PhD project is its contribution to a small body of literature seeking to reveal a relatively societally

influential but under-researched category of Pakistani women: female professors. Finally, I discuss the study's limitations, unsolved inquiries, implications of the present findings for future research in the relevant field of knowledge, and institutional policy recommendations for gender equality in academic leadership and beyond.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

I conducted qualitative semi-structured biographical interviews with a homogenous purposive sample of thirty female professors to understand and interpret their academic career journeys in public universities in Punjab, Pakistan. The study's primary purpose is to explore and analyse institutional enablers and barriers that female professors came across in their progress to a professor's position. This methodology chapter explains the conceptual framework covering methodological decisions about - 1) qualitative research approach; 2) instrumentation; 3) participants sampling; 4) fieldwork, and 5) data management and analysis techniques. First, I will describe the philosophical elements of the chosen qualitative research method to study the career paths of female professors. Second, a brief description of designing topic guides and the main components of the interview guide will be given. Next, justification for the sample design, main sampling criteria and strategy to select (a) research sites and recruit (b) study participants for fieldwork will be explained. Then, I will explicate fieldwork experiences regarding emergent issues and approaches to managing these challenges. Also, I will describe the process of conducting biographical interviews with female professors at Punjabi universities and address my subjectivity and positionality as an insider researcher. The final section will introduce analytic tools and techniques to translate, transcribe, code, categorise and analyse qualitative interview data, followed by brief concluding remarks.

2.2 Qualitative Research Approach

This section contains arguments explaining the methodological decisions about selecting and executing the qualitative research approach. There is a general agreement in the literature that the justification for using a specific research design and approach is centrally linked to the topic under investigation and the research questions and objectives sought (Strauss and Corbin,1990; Corbally and O'Neill, 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2019; Tracy, 2019). Levitt et al. (2017) suggest the concept of 'methodological integrity' underpins an alignment and fit between theoretical assumptions, research question(s) and methods. As a general principle of scientific

research, methodological integrity implies that the chosen research procedures support the research goals and questions and must be crafted for the subject matter's core features and the researcher's philosophical and epistemological approach. Similar to methodological integrity, a conceptual framework is designed to delineate preferred methodologies of understanding reality, building knowledge/theory, and creating information about proposed research (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Similarly, I outlined a conceptual framework that specifies who and what will (and will not) be studied and explains how it will be studied. Furthermore, my conceptual framework seeks to operationalise proposed research ideas and planning about research design, sampling choices, data gathering, and analysis devices to collect answers for theoretically developed questions for my PhD study (Ravitch and Riggan, 2012; Ormston et al., 2014; Packer, 2017). Such as in the present study, I posited exploring and examining female professors' career progression histories in Pakistani academies.

Therefore, the key research question is to examine how Pakistani female academics progressed in their academic career and what factors supported or constrained them in their journeys to a professorial position in Punjabi public universities. I used biographical designs to seek detailed descriptions of the interplay and influence of institutional and interpersonal enablers and barriers through women's stories. The central aim of my study – documenting, analysing and presenting results related to institutional enablers and barriers that women faced on their routes to the position of a professor – has highlighted an analytic need to comprehend the relationship between interpretivism and causal explanation with some discussion of context in relation to the narratives/text -what actors create in terms of belief, and interpretation (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002; McMahon and Watson, 2007). It means the current PhD research's ontological stance requires a methodology that can blend elements of causal explanation with an explanation at the level of the belief held by the actor to unpack the phenomenon under study (Maxwell, 2004). In other words, in this research, study participants' subjective sense-making is focused. However, the embedded nature of social and cultural institutions requires me to link female professors' construction of sense-

making and enactment to social, cultural, historical and political norms and processes that operate within a specific context (Wheeldon and Ahlberg, 2011; Grandy, 2017).

Therefore, from designing research questions to analysing study findings, my methodological choices are sourced from Weber's constructivism, which combines a sense of causal explanation with interpretive meaning-making as a cause for action (Williams, 2000; Patton, 2008; David, 2010). The constructivist framework allows the researcher to explore certain forms of micro-historical experiences (e.g., meanings, motives and actions) within socio-structural conditions (Fulbrook, 1978). Similarly, drawing on constructivism, I conceptualised the reconciliation of interpretive understanding and causal explanation in terms of how the institutional elements create perceptions shaping women professors' academic and career aims, decisions, and outcomes (Ringer, 1997). This means constructivism's lens informs the formulation of my study questions and methodological decisions to answer the posited questions with the reflections that the career realities I study are the social product of women professors' perceptions of interactional processes and institutional elements (Flick, 2018). Weber believed in explanations in relation to conditions produced by established arrangements that were not reducible to individual choices or singular interactions at a given moment. Instead, Verstehen guides constructivism's methodological approach- a philosophical contribution by Weber which means studying people's lived experiences in a specific historical and social context (Weber, 1981; Brown, 2002; Ringer, 2002). So, drawing on Weber's causal interpretive sociology, I seek to link explanation at the study participants' understanding level with an explanation of more 'structural' factors- socio-economic class background and institutional cultures shaping, constraining, and conditioning belief and opportunities for women's action and career outcomes.

In part, my research explored more than just 'interpretations' as I conceptualised identifying factors such as parental class, education and attitudes as 'causes' of female career opportunities and achievements. Therefore, I combined elements of causal variables with elements of agency for crafting data collection tools and designing analytic techniques to analyse and explain study outcomes. For this, I

designed semi-structured life history interviews containing a range of questions (mainly sourced from pre-reviewed literature) that collected data that is in part about causal variables and in part offers scope to express internal beliefs. Moreover, I adopted elements of the interpretive approach to gathering relatively open-ended data from participants about their lives and careers (Silverman, 2015). Besides, for understanding actions, the description of the context in terms of background features was a central focus of my qualitative inquiry (Cohen, Duberley and Mallon, 2004). For example, family education status, parental class, and associated cultural values create the context in which a daughter is raised with achievement-oriented values, talents, strategies, and sociocultural capitals (resourceful networks). In this sense, family background context is a causal factor for female professors' career outcomes. My methodological choices of data analysis are also sourced from constructivism as I employed analytic tools to illustrate findings sourcing from elements at personal and institutional levels. Therefore, I analysed and related parental class, education and rural/urban conditions, and cultural systems regarding their influence on academic women's beliefs, motives and actions. Also, I analysed the connection between having various kinds of social capitals (institutional support networks) and women's academic and career ambitions and achievements. In my PhD research project, I was keen to balance interpretation at the level of meaning with an explanation of institutional practices and social relationships that shape female academics' aims, actions and career outcomes. The constructivist philosophy helped in understanding and interpreting study participants' construction and sense-making of their career progression trajectories in terms of experiencing institutional support and hurdles (Young and Collin, 2004).

Finally, for the quality coverage in research practices, contemporary qualitative scholars increasingly believe in employing pragmatic choices- justifying the combination of different research approaches to address specific research questions rather than aligning with a single research approach (Creswell and Poth, 2016; Mason, 2017). Similarly, in the current study, various theoretical assumptions from different qualitative research traditions were combined to conceptualise and operationalise choices and decisions related to the research question, sampling

criteria, topics covered in the interview guide, and data analysis techniques (Carter and Little, 2007). Therefore, the biographical interview approach, constructivism framework, categorisation of findings, and thematic data analysis techniques have been aligned to design methods' decisions to answer the research questions. First, the current study's focus is to be found within constructivism: retaining a sense of reconciliation between causal explanation and interpretive meaning-making as cause for action (Casper et al., 2007; Bluhm, 2011). Second, the biographical approach has helped formulate the interview guide's structure and content to reveal/explore career progression from the perspective of situated individuals in temporal order and manners (Cohen and Mallon, 2001; King, 2004). Thirdly, thematic analysis, qualitative data matrix, and categorisation of findings are adopted to identify, describe, and interpret common and divergent ideas, beliefs, choices and practices around the theoretically informed research questions (Riessman, 2008; Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012; King and Brooks, 2018; Woods and Sikes, 2022).

2.3 Biographical Semi-Structured Interviews: Rationale and Benefit Using the Interview Guide

I theorised to conduct qualitative semi-structured, biographical life history interviews with a homogenous purposive sample of thirty female professors to understand and interpret their academic career progression journeys in public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan. This section describes the rationale and advantages of using a biographical, life-history semi-structured interview guide as a choice to find answers to my study questions. The structure and content of the interview guide will also be explained. Key research questions and sampling plans are the sources of decisions about how the information will be accessed to understand the phenomena under investigation (Brinkmann, 2013). In the case of the present PhD research, female professors from public universities of Punjab province are specified to interview to explore and analyse their perceptions and experiences of their journey of career progress to reach the position of a professor. The qualitative interview is a purposed conversation (Bhattacharya, 2017). Given the current study's purpose, a biographical semi-structured interview guide has been used to explore women's descriptions and interpretations of their career experiences. In-depth qualitative

interviewing in this study allowed women to describe what is relevant and vital to their life situations and gain insight into individuals' experiences of particular events and situations through their reflections (Riessman, 2008; Merrill and West, 2009). Qualitative in-depth interviews are a well-established research instrument for approaching people's descriptions and interpretations of their social worlds (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). However, there are different types of interviews adopted to collect qualitative data. This difference is mainly determined by the planned study's goal, participants' characteristics, researcher's epistemological approach, and interview structuring (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2014).

Given all this, I decided to combine 'respondent' and 'biographic/life history interview' techniques for conversation with female academics instead of adopting a single interviewing design. Firstly, according to the explanation provided by Tracy (2020, p. 159-160), 'respondent interview design' is an appropriate choice for those study respondents who hold similar positions and have experiences that directly attend to the research goals. The respondent interview approach may be particularly worthwhile when attempting to understand similarities and differences within a particular cultural group. Similarly, respondents in the present study are a homogeneous set of women in their prime roles as female professors. Moreover, to identify similar and varied experiences, this sample of thirty female professors is interviewed to narrate their perceptions and experiences surrounding the main study questions: what institutional elements are involved in their career selection and progression.

Secondly, the biographic, life history interview approach focuses on how respondents narrate their perceptions and experiences across their life trajectory, mainly related to the research's focused purpose (Denzin, 1989; Corbally and O'Neill, 2014). Given that in-depth biographical interviewing with academic women in the professor's position has allowed me to explore their experiences that directly link with the problem of interest and focus of the investigation (how progress has been achieved). Storytelling/qualitative interview has been recognised as a powerful and valuable research instrument in analysing careers. Its strength is to provide rich, integrated and multifaceted insights from studied individuals' perspectives (Cohen

and Mallon, 2001). In the same way, the interviewed women in my study told stories of their careers as they unfolded through time and space. More importantly, these stories provided both the holistic nature of their university careers and specific career transitions. Furthermore, academic literature confirms that family background indicators, family relations, and educational and career experiences significantly affect professional development in adult roles (Lindholm, 2004). Therefore, biographical life history interviews have provided an effective way to explore, describe, and bridge/connect interactional processes, institutional practices, women's social membership, cultural and historical locations, and living conditions with their successful academic career outcomes (Chase, 2008). In brief, the research's main focus clarifies the justification for selecting biographical interview design as a suitable methodological approach to understanding different life course phases (Merrill and West, 2010). The design and conduct of a biographical semi-structured interview guide function as a bridge between study participants' past, present, and future life course episodes (Denzin, 1989; Bujold, 2004). Therefore, for an in-depth understanding of the role that family and work institutions played in shaping the educational and career trajectories of a sample of thirty female professors, biographical interviewing provided women with an opportunity to reflect on temporal and spatial dimensions of their educational, family and occupational lives and share their voices on success/achievements, failures, difficulties and challenges, conflicts and decision making throughout life.

2.3.1 Content and designing of the interview guide

Interviews in qualitative research can be termed guided question-answer conversations (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018). The section discusses how I strategically chose the content, order, and structure of interview questions. My choice is to combine structure with flexibility in drafting key topics to cover in the interview guide by drawing on themes from the existing scholarship. So, the interview guide has three main sections with several questions to record women's accounts about how did they experience core theoretical constructs (mostly investigated in western context) in Pakistan society. The present study benefitted from the background literature review in designing the instrument's structure and content (Drisko, 2005;

Mason, 2017). The decisions related to the level/degree of structures (loosely to tightly structured or little instrumentation to highly prior instrumentation) and the content (topics, themes, and variables) of the tool of data collection are linked to the nature and the focus of study (either exploratory or confirmatory) (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014, p. 53), 'in the case of an exploratory study, largely descriptive, you do not know the parameters or dynamics of social setting. So heavy initial instrumentation or closed-ended devices are inappropriate. If, however, you are doing a confirmatory study with relatively focused research questions, a well-bounded sample of persons, events, and processes, then well-structured instrument designs are the logical choice'. In the present study, the foci are both exploratory and confirmatory. The topic (female professors' career development journeys) is moderately well understood in culturally diverse global contexts and offers reasonably detailed background literature. However, this kind of topic is an exploratory study in Pakistani background, and the stage in the development of topic knowledge in the Pakistani context is at the initial level. The sampling criteria are also straightforwardly well-bounded and determined through the study topic and purpose. Therefore, given the global, contextual, and academic backgrounds, I broadly designed the content of the biographical interview guide around the following theory-driven topics:

1. **Family and educational background: this section has focused on the following themes**:
    - **Family relations**- with parents, siblings, and others.
    - **Family background**- parents' education & occupation, family forms, residential area.
    - **Education history** - (school, college & university), location, age, duration.
    - **Education & career goals -** selecting a subject field for the university degree and university career.

An underlying cause of this interview questions section is understanding the interplay of family background, parenting, educational experiences and women's aspirations, goals and choices for a higher education degree and a professional career.

2. **Professional-organisational factors: this section is designed to cover the following topics**:

- **Work history-** enter an academic career, faculty work, duties, and promotion experiences.
- **Workplace relationships**- with boss & colleagues, academic/ professional networking.
- **University/department work environment & conditions** – opportunities, resources, constraints, and challenges.

3. **Work-family interface: this section has aimed to focus on the following matters surrounding career and care priorities:**

- **Marital status-** married/ other, time of marriage, husband occupation & education.
- **Family forms -** family system (joint vs nuclear setup).
- **Care responsibilities-** childcare arrangements and other caring obligations.
- **Family role** - supporting or constraining career and care needs.
- **Career-family priorities-** strategies and ways/resources to manage the competing demands of family and professional life.

Several interview questions have been outlined to understand how the above literature-driven factors might have influenced female academic career journeys in higher education institutions in Pakistan. The interview questions were based on sociological perspectives on gender, work organisations, and women's career development (Heslin, 2005; Acker, 2010; Baker, 2012). In addition, the generated data through biographical interviews have been analysed to understand and interpret theory-driven career development constructs/perspectives in the Pakistani context.

2.3.2 Sequence of interview topics and structure of interview tool

Reviewing the research specification, study objectives, and relevant literature is the beginning step to forming an initial picture of the key topics to cover and planning how to group and order these themes in the research instrument (Brinkmann, 2012). A review of the relevant literature guided me to draft interview themes and a list of interview questions subsequently. In the case of the present study, after mapping out a range of topics to be outlined in the interview guide, I chose to organise topics in

chronological order so that conversations related to career trajectory would progress in which they happened (Del Corso and Rehfuss, 2011; Yeo et al., 2014). There are three key sections, each divided further into relevant subtopics. For example, opening questions were an opportunity to collect the participants' family background information that provided crucial context for later discussion of findings. Next, questions related to their university education choices and beginning of career have been listed to ask that would gently lead the participants to the main topic of career development biographies. Finally, questions related to the central theme of career progress experiences were chosen to ask after establishing the interview conversation's comfort zone. Moving towards the end of the interview, I designed to ask about their career plans, suggestions for improvement in work conditions, and advice and recommendations for other female academics in order to help my participants move on from the stressed emotional state of mind and complicated feelings that the discussion related career progress might have generated (Rubin and Rubin, 2011; Yeo et al., 2014).

In addition, a semi-structured interview guide is more flexible and organic than a structured interview schedule - a list of questions repeated in the exact wording that schedules the respondents to answer these pre-emptive questions in the same order (Weiss, 1995; Yeo et al., 2014). I also lean toward generating a collaborative dialogue than a formal and strictly ordered question-answer protocol (King, 2004; Josselson, 2013). Therefore, a moderately structured interview guide in this present study has facilitated me in establishing control over the interview's content and focus. At the same time, it has allowed my participants a reasonable amount of freedom to narrate their experiences, which led to an emic understanding of the research questions sourced from key constructs of career development perspectives. (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Kvale, 2007). Another advantage of this responsive way of conservation is the value of the research participant's viewpoints and interpretation rather than imposing a researcher's framing/understanding of the subject matter (Yeo et al., 2014; Gabriel,2018). However, a potential disadvantage of the flexible semi-structured design (e.g., biographical tales) is likely a generation of detailed, lengthy and partially irrelevant interview conversations resulting from allowing the

interviewees to be heard without the boundaries of ordered and close-ended question-answer sequence (Gibbs, 2018). Another important choice regarding fieldwork decisions has to be made on how the interview will be conducted. Qualitative interviews are conducted mainly in face-to-face or virtual/remote (telephone and online) interviews (King, Horrocks and Brooks,2018). Given the practical limitations of suspension and rescheduling of interviews in Pakistani society, which will discuss later, a face-to-face interview was the most suitable method to access study participants to conduct interviews.

2.4 Sample Design and Strategy of Sample Recruitment

The previous sections delineated the justification for using a qualitative research approach and biographical, life history semi-structured interviews in response to the study questions and foci. This section explains the nature and significance of purposive sample- a method that is an integral sampling approach to qualitative research, followed by a detailed description of the practical aspects of choosing the research field, site, setting, and study participants' recruitment for the current study. Sampling choices related to whom to talk with, where, when, and why are crucial for later analysis and conclusion as these decisions have theoretical and practical implications (Stake, 2010). The field of study in a qualitative inquiry consists of people, locations, texts, and places where the study's phenomena may be found, explored, and analysed (Given, 2008). Such as, in my PhD research, the academic career progression experiences of female professors in Pakistani higher education institutions can refer to the field of study. Hence, there are sites or specific geographical and organisational locations within the fields. For example, in the current study, Punjabi universities or universities in Punjab province designate geographical and organisational sites.

Furthermore, within sites (universities in Punjab province), specific settings like public sector universities will represent my study's particular settings. Also, there may be different sets of participants- the target or focal population of the study. For instance, the current PhD project's targeted study population is female professors in public sector universities. Research questions and topics are the primary sources to set the boundaries for sampling decisions. Therefore, I combined convenient and

purposive sampling approaches for the current study to select participants who closely match the study's criteria and research purpose (Saunders, 2012). According to the definition provided by Tracy (2020, p.102), 'a key feature of purposive sampling is that sample criterion is prescribed, and sample units are selected based on known characteristics, which might be sociodemographic or relate to factors such as experience, behaviour, and roles relevant to the research topic'. The current research investigates female professors' career progression trajectories nested in their context (Pakistani universities). Given the study foci, the status of being a woman professor and experiences regarding what helped or constrained to reach the professor's position are the targeted population's fundamental features that led the study participants to be selected. In other words, female academics in the professorial position are chosen to represent and symbolise the prescribed study population and their characteristics (Tracy,2020). So, female academics' current professional status, career journeys, and experiences of reaching the professorial position have made them eligible to be studied to answer my PhD study research questions. Another characteristic of the sample is homogeneous (all women and all professors) in its composition linked to the study's primary aim and coverage. The literature review informed the choice of purposive sampling for a homogeneous group of female professors. Similarly, in this research project, emerging research trends to investigate female career progression in the sociology of career, gender and women leadership, and gaps in knowledge about Pakistani female professor career experiences informed my study's primary aim and criteria for selecting the study sample (Emmel, 2013; Morley and Crossouard, 2016).

2.4.1 Multistage sampling design: study population, sampling frame & selection of study sample

As discussed earlier, a field of study comprises many potential settings, sites, and sets of participants. However, a specific number of sites, settings and participants need to be sampled to investigate specified and posited research questions (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, a researcher must carefully reflect on one's study objectives and interests to determine the main criteria parameters to justify the study population and research sites (Rudestam and Newton, 2014). This PhD research's key foci set to

explore Pakistani female professors' academic career trajectories and investigate what helped or constrained them along their journey to reach the professor's position. Therefore, I designed a justifiable sampling strategy- multistage purposive and convenient sample methods to choose sample units- including study sites and study respondents within these sites.

Multistage sample design is preferably used for qualitative methodologies- specific subsets of sample units (people, events, processes, settings) within the study population are included or excluded according to the study's foci (Ritchie et al., 2014). Drawing on a multistage sampling approach, I briefly explicate the logic behind my choices to determine the criteria to include or exclude subsets of the study population and sites to define and select the final sample. For example, in my PhD research, the targeted population (female professors from public sector universities) within the main study population (female professors) are more proximal to the research question in terms of shedding light on understanding the research questions in more depth.

The multistage sample approach mainly involves two stages to select the study sample. The first step is defining and prioritising purposive selection criteria- signposting the characteristics of the study population/target population and research constituency - social settings (Ritchie et al., 2014). For example, in the case of the present study, women's professional status as a professor and their experiences related to reaching the position of professor in public universities are the main criteria to decide about the study population and its geographical location (public sector universities). The next step is to focus on sampling units (individuals and study sites) looked for within these prioritised and specified constituencies (public universities). Following the multistage purposive sampling approach, I used different criteria to filter and specify sampling units (women professors, geographical locations, and university organisations). For example, the first stage involves defining the study constituency/social setting (geographical location and university organisation) from which the sample is drawn. Furthermore, considering my time and resource limits, I need to set other boundaries to sample the universities. Given time, money, and ability to access potential study respondents are the critical

factors in determining the feasibility of sampling choices in selecting geographical and organisational constituencies (study sites) (Saunders et al., 2017). Next, drawing on convenience sampling, I selected Punjab province as a geographical site among the four provinces of Pakistan. The logic behind the Punjab province's selection as the leading study site is linked to the time and resources required to access my respondents. I live and work in the capital city of Punjab. Given my geographical location and professional background, travelling, and approaching the sample women was convenient. Therefore, I planned to recruit my respondents for interviews from the public-sector universities across Punjab's various locations.

Given that the study's substantive focus was a linear career progression journey, a decision was taken to restrict the study population to female professors from public sector universities. Female professors from the private sector of Punjab province (a subset of the central population) were excluded because of work conditions and promotion structure in the private sector universities that set them aside from the current study's scope. Moreover, I conceptualise exploring women's career progression experiences along a linear path (typically from lecturer to professor) that characterises long-term, regular, and permanent job features. The academic career promotion route in public universities contains structural elements of linear hierarchy, full-time/ permanent and long-term career routes, which are being conceptualised to examine in the current study. Therefore, public universities' service structures and linear progression systems are determinants of recruiting study participants from these universities.

The next stage involves setting the criteria for sampling public sector universities to recruit female professors to be contacted for an interview. Again, selecting universities (organisational context) is linked to some determinants. Table-4 below displays that till 2017 (the year I collected data), there were 27 public sector universities in different divisional locations and cities of Punjab. The table also charts the establishment date of these universities and their geographical locations. More than half of these universities (18/27) were established after 2000 and in recent years. Because of their initial period, many new universities do not have senior academic faculty members, especially women, in the professoriate's rank. Moreover, I could

not find data from the relevant university websites regarding the number of male and female professors in most recently established universities.

Table-4 List of Public Universities in the Province of Punjab

Administrative Division	No of series	Public Sector Universities	Date of establishment
Bahawalpur	1	Islamia University, Bahawalpur	1975
	2	The Government Sadiq College Women University, Bahawalpur	2013
	3	Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar khan	2014
DG khan	1	Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi khan	2012
Faisalabad	1	Government College University, Faisalabad	2002
	2	**University of Agriculture, Faisalabad**	**1906**
	3	Government College Women University, Faisalabad	2013
Gujranwala	1	University of Gujrat, Gujrat	2004
	2	GC women, University, Sialkot	2012
Lahore	1	Government College University, Lahore	1864 as college 2002 as university
	2	King Edward Medical University, Lahore	2005
	3	Lahore College for Women University, Lahore	2002
	4	University of Education, Lahore	2002
	5	**University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore**	**1962**
	6	University of Health Science, Lahore	2002
	7	**University of the Punjab, Lahore**	**1882**
	8	University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences, Lahore	1882 as college 2002 as university

	9	Information Technology University of the Punjab, Lahore	2012
Multan	1	**Bahauddin Zakriya University, Multan**	**1975**
	2	The Women University, Multan	2012
	3	Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of engineering & technology(MNS-UET) Multan	2012
	4	Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture, Multan	2012
Sahiwal	1	Under process	
Rawalpindi	1	Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi	1998
	2	Pir Mehar Ali Shah Arid Agriculture, University Rawalpindi	1994
	3	University of Engineering and Technology, Taxila	1975
	4	**Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, Rawalpindi**	**1967**
Sargodha	1	University of Sargodha, Sargodha	2002

Therefore, I chose the four oldest universities according to their year of establishment. The selection of these four universities is linked to their specific structural properties. The service structure and career promotion route in these chosen universities represent a linear career progress trajectory that the current study has been conceptualised to explore. In addition, information/ data regarding the female professors were accessible in the selected universities. Table-5 below outlines the four oldest universities sampled within the primary study constituency (public sector universities of Punjab listed in table-4 above) and the number of employed female professors who were contacted for the invitation to participate in the current study. I contacted and requested all female professors to participate in my study within the universities finalize for the current research. However, thirty out of thirty-five female professors finally agreed and were available to be interviewed.

Table-5 Selected Universities with Number of Male and Female Professors

	Administrative Division	Public Sector Universities	Date of establishment	Number of Male Professor	Number of Female Professors
1.	Faisalabad	University of Agriculture, Faisalabad	1906	60	2
2.	Lahore	University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore	1962	50	5
		University of the Punjab, Lahore	1882	67	21
4.	Rawalpindi	Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, Rawalpindi	1967	55	6

2.4.2 Sample Size

The selection of thirty female professors as the sample size was linked to some pieces of advice present in the extant literature. The pragmatic, situated, and interpretive assessment has guided me in selecting study sites and sample size (O'reilly and Parker, 2013; Baker and Edwards, 2017). A review of background literature has offered some theoretical understanding that guides my choices regarding the number of cases selected for interviewing. First, the availability of budget and resources plays a determining role in deciding the sample size. Each sample unit in qualitative research requires extensive resources to be collected and analysed. Second, qualitative samples are small for a good reason, as these studies traditionally yield rich and complex data and require intensive time to be adequately analysed. Third, in the case of a homogeneous sample population, a smaller sample seems to include all required internal diversity. Fourth, qualitative investigations are not required to have a large sample set to support incidence prevalence as this is not a core concern of qualitative inequity (Emmel, 2013). Notably, background literature

within the qualitative research tradition has extended advice for sample size from the data /code saturation to inescapably a subjective and situated judgement-proposing a certain number of cases that offer meaning saturation- a deep and rich textured understanding and appreciation of the interrelationship among varied features of life experiences (Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2019). A widely held view within qualitative enquiry is that saturation (stopping data collection when the findings become redundant) is the crucial determinant of sample size. However, contrary to saturation theory, actual saturation may never occur as each new case can offer something unique to contribute to the research or at least may offer some thematic variability (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006). To conclude, longer, intensive, and more detailed transcripts are expected to produce in response to biographical interviews, so a reasonable decision is to specify a certain number of participants to interview for their career courses. Given the above guidelines, thirty female professors were deemed manageable and approachable to be interviewed from four universities across three cities.

2.5 Field Experiences

The previous section has explained the logic for selecting the study sample via employing the multistage purposive sampling method. This section details the logistical choices embraced to (a) access study respondents and (b) arrange interviews. During these interviews, communication and interaction dynamics are observed and noted. Sensitivity to subjective reflexivity will also be described before discussing analytical approaches for data organisation, analysis, and interpretations. I need to refocus and redraw sampling parameters slightly during fieldwork, which is common in qualitative studies while dealing with people and social settings (Woods, 2005; Arthur et al., 2014).

2.5.1 Challenges in gaining access to study participants

The study sample consisted of all female professors from four public sector universities selected due to their institutional and structural features suitable to the study's aim and requirements (explained in the previous section). This part will discuss practical issues in accessing study women and organising interviews. Also, I have briefly explained contextually relevant steps that I took to select women

professors as study participants despite the lack of access to accurate data information about women in the academic pipeline in Pakistani universities. Review of the background literature highlighted the absence of nationally representative statistics about female participation in academic careers. In addition, systemically collected national data sets mapping gender differences and women's leadership in higher education sector of Pakistan are missing. A study was conducted to understand the dynamics of women leadership in the higher education sector of South Asia in response to concerns raised by various international statistics about women's absence from senior leadership positions in the regional countries. In this study, Morley and Crossouard (2016) analyzed statistics, academic literature, policy documents and 30 qualitative interviews conducted with female academics from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The researchers have identified complex discrepancies in available statistics regarding gender, academic staff, and higher education. They highlighted that, in contrast to comprehensive data sets related to gender differences in academic careers in many other countries around the globe, there were few accessible data sets available on academic staff of universities in these countries. After an extensive examination, the authors reported that there was a deficit of statistical and historical data on university faculty, making it hard to determine patterns, changes, and trends in terms of distribution and progress of both male and female academics across the academic ranks in universities of focused countries.

Given a consistent lack of statistical data and theoretical interpretation on women's leadership in universities of Pakistan, there is lack of nationally representative evidence of uniform and linear progress regarding increased number of academic women and decline in gender gap across academic ranks or vice versa. Consequently, gender analysis in relation to women's participation in university careers, leadership, and professional progress remains absent from policy documents, and academic literature debates due to the absences of gender segregated data/ inadequately available statistics (Morley and Crossouard 2016). Among infrequently conducted academic scholarship and statistics, Singh (2008) collected data on female staff in Commonwealth universities, including Pakistan.

This rarely available data gave an overview of female academic leaders in the region of South Asia. Pakistan focused statistics show gender representation across different categories of leadership positions in Pakistani universities. A massive gender gap is visible for all categories of administrative and academic leadership positions in Pakistani universities. Data from Singh's survey about women academics in commonwealth countries showed that despite the increased women's representation in university education, there was a little improvement in women's representation in higher education leadership.

My research population comprises female professors from public universities. A lack of access to accurate data information about women in the academic pipeline in Pakistani universities also presented challenges for my research design in relation to decide on the sample constituency (four public sector universities), and to identify a suitable sample frame (the potential participants' population) from which female professors could be contacted for an interview. Because, after theoretical justification for the preferred sampling method to gain access to study interviewees, the next step is to decide upon an appropriate information source or sample frame (a list of all study populations) from which the study sample will be recruited and contacted for biographical interviewing (Arthur et al., 2014). A suitable sample frame is featured to provide all the information required to contact selected participants- correctly registered full name, postal address, e-mail address or contact number (Ishak and Abu Bakar, 2014). Given the absence of national statistics on female participation in university careers, I collected/obtained the respondents' information from the universities' websites as they have published data on their faculty members across different academic departments. However, in most cases universities did not have data related to gender differences for different academic positions and varied levels of academic achievements.

Before contacting my potential participants, I submitted the 'Ethical and Risk Assessment' application to Durham University Ethical Review Committee. I received approval within a few weeks without any instructions to change my proposed fieldwork plan except for suggestions for minor changes in the 'Participant Information Form'. Immediately after that, I travelled to Pakistan for data collection.

The contact details of female professors from the chosen universities are available on the universities' websites. Therefore, I prepared a contact list of potential respondents based on information accessed from relevant university websites. Initially, I contacted these female professors by sending them an introductory e-mail comprising the information on my PhD research project's nature and objectives and inviting them to participate in the study. Most of the contacted females replied to my e-mail with positive answers. They showed their consent for the interview and shared their telephone number for further communication to arrange the interview time and venue. Next, I sent the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form via e-mail to those females who have already expressed their willingness to participate in my research (Arthur et al., 2014). One of the difficulties commonly appeared as some academic women sampled were not using their official e-mail addresses as mentioned on university websites. Moreover, universities did not update data regarding faculty members' changing academic status in some cases. For example, some of the women professors are retired. Therefore, they were not part of the faculty team; some female academics have been promoted to a professorship; however, they are still mentioned to rank in their previous academic positions on websites. After reaching Pakistan, I attained updated lists of female professors from the admin department of the relevant universities. Furthermore, I kept noting all non-contact potential participants. For those women, who were not being contacted through their official e-mails, I contacted them on their official landline numbers. Then, I briefly introduced the research project and requested their time for the interview.

Gaining access is sometimes a simple matter, sometimes not, as access to study participants rests on multiple situations and operating factors (Flick, 2018). As an insider researcher, I know that waiting for e-mail responses from women would hold me back and waste my limited time in the field. I recognised that telephone contact with potential study respondents would be a more practical and feasible strategy to arrange the time and venue for interviews. Developing and following a systematic way of scheduling and confirming interviews is essential in fieldwork arrangements; however, the best way to schedule an interview depends on the participants' choice (Arthur et al., 2014; Flick, 2018). After the first contact with them through e-mail or

office telephone number, my respondents suggested and preferred to communicate further to finalise the interview date and time through their contact numbers.

Handling the issue to fix the interview time posed more complexities and challenges than female professors' access. Some real challenges were postponements and rearrangement of agreed appointments for the interview or sometimes a long waiting time before the interviews started. I needed to arrange different interview appointments during a week according to the time decided and given by the participants. Some days, it appeared challenging when the appointments had been made at short notice or postponed before they started. Most of the female professors also held administrative and leadership positions. My study respondents' academic and leadership responsibilities were the main reasons for rescheduling interviews. As senior academics and holding leadership positions (chairpersons, head and part of administrative committees), female professors needed to attend planned and urgent meetings alongside constant pressure to meet deadlines for research supervision. Some female professors had to change the interview time and date for their personal and family commitments. A few women did not agree to the interview due to their personal choice and unavailability during my stay in Pakistan for data collection. It was a great help from some of the female professors interviewed who referred to a set of female professors working as National Professors in the selected universities (HEC designs a category to recruit exceptionally outstanding academics in HEIs after their retirement). So, I also interviewed four female professors who were part of their departments as National Professors after retirement. Feldman et al. (2004) suggest that researchers' commitment acts can foster the trust and willingness of study subjects to participate in the research. Such as many times, the appointments for interviews had to be cancelled, and I kept on waiting patiently to confirm new dates and times from my respondents. I also demonstrated my commitment to respondents by conveying that I value their time and interaction with them. The sample women appreciated my patience and commitment, and they arranged the time for interviews on a priority basis after the cancellation of the interview appointment.

2.5.2 Pilot interview

Practising pilot interviewing helps try and rationalize many aspects of the proposed research. First, it can help you learn whether the research's focus that attracts a researcher's interest is attractive to participants too. Second, it can assist in clarifying research statements and questions. Third, it can challenge and uncover some of your assumptions about your proposed topic and context. Finally, the pilot study is important for trying out research methods (Kim, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Creswell and Poth, 2016). Therefore, before formally starting the interviews with female professors from different study sites, I conducted a pilot interview to uncover any unanticipated issues related to the interview's contents and methods. The pilot interview participant was a sociologist. It is ontologically justified to conduct pilot interviews in a context and with those close to the main study's realities. So, I chose and contacted a sociology professor for pilot interviewing regarding her speciality in social sciences to make her ideal for reflecting effectively on the interview tool's strengths and weaknesses and interview process. I expected her to contribute to the interview process and ask questions through her observations and suggestions.

The pilot interview took more than one hour. It went very well to clarify my initial apprehension about my 'insider status', and my personal and professional connection with the interviewees might be a disadvantage. I understand that this situation may reduce participants' willingness to share personal information due to their fear of being disclosed (Tracy, 2020). However, it worked oppositely as my interviewee was very comfortable talking about her life in detail. In addition, I have been able to get very constructive feedback after the interview. The pilot interviewee appreciated the overall interview guide's structure, sequence, and content. Her feedback highlighted some new dimensions of female academics' career journey, which was of great importance for all further interviews in the study. Therefore, I added these topics to the interview guide. The pilot interviewee also commented on some likely problems in the language and substance of the interview questions that I revised by including some relevant probes and prompts.

The pilot study's key learning was to be open and flexible to incorporate changes in your main study project to move toward the best possible networks between the

researcher, the study participants, and the topic itself (Silverman, 2013). Understanding this flexible approach in fieldwork has helped me learn about my study participants' lives from these revised research ideas. Therefore, after the pilot interview, including the interviewee's feedback, I incorporated some questions about the role of mentors, PhD supervisors, and immediate bosses in creating a work environment wherein women experienced both opportunities, challenges, and barriers. In brief, piloting an interview was an opportunity through which I learned to improve the way of presenting myself and introducing myself: balancing too long and not being detailed enough. I have further learned how to improve a conversation flow and connect the talk around the study's central questions. The exercise also gave me the confidence to talk to senior academic women about their personal and professional lives, even when they would be my colleagues, teachers, bosses, and peers from the same academic community.

2.5.3 Location/venue & duration of the interview

Arrangement for a suitable time and place for the interview plays a significant role in conducting a productive conversation. Moreover, it is recommendable to conduct interviews at the interviewees' choice of location (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013). I asked female professors about their preferences in conducting interviews in corresponding e-mails and telephone calls. I often opted for culturally popular techniques to approach and communicate with my respondents to schedule interview times and locations. For example, in Pakistani culture, even in formal settings, professionals arrange appointments through telephone contact rather than e-communication. Also, my respondents have suggested that I call them to arrange the interview time rather than communicate through e-mail. Most female professors were more easily accessible by telephone and happy to facilitate me.

Most women preferred to be interviewed at their offices. However, almost all women invited me to their offices for interviews after office time, like around 4:00 pm, to ensure a comfortable and quiet meeting setting and avoid interrupting office tasks. As part of the scientific community, the female professors were mindful of the requirements of the basic rules and research procedures. So, they directed their office assistants to hold on to other tasks and visitors during interviews. Therefore,

arranging the interview conversation after office hours worked effectually as we had privacy and reasonably quiet surroundings to discuss the women's career journeys. Some respondents preferred sharing their life stories in their home settings, providing a comfortable and personal space to talk without being pressured by office demands. Of the two women, I went to their homes for the interview. As they perceived in the home setting, they could be more relaxed and have quality time to share their career histories. Again, this location appeared conducive to talking about life stories. In addition, all my respondents were exceptionally hospitable and offered me refreshments before starting the interview. Such kind and welcoming gestures helped create a context where we were immersed and relished by interview conversation.

The interview duration was another significant aspect of field experiences. The interview is structured to investigate female academics' biographies. Most interviews were approximately sixty minutes or longer in duration. In some cases, interviews were more prolonged than sixty minutes as women shared their life stories in much detail. One hour to two hours' duration is also noted as a reasonable time frame for qualitative interviewing (Weiss, 1995; Arthur et al., 2014). A couple of interviews lasted two hours due to detailed descriptions of events related to these women's career journeys. I mentioned the interview guide's essential topics and the interview conversation's approximate duration (one hour) in the 'Participant Information Sheet' e-mailed to study participants (Weiss, 1995). After reading this sheet, all interviewed women signed the consent form and handed over it to me before the interview. I kept on commuting between different cities to interview my respondents. I mostly travelled by inter-city bus service, which was more convenient and faster than the rail service. I used a taxi service to reach the agreed location for the interview within a city.

2.5.4 What is going on during interviews?

This section describes how the interview conversation proceeded through different stages. Concerning the interview's successful accomplishment, I kept in mind to be purposeful and clear by moving through the interview to meet both participants and my goals on time. I requested permission from the participants to record their

responses and take notes before the interview (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013). I mentioned that it was difficult to capture and memorise all the discussions. I explained the steps to ensure confidentiality for both data and the participants. However, all these steps related to ethical considerations have been communicated through the participant information sheet (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). For example, I assured them that data would remain confidential as the recording would only be used for academic and research purposes. Before the interview, I described the scope and objectives of the research. Also, I explained what the interview would be likely to cover, although I have already explained in the earlier stages of arranging the interviews. Again, I communicated that participating in the interview was voluntary and told participants you could say no to answer any questions about them they would not want to talk about (Arthur et al., 2014). Lastly, I clarified that participants were in control of what they wished to disclose (Bryman, 2016). Interview conversation in my study involved travelling across the various phases of study participants' lives is liken to dramatic composition with an opening, narrative scenes, and finale (Arthur et al., 2014; Gibbs, 2018). As the conversation host for the first meeting with my participants, I tried to establish rapport by taking the initiative to create a friendly, positive, and secure environment (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013; Arthur et al., 2014). The initial conversation encourages the respondents to feel likeable, comfortable, and knowledgeable (Denzin, 1989). For example, I endorsed positively that this interview was not like a survey consisting of a list of questions and short answers. Instead, the focus is on understanding your experiences and ideas in your own words. Before starting the interview, I briefly shared my reasoning for researching that topic. This relatability practice helped me set a stage for mutual disclosure and create affinity with my respondents (Josselson, 2013).

I opened the interview with questions about their childhood, family background and relations, and various phases of educational gains. From the background conversation, women's higher education experiences after a certain level have been discovered as the turning phase of their life. So, on the next level, we talked in detail about their experiences related to enrolling in university education and how they reached to decide/select an academic discipline for their university education and

the beginning of their academic career. Interview conversations related to higher education provided an opportunity to look at the critical phase of their life course regarding preparing, deciding, and entering university education and career. After a conversation about family life and education attainments, I guided the participants to discuss their academic careers through questions surrounding opportunities, promotions, support, challenges, hurdles, and strategies to overcome the en-route barriers. Discussion in this phase was guided by the questions in the interview guide and the emergent concepts and issues raised from the participants' accounts (King, Horrocks and Brooks,2018). This interview phase was the starting point from the surface level of interaction to a deep level at which we both focused on a set of topics that influenced their career journeys profoundly (Atkinson, 2012; Arthur et al., 2014). I always opened the new interview topic with simple questions to allow the interviewees to settle down and smoothly move around different areas of their lives. Furthermore, finishing the interview conversation positively towards the end is suggested. For example, probing study participants' thoughts about future goals, suggestions on how situations can be improved and advice for other women might help the participants move on from any hard feelings and distressing emotional states of mind that the interview's conversation may have generated (Yeo et al., 2014). On the same grounds, my closing questions asked women their reflections on what universities need to do to improve university working conditions and structures and their goals for future life. Moreover, I sought their advice for junior female academics currently at a career stage that the study women previously faced. It appeared to be a very constructive way of winding down the interview as female professors optimistically offered ideas and suggestions for improvement at personal and institutional levels out of their progression journeys.

At the end of the interview, another question was to ask participants: what is the most helpful or constraining factor throughout their academic career trajectory? This winding-up question helped to encourage participants to raise anything vital that they might not have discussed yet. In response to this question, answers provided an overall summary of women's attitudes and experiences, indicating relative importance to different aspects. This winding-up question also assisted the study

participants in reflecting and sharing how they had been refined in their views and actions. In the end, I did not forget to ask my participants if they had any questions, they wanted me to answer about the research and topic foci.

Women's career narratives functioned as a bridge between their past, present, and future. The biographical conversation's strength was its travelling from early life to moving towards a more specific career life and its connectivity with various aspects across the life course (Rönkä, Oravala and Pulkkinen, 2003; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Similarly, biographical interviewing has allowed my respondents to reflect on the temporal and spatial dimensions of their educational, family, and occupational lives and share their voices on success, failures, difficulties, challenges, conflicts, and decision-making. Although, during the interview, such recalling/memorising caused evoking sad and cherishing feelings among the study participants that appeared sometimes challenging to respond to. However, a few minutes of silence and endorsing words assisted us in moving further in our conversation (Roulston, DeMarrais and Lewis, 2003).

Rapport and trust can quickly build if both researcher and study participants get something out of the interaction. Notably, research participants often find it interesting as part of the study that will allow them to reflect on matters of importance to them (Gray, 2013; King, Horrocks and Brooks,2018). In my study's context, all women, without exception, shared positive feelings and constructive views toward the overall research project. They admired it as a much-needed debate in Pakistani academia and research discourse. In addition, they were happy to find a venue to recall, reconnect and refresh their memories. Almost all women were surprised to talk so long about their life journeys in a way they usually did not explore before. They said they rarely had the opportunity to consider their achievements as a noteworthy success during all these years. Some of them found this conversation as a way through which they were able to come across their own unexplored, unspoken feelings and life events as they did not imagine and connect the things like that beforehand (Maxwell, 2004). They also mentioned that these self-discoveries made them feel good about their self-image and success. After closing the interview conversation, I explained briefly how the data would be stored,

analysed, and reported. In the end, I also expressed my gratitude for their time and willingness to share their lived experiences.

2.5.5 Communication dynamics with study participants and self-reflexivity

Tietze (2012) suggests that the interviewer and interviewee's relationship is complex, multidirectional and can influence the data generation process. Given the significance of communication between researcher and study participants, especially while doing interviews, I discuss critical sides of my role as a researcher (including being an insider of the research context and my subjectivity), its implications and my attempts at self-reflexivity in this section. Social sciences traditions have recognised and acknowledged that the researcher's subjectivity informs conceptualising and mapping scientific research decisions (Arthur et al., 2014). The researcher's subjectivity includes one's point of view, opinions, preferences, and ways of seeing the world and being in the world (Tracy, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to be critical and reflexive on subjectivity and avoid conscious, obvious and systematic biases that hurt the respondents and research outcomes (Wheeldon and Ahlberg, 2011).

Tracy (2020, p.156) suggests that 'self-reflexivity refers to people's careful consideration of how their experience, points of view, and roles impact their interaction with and interpretation of any particular interaction or context'. Likewise, a researcher needs to be self-reflexive, which means they are thoughtful about their background traits, perspectives, and influences during the different stages of a proposed study (including research design, collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data). At the same time, conducting this qualitative inquiry, being self-reflexive, required me to give a complete and honest account of the research process and explain my relation to study participants and their views.

Furthermore, reflexivity made me realise to be sensitised and aware of my role and the potential contribution of my demographic background traits and socio-political preferences to inform and shape the main research parameters, question, and analytic outcomes (Wiederhold, 2015). I, therefore, critically reflected on my subjectivity, values, and beliefs regarding their influence on my communication with study participants during interviews. My conscious efforts to reflect on my perspectives serve as a research instrument and an analytical resource that guides

me - absorbing, learning, sifting through, and interpreting the emergent themes (Chaudhry, 1997).

A critical element of my subjectivity is that I need to reflect on my status as an insider of the study context. Currently, there is an emerging trend for researchers to draw their projects in investigating their institutions and agencies, named doing backyard research (Tracy, 2020). My research is also a backyard project. In many ways, I was an established insider. I am a woman and belong to the society, culture, career and the organisation where I recruited my study participants for interviewing. This understanding has challenged/sensitised me to reflect carefully on the issue of whether being an insider will be helpful or problematic? I need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of backyard research (Ellis, 2007) critically and carefully. Apart from the benefits of having a wealth of background information due to already being on the scene, I need to navigate the challenges that might result from being a member of the same organisation and academic community. Such as, the study participants may hide information and be reluctant to share harmful elements of interpersonal interactions and structures due to my similar organisational membership.

Noticeably, my insider status contributed positively to gaining women's consent and building trust and quick rapport during interviews. Even when I sent introductory e-mails, made phone calls, and introduced my academic and professional position, all-female professors responded very kindly and familiarly. They comfortably gave their consent for the interview. Later, I needed to rearrange multiple postpones, subject to women's workplace pressures. I reflected on the possibility that the female professors might be reluctant to share their work situations and dimensions of personal life with me. They might also feel uncomfortable and insecure because of my status as part of the same university (in some cases) and the academic profession. However, it did not happen. Instead, my insider identity was vital in gaining trust and facilitated my communication with respondents. The female professors were open, relaxed, and informal while sharing their perceptions and experiences, trusting me in the same sociocultural and organisational contexts. The women seemed happy to reveal themselves in front of a person who also belonged to their

collective context. Their conversations provided explicit interpretations and understanding of the factors that influenced their journeys significantly. Without hesitation, the respondents highlighted harmful and discriminatory forces at interpersonal and institutional levels. It seems that they developed this confidence as being in their universities' most influential positions. Therefore, women professors' organisational seniority, age, and career stage can be attributed to their affirmative and confident style of highlighting universities' political culture and sharing harmful elements operating in their workplaces.

Moreover, my respondents' trust and comfort are indicated through their sentences: 'you know well; you also have experience, and you are the part of the system to understand. Therefore, my position as an established insider was a strength rather than a problem. An outsider might not have found it easier to get women's consent for interviewing and generating the data I managed to collect. In brief, doing backyard research was an engaging and facilitative field experience in many ways. For example:

1. relatively easy access to sites and respondents;
2. time, energy and financial resources needed for my field stay had been reduced;
3. familiarity with the geography of the study sites had made it convenient to commute across the different locations;
4. the groundwork for rapport and trust reasonably existed due to my insider identity.

Another important interactional dynamic is that the power relationship between the interviewees and me occasionally led the respondents to be more affirmative and dominant during the conversation. Sometimes, I felt they wished me to define and perceive matters like them. Perhaps it might be subject to women's experiences to lead the contexts as teachers, supervisors, and academic and administrative leaders. This power imbalance in relations with my respondents is embedded in Pakistani culture, where younger persons are expected to revere older people. Furthermore, I consciously reflected upon my behaviour as a junior colleague. I tried to be modest, humble, and respectful in discussing issues through my verbal and non-verbal

communication styles. I never called them by their names; instead, I always used to call study participants 'Madam' in our culturally expected way of addressing seniors in age and professional rank. In addition to being humble, another conversational technique that positively helped during the interview was displaying a sense of 'tranquillity'- conveying respect and appearing comfortable and welcoming with the interview situation and everything that the interviewees had to say (Atkinson, 2012; Yeo et al.,2014) Throughout our interview conversation, I tried to remain focused on to ask meaningful questions to women based on an understanding of the research aims.

Another critical challenge of in-depth interviewing is maintaining a warm, interactive relationship with participants without becoming overly involved, similar to 'empathetic neutrality' (Tracy, 2020). It seems normal to become emotional while listening to people's lives comprised of positive and negative emotions, events and processes. In the current situation, my status as an insider has enabled me to empathise with various perceptions and experiences I can relate to as part of similar contexts. Skills in empathy and relatability contribute to generating a conducive environment where rich narratives are created (Ormston et al., 2014). Overall, the interview journey with a sample of thirty female professors provided a mutual opportunity to discover, reflect and understand women lived experiences and perceptions via an adaptive, responsive, organic and energising path of biographical interviewing (Atkinson, 2012).

2.6 Data Analysis Strategies

This final section explains data management and analysis methods - focusing on-how data will be coded, categorised, themed, analysed, interpreted, and presented. The interview data is analysed into five steps/ stages - 1) data transcription & translation, 2) stage-wise data coding, 3) weaving codes into themes and categories, 4) classification and display of study participants across emergent themes and crafted categories, and 5) analytical interpretation of findings with illustrative examples from interview narratives (Spencer et al., 2014; King and Brooks, 2018).

2.6.1 Interview language, translation & transcription

Discussion in this section will explain the process of doing translation and transcription simultaneously of audio recordings of interviews. Language to communicate in interviews was bilingual. Bilingualism-combined two languages for communication (e.g., use of English and Urdu) is typical for conversation among Pakistan's academic and professional communities. Women communicated bilingually but mainly talked in English. One advantage of interviewing women from academia is their understanding of academic and scientific terminology. They were well-equipped and experts in comprehending, reflecting, and communicating subject-specific terms of career, promotion, gender, workplace barriers, linear career, networking, biographical qualitative interview, and research ethics. Data transcription is a relatively lengthy and laborious task and involves some challenges; however, it is a valuable part of the research because it brings the researcher closer to the data (Spencer et al., 2014). I did verbatim transcription, which is a demanding and focused task since it involves producing literal scripts of what was said by whom and grasping the tiny details in interviews for deeper data analysis in the next phase (Bird, 2005; Visagie and Koekemoer, 2014). Also, I translated non-English conversations into English where it was needed. One hour of audio recording consumed about 7 -10 hours to produce interview texts. Whilst the transcription and translation processes were very time-consuming; however, these textual forms enabled me to draw the potential templates for qualitative analysis and findings (Wertz, 2011).

2.6.2 Data analysis approach: multistage coding & reflective thematic analysis

This final section explains different qualitative analytic methods that aim to identify patterns in data, search for the relationship among these patterns, and describe and interpret those themes that provide theoretically informed explanations for research phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibbs, 2018). In my PhD research, data analysis structure is stage-based and influenced by 'multi-cycled coding' (Saldaña, 2016), 'phronetic iterative analysis' (Tracy,2018), and 'reflective thematic approach' (Braun and Clarke, 2021) to seek and develop patterns (themes, categories) across cases (study participants). These chosen/selected analytic traditions advocate an

interaction between emic or emergent codes developed through a reading of data and the etic use of existing theories and models to segment and explain the data (Braun and Clarke, 2021). According to Buran, 'the thematic analytic approach typically acknowledges the potential for inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) orientations to coding, capturing semantic (explicit or overt) and latent (implicit, underlying; not necessarily unconscious) meanings' (Braun and Clarke,2021, p. 39). Therefore, thematic analysis is chosen to analyse women's career trajectories as it is a logical choice that reveals and develops patterns of causal mechanisms across cases. Moreover, my central approach to coding the interview texts is a stage-based style that employs a combination of coding strategies at different phases to label and categorises the interview data documented in response to the interview questions (Saldaña, 2016). That included- a) preparation of a list of codes generated from a reflection on the prior literature and interview questions; b) labelling and indexing the interview data against predefined codes reflecting theory-driven concepts; c) uncovering a variety of influential elements from coded data units by employing a combination of coding types, and d) finally reassembled inductively emerged codes into themes and categories.

2.6.3 The coding strategy: from prefigured codes to data-based coding

The analysis's core focus is to design a multistage coding strategy that explores, develops, and classifies core categories and themes across the data to explain relational, contextual, and processual elements of female professors' career progress. This section elaborates on the steps involved in data coding as the most critical qualitative data analysis step. Transcribing and translating the interview recordings has allowed me to become familiar with interview contents that I need to code in the following data organisation and analysis stage. An extensive amount of interview texts in terms of length of scripts and range of narratives has been generated from transcribing and translating thirty audio interview recordings. The philosophy of iterative phronetic informs conceptualising and operationalising stage/cycle-based coding approach used in the current study scenario to analyse career biographies. According to Tracy, 'in the Iterative phronetic approach, the researcher alternates between considering existing theories, research questions on the one hand, and

emergent qualitative data on the other hand' (Tracy, 2018, p.63). Similarly, drawing on the iterative phronetic approach, I have used a mixed-method by combining- 1) deductive coding to organise the data into predefined research questions and theory-driven themes and 2) an inductive approach to explore themes from the deductively coded data units. The central analytic strategy for extracting codes and developing themes is stage/cycle-based coding, as coding is analysis (Tracy, 2018). Drawing on Saldaña's stage-based coding theory (2016), I conceptualise and design a three-level coding strategy for my study to develop and analyse patterns of shared meanings and experiences across cases (participants). A strategic benefit of this stage-based coding process is data reduction which involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data into patterned themes and related categories (LeCompte, 2000; Spencer et al., 2014).

The first coding stage involves a structured approach toward coding centred on a coding frame or codebook (theory-driven). First, I prepared a list of literature-driven concepts and sub-concepts I previously used to develop interview questions. I then labelled, compiled, and organised the interview transcriptions under these prefigured themes. Moreover, I selected the holistic and descriptive coding techniques for the first coding stage to code and label the larger interview data units rather than analyse them line by line. Holistic coding refers to applying a single code to a large unit of data in the corpus, rather than line-by-line coding, to capture a sense of the overall contents and the possible categories that may develop (David and Sutton, 2011; Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). I employ holistic coding at an introductory level before indulging in more detailed coding to categorise data. Next, I used descriptive codes- terms and concepts to label/tag the sections/units across the data scripts as per research questions and theory-driven themes (Richards, 2020). Finally, these theory-driven sensitising concepts and research questions guided by background literature served as a lens for me to code data according to research foci. In other words, this approach has helped me retrieve and index data units under the prefigured themes that facilitate my focus of attention from the large text to those parts of data where pertinent themes appear. This strategy also helped me reduce the immense size of interview transcripts to manageable and relatable sections of

texts that can be further unfolded and coded to develop meta codes and women's categories for writing and interpreting the analytical text (Vaismoradi and Snelgrove, 2019). Then I moved to the next level of coding. I unfolded the coded segments of interview scripts to locate and analyse processes, events, conditions, cultural norms, relations, actions, persons, and attitudes that potentially contribute to female professors' academic career progression trajectories (Richards, 2020; Maxwell, 2004). I adopted an integrated hybrid coding approach to developing a coding structure for the second coding cycle (Saldaña, 2016). An integrated hybrid coding approach refers to employing a combination of coding techniques to code frequent things participants said concerning a particular topic/theme. For example, I combined and engaged a range of coding methods to identify narrative-based notions that referred to influential elements. These selected coding methods are 1) magnitude codes– identify evaluative components of participants' experiences; 2) attribute code - indexed participant family background and contextual traits; and 3) process, causation, and value codes - discover causal attributions and influential beliefs and actions from interview scripts that were coded and segmented descriptively and deductively in the first phase of coding (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). I named these inductively emergent themes by assigning words or phrases that capture the essence as their labels. It is important to mention here that an analytic description of a combination of different coding methods in terms of how the chosen coding types are applied to organise and analyse empirical materials into three sequential analytic chapters of findings will be presented at the beginning of each empirical finding chapter.

2.6.4 Analytic coding: generating themes & categories

The third level of coding explains the moves from the first two interrelated stages of coding to a more focused, analytic, higher level, and interpretive coding stage (Tracy, 2020). The interpretive codes identify salient data for the analysis and highlight an improved understanding of how emergent themes significantly attend to research foci and study questions (Bhattacharya, 2017). In the current study, these third-level codes are called Meta codes, themes, and categories (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Given the theorization of the social phenomenon (women's career

advancement) in relation to multi-layered contexts: temporal, spatial, historical, cultural, institutional and personal is grounded in the social constructivism framework (Stake, 2010), these themes and relevant categories are established to discover connections between background characteristics, social conditions, influential factors (supportive or constraining attitudes, behaviour, structures) and women's academic career journeys. These meta codes (themes and categories) are generated by pulling common elements from the second level of coding into more meaningful units of analysis (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). In the final step, patterns started to evolve. These emergent patterns indicated factors that continually reappeared in the data and shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Spencer et al., 2014). Similarly, the notions containing similarities have been combined, merged, and grouped into interpretive, focused, conceptual themes, and subthemes. In other words, third-level coding reassembles the data into patterned themes through condensing, pooling, and clustering the narratives that were unfolded and split during the second phase of inductive coding. Finally, several themes have been prepared to explain and compare pattered experiences and diversity within the data set. Themes and categories were used as analytic strategies to organise, display, and present data findings (Saldaña, 2016). Lastly, I organised findings into categories and discussed the analysis by classifying the female professors into different categories based on their expression and selection for different configurations/combinations of influential factors and thematic statements (shared meaning-based statements) (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014).

It is important to explain that the reflective approach is the basic technique applied to develop third-level meta themes from initial codes, as meta codes/themes are creative and interpretive stories about the data crafted to understand focused phenomena. Therefore, the reflective approach requires considerable analytic and interpretative work on the researcher's part for theme formation generated through and from the creative interplay of the researcher's immersed data engagement, their theoretical assumptions, analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves (Braun and Clarke, 2019). I conceptualised, synthesised and categorised data into

interpretive patterns by coupling my thoughtful and reflective data engagement with my interpretive understanding and theoretical knowledge. In most cases, I chose the title for the patterned themes, subthemes and hierarchically related categories according to my reflections on what their constituent coded data appeared to have in common (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). In brief, I identified, developed, titled, and interpreted conceptual themes and categories-illustrating women's career development perceptions and biographies, types of influential factors, ways of influence, and methods of influence.

2.6.5 Codebook, logistics of coding and visual display of findings

Data coding involves deep immersion and locating relational, contextual, and processual elements (Bernard, Wutich and Ryan, 2016). A codebook is like a recipe book suitable for listing your project's ingredients and developing different combinations to draw your recipe (Tracy, 2020). I prepared a codebook containing key codes, definitions and illustrative examples from the data quotes. This codebook continued to morph as emergent codes matured, changed or modified (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006; Tracy, 2020). I kept the codebook chronologically by saving the updated version with the modification date. In addition, I kept on writing descriptive notes on the inductive themes for explaining and defining the contents and components of these themes.

Various techniques are used to code, label, categorise and display the empirical findings. I mainly used traffic-light coding to categorise study participants' career development narratives into positive, negative, and mixed experiences/biographies across different educational and career phases. Women's background characteristics related to parental education, occupational class and residential location are also coded, categorised and displayed through traffic light coding. The logic behind the coding and categorisation of family background features is to understand how family background and demographic traits motivate specific actions, behaviours, and beliefs that influence women's career trajectories. The use of visual presentation of the qualitative analysis process is increasingly emphasised to summarise and compare results, track and order demography and causation, and visualise interrelationship among different concepts (Dey, 2003; Richards, 2020). Connecting

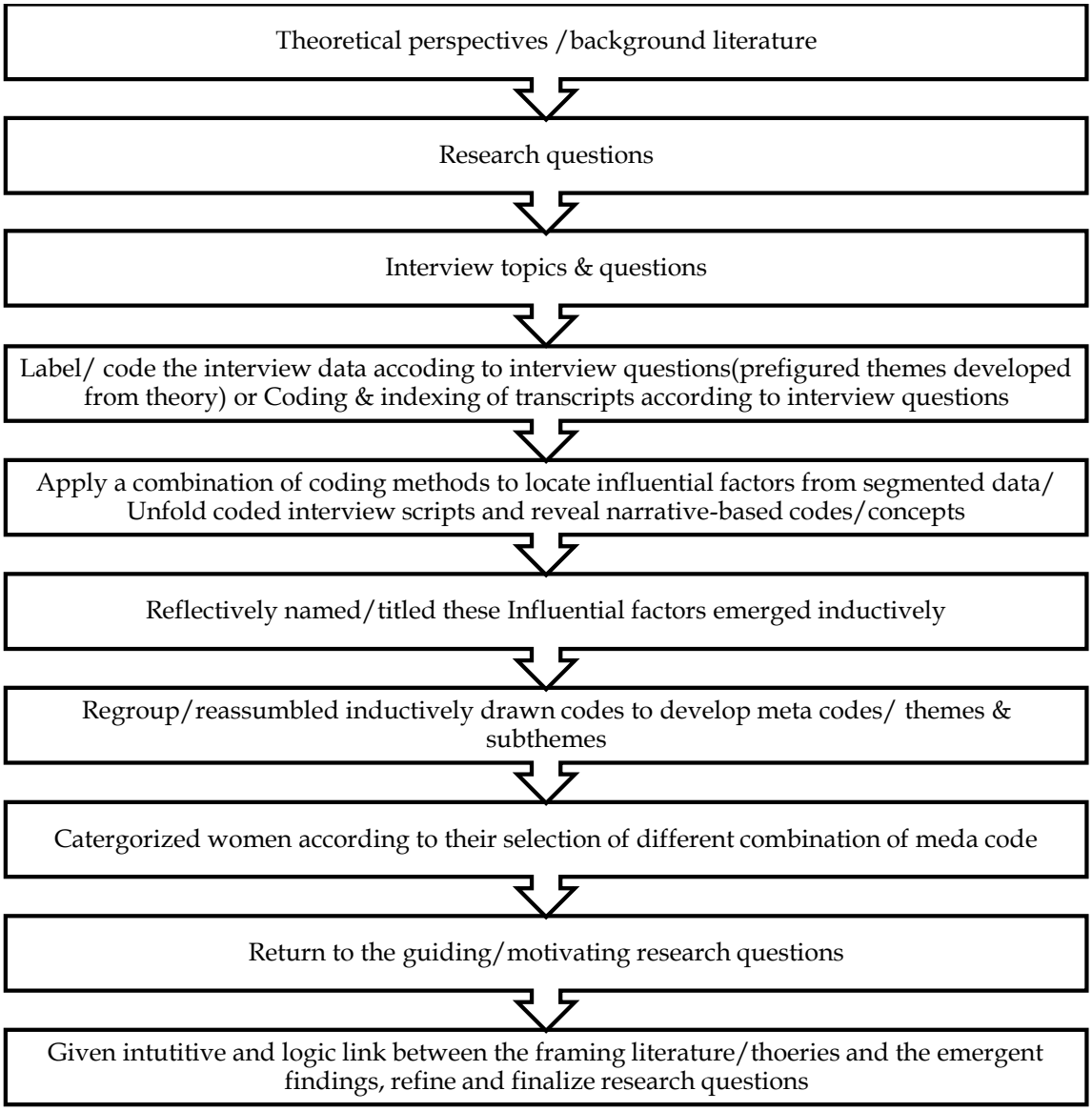
to the latest analytic trends, I graphically display data findings by combining visual data display techniques (tables, traffic light coding, hierarchal ordering of cases and experiences) and analytic texts (Verdinelli and Scagnoli, 2013). Presently, 'data matrices' as part of the qualitative data analysis presentation have been emerging styles used to display and interpret coded and categorised interview scripts (Wheeldon and Ahlberg, 2011; Verdinelli and Scagnoli, 2013). Among various matrix displays, I chose conceptually constructed and clustered matrices to display and order the findings around the key concepts or subtopics grounded in the primary research foci and guided by the research questions (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Compared to traditional-typical styles of qualitative data analysis and display, 'matrix data analysis' as one of the styles of thematic analyses has offered a couple of interrelated advantages in my study, including:

1. Construction of matrix through an in-depth analytical process of multiple rounds of revision and modification to code interview materials led to structured and refined analysis and interpretation.
2. The use of templates and matrices helps reduce and display data in central themes and categories.
3. Data matrices provide a structure to define and organise the findings to represent and discuss the conceptual relationships among emergent themes explaining the career trajectories of a sample of thirty female professors.
4. For comparison across a sample of thirty female professors, an accessible and sequential display of qualitative data in a matrix enables the identification of common elements or points of contrast about the research question/theme to which the matrix relates (Nadin and Cassell, 2004).

Finally, the presentation of empirical findings involves two steps. First, I presented detailed interpretations of the steps involved in coding the transcripts, developing and reaching the final versions of data matrices at the start of each chapter of empirical results. The next task was the presentation of the findings through interpretations of the constructed matrices. Although there are different suggestions regarding data matrices interpretations, I selected to interpret and compare emergent themes and categories with illustrative quotes.

Figure 2: Outline of the Analysis Plan

The following display presents sequential stages of data analysis adopted in this study.



The above matrix highlights the abductive and iterative process for logical steps used in the current qualitative understanding and explanation of the institutional elements that influenced women's career journeys. Abductive reasoning refers to engaging both inductive and deductive logic in developing tentative assumptions/research questions, examining these questions/assumptions in the field of investigation, and revising the assumptions in line with emerging data (Tracy, 2020). Similarly, I began developing research questions by reviewing existing

literature and finding gaps and scope for the current study. Next, I drew interview-guide topics from my study's core questions that provide research direction – such as women may be mostly constrained and delayed due to interpersonal and institutional factors before reaching the professor's position. I entered the field of study with a flexible approach to collecting data around theory-guided research questions and seeking new and exciting findings from the field (Grbich, 2012; Swedberg, 2012). Then I weaved theoretically driven and inductively drawn codes into analytic matrices, and interpretations. Also, research foci and study questions are distinctively and clearly shaped subsequently. For instance, the sub-research question about university education and academic career decision formations is refocused after data analysis revealed these life stages and decisions as core elements of women's career trajectories. Markedly, abductive/interative methodological decisions/steps produce more precise and coherent explanations for the study questions and foci.

2.7 Conclusion

I introduced study focus, and research questions posited to qualitatively investigate female professors' career lives following a detailed discussion of method decisions related to tool design, sampling strategy, fieldwork, and data analysis techniques. This chapter's core purpose is to introduce an appropriate across-case qualitative methodology and justify its selection. I explain conceptual, methodological, practical, and pragmatic choices related to qualitative research design, sampling methods, interview techniques, and data analysis tools used in the current study. Well-delineated and tighter decisions related to the nature of data to be collected (career progression trajectories) helped clarify the present research's focus. However, a flexible approach has been adopted to revise initial decisions related to sampling, instrumentation, and concepts chosen for final analysis and the presentation of findings. Furthermore, the time investment in planning to design fieldwork materials- research instruments significantly paid off. Methodological decisions must be ethical in matters related to informed consent, the potential benefit and risks, and the processes of interacting and connecting with participants. Appropriate measures for the safety of both the researcher and the participants have been

adopted. An approval from University Ethical Review Committee for ethical consideration measures is attached in the appendix.

Chapter 3: Professoriate Trajectory: The Role of Family and Personal Preferences in Shaping Women's Educational & Career Choices

3.1 Introduction

The present thesis seeks to examine the career progression trajectories of female professors in Pakistani academia. The research data is drawn from semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with thirty female professors at major public sector universities in Punjab (the most populous province of Pakistan). One of the core study objectives is to examine how a sample of thirty female professors developed their university education and academic career preferences that led them to enter university employment. Therefore, this first chapter of qualitative analysis examines study participants' narratives generated in response to a series of interview questions about their family life, participation in higher education, and career decision-making processes. For the current study, a combination of both deductive (e.g. predefined) and inductive (e.g. emerging from the data) coding techniques are used to sample, focus, and code interview scripts. Correspondingly, the primary analytic strategy to extract and develop themes is stage/cycle-based coding comprised of sequential steps. These are - a) preparation of a list of codes generated from a reflection on the prior literature and interview questions; b) labelling and indexing the interview data against predefined codes/ theory-driven concepts; c) uncovering a variety of factors from coded data units by employing a combination of coding types, and d) finally reassembling emergent notions into themes and related categories. In addition, conceptually constructed and clustered data matrices as part of the qualitative data analysis presentation have been used to display and interpret study findings. I arranged the analysis in four sections to discuss themes, subthemes and relevant categories that explain patterns and variations in women's perceptions and experiences related to the formation of their university education and academic career decisions, covering the following:

1. Family background features of study participants

2. The role of participants' families' values and parental academic inspirations in shaping women's academic and career ambitions and decision making
3. The role of family guidance in women's academic and career selections
4. The role of personal preferences in the selection of a university degree program and academic career

3.2 Study Participants' Family Background Characteristics: A Contextual Understanding of Personal and Familial Influences on Women's Educational Pathways

In the present study, coding and mapping of study participants' family demographic data provided backdrop information about the circumstances women grew up with. In addition, elements of women's interpretative and subjective career narratives can be linked to and combined with elements of their causal structures (family education, occupation class and rural/urban location) for understanding and explaining their educational and career choices and outcomes. All women in the study mentioned their parents' educational and occupational statuses and family residential locations in response to a couple of questions about early family life and their relationship with parents and family members. Furthermore, during the interview, women in the study repeatedly related their academic and career experiences to different family background conditions. Especially different aspects of parental/familial involvement (e.g., educating, inspiring, encouraging, advising and helping) have been linked to family structural traits (parents/family educational qualification, occupational status, and family residential locations). Besides, on many occasions, the female professors identified links between their background characteristics and the ways their families supported or (rarely) constrained them on their academic pathways. The study participants also spoke of their siblings' educational levels, the academic background of extended family members, and persons from the family's social circles related to their influence on their academic and career choice formation. Family residential location (rural/urban) also appeared relevant to influencing women's academic journeys. Detailed discussion about how family background characteristics impact women's trajectories will be presented in the following sections of this analysis chapter.

3.2.1 Coding strategy to categorise study participants' family backgrounds

This section explains the analytic strategy and steps taken to code, categorise, and display the study's participants' family background features. A two-stage coding approach has been used to code, categorise, and display data related to study participants' background features. I have drawn a matrix (table-6) below that shows the different values of women's family background characteristics, sorted into conceptually clustered categories. Firstly, different values of parental education, occupation and rural/urban location were illuminated through the 'magnitude' coding system (traffic light colours). For cell entries, red, yellow, and green colours (magnitude codes) are used to display, compare, and interpret cross-case similarities and differences in women's background conditions. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014, p. 85) state, 'Magnitudes consist of supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic codes or sub-codes applied to existing coded data or a category to indicate their intensity, frequency, direction, presence or evaluative content, and to enhance description'. For example, the colour green is allocated to those interviewees' parents who were educated to a degree level or above and engaged in an economically secure, stable, and prestigious occupational activity. Women with urban residential backgrounds were also labelled with the colour green.

Parental education up to upper secondary level (12 years education), engaged in middle-level occupational category (non-professional occupation) and town-based residential location or occupational mobility (due to father's transferable job) were coded with the colour amber. Women's parents who were educated up to lower secondary level (5 years education) or without formal school education, engaged in labour work or homemaker mothers, and lived in rural areas, were labelled with the red colour code.

Next, pattern coding as a second cycle coding method was applied to group study participants into a smaller number of categories based on their similar demographic traits. I chose the father's level of education to classify a sample of thirty participants into three categories so the cases can be compared in terms of similarity and variability in their experiences linked to their contextual features (e.g., father's educational status). For this, in the second column (B) from the left side, women are

hierarchically ordered according to their father's level of education, ranging from fathers with degree qualifications (14 years or above) to fathers without any school education.

Furthermore, study participants are classed as group-1 (green category), comprised of eighteen women for whom one parent is educated up to a degree level or above. For most women in this group, their fathers were employed in high-status occupations, and most lived in urban areas. Group-2 (amber category) included nine women professors with one or more parents educated up to upper secondary level. Fathers of these women engaged in middle-level occupations (e.g., medium-level farmers, small-level businesspeople, clerical jobs), and their residential background was mixed in terms of urban, rural and small-town locations. Group-3 (red category) consisted of three women professors whose parents received up to lower secondary education or never attended formal school education. These women's fathers engaged in middle rank and lower rank occupations. All three women lived in rural areas/small towns. This set of three categories of women based on their demographic features provides an overview of common background characteristics and comparatively rare demographic features within the study sample. It shows that affluent and better-educated parents were commonly the norm among women professors, in contrast to the general population's demographic backgrounds, which predominantly featured rural livelihoods and lower levels of education and occupational status in the parent generation.

3.2.2 Matrix display and description

The below matrix in the tabulation form is drawn to map, categorise, and display study participants' socio-economic background characteristics. Specifically, parents' educational attainment, occupational social class, and whether living in urban or rural areas are addressed to answer three main questions:

1) What are the socio-economic background characteristics of women professors in Pakistan?
2) How can a typology summarise the socio-economic similarities and differences between the thirty women professors in the sample?

3) How do they compare to the socio-economic profile of the wider Pakistani population?

Table-6 Study Participants' Categories as per their Family Background Characteristics

A	B	C	D	E	F	F
Women's group	**Female professors (pseudonyms)**	**Father's education**	**Father's occupation**	**Mother's education**	**Mother's occupation**	**Residential location**
Group-1	Naveeda	Degree & above	Chief justice	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Faiza	Degree & above	Bureaucrat	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Sarwat	Degree & above	MD	Degree & above	Housewife	Urban
	Tabinda	Degree & above	Educationist	Degree & above	School principal headmistresses	Town
	Sameen	Degree & above	Bureaucrat	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Noureen	Degree & above	Engineer (irrigation)	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Occupational mobility/urban
	Neelam	Degree & above	MD (army)	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Naeema	Degree & above	MD	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Occupational mobility
	Mehak	Degree & above	Engineer (MNC)	Degree & above	Housewife	Urban
	Shabnum	Degree & above	Engineer (railway)	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Occupational mobility
	Amber	Degree & above	Army official	Up to upper secondary	Businesswoman	Occupational mobility
	Fatima	Degree & above	Lawyer & retired as a judge	No formal ed	Housewife	Urban
	Reema	Degree & above	Accountant in Navy forces	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Shazia	Degree & above	Lawyer	Degree & above	Housewife	Rural
	Nasimaa	Degree & above	Civil servant	Degree * above	Housewife	Urban
	Komal	Degree & above	Civil servant	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Urban

	Farkhindaa	Degree & above	Police officer	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Occupational mobility
	Ghazal	Degree & above	Businessman	Degree & above	Housewife	Urban
Group-2	Saba	up to upper secondary	Air forces	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Zara	Up to upper secondary	Businessman	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Town
	Jabeen	Up to upper secondary	Businessman	Degree & above	Housewife	Urban
	Mirza	Up to upper secondary	Accountant	No formal ed	Housewife	Urban
	Yasmeen	Up to upper secondary	Businessman	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Urban
	Sabira	Up to upper secondary	Middle-level farmer	No formal ed	Housewife	Town
	Nazia	Up to upper secondary	Film technician & writer	No formal ed	Housewife	Rural
	Momina	Up to upper secondary	Middle-level farmer	No formal ed	Housewife	Rural
	Mubeena	Up to upper secondary	Government servant	Up to upper secondary	Housewife	Rural
Group-3	Rub	Up to lower secondary	Small businessman	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Town
	Nadia	Up to lower secondary	Government service	Up to lower secondary	Housewife	Rural
	Ruqia	No formal ed	Labourer	No formal ed	Housewife	Rural

An initial mapping of social background indicators of women's families (table-6) showed that an overwhelming majority (27 out of 30) of female professors in the sample had at least one parent with education to the level of matriculation (10 years of school education) or above (column-C &E). Father's occupation status (column-D) presented a similar situation. More than half of women's fathers (17 out of 30) engaged in professionally prestigious and high-income careers ranging from engineers, doctors, bureaucrats, civil officers, and solicitors to armed force officials. The fathers of four (4) women were involved in established family businesses, so

they have been labelled as self-employed. Professional career and established fathers' business were combined and made a single category of prestigious occupation (21/30), graded as upper-middle-class, and coded with the colour green. The fathers of three (3) women were medium-level farmers and small-level businessmen, respectively. The fathers of five (5) women in the sample worked as clerks (middle-rank administrative jobs) in the government sector. Together (3+5=8), these cases were classified as middle and lower middle class (yellow colours). One woman's father (n=1), a man with no formal schooling, worked as a labourer on daily wages in his village and was coded as working class (red colour).

Unlike fathers, most of the study participants' mothers (28/30) did not engage in paid work (mother's occupation, column-F), coded with the colour red. There were only two exceptions: one mother worked as a school principal, and another mother combined a part-time career as a businesswoman with full-time responsibility for caring for children. They were coded with the colour green. Although nearly all study participants' mothers did not work, most mothers were educated to at least some extent (24/30, column-E). Some mothers completed university education (7/30, column-E). Residential location data is coded and displayed in column-G. Data on families' residential conditions indicates that most women (18 out of 30 cases) came from urban or semi-urban areas (green colour). In contrast, six women resided in rural areas (red colour). The families of six women who lived in towns or were involved in geographical mobility due to their fathers' transferable jobs were illustrated with yellow/amber colour coding.

In addition, placing study participants in the broader social context has allowed us to trace and identify study participants' common demographic background that was a source of core enablers of reaching the same outcome (professorship). It can also reflect upon how much women's demographic features in my study a typical representation of Pakistani women are. I chose two indicators of parental education and father's occupation to compare women's family background status with general population demographic conditions. Father's occupation status (column-D) is considered a key determinant in mapping and comparing women's family socioeconomic class (SES) in the study with the general population's class structure.

For a comparative discussion of the study sample's economic status with the general population class structure, I used data from the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2015-16 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This survey is designed to collect, count, and report information on the general population and household distribution among different occupational groups. According to data from the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) for 2015-16, only 12% of male heads of households hold upper-middle and middle-class occupations, compared to more than 80% of the fathers of the female professors in my study sample. Conversely, only five female professors in the sample (16%) came from lower middle class or working-class family backgrounds compared to 89% of the general population in Pakistan that belong to the lower middle class and working-class categories. The findings related to women's family's socioeconomic status in this study show how highly privileged the sample is compared to the general population. Moreover, these findings are consistent with other female professionals' studies, showing that professionally successful women predominantly have middle-class origins or come from upper-middle and middle-class family backgrounds (Fujimura-Fanselow, 1985; White and Cooper, 1997; Dustmann, 2004; Arifeen, 2011; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Also, in a comparative discussion of the study sample with Pakistan's national demographic features, I used the national educational figures from the population census report of 1961 (Sanaullah, 1962). As across all the study cases, parents of female professors were part of the 1960s adult working population. An overwhelming majority of the women (27/30: 90%) in the sample had at least one parent with education to the level of matriculation and above. It shows that a significantly large section of the female academics sampled was drawn from the smallest (and most advantaged) segment of the general population regarding parental educational attainments. As only 16% of the adult population was educated up to a degree level at that time in history, according to the educational figures of the population census report of 1961. Simultaneously, only three women, who have parents with primary or without education, were drawn from the larger bottom of the general population (almost 70%) by education. Moreover, across the sample, the

vast majority of the parents, especially the mothers (n= 24/30), were notably better educated (from lower upper secondary to university level) than the general population, considering that little or no formal schooling for women would be the norm at that time in history.

In summary, back in the 1960s, when more than 70% of the general population of Pakistan was rural, with almost 70% of people having an only primary level or without school education at all and farming was the largest source of family livelihood, the majority of cases in my study came from the following atypical social background conditions:

- Mostly well-educated and professional fathers
- Most of the mothers were educated to some extent, but almost all were domestically engaged
- Mostly urban living

The study participants' demographic traits showed that women's families have an atypical position relative to the general population of Pakistan. Most of the women professors in the sample are much more likely to come from socio-economically advantaged families than the average women of this generation in Pakistan. It provides empirical evidence to existing key literature claiming a positive link between success and background advantage. Historically and globally, it is evinced that advantaged family background is the source of multiple and sustainable socio-cultural capital (s) that shape family members' academic and career aspirations and success compared to individuals who come from families occupying relatively low socioeconomic positions (Young, 1998; Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Marjoribanks, 2005; Dubow, Boxer and Huesmann, 2009; Ashby and Schoon, 2010; Byun, Meece and Irvin, 2012; Liu, McMahon and Watson, 2015). Similarly, women professors in my study frequently highlighted connections between enabling elements, family socio-economic background, and family cultural environment. However, a small minority of women professors in the sample did not follow the general/ traditional pattern of family's class background. These were particularly useful cases to understand what, besides a socioeconomically privileged upbringing, helps these women become academics/professors in Pakistan? Therefore, the following section

will present an empirical analysis of women's thoughts and experiences about the contribution of personal and institutional capital to crafting their university education and career preferences, decisions, and achievements.

3.3 Family Influences and Women's Educational & Career Routes

The family background features, and family cultural and interpersonal elements influence individuals' career pathways in specific and predictable ways (Whiston and Keller, 2004). This section identifies, analyses, and interprets interviewees' narratives/accounts regarding their families' contribution to instigating their educational and career choice-making process and outcomes. The study's interviewees regularly cited the family's role in shaping their academic and career routes. All women in this study expressed that their educational and career preferences and decisions were not spontaneous, immediate, or unplanned. Instead, these selections and decisions had evolved in tandem with their relationships with immediate and extended family members and persons from their social and academic circles. In response to the question during qualitative semi-structured interviews, which factors influenced your academic and career choices/how did you decide about your university degree program and career in academia? All thirty women in the study reported multiple ways in which their parents, siblings and other family members individually or jointly influenced their academic and career options and their decisions to choose from these available options. In most cases, family members' involvement was interconnected and overlapping, in that one form of engagement led to other forms of family influence. For example, academically aspiring and ambitious parents encouraged, guided, and supported their daughters to pursue higher education and career formation.

The concept of family covers the influence of families of origin and family of destination, with a substantial role of the family of origin in shaping women's educational and career pathways. Until admission to a university degree program, except for one participant, all women were unmarried. So, the family of origin (both immediate and extended) was reported to influence their educational trajectory towards university access. A PhD degree and the start of a career were the stages where a set of women experienced the impact of family of destination (primarily, this

impact comes from their husbands in the form of encouragement, advice, and guidance, discussed in the following theme's interpretation).

The theme of family's contribution is given the title of "family influences" as its literal meanings cover psychological, verbal, and practical involvement (inspiration, encouragement, academic guidance, and instrumental assistance). I coded relevant responses from interview texts through various coding strategies for the central notion of 'family influences'. I developed two central themes with a certain number of study participants' categories. Family influences, therefore, have been classified into interrelated and sequential patterned themes. Theme one is 'Parental/family educational and career values & aspirations' with subcategories of a) encouraging and reinforcing attitudes, b) favourable and equitable academic aspirations compared to typical values and practices, and c) perceived link between family educational aspirations and family education history. Theme two is 'Family role in academic and career guidance' with subcategories relating to family members a) leading the decision, b) offering guidance and advice, c) showing willingness to support academic and career choices, d) providing an inspirational role model, and e) engaging in temporary conflict and subsequent willingness to provide support. This classification arose from deductive and inductive coding schemes (explained in the following sub-section).

The analysis of interview transcripts related to 'family educational values and parental academic aspirations' will be outlined in four steps. This first step will introduce the processes and approaches that I used to code the interview data and transform these coded data segments into analysable patterned themes with categories of responses. Further, the emergent findings (themes with relevant categories) will be summarised into conceptually clustered matrices, followed by a brief description to explain these data matrices. Finally, analytic texts will be presented to interpret and discuss the similarities and differences in women's experiences related to the family role in impacting the formation of their educational and career choices and outcomes.

3.3.1 Approach to code, categorise and display attitudinal and belief elements of family influences

This section categorises, analyses, and interprets an extensive amount of interview transcripts referring to women's perceptions and experiences about their families' contribution, particularly the influence of their parents' educational values, gender role attitudes, and academic aspirations in shaping women's educational and career choices. Drawing on Saldana's cycle-based coding approach (2016), I employed a combination of different coding types to label, categorise, and display the interview data documented in response to the research question- how do you see the family/parents' role in your academic and career ideas and decisions? For the first coding stage, I chose pre-reviewed deductive codes from the literature and interview questions about family influences (e.g., parents, siblings' role, family environment). I used the general term of the family most of the time because women used parents and family alternatively. Usually, women professors started to talk about family and then referred to specific members of the family who appeared active in influencing their trajectories. Next, I coded and labelled the large segments of interview scripts against pre-defined codes. Next, deductively coded interview scripts were unfolded to reveal data-based codes and concepts indicating women's perceptions and experiences. This approach has assisted me in retrieving and indexing data units covering women's perceptions and biographies about family educational values, gender role beliefs and attitudes towards women's education choices and career formation.

I have chosen a variety of different terms used by interviewees. Then, I slightly rephrased/ summarised and used these terms to index similar thoughts expressed by multiple interviewers to describe parental educational values, expectations, and emergent supportive behaviours that shape their educational and career choice-making processes. Such as encouraging and aspiring parents, family love for education, inspirational role model, support against disapproval and opposition for higher education, emphasis on the value of gaining education and career success in contrast to broader gender role conservatism, progressive gender role attitudes, equitable gender role expectations/gender equalitarian academic aspirations, family

support and trust for women's higher education's choices, and parents' strong wish/motivation to have professionally successful children, unlike their personal deprived academic and occupational gains. These notions seem to cover the meanings of women's perceptions and experiences regarding the positive contribution of family values and attitudes to their academic and career routes. Further, I kept recording and updating inductively emergent concepts/themes in the codebook.

In the second coding cycle, indexed data units have spelt out a set of three patterns of story-telling that the interviewees used to describe the relevance of their families' and parents' values and attitudes for their educational and career routes. I further sliced, clustered, and reassembled the interviewees in the three categories according to how they described the contents and the implication of family or parents' educational values and expectations for their career paths. Finally, I chose the thematic statements (shared meaning-based statements) for women's categories according to my reflections on what the constituent coded data appeared to have in common. For example, nineteen women are classified into a category titled **encouraging & reinforcing attitudes.** The logic behind combining and clustering the coded data under the heading of encouraging attitudes is the women's patterned way of expressing the role of family's educational values in shaping their academic motivation, choices, and decisions.

Further, five women in the sample are categorised under the subtheme of **progressive/ egalitarian attitudes towards women's education compared to typical conservative gender role attitudes in wider Pakistani society.** These women highlighted the uniqueness of family values and attitudes by comparing them to surrounding traditional gender role outlooks. Women have been grouped in this category because of the commonality in their perceptions and experiences related to the influence of family egalitarian gender role values on their academic and career ambitions and achievements. Finally, six women are classed into the third category, titled: **linked parental academic aspirations to family education history**. Women in this group appeared to link family/parents' educational aspirations and verbal

encouragement to parents' deprived/ underachieved education and occupation statuses and history.

3.3.2 Matrices illustrate women's perceptions about the influence of family values and parents' attitudes on their academic and career route selections

By drawing upon coded data, I designed two matrices in the table forms to display themes to analyse and interpret similarity and variability in study participants' perceptions and experiences around the focused research question: how did family/parents shape women's educational pathways. For matrix illustration, the narratives –indicating the central theme of women's perceptions and experiences about the influence of parental/family educational values on their academic and career paths are reported in column-B of table-7. All thirty women believed in benefiting from their parents or family's passion for education in developing their ambitions, preferences, and focused efforts to achieve academic and career success. Therefore, the related data scripts mentioning the influence of family values and parental attitudes informing the interviewees' determinations, efforts, and accomplishments are slightly rephrased and summarised. These data summaries are presented/shown in column-B of table-7. The entry of brief data summaries is advisable as these phrases offer some grounded meanings from the interview material/transcripts to understand the magnitude, similarity and variety of study participants' perceptions and experiences (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014).

Table-7 also displays the distribution of study participants across three categories of their family background variables (formed and described in the previous section) with parental education (from highest to the lowest father educational level: graduation to no education) as a core criterion to hierarchically ordered and grouped women in column-A.

Though all women suggest that parental educational values played an indispensable role in shaping their educational ambitions and motivating them to achieve academically, the participants were further clustered into categories based on their narratives, highlighting different aspects of these values. So next, study participants were classified into three categories according to their perceptions & experiences about the contribution of family educational values & beliefs to their higher

education and career choice-making. Lastly, these three categories of women's perceptions about the impact of family educational values on their academic and career outcomes and the number of women in each category are charted in columns B and C of table-8, respectively. The distribution of study participants across the three categories shows that women from each category chose one expression/element to describe the central theme of women's perceptions about the influence of family values and parental aspirations on their academic trajectories. Further configurations of combining sub-themes have not been established accordingly.

Table-7 Background Characteristics & Study Participants' Perceptions about the Role of Family's Educational Values in their Academic and Career Choice Formation

A		B
Female professors' categories as per their family Background		**Role of family's cultural values about gender role/ education in women's academic and career ambitions and choice formations**
Group-1	Sameen	Professionally educated family background and career-oriented and encouraging parents
	Naveeda	Professionally educated family background and career-oriented and encouraging parents
	Faiza	Emphasis a lot on educational achievements
	Sarwat	Career-oriented/encouraging parents and husbands
	Tabinda	Great emphasis on the value and the importance of gaining education and career success
	Noureen	The whole family environment is very encouraging and facilitating
	Neelam	Father's support against mother's opposition
	Naeema	Mother's motivation and push for PhD & career
	Mehak	Educated family background/whole family environment is supportive and career-oriented
	Shabnum	Professionally educated family background and career-oriented and facilitative parents
	Amber	Educated family background/whole family environment is supportive and career-oriented

	Fatima	Great emphasis on the value and the importance of gaining education and career success
	Reema	Unswerving reinforcement to join a professional career/ from early years being pushed towards a future in higher education/career
	Shazia	Parents' encouragement for professional education
	Nasimaa	Grandmother's tremendous stress on educating daughters for a bright and secure future, unlike hers
	Komal	Great encouragement to continue education after marriage
	Farkhinda	Strong beliefs about the importance of gaining professional education
	Ghazal	Professionally educated family background and career-oriented and supportive parents
Group-2	Saba	Parents always encourage regardless of gender differences
	Zara	Father's support against mother's opposition as he was passionate about having professionally educated children, unlike his gains
	Jabeen	Mother's passion for education against the family's resistance
	Mirza	Great motivation for academic and career achievements
	Yasmeen	The education-oriented family environment, in contrast to surrounding values about women's education
	Sabira	Father's support against family opposition as he had the biggest desire to have professionally educated children, unlike his gains
	Nazia	Mother's passion for education, unlike her gains
	Momina	Despite community criticism, my parents allowed me to study and join a career.

	Mubeena	Parent's encouragement, regardless of living in rural areas where there was no culture of women's education
Group-3	Rub	Father's passion for children's education, unlike his gains
	Nadia	Parents' passion for children's education, unlike their gains
	Ruqia	Family's passion despite from conservative background

Table-8 Women's Categories According to their Perceptions and Experiences of Family Educational Values and Attitudes

A	B	C
Number of categories	**Kinds of perceived family attitudes regarding education and gender role**	**No of cases**
1	Encouraging & reinforcing attitudes	19
2	Equitable attitudes toward women's education compared to typical Pakistani cultural values & practices	5
3	Linked parental academic aspirations for their children to family educational history	6

3.3.3 Family educational and career values and aspirations for their daughters

This section describes and discusses the analytical theme of women's perceptions about their families, particularly their parents' educational values and gender role attitudes that shaped these women's academic and career choices and outcomes. In-depth & close reading of study participants' narratives revealed a clear and consistent impact of parents' educational values and aspirations on shaping their academic and career ambitions, choices, determinations, and focused efforts to achieve success. Multiple rounds of coding and categorising interview data widely recognised that families' and parents' educational values, aspirations and reinforcing attitudes were the first expressions of family support women remembered as the key factors shaping their successful academic and career routes. Across the sample, all thirty female professors unanimously identified that parents' educational values for their daughters and their encouraging attitudes were crucial elements of family support that significantly shaped their academic and career goals and outcomes.

In this study, a sample of thirty academically high achieving and professionally successful academic women unanimously involved in explaining their success by

identifying the overarching contribution of family members' supportive attitudes and behaviours, which helped them establish their academic careers. Interestingly, no difference was found across the sample for parents' educational aspirations and encouragement being experienced to have played an essential role in shaping women's educational and career aims, academic performance, and attainments – even between women whose families are varied concerning their socio-demographic circumstances. However, variation exists in how women perceived and defined family values and parents' aspirations for their educational and career routes. Women in the study spoke of different ways parents and families demonstrated their beliefs about the importance of gaining professional education and exhorting their daughters to do well. Thus, women are categorised into the following three groups according to the perceived ways by which their parents expressed their educational values and aspirations.

3.3.3.1 Encouraging & reinforcing attitudes

A shared thread which clustered women in this category is the commonality of their experiences concerning parental educational values and career aspirations for their daughters. Without exception, nineteen women in this category expressed that they received explicit and sustained reinforcing messages advocating the importance of gaining professional education from their parents and other family members across their academic journeys. Considering these women's family backgrounds (listed in column-A) of table-7, it becomes evident that all women in this category belonged to educated family backgrounds with at least one parent or a sibling who was educated up to the university level. So, a pattern of association among educated parent (s), urban upbringing, parental reinforcement and women's academic motivation and success emerges. According to these women, encouraging and education-oriented parents were vital attitudinal elements of the parent-daughter relationship that shape their academic ambitions, aspirations, and motivation to achieve higher education and enter a professional career. In addition, the interviewees highlighted various elements of their parents' and family's cultural attitudes and belief systems, emphasising gaining an education. These spoken attitudinal elements (casual attributions) were slightly rephrased, summarized, and listed in column-B of table-7

above. In addition, interviewees in the group associated the family's education-oriented culture/environment and parents' educational and career reinforcement with the elements of their agency (self-determination, strong motivation, and focused efforts) that played a leading role in shaping their educational and career goals, preferences, decisions, and success consequently. All interviewees in this study specified that parents' aspirations to educate their daughters significantly promoted their motivation to achieve and succeed academically. The interviewees from this category expressly referred to the consistency and stability in parents' encouragement of gaining professional education in a specific field of study. For example, Faiza, whose father was retired as a senior bureaucrat, linked her educational ambitions, determinations, and focused efforts to achieve these determined goals with her parents' stern attitudes toward the value of gaining higher education and parenting practices in the following way:

> My whole family environment was truly education and career-oriented- a really supportive environment for education. Parents stressed a lot on education. For my father, nothing is more important than education. He sometimes overemphasised it. In our times, parents had settled strict and fixed schedules and timetables of studies even after school. Their emphasis on education and family routines of scheduling academic activities helped/advantaged us in developing focused academic and career goals and single-minded efforts to achieve them.

Similarly, Mirza said, "my father was a kind of serious person about education. He has realised us how essential to gain an education''. These statements by Faiza, and Mirza, were commonly presented in women's accounts across the sample to express the influence of parents' educational beliefs on women's career routes. In other words, parental engagement in communicating the importance of gaining an education, expressing their educational aspirations, and encouraging their children to pursue them was the regularly highlighted motive behind the women's focused academic and career ambitions, efforts, and accomplishments. In contrast to other women in this category, only Neelam mentioned facing her mother's opposition to higher education up to the PhD level. However, her academically ambitious father permitted Neelam to continue her education and join an academic career. She said

that her academic and career success was the result of the support, inspiration and encouragement that she received from her father throughout her academic journey:

> My father provided real support to achieve my academic and career goals. Positive! There are many. Like I am very lucky as my father was so much supportive. Especially when I applied for a PhD, my mother did not talk to me for three days. (Laugh) because she wanted me to get married. My father said you want to do this. Go! His encouragement and trust were real support.

Self-determination and regulation, achievement-related beliefs, motivation, serious and focused efforts to succeed academically were commonly reported elements of agency (both psychological and actions) that women in this group believed to develop from the supportive, encouraging, and inspirational interaction with parents and families (Liu, McMahon and Watson, 2015; Richardson, 2015; Baeck, 2017). For example, Reema highlighted the contribution of her family's encouragement to achieve academic success and particularly her father's unswerving messages of dedication, commitment, and reinforcement that motivated her to pursue jointly inspired academic goals and to join a professional career:

> The utmost credit goes to my father, from whom I received consistent motivation and reinforcement to join a professional career. He had a significant focus on our education. So, I got inspired and put my all efforts into success. I scored first in every class, so I had to maintain that. For that, I used to study the whole night and rarely attended family events and other get-togethers. I had urged myself that I must fulfil my father's extreme wish for me to become a medical doctor. All these factors are foundational blocks of my current success.

Tabinda, another participant from this first category, linked a parental supportive attitude to her family's educational background. She believed that her academic goals and career aspirations had been embedded in her parents' and other family members' educational and professional success. During her interview, Tabinda repeatedly identified herself as lucky due to being the daughter of professionally qualified parents (Father: educationist; Mother: school headmistress). In addition, she stated that her academic drives stem from having professionally qualified role models in the family to follow in their footsteps:

> I was lucky that I was born into a very well-educated family. With my father's role in my education, my mothers and her sisters also played a significant

> role. The family's whole environment is education-oriented—an actual role model for the value of getting an education. We basically learned to live and grow by educating ourselves.

Women's biographies from this category revealed that parents' strong beliefs about the value and importance of gaining education and expectations regarding their daughters' future adult roles have significant implications for women's academic and career journeys. Across the theme of encouraging and reinforcing attitudes, all women reported the contribution of parental aspirations and encouragement to develop their academic motivation and determination to succeed academically. Interestingly, all clustered women in this category belonged to educated family backgrounds with at least one parent or a sibling educated up to the university level. In contrast to a small set of first-generation university graduates (7/30), women from educated family backgrounds did not commonly make explicit and direct connections between parents' academic aspirations and family background characteristics or family education history. Instead, these women mentioned that their whole family environment was pro-education. In these women's families, the parents routinely and pointedly emphasised gaining professional education and academic achievements that kept them motivated and made them realise how important it was to gain an education. Given the advantaged family backgrounds, family or parents' academic aspirations can be linked to family norms of reproduction of capital and inheritance of privilege through their children's academic and career gains and achievement. In other words, parental engagement in communicating the importance of gaining an education, expressing their educational aspirations, and encouraging their children can illustrate parents' underlying belief to continue the family norms of academic and career success. In addition to parents' strong emphasis on gaining an education, these parents from educated backgrounds were reported to actively lead, advise, and guide their daughters' academic and career options and decisions (the next section will present a detailed discussion). In summary, women's narratives provided significant evidence that their achievement-related beliefs, career-oriented attitudes, and academic achievements inter-relatedly grew and emerged from sustainability,

consistency, and stability in parents' and family's emphasis on prioritising educational gains as family norms.

3.3.3.2 Progressive/ egalitarian attitudes towards women's education compared to typical attitudes in wider Pakistani society

All thirty women in the study talked about their family or parents' academic aspirations and positive attitudes towards gaining an education. The interviewees have been grouped in this second category because of the commonality in their perceptions about the characteristics and content of their family's gender role beliefs regarding women's participation in education and career. Interviewed women in this group have common thoughts with the rest of the study participants regarding the inspirational contribution of family educational values to shape their academic and career routes. However, variation exists in how women in this group interpreted the family's educational values and relevant experiences. A common theme of feeling lucky due to the family's progressive attitudes and encouragement for gaining an education compared to broader traditional gender role expectations is extracted and coded within the interview conversations of five women in the sample. Therefore, these five women are classed in the second category based on their narratives highlighted another aspect of family educational values - parents' gender-equal attitudes and family's equalitarian views for their daughter's education compared to the gender role norms in wider Pakistani society.

Narratives of these five women illustrated a pattern of similar sentiments. For example, the value of girls' education compared to the traditionalism of gender role separation; parental aspiration, encouragement and support for gaining education regardless of the gender of their children; unlike the traditional culture, parents showed similar levels of aspirations and encouragement for children to gain education regardless of their gender; freedom over educational choices and career-making; and parental support to overcome the relational and structural barriers typically experienced by women, were recurrent accounts. These rephrased data summaries highlight a link between family egalitarian gender role attitudes and family enabling contribution to these women's educational aims and achievements as listed in column-B of table-7 above. Therefore, commonality in women's accounts

related to family values and parental support provides a logic to unite these five participants in the sample into another analysable category. While reflecting on these women's story-telling features, an adjective of 'progressive & equitable' has been added to family values and assigned this title to this second patterned subtheme- 'Progressive/ egalitarian attitudes towards women's education compared to typical attitudes in wider Pakistani society' (listed in column-B of table-8 above).

These five women belonged to amber, and red categories of family background groups comprising study participants whose parents' education level ranged from never attended school to upper secondary level education. Most women in these groups' fathers were employed in middle-status/income occupations and mostly lived in semi-urban and rural areas. Most importantly, none of the mothers of this group's women ever reached university degree qualification or participated in the labour economy- an entrenched and typical gender role norm on the broader level of the Pakistani context. These five women of the second category said their parents held less traditional and conservative expectations for their daughters' education and career gains than typical Pakistani parents. Whereas parents and extended families from similar backgrounds traditionally emphasised the importance of daughters' timely marriage compared to allowing them for higher education and career-building in the wider Pakistani society. Moreover, broader gender role expectations require women to prioritise domestic responsibilities over career life as careers are typically regarded as male activities (Farah and Bacchus, 1999; Farooq, Kayani and Ahmad, 2015).

However, these women highlighted that their family culture stands at a distance from the broader dominant gender role beliefs regarding the crucial matters of women's education participation and career decision-making. In contrast to the dominance of traditional gendered values that aspired women for unpaid domestic responsibilities, female professors from this second category talked about non-conventional gender role values and norms, believing them to be the unique features of their family environment or unique characteristics of the family member(s). For example, Saba illuminated that egalitarian and equitable gender-role values in her

family led her parents to ensure that their sons and daughters should receive equal educational opportunities and resources regardless of their gender:

> The utmost credit for my success goes to my parents, who never discriminate in supporting their children's education. Both parents embraced similar aspirations and encouragement for children to gain education regardless of gender. Unlike Pakistani families' environment, we have never experienced gender discrimination from our parents in deciding our educational choices. Openly they said: 'do what you want to do in your education. The same support that brothers were getting, sisters were getting too.

Saba's description is based on an understanding of Pakistani families' typical culture, which traditionally socialises young girls and boys for different routes to adult roles-career versus care responsibilities. So, families have diverse preferences to spend their social resources (economic, psychological, and cultural) on preparing their daughters and sons for culturally admired traditional gender roles. Importantly, these traditional cultural preferences significantly shape women's career-relevant aspirations (Phillips and Imhoff, 1997; Correll, 2004; Farooq, Kayani and Ahmad, 2015). Given the surrounding traditional gender-related social expectations and norms, Saba believed her experiences of not facing gender differences in her parents' aspirations, reinforcement, and resource provisions enabled her to achieve her academic and career goals successfully.

Yasmeen, another woman from this category, appreciated her parents' willingness to support their daughters' academic and career trajectories in contrast to traditional gender role beliefs that did not inspire families to educate their daughters, especially four decades before Pakistani society's traditionalism. According to Yasmeen, "You might have an idea that girls' education was not common at that time and few families gave importance to female education. Luckily, I belonged to this family". Another interviewee from this category, Ruqia is a unique case across the sample in terms of low-income family background characteristics (both parents never attended school, father was a daily-wage labourer in the village). She combined elements of her agency, family cultural system and structural conditions to explain her journey to reach university for higher education and start a career. Ruqia specified her family's positive approach towards gaining an education as the core source of different kinds of family support despite living in a cultural setup where women's

higher education, especially joining professional careers for earning income, was traditionally backlashed. She told:

> Look. I am kind of a person who comes from a very conservative background where people would say that you teach daughters to use their earnings and money. So, I think support is significant. For example, my grandfather and then my father had indispensably supported me. The rest of the family never objected to my decisions. So, I think it is unsaid but imperative support. Somebody in your family must understand the value and worth of education. And even if only one person supports you and you have a will and want to do something, I think nothing can stop you. Paths are made for you gradually.

She added that her family's deprived economic circumstances helped her develop self-determination, academic regulation, and focused efforts to struggle against all challenges and succeed academically and professionally. Ruqia's story-telling referred to deep-rooted gender role attitudes that associate family's honour with the modest and limited presence of family women in public regimes. In other words, women's participation in public regimes for education and career purposes is considered discrediting to the family's male nobility (Chaudhry, and Riffat, 2010; Murtaza, 2012; Amir et al., 2018). This mindset existed strongly for a few decades before- a time when the women in my study started their academic journeys to professional careers. Moreover, paid occupational roles are marked as esteemed tasks, and male family members are traditionally trained and expected to take up the responsibility to earn and feed their families (Haque and Minhaj, 2005; Maqsood, Maqsood and Raza, 2012; Faiz, 2015). As a result, families of the wider community continue to practice a gendered division of roles in which male members are admired and expected to lead in fulfilling their families' financial responsibilities. Whilst women are socialised and pressured to confine to primary care take of domestic regimes, discouraging women's mobility for education and career formation (Jayaweera, 1997; Khan et al.,2014). Additionally, traditional families reject women's participation in public domains for careers to escape social pressures and criticism (women's income is considered shameful and embarrassing). However, Ruqia credited her family's enlightened attitudes, and firm support led her to achieve academically despite a culturally traditional and structurally deprived backdrop.

While recounting their higher education journey, a subset of two women from rural backgrounds experienced difficulties associated with the lack of educational institutions, especially minimal educational opportunities and facilities (e.g. absence of secondary schools for girls in their villages). The entrenched traditional mindset discourages women and girls from commuting alone unless some male family members accompany them in public locations (Papanek, 1971; Maqsood, Maqsood and Raza, 2012). After primary education, these women travelled to nearby towns and cities for further education. They appreciated their parent's exceptional support in a context wherein women were customarily stopped from participating in higher education and pursuing career opportunities if they needed to travel alone or stay away from the family home because of the structural and cultural limitations. In contrast to the prevailing traditional values and gender role practices at a broader level and the lack of educational facilities for females in rural settings, these women in the sample were encouraged and facilitated by their families to overcome these cultural and structural impediments in order to continue their education up to university level and to enter a professional career. The parents, especially fathers, commuted with their daughters to educational facilities or permitted them to travel alone or stay away from homes to live in a hostel.

While residing in rural settings with no educational facilities for higher levels, Momina mentioned constant support from her parents out of their great passion for educating their daughters. Surrounded by traditional cultural circumstances, Momina believed that her parents' support in allowing her to commute and stay in hostels away from home was an integral contribution to continuing her education up to the university level. She recounted how her parents faced all pressure from the community on permitting her to study in co-education:

> Our neighbours dishonoured and pressured my parents by saying, 'why did you send your daughter to live in a hostel in the city as in the city, boys and girls live together. At that time, living in a hostel away from the family's supervision and studying with males was not an appreciated step for parents.

Mubeena had a similar experience regarding her family's willingness to support her higher education regardless of living in rural areas, where women's education is constrained due to structural and cultural barriers. She came from a rural setting

without having higher education opportunities in her hometown, so she started to live in a hostel away from her hometown for a college education. Mubeena specified her parents' support towards her academic journey by comparing their progressive gender role outlooks with broader conventional gender role ideologies. She claimed that her parents' positive attitudes towards girls' education were the foundation of her academic success:

> I was blessed with my supportive parents; what could I do if they did not support me? You know a girl's status, particularly in our rural setting, unless her parents stand by her. For example, what can I say if my mother did not let me attend school, what can I do and if my parent did not make me admitted to a college in another city? You know, in our villages, at that time, girls' education was a rare phenomenon, and parents typically stopped sending their daughters for further education if they needed to travel.

Mubeena and Momina's descriptions refer to widespread contextual realities and extensively investigated and debated reasons in literature for the lower rate of women's educational attainments in women's higher education history. Moreover, geographical location greatly influences female educational participation in developing countries like Pakistan due to the widespread regional inequalities and unevenly developed rural/urban areas (Farah and Bacchus, 1999; Haider, 2008). Geographical locations, predominantly rural and remote tribal areas, present a more complex and stubborn set of barriers that have deepened the educational disparities for both genders compared to those males and females living in urban and modern locations. Nevertheless, women suffer at a double rate because of the intersectionality of their gender and rural living. Women's disadvantageous position in education gains, compared to men, has resulted from restrictive family attitudes, and is linked to insufficient educational investment by governments in the provision of culturally and socially acceptable institutions (Farah and Shera, 2007; Malik and Courtney, 2011). A set of empirical studies discovered that conservative gender outlooks combined with a lack of educational and transportation facilities in rural areas jointly inhibit and discourage families' willingness and ability to send their daughters for education. The available literature about gender and higher education shows that historically, in the Pakistani context, especially in rural areas of Pakistan, families usually stopped their daughters from continuing further education due to the lack of

accessible higher education facilities near their residential locations (Murtaza, 2012; Syed, 2018).

Furthermore, at the university level, in addition to accessible education institutions, cost, the availability of single-sex universities and secure boarding facilities were identified as the main determinants for women's participation in higher education (Noureen, 2011; Mehmood, Chong and Hussain (2018). Other studies have found that conservative gender role values and patriarchal family structures are the sources of severe family resistance that young Pakistani females commonly face for their desires to get university qualifications or join paid employment (Naz and Ashraf, 2020; Ahmed, Bari and Riffat, 2021). For example, in a qualitative study, female university graduates identified various challenges and barriers during their educational and career journeys. Most participants stated that they faced gender discrimination as they must seek family permission to participate in higher education than their male siblings, who were permitted to make these decisions themselves. The significant decisions related to the subject of study, selection of university and the kind of accommodation have mainly been finalised by the family, especially by its male members. Even in some cases, women were not permitted to enroll in their desired field of study in a distant university despite their strong academic performance. These women's families were not ready to permit them to stay away from home for education (Khattak, 2009). In brief, available literature suggests that traditional gender role expectations, family socioeconomic locations, lack/unequal distribution of resources, opportunities across the regions (rural/urban divide), and patriarchal values are the leading factors influencing women's participation in public domains for education and career gains. In contrast to the literature findings, families in this study fully aided their daughters in acquiring admission in the nearby towns irrespective of residing in rural areas where educational institutions, especially girls' higher education institutions, were scarce. Even these women had been permitted to live in a hostel and study in co-education despite gender role traditionalism prevailed.

To conclude, women's biographies in the second category are marked by comparing their non-traditional family environment with the broader socioeconomic class

culture they belong to. All these women were from the amber and red categories, representing a larger section of the population with lower social class indicators of parental education, occupation status, and deprived rural living. The women from this group highlighted that their families understood the value of educating their daughters relative to the general population, mainly comprised of middle and lower-middle classes, where going to university was not a norm for women. However, the women in this category frequently suggested that their families' culture stands at a distance regarding gaining education and joining professional careers from their broader social class's gender role beliefs (women of amber and red categories belonged to this broader category of social class).

3.3.3.3 Linking academic aspirations to family education history

Six women in the third category are grouped according to their accounts, highlighting a link between parents' educational aspirations and encouragement for their daughters and family education history in terms of lower parental education levels and women's status as first-generation female university graduates. All thirty interviewees recognised and celebrated positive educational values and parents' encouraging attitudes towards gaining higher education. However, a group of six female professors' experiences will be analysed under the subtheme of 'linking parental educational values to family education history, because this category of six women interviewees specifically cited that their parents' inspirations to educate their daughters were formed in relation to their deprived history of education and career status. The analysis of women's narratives in this third category revealed that parents' academic expectations for their daughters are embedded/grounded in their personal histories and experiences of deprived status in education and professional career attainments.

These six women identified themselves as first-generation scholars (first in their families to attend university). They claimed that their family education history and status as the first generation of university graduates were the vital background conditions behind their parents' or families' passion and willingness to support their daughters in enrolling for a university degree and entering a professional career. Furthermore, this kind of achievement is not only restricted to educational

endeavours, but these women were also the first to reach the highest levels of professional accomplishments in their families. Rephrased data summaries identifying the attributional role of family educational history in forming parents' motivation and support for their daughters' academic routes are displayed in column-B of table-7 above.

Variation exists in female professors' experiences from this category regarding whose family member(s) influenced and supported these women's academic and career routes and outcomes. Moreover, women in this group shared varied stories linked to their family background circumstances regarding gender role beliefs, social class status and residential location. A subset of four women within this category indicated their families were passionate about educating their daughters in contrast to the family educational history. Further, these women suggest that family values and expectations and their identification as daughters with their family's academic aspirations shaped their academic and career interests and achievements. For example, Nadia belonged to a small town where her mother was a housewife, and her father used to work as a clerk in a government institute. She linked her educational ambitions, efforts, achievements, and subsequent promising start of an academic career to her parent's desire to have educated children, keeping her motivation level relatively high even without background advantages. Likewise, Rub, another woman who was the first in her family to go for a university education, described her parents' desire to have educated and professionally successful children due to not being well educated and professionally high achievers themselves. All six women made similar claims. They also explicitly mentioned that their parents' willingness to support them stemmed from their strong desire to see their daughters be the first woman in the family to gain a higher education.

Another woman, Nasima, linked the formation of her educational drives and efforts to succeed academically and professionally with the messages of educational inspiration and encouragement that she received from her parents and grandmother. Nasima's parents graduated to degree level, and she lived in the urban area. Nasima believed that her grandmother played a significant role in motivating her entire family for educational and career success by presenting her life outcomes as a model

that should not be followed. Nasima linked her father's determination and positive attitude to support his daughters' educational pathways to her grandmother's extreme wish to educate girls in the following words:

> Well, my father was very supportive because my grandmother always stressed the importance of education and encouraged my father to educate his daughters. She gave her point of view that if she had an education, she could survive far better. So, she always highlighted the importance of education and wished her granddaughters should get an education for their bright future. That is how she socialised my father to understand the importance of education and kept motivating my father to go for his daughters' education to every extent.

Nasima's description identified the intergenerational flow of family's love and valuing for gaining an education that emerged from the deprived history of educational gains. It has further highlighted the influence of family socialisation in shaping cultural values that motivate family members to gain education to advance in future adult societal roles. The female professors from this category repeatedly expressed that their parents desired their daughters to succeed and achieve beyond the family norms of low educational attainments.

Another study participant among the first-generation university graduates, Nazia's narratives related to family influences involves stories of family's relentless encouragement and help overcome barriers related to the lack of girls' educational facilities. She lived in a rural area characterised by a lack of educational opportunities and resources, especially for girls after primary education. Lack of single-sex schools beyond the primary level is the most reported condition that causes parents' preference to keep their daughters at home instead of sending them to far-flung schools in the literature (Khalid and Mukhtar, 2002; Khattak, 2009). According to Nazia, her entire family was hugely passionate about attaining professional education and joining a full-time career compared to the family's existent educational history. She credited her academic and career ambitions, choices and achievements to her family's educational expectations that had academically motivated her to follow her parent's hopes for her future adult role. Nazia's mother, without formal education, strongly wished for her daughter to reach the highest levels of education. She recalled her childhood memories when her mother shared the negative

repercussions of not gaining an education. She claimed that her mother sparked academic and career success motivation by presenting her life outcomes as models that should not be followed.

> My mother was very fond of educating her children, as she could not study herself. Once my mother was making the floor of the front courtyard and levelling the floor with mud *(گارا)*. At the same time, I entered the house and said: "how smelly is this!" She smiled and said, "do you want such smelly hands or want to write with a pen?" I replied: "I want to write." She said, listen, your grandmother is coming, you must go with her, and start studying in the school, then you will not get such smelly hands like me, and you will be writing with a pen. That conversation and my mother's advice stuck in my mind and was the first step toward my current achievements.

In addition, she praised her father's struggles and practical support as a significant factor that bridged Nazia to an accomplished and successful education and career journey in the following accounts:

> My father accompanied me to the bus stop, where I took the bus to attend college in Lahore. This routine continued for four years. You can imagine the living conditions of my village. My parents, particularly my father, played an absolute part in helping me reach my current destination in such conditions.

The evidence from the above stories of first-generation graduate participants suggests that family members' negative feelings about their low educational and occupational attainments were decisive factors that shaped the family's educational values, aspirations, and support strategies for their daughters' academic routes. For instance, in the above description by Nazia, the mother incited her daughter to gain an education by warning of potential disadvantaged life conditions associated with the lack of education. At the same time, she attributed favourable life conditions to educational achievements. According to Nazia, her mother endorsed her emotionally. Furthermore, she took practical steps to continue her education by arranging and permitting Nazia to stay with her grandmother away from her family home, contrary to prevailing norms that inhibited women from continuing education in the case of inaccessible educational institutions. Briefly, by referring to the family's influence, these women claimed that their parents' negative perceptions about the family's lower educational status played a critical role in shaping their beliefs about the importance of education, motivations and efforts to support their daughters.

These findings are consistent with a segment of previous studies that suggest that some less-educated parents actively encourage their daughters by emphasising the importance of gaining professional education to ensure that their daughters lead a better life than them (Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010; Harden et al., 2012).

In contrast to the subset of four women whose entire families were very progressive and passionate about educating their daughters, two women from this third category specified that the cultural attitudes of their families were conservative and traditional regarding gender role expectations. Compared to the other interviewees within the sample, only these two female professors identified restrictive family roles in gaining a university education due to the conservative gender ideology – upheld by their family members and operating within their family structures. Given the traditional family backdrop, both women linked the continuation and completion of their higher education to the indispensable role of their fathers' supportive and encouraging behaviour.

For example, despite her mother and extended family's extreme disagreement with her wish to gain higher education, Sabira was enabled by her ambitious father. Sabira linked her determination and focused efforts to achieve extraordinary university education success to her father's defining role, who resisted all pressures and opposition from other family members and permitted her to stay in a hostel away from home for higher education.

> I belonged to an extraordinarily traditional and conservative family culture. Please believe me! On my desire, even my siblings extremely opposed me. MA is enough education. They asked my father what he would want me to do after doing MPhil. My mother became quite angry. 'What would we do? How do we arrange her marriage as they were afraid, they could not get a good proposal for my marriage? Nobody will agree to marry me because if I take admission to MPhil, it becomes impossible to find any suitable proposal for my marriage. However, my father has great trust in me. I was permitted to live in the hostel. I was permitted to come to Lahore and study in co-education.

Sabira mentioned that her father's support against the family's opposition was sourced from his life history as he could not achieve academically and professionally despite dreaming at a young age. She added:

> The biggest aim for my father was to ensure that his children must get higher education. My father aspired that if he could not get a chance to achieve professional education and could not do a high-profile job. So, he wished his children would be highly qualified and join the job sector.

Zara also talked about her family's culture related to women's education. She criticised her family's environment, wherein women with professional degrees and careers were not appreciated and inspired. In contrast to the family's traditions, according to Zara, her father was passionate about educating their children regardless of gender. However, Zara's father was criticised by her extended family for his desire and support. Even her mother became highly angered with Zara's father, especially for allowing and supporting Zara to gain education up to the PhD level and join an academic career. Like Sabira, Zara's father not only motivated and encouraged her daughter. However, he also provided help to overcome her mother's disapproval of her educational goals. Zara gave detailed accounts regarding how her father and brother played a vital role in convincing their mother to accept Zara's choice to enrol for PhD studies:

> My father was very supportive irrespective of the gender of his children. He gave us complete freedom of what we wanted to study and up to the level. My father showed tremendous support throughout my academic journey. However, especially at the PhD admission time, my mother was angry with my father for his support and encouragement rather than for arranging my marriage. My wish to go for PhD studies was not acceptable at any cast for my mother. She was determined to stop me, literally determined to stop me. She believed I was already getting very late for marriage as my elder sister got married in 19years, and now my turn for marriage.

Zara further attributed much of her success to her father's love for education and his aspirations to have professionally qualified children in the following way:

> My father could not get professional education despite his extreme wish to do high profile government job; however, he was very ambitious and aspired for all his children to be highly qualified and join high-status careers irrespective of their genders. When I look back and count what actually contributed to my success, the first thing that comes to my mind is my father's untiring support for his children's education. I could not pursue my career without my brother and father. They are real heroes of my career journey.

Both Sabira and Zara were significantly invigorated and encouraged by their fathers through their own life stories. By looking at Sabira and Zara's narratives, it has been

revealed that their fathers' personal unfinished educational and career ambitions and outcomes were the underlying reasons behind their aspirations, support, and willingness to send their daughter for higher education. In addition, Zara and Sabira recognised the motivational function of their fathers' academic aspirations and career expectations that work as a guiding force in establishing these women's motivation to succeed academically and professionally. The above descriptions by Zara and Sabira show that their fathers' education-oriented values became the source of a wide range of supportive attitudes and enabling behaviours that they offered to their daughters to achieve success or overcome barriers. Both women believed their fathers' strong aspirations to have professionally qualified children played a unique role in providing consistent support- from encouraging/inspiring through allowing them for university education to helping them overcome barriers to achieving higher education and embracing a professional career.

The quotes above from Sabira and Zara's stories also represent another salient cultural outlook of Pakistani society regarding marriage norms and gender role expectations. Such continuing education after a certain level, especially to enrol for a university degree and then join a professional career, is perceived to cross the best age for women's marriage in Pakistan (Shah, Ahmad and Sathar,1986; Sathar and Lloyd, 1994; Masood, 2018; Mohsin and Syed, 2020). In Pakistani society, parents are traditionally expected to maintain strict social control in the family and have the responsibility to arrange their children's marriages (Qadeer, 2006; Zaman, 2013; Farooq, Kayani and Ahmad, 2015). Often, mothers maintain traditional gender role patterns in their families by policing, practising, and submitting to conservative gender role expectations and gendered rules (Papanek, 1971; Ambreen and Mohyuddin, 2013). One of the family's critical reasons for not allowing their daughters to enrol in higher studies was the parents' worries about arranging their marriages at the appropriate age. Traditionally, mothers are more concerned about their responsibility to arrange their daughter's marriage (Korson, 1970). The burden of this responsibility caused parents, particularly mothers, to fear that achieving a higher qualification and taking part in a professional career outside the home would reduce their daughters' chances of finding an appropriate marriage proposal.

Similarly, Zara and Sabira's mothers believed the daughter's choice for PhD meant that they had to move away for studies and forego starting a family life after marriage for several years. Both women's family environments exemplify broader conservative gender role attitudes. Therefore, their mothers' opposition can be understood in relation to culturally rooted gender scripts that would not appreciate those women who leave their parents' homes for study and career prospects. The support and resistance that Sabira and Zara received within their families reflect tensions and contradictions between gender role expectations upheld by different family members, especially parents. However, ambitious family member (s) (progressive patriarch: father, brother) who understand the value of gaining an education and uphold progressive gender role attitudes played a powerful & inspiring role in helping their daughters to access educational opportunities and enter a professional career.

Male family members' willingness to permit and facilitate their daughters/sisters to pursue university qualifications and join academic careers despite opposition from their mothers demonstrates the dominance of private patriarchy- a core centre of decision-making authority in Pakistani family institutions. As in all three cases of family disagreement (Neelam from the first category), mothers were mentioned as the primary source of conflict and resistance compared to fathers. These mothers exhibited traditional gender ideologies for their daughters and decidedly resisted their enrolment for university degrees. At the same time, these women's fathers took a stand, allowing their daughter to get admission to higher education outside their hometown and live in the student hostel despite all the family opposition. It clarifies that women mainly need elders, particularly male family members' consent for life decisions in Pakistan's patriarchal context as they were the main decision-making centres (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006; Syed, 2010; Akhter and Akbar, 2016). So, fathers' supportive attitude and willingness appeared to be essential for these women's success paths. A narrative of 'valuing to gain education is identified as a central ingredient of women's success in this study. All interviewees have internalised parental academic aspirations and embraced them as good life standards that they strived to achieve. In sum, parents' emotional support and verbal

encouragement positively influenced women's educational experiences and enabled them to succeed along their educational and career pathways.

This section explored the influence of family educational cultures and gender role attitudes on the interviewed women's academic and career outcomes. Overall findings suggest that study participants responded similarly to questions about the families' contribution to their academic journeys. Family's educational values, especially their parents' spoken academic desires/aspirations for their daughters, and reinforcing attitudes played a significant role in leading women's trajectories towards the position of professoriate regardless of their background characteristics. All thirty interviewees recognised experiencing direct, consistent, and explicit endorsement and encouragement from their parents or families for higher education and professional careers. In addition, the qualitative analysis of data related to women's family background and social class has shown the significance of family demographic conditions in engendering family supportive educational values and progressive gender role attitudes. The study participants were not vastly different regarding family's socioeconomic backgrounds as a significant majority of the interviewees (27/30) belonged to middle-class families with at least one parent educated from matriculation to degree and above (a detailed discussion presented in the first section of this chapter).

Therefore, the present findings have added to existing literature that found positive links between advantaged family backgrounds, associated capitals that include-family's academic aspirations, consistent emphasis on gaining education, parental reinforcement/encouragement for career success, family gender-egalitarian attitudes, and children's determination to achieve success, and achieve accordingly (White, Cox and Cooper, 1997; Richman, Vandellen and Wood, 2011; Hui and Lent, 2018; Polenova et al., 2018; Twumasi et al., 2018;) However, a small portion of rural women from lower social class backgrounds have succeeded against the odds. They often recounted family support methods and sustainable sources of relational support that worked as the proxy for fewer socio-economic resources and offset the impact of lower parental educational gains and disadvantaged rural living. They consistently received verbal encouragement from their parents. More importantly,

they were enabled through practical parental help to overcome relational and structural obstacles (e.g. lack of local educational institutions for girls and the culturally-rooted objections of others) and continued education. There was considerable evidence from women's narratives to reveal a core contribution of family members, particularly fathers, to women's academic accomplishments. Father's role has been praised as the primary source of psychological and instrumental support by all women professors regardless of their fathers' varied levels of education and other family background differences. In many cases, the study respondents identified their fathers as atypical because they empowered their daughters by standing with them in situations where conservative gender role attitudes or lack of resources constrained their access to opportunities.

This part of the analysis has identified families' educational aspirations for their daughters and positive attitudes towards gaining an education as underlying forces behind the formation of interviewed women's academic and career aims/pursuits. The following section will discuss how parental aspirations constitute the foundation for establishing various practical methods of family involvement (e.g., advice, guidance and acceptance of women's choices) to support women's positive engagement with mainstream education institutions and professional careers.

3.4 Family Role in Academic and Career Guidance

Further to women's experiences related to the impact of family's academic aspirations in shaping their educational and occupational ambitions and outcomes, this study also provides strong evidence of family members' powerful and inspiring role in offering academic guidance and career advice. Women in the study talked about family members and individuals from family-linked social circles who were directly involved in leading, guiding, and advising the women. In addition, the participants cited routines of family interactions as a source of having inspirational role models and learning experiences that motivated women for their future academic and career choices and decisions. The family influence was identified regarding advice and guidance at two main points across women's career trajectories. First, the interviewees often highlighted receiving guidance for selecting

subjects studied for a university degree. Second, women occasionally mentioned family influence in deciding about career formation.

3.4.1 Approach to code & categorise study participants' experiences regarding family guidance

I coded responses from the in-depth and close reading of female professors' narratives for the theme of' family role' in advice and guidance. Then, drawing on Saldana's stage/cycle-based coding approach (2016), I employed a combination of coding techniques to label and categorise the interview data recorded in response to the research question: how do you see the family or parents' role in your academic and career ideas and decisions? I selected the 'process coding technique' to label and extract the interview data segments containing women's narratives about family and parents' actions ('ing' words) of advice and guidance for the first coding stage. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014, p. 81), the "process coding method uses gerunds (-" ing" words) to connote observable and conceptual actions in the data". Similarly, this approach has helped me retrieve and index data units related to interviewees' educational and career choice-making process and outcomes resulting from interactional patterns involving parents, siblings, husbands, and members of extended family and social networks. Then, I employed the causation coding method to locate attributions and causal interactions from coded narratives to locate interrelationships among background characteristics, family engagement patterns, and study participants' academic and career aims and outcomes. Next, after inductive coding methods (both process and causation coding), I used various concepts to catalogue similar opinions expressed by multiple interviewees to explain their academic and career selections. Family members' engagement in directing, advising, suggesting, and inspiring women's routes is revealed as a common element in women's narratives. For example, I indexed recurring themes such as parents' desire for a clear choice for a particular field of study and the type of occupation for their daughters; parents recommend, lead the decision, or oppose the subject studied for university or career to join. In addition to family members' direct involvement in offering guidance and advice, interactional patterns with various family members and learning through these routines also influenced women's career decision-making

process. The interviewees across the sample also cited the salient influence of parents and other family members as role models for their educational & occupational preferences and attainments. As a result, women's explanations of their experiences about the indirect influence of these routines of family interaction and associated learning experiences have been coded and grouped as an 'inspirational role modelling' theme.

In the second coding cycle, I further partitioned, clustered, and reassembled the coded segments of data in the following interrelated and sequential sub-themes according to how women described the contents and the implications of family or parents' guidance for their educational career trajectories. I chose the title for the patterned subthemes according to my reflections on what their constituent coded data appeared to have in common. Therefore, the key theme of 'academic and career guidance' is set with subthemes relating to family members a) leading the decision, b) offering guidance and advice, c) showing willingness to support women's academic and career choices, d) providing an inspirational role model, and e) engaging in temporary conflict and subsequent willingness to provide support. Later, I sorted and classified the interviewees into five groups. This categorisation of study participants in these five sets is based on their selection and expression for different configurations/combinations of kinds of family members' involvement in guiding their academic and career trajectories.

3.4.2 Tables display & description

Again, two interrelated matrices in the tabulation form have been conceptually drawn to display the study participants' perceptions and experiences regarding family guidance and role modelling. The first matrix (table-9) below assembles women's family background categories, the values of their husband's occupation, and family guidance. Previously, women were hierarchically organised and grouped into three categories (column-A) according to their father's level of education. In addition, values of study participants' marital status and husband's occupation have also been charted in column-B of table-9 as women in the sample commonly recognised connections between family background characteristics, husband's occupational status and their engagement in guiding their career journeys. Later in

analytic interpretation, the study participants have been compared occasionally in terms of similarity and variability in their experiences linked to their contextual features.

I rephrased and summarised women's accounts describing their experiences of various interrelated ways of family guidance and its influence on shaping their academic and career decisions. These summarised narratives indicate different aspects of the central theme (women's perceptions and experiences regarding the family's role in providing academic and career guidance and inspirational role modelling. In most cases, the participants chose more than one element of family guidance and role modelling theme. Therefore, different combinations of family advice/guidance elements referred to by participants are entered in column-C of table-9 below. Next, the second matrix (table-10) below charts the distribution and categorisation of interviewees according to their family guidance experiences for their educational and career choice-making process. The study participants are distributed into five categories according to their analogous experiences regarding the various kinds of family involvement in guiding their career and academic trajectories. Five clusters of women are identified based on their selection of similar combinations of elements of family guidance. They are then displayed/listed in column-B of table-10 with the number of participants in each category in column-C. The study participants' allocation across the sub-themes shows that most women mentioned more than one kind of family guidance except for two situations where either daughters or family members were decision leaders. The sub-themes in table-10 are placed according to the number of women per category - starting from the highest number of women (7) to the least number (4) of the participants.

Table-9 Study Participants' Family Background Categories and Family Role in Advising and Inspiring Women's Academic and Career Choices

	A	B	C
	Female professors' categories as per their family Background	**Women's marital status & Husband's occupation**	**Direct and indirect ways of family's engagement in women's academic and career selections**
Group-1	Sameen	University professor	• Engaging in disagreement &resolved to accept a daughter's choice
	Naveeda	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Faiza	Non-academic/professional career	• Father was leading the decision
	Sarwat	Non-academic/professional career	• Husband as leading the decision
	Tabinda	Non-academic/professional career	• Engaging in disagreement & accept the father's choice • Father pushing/encouraging for PhD
	Noureen	Divorced	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shape academic and career choices and interests
	Neelam	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Naeema	University professor	• Engaging in disagreement & accept daughter's choice
	Mehak	Non-academic/professional career	• Mother was leading the decision • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Shabnum	Unmarried	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests

	Amber	Non-academic/professional career	• Father was leading the decision
	Fatima	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Reema	University professor	• Father & husband as leading the decision
	Shazia	Non-academic/professional career	• Mother was leading the decision
	Nasima	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices
	Komal	University professor	• Husband as leading the decision
	Farkhinda	University professor	• Husband as leading the decision
	Ghazal	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
Group-2	Saba	University professor	• Showing a willingness to support choices.
	Zara	Unmarried	• Engaging in disagreement & accept daughter's choice
	Jabeen	Non-academic/professional career	• Cousin & mother leading/offering guidance • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Mirza	University professor	• Brother offering guidance • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Yasmeen	Unmarried	• Showing a willingness to support choices. • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests
	Sabira	Academia	• Showing a willingness to support choices.
	Nazia	Non-academic/professional career	• Brother leading the decision • Family interaction routines shaped academic and career choices and interests

	Momina	Academia	• Engaging in disagreement & accept daughter's choice
	Mubeena	University professor	• Showing a willingness to support choices.
Group-3	Rub	Non-academic/professional career	• Showing a willingness to support choices.
	Nadia	University professor	• Showing a willingness to support choices.
	Ruqia	Unmarried	• Showing a willingness to support choices.

Table-10 Women's Categories Based on their Selections for Different Combinations of the Subthemes Related to Different Forms of Family Engagement

A	B	C
Number of categories	**Women's categories**	**Number of cases**
1	The first group of women talked about the influence of social–circles and routines of parent-daughter interaction on the development of their academic ideals and career goals. Also family showed a willingness to daughter's choices.	7
2	The second category of women specified that parents or husbands led the decision.	7
3	The third group of women appreciated parents' willingness to support their daughters' choices and decisions.	7
4	The fourth group of women engaged in temporary conflict with parents against their academic advice. They eventually convinced parents to accept their preference except for one case in which the daughter had to accept her father's choice.	5
5	The fifth category of women specified the joint influence of inspirational role models and family advice on their academic and career choices and outcomes.	4

3.4.3 Analytic Interpretation of Family Guidance's Role in Women's Academic and Career Choice Formations

The above section has reported the procedural steps and methods involved in coding, categorising, and displaying the emergent themes and categories, illuminating study participants' answers regarding the family's contribution to guiding their educational and career trajectories. This section aims to analyse and interpret the qualitative data matrices to look for patterns and relationships among

emergent themes pertinent to the research question (what is family's contribution to academic and career selection?) to which the matrices relate. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative findings will range from providing a general description to discussing similar or contrasting experiences concerning the research foci.

The second matrix (table-9) above has displayed data about categories of interviewees and summaries of their similar experiences related to family members' role in guiding their academic and career outcomes. The interviewees were asked how their families or parents engaged in forming and selecting their university degree program and academic career choices and decisions (theory-led question). The women in the study revealed important information, often in details, about whose family members were there to influence and how they played an active role in forming their educational and career choices. The interviewees also identified how family-centred interactional patterns or family-linked social connections impacted their career selections.

A group of seven female professors talked about the significant joint influence of family routines of learning and having inspirational role models that shape their academic and professional choices. Women's responses to the role model's influence from family and associated social circles on shaping their academic preferences were coded and labelled as 'family interaction routines shaping academic and career interests and choices. They are placed in the third row of table-10 above as a category. These women linked their educational and career ambitions to having successful role models in their families who inspired and motivated them to pursue higher education and join academia. Though these seven women in this group personally and independently decided about their field of study for university degrees and academic career routes, they believed that their decisions were influenced by positive family routines and having professionally successful role models. These women professors recurrently told of idealising their parents' and other family members' literary interests, positive educational experiences and prestigious occupational gains for their future academic and career routes. For example, two women from this group specified that their fathers had offered career-related modelling behaviour. Neelam's father was a medical academician with a strong writing background in

publishing. Neelam described that her father's guidance had illuminated her writing ability. As a result, she eagerly learned to model her father's scientific writing style and produced academic articles even during her higher education, significantly developing her interest in academia and, later, a speedy promotion of her university career. Similarly, Noureen's father was a role model behind her career choice, as her teenage occupational aspirations were to become an engineer like her father. She stated, ''I was inspired by my father and wanted to become an engineer like him''.

The rest of the four women from this category mentioned their learning experiences through family routines of interaction as the source of their academic and professional interests and outcomes. In addition, they identified a connection between their parents' intellectual interests, family-centred routines of learning, and the formation of their academic skills and preferences. While recalling early socialisation experiences within the family, Ghazal, among these four women, praised the key contribution of her parents, particularly her father, in making a conscious effort to create an intellectually stimulating environment at home. Her father was actively involved in instigating analytic abilities that enabled her to succeed academically and to enhance her likelihood to join and excel in academia and research:

> My father was very particular about eating dinner together as a family. He initiated a discussion over the dinner table. I thought that my actual grooming of thinking and analysis started from there. He used to ask questions and indulged us in discussions on different topics. So, a spirit of inquiry and analysis originated in me from this way of communication with our father. Not only I but my all sisters have the same experience and spark.

In the same way, Yasmeen appreciated her parents' literary and scholastic approach to arranging learning facilities and opportunities within and beyond home settings that had a key influence on the development of her academic ideals and career goals:

> My father had an interest in Arabic and Islamic literature. Once there was an Arabic, my father especially hired him as a tutor for me. My father decided to enrol me in an Islamic school. This institution played a vital role in making my academic career in the Arabic language and Islamic Studies. There were very great teachers and environment there. Positive is that my 'father'. He was fond of me for getting a higher education and was my primary source of support. My father had an interest in literature. We used to read books as both parents arranged books for us to read, and then we discussed these books too.

In addition, another set of two women from this category gave credit to routines of interaction with family's friends from their fathers' professional circles that played a significant part in shaping these women's academic interests and career choices. Fatima and Naveeda from this group stated the contribution of academic opportunities and resources associated with their fathers' professional connections to their academic socialisation. Both women believed that interaction with the father's social connections helped them explore their academic interests. Naveeda (Father: attorney general) highlighted the influence of her father's scholarly circles on shaping her academic and professional interests. She appreciated that people in her father's social circles offered her exposure to a variety of opportunities to develop skills and interests in performing arts and academia:

> I was really good at drawing and painting. My teacher was a great artist, Abdur Rehaman Chugtai, a great friend of my father as my father has a vast circle of friends in literature and arts. So, I was lucky enough to meet and learn from the best people in the field. I am blessed to enjoy the learned company of my father's friends, which has given me an advanced understanding of my field of subject and career. I am intellectually groomed by discussing with my father's scholarly circles of friends.

Similarly, Fatima, when asked about the leading factor that helped in selecting her field of study and career, identified the contribution of her childhood interaction with the social connections of her father to the exploration of her values and interests in her current academic field of specialisation. Fatima credited her father's approach (lawyer & political activist) to encouraging his daughters to participate in and learn from scholarly and political debates arranged by a group of her father's friends consisting of intellectuals, journalists, and political activists. Fatima hugely believed that her family routines of political activism played a significant part in shaping her world outlook and academic interests in the politicisation of gendered public spaces:

> As our father was a lawyer and politically active, he gave us confidence and took us to his meetings. While returning from school or college, we went to the processions with him, which kept us politically aware. Well-known journalists, thinkers, & politicians used to come to our home. Due to those people, I think now. I had an impact. My father introduced us (sisters) to his friends and encouraged us to participate in their discussion. The factors, I think, are helping to make a force of confidence in you. Especially this sort of interaction and learning has developed my academic interests in political

> contexts of gender, violence and social injustice. As I told you, the best thing was my political background, and my father trusts us to engage and learn from this environment.

For these seven women, having inspirational role models, routines of the parent-daughter relationship, and interaction with their father's social circles had contributed positively to forming their specific academic interests and the beginning of an academic career. Family learning routines and exposure to inspirational and successful role models can be understood as central contextual features of these interviewees. All seven women from this category were from urban families. Five of them have fathers educated up to degree level and above and engaged in professional careers or established businesses, which offered socio-cultural capitals for academic success. Consistent with the previous literature, these women referred to the interplay of their parents' educational qualifications/professional backgrounds and parenting practices as a source of learning skills and knowledge that significantly and positively impacted their academic and career trajectories (White and Cooper, 1997; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Arifeen, 2011).

Seven interviewees from the second category experienced parents' and husbands' involvement in career exploration and planning that had facilitated their academic tracks in terms of university institution selected, subject studied and selecting the academic career. All interviewees from this category whose families led their daughter's or wife's academic and career options are listed in the fourth row of table-10 above. Furthermore, these women indisputably agreed to accept their parents' and other family members' recommendations and decisions for their academic and career routes. For example, Faiza and Shazia from this category shared being disappointed and confused about their future academic prospects after failing to get admission to medical colleges as per their parents' wish to have their children in the medical field. However, both women admired their parents' timely decisions to select their daughters' fields of study and university after their failures to get admission to a medical degree. They believed their parents' active involvement at this critical stage of their academic journeys had a profound impact on enabling them to develop and maintain focused career goals and sustainable efforts to achieve them. They also believed their career success in the current academic disciplines was subject to their

parent's selection of the field of study for their university qualification. Faiza described that her father, who was retired from a prestigious professional position as a commissioner, chose a subject studied for her university qualification. She linked her promising career outcomes in academia to her father's decision in the following words:

> I remember I could not get admission to medical college. After that, my father guided me to do B.S (Hons.). My mind was deviating toward other professional fields like pharmacy or veterinary doctor. However, my father asked me to do B.S. Actually, he had done M.Sc. in Physics from one of Pakistan's oldest and the most prestigious higher education institutions. I think he knew the importance of the sciences. I think this was his given awareness and guidance that I took science subjects for my university degree. I believe it was the best decision of my father that contributed to the beginning of my bright academic career. After that, I joined the same department as a lecturer, where I completed my M.Sc. and never left. And now, I am a professor and head of the department in the same institute and university where I got my M.Sc. degree with distinction.

Similarly, Shazia recalled how the timely and wise decision of her mother regarding her university admission had opened opportunities for her PhD studies and led her to pursue an academic career:

> ABC University started admissions in B.S. (Hons) while still confused after I failed to get admission to medical college. At that moment, my mother firmly decided to take admission to ABC University in Economics based on the point that at least this field has a scope. She always wanted me to have a bright future by studying at well-known universities. She arranged my admission to ABC University. Her decision undoubtedly approved a turning point that led to opportunities for doing a PhD and joining an academic career eventually.

In contrast to Shazia and Faiza, Reema successfully fulfilled her parents' first preferred field of education by getting admission to a medical college. She gave credit to her father, from whom she received consistent and clear direction and motivation to join medical college. Alongside parents' positive role, four interviewees specifically appreciated their husbands' active role in guiding, motivating and supporting them to begin and complete PhD studies and join professional careers. For example, after her father's contribution, Reema also particularly appreciated her husband's role, who guided/directed her to secure admission to a PhD that paved the path toward her academic career. Another two

women were married during their university education. Husbands of these women started PhD programs at foreign universities. So, they guided their wives to take admission while staying abroad with them. Komal's situation differed from other women in this category as she married just after 12th grade and completed her education alongside her child-caring responsibilities. For her admission to a university degree and later to join a career in academia, Komal's husband, an academician, played a leading role. She believed that her husband's decision for her to do an M.A. in a particular field of study and then join academia was entirely compatible with her family responsibilities:

> My husband had decided on the subject for my M.A. degree. Perhaps he knew that a career in this field was manageable with my family's needs. And he proved right in his selection. However, even with this relaxed routine in the department, it was harder for me to complete academic tasks with children and family concerns.

In contrast to the traditional husband's role in Pakistani society, none of the sample's married women discussed their husbands' intruding role in their career journeys. Instead, all women believed they were lucky to have emotional support, verbal encouragement and practical assistance from their husbands that influentially contributed to their educational and career achievements. Family-led decisions and the family's clear and specific choices for their daughters' university qualifications can be understood in relation to these women's families' history of successful educational and occupational statuses. All these seven interviewees belonged to academic and advantaged family backgrounds (green category), wherein their parents, particularly fathers, had shown clear-headed and specific educational preferences for their daughters.

Moreover, a subset of four women who recognised the contribution of their husbands shared a common context in terms of their husband's professional status as all these four women's husbands were in academia or were doing PhD at the time of their marriage. Consequently, the husband's academic and research career positively influenced their career outcomes. Analysis related to women's experiences of family's active involvement contributes to the literature found strong connections between advantaged/educated family background and parents' active role in

children's academic socialisation in terms of helping and guiding their children about career exploration and career planning (Whiston and Keller, 2004; Ma and Yeh, 2010). Also, women's accounts from this category spell out their appreciation for family-led academic and career selections. Such as, they appeared to link their successful academic and professional profiles to their family's educational preferences, which positively contributed to the beginning of a bright academic career. Notably, in the leading role of family members, these women were willing to agree to their parent's preferences and decisions regarding their higher education studies and career selections.

Apart from parents' leading role in deciding about their daughters' academic and career routes, a group of seven women appreciated parents' willingness to support their daughters' choices and decisions and as a third category placed in the fifth row of table-10) above. Women in this third category were grouped on their perceptions of being free to decide their academic routes. They received family support (as opposed to direction) on their preferred field of studies and career trajectories. All these interviewees expressed their longstanding passion for their favourite field of study, which inspired them to get admission to the university degree program accordingly. The role of personal passion in shaping these women's educational and career routes will be discussed in the next section. Looking across the rows of the first matrix (table-9) to understand connections between background conditions and families' willingness to support their daughters' choices shows that this set of seven interviewees has mixed background features regarding parental academic and occupational gains. Therefore, the family's acceptance of women's academic selections can be associated mainly with limited information due to the parents' lower education level and the family's progressive gender role attitudes that endorse exercising individual choices.

Parent-led decisions, women's personal choices, family learning routines, and inspirational role models were specified to explain women's academic and career preferences and decisions in the first three categories. A set of five women were classed into the fourth category and placed in the sixth row of table-10 above. They engaged in temporary conflict with parents against their academic advice.

Eventually, these women convinced their parents to accept their preferred field of study, except for one case where the daughter had to accept her father's choice. These five women talked about the conflict between them and their fathers in response to pressures on them to join their fathers' advised field of study. However, despite their fathers' disagreements, they were determined to pursue higher education in their preferred subjects. For example, Sameen from this group experienced different episodes of conflict due to her divergent academic preferences from her father's academic expectations. She told:

> There was a conflict with my father throughout my academic journey because he insisted that I must take his desired field of studies. I did not want to go for science as I always wanted to do English literature. So, my father consented half-heartedly and was not very happy with the choice. I wanted to join an M.A. in English literature, but he wanted me to join an M.A. in economics. So, again, after about three weeks, I said I did not want to do economics and returned to literature for my university degree.

In the same way, Zara experienced conflict with her father on selecting a degree program for university admission that was gradually resolved into an agreed decision. Zara argued with her father in favour of her educational preferences. She took a stand to select psychology as a major for her graduate degree despite her father's desires and pressures to do a bachelor's degree in science subjects. After completing her university education, Momina, another woman from this group, experienced her father's opposition regarding her occupational choices. She was the only one in the sample who faced her father's disapproval of joining other professions instead of a university career. However, it took Momina six months to convince her father to agree with her choice of a university career because she was enormously interested in working in the university system and joining PhD studies. According to the women, their families began to applaud their academic accomplishments and career progression in their chosen field of study. They are proud of their daughters' academic and career achievements. Women's accounts from this category revealed that fathers had a lead role in guiding and deciding their daughters' educational and career routes. However, compared to this set of four women whose fathers finally agreed to their daughters' academic choices. Tabinda, after multiple attempts, could not change her father's decision on academic subjects

for her higher education degree, and she had to take up subjects on her father's wish. Moreover, she was actively encouraged and pushed by her father to join PhD studies and start an academic career after completing her university degree.

The fifth category of four women specified the joint influence of role modelling, routines of family interaction and family advice on forming their academic and career choices and outcomes. This final set of four interviewees is placed in the seventh row of table-10 above). These four interviewees were grouped based on their accounts identifying various interrelated elements of parent-daughter interaction that significantly inspired, trained, and guided them to explore their academic interests. Then, they made informed decisions accordingly. In their accounts of family engagement, women from this group believed that career-specific family guidance significantly influenced their selection of subjects studied for higher education that eventually linked them to academic career opportunities. For instance, two women (Mehak and Nazia), though they belonged to different family backgrounds in terms of parental education and residential locations, discussed their families' proactive role in guiding the options related to their career paths. They both identified the parents' educational and literary interests' contribution to shaping the parenting mechanisms they used to influence their children's life choices. It is evident from the stories of Nazia and Mehak below that their parent's literary interests and occupational background influenced their parent-daughter interaction in terms of socialising, educating, and instilling scholastic values. For example, in the case of Mehak, her mother's academic interests and specialisation in the Arabic language impacted the ways through which she developed her daughter's learning interest and knowledge in scientific understanding of Islam:

> My mother is very religious, and I always had a religious aptitude because of my mother; she is like a teacher who taught me Quran and Arabic as a language because she was well-trained in Arabic. Due to this background and knowledge, I firmly grounded and developed my interest and academic specialisation in Islamic feminism, which has linked me to a wide range of academic research opportunities across the globe.

In addition to her mother's involvement in home-based and family-centred learning, Mehak applauded her mother's guidance and lead role in choosing an academic field of study in the following words:

> My mother's timely guidance regarding selecting a subject for my university degree was another vital contribution to my current success. I am now extremely satisfied and happy in this field because a career in communication sciences matched my temperament and opened a chain of opportunities to actualise my potential.

Similarly, Nazia was inspired and guided by her family's literary interests to pursue her academic career in Punjabi literature. Nazia's family had a strong literary background with many folk poets and artists. She shared that despite residing in rural areas where educational institutions, especially women, were scarce, her family involved in folk literary activities for generations. She recalled how her love for literature and poetry emerged from her family's participation in literary activities that inspired her to develop a career in Punjabi Literature:

> I belong to a family that loves knowledge and education and is very simple. Despite living in a rural background with few opportunities and resources, my family was an amazing intellectual family with many poets and intellectuals. They used to express their feeling through poetry and writing, and I sought much influence from my father's poetry and literary sagacity.

In addition, Nazia gave credit for her academic achievements and extraordinary career performance to her brother's advice to enrol on a Punjabi literature program for her university qualification. Another set of two women from this final category believed that their attraction to a specific academic discipline and academic career evolved from having inspiring and successful individuals in their families and receiving career advice from them. Such as, Mirza discussed her educational choices and access to career opportunities in relation to her brother's active involvement in advising and motivating her along her higher education trajectory. She linked her informed decision to select the academic field of study to her brother, whose academically successful career has inspired and motivated her toward an academic career:

> I was inspired by my brother's brilliant academic achievements as he got a US-aid scholarship and earned an MBA from Boston University. He always

> guided and informed me about international scholarship opportunities and motivated me to apply for them. Under his guidance and motivation, I won a commonwealth scholarship and went to Cambridge University for PhD studies. Having constant motivation from my brother, after completing my PhD degree, I straightforwardly did my post-doc from the U.S., and then after returning from there, I am teaching here until now

Similarly, Jabeen highlighted the defining role of a cousin in providing her with the relevant information that allowed her to make a well-informed and guided selection of the field of studies. Jabeen gave credit to her cousin's role in advising and guiding her to pursue a university degree in sociology, ultimately leading Jabeen to join an academic career. She praised the contribution of her cousins to provide both inspiration and information related to educational and occupational opportunities in the following way:

> My cousin gave me a lot of support, broadened my vision, and showed me the different fields I could pursue. My cousin was my inspiration and role model in choosing Sociology as my subject. She had done the same degree and led a successful academic career in an American university after her PhD. Though I did not know anything about the subject before, she encouraged and practically helped me pursue an academic career in sociology.

Finally, recalling her entry to a university career, Jabeen highlighted her mother's vital role in offering career-related advice and encouragement for her initial career-making planning and decisions. According to Jabeen, her mother kept on encouraging and motivating her to start a career in university teaching:

> My mother had a huge role in encouraging me toward a career in academia. After I was married and had my first two children, a boy and a girl, my mother told me that my family was complete and now I should not waste the rest of my life. She told me to pursue teaching. I wanted to do an office job instead. My mother encouraged and pushed me to go to my department and speak to my teachers and the head/chairperson of the department for work opportunities.

In contrast to the second category's interviewees who gave full credit to family in leading their academic selections, women from this final category believed their personal preferences for a specific field of study and career decisions sourced from their family and associated networks who offered inspiration and advice. In brief, this final set of four women explored their potential and gradually developed a

career up to the highest rank of the professorship in academia in their family members' recommended field of studies.

Women professors talked about various ways related to their parents' involvement across the different stages of their academic journey in general and to enroll on university qualifications and pursue a long-term professional career in particular.

This analysis section has mainly focused on analysing women's accounts about various kinds of family guidance described as defining elements for forming their academic aspirations, career goals and outcomes. Family involvement operates in various ways, from selecting the academic field of studies and institutions through career guidance to family learning routines. The family's positive attitude towards the importance of learning and valuing education for children regardless of gender stimulate parental involvement in encouraging and guiding their daughters' academic routes. In other words, family progressive gender-status attitudes and parental education-oriented beliefs (emergent dominant themes in the previous section) have instigated the involvement of parents and other family members in providing academic and career advice. Study women, therefore, were classed into different categories due to their analogous narratives about the active role of family members and associated circles in providing support in terms of role modelling, encouragement, information, and direction for the selection of degree program and career path. Findings suggest that most parents from professional backgrounds were proactively involved in the decisions related to a university qualification. In contrast, parents with low educational levels appeared to respect their daughters' academic choices and decisions.

Across the sample, the interviewees have reported multiple ways family members are involved in guiding and advising their academic routes. Therefore, a sample of thirty women is coded and classed into five categories according to their identification of interrelated forms of family guidance. Nearly all participants across these five categories linked their successful higher education performance to guidance, advice and information from parents and other members (e.g., family and social circles). Apart from family members' active involvement in academic guidance, nearly half of the female professors admired families' willingness to accept

their higher education qualification choices and allow them to pursue careers in their preferred field of studies. However, besides groups of women who agreed to their family's recommendations and decisions for their higher education studies, a small section of the participants disagreed with their parents' career aspirations and advice. In these situations, a conflict emerged between parents' academic expectations and women's choices in response to pressures on women to enrol on higher education in their fathers' preferred field of study. However, in all but one of these conflicting situations, the women eventually convinced their fathers to accept their choice of the higher study program and their chosen career plans. That showed parents' flexible and progressive attitudes towards women's position in these respective families.

Noticeably, the interviewees commonly identified that they idealised and modelled parents' literary interests, positive educational experiences, and occupational gains. Moreover, the women often linked the routines of family interaction, parental guidance to the parents' educational and occupational status and the family's cultural values related to gender roles and education. So, family members' active role, especially advice from educated mothers and fathers, can be explained in relation to the advantaged family background (the dominant context of the women in the sample) as most of the women (27/30) in my study were from relatively advantaged family backgrounds. In addition, more than half of the study participants' fathers were professionally qualified, engaged in privileged occupations, and offered successful role models to inspire and influence women's academic and career choices.

Studies show that youth from higher socioeconomic status, which is frequently related to parental education levels, are more likely to be knowledgeable of and choose professional occupations (Sellers et al.,1999). Similarly, in line with the existing field of knowledge, findings offered that the educated parents of these women were relatively more knowledgeable in informing, guiding and directing their daughters' academic routes (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2006; Agarwala, 2008; Li and Kerpelman, 2007; Howard, 2009; Fouad et al., 2016). In addition, an analysis of study participants' choices of the university degree program and career field suggest

that most parents from professional background are proactively involved in the decisions related to a university qualification. In contrast, parents with low education levels appeared to be less actively involved in selecting academic subjects. It can be explained in relation to parents' limited level of knowledge due to their deprived educational status. Therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of the female professors in this study, from their childhood, directly witnessed the benefits of their parents' academic and professional achievements that have enhanced these women's motivation and aspirations for their future occupational success with class reproductive consequences.

3.5 Women's Personal Preferences and the Start of an Academic Career

The previous analytic sections describe and analyse the influence of family-related elements, including family demographic characteristics, family or parents' educational aspirations, gender role values, and academic guidance on shaping study participants' career paths. In addition to various kinds of family influences, women in the study commonly spoke of the role of their personal preferences for career and life in their academic career decision-making. The present analysis section first introduces the primary analytic strategy to code, categorise, and display interview texts comprising different elements of personal preferences for an academic career. Next, a detailed interpretation of emergent themes and study participants' categories related to the contribution of personal preferences to academic career selections will be presented.

3.5.1 Coding strategy for personal preferences theme

In addition to stating enabling contributions of family relations to the formation and selection of a career in academia, the female professors also cited their interests as a great source of mounting their inclination to join a university career. Such as, all participants repeatedly expressed their favourable attitudes toward a field of study, type of career and life preferences. Again, employing Saldana's stage-based coding approach (2016), I selected a combination of different coding strategies to identify and categorise experiences related to the influence of personal interests and preferences on women's career decisions. I initially employed holistic and value

coding methods to index the large unit of interview scripts- identifying personal preferences that contributed to women's career decision-making processes and the beginning of an academic career. Miles, Huberman Saldana (2014, p. 81) state, 'value coding is used to code qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes or beliefs for themselves, another person, idea or thing'. Similarly, the value coding technique is employed to locate and code the study participants' interpretive perceptions about their values and the importance that they used to attribute to specific academic discipline, career, and life priorities. Three personal considerations and preferences types have been traced and coded from a further in-depth reading of indexed data units. First, I chose the titles and labelled these inductively emergent patterns of personal preferences with conceptual titles. For example, I gave titles to the interviewees' cited preferences: 1) longstanding passion for a particular academic field of study; 2) personal attraction for professional values and work norms of a university career, and 3) preferences for combining career and care responsibilities that motivated them to join an academic career. Next, interaction among various personal preferences, career choices, and outcomes emerged by reading the coded and labelled interests. The study participants also identified connections between personal interests and deciding to join a university career. Then I applied a causation coding procedure to extract the interrelationship between emergent personal considerations, career decision-making, and outcomes. Lastly, study participants were categorised based on their narratives- identifying the contribution of different combinations of personal interests to their career outcomes.

3.5.2 Tables display & description

The first matrix (table-11) below is conceptually designed to display sub-themes indicating study participants' experiences regarding personal preferences (column-B) and mapping their family background categories (column-A). Column-B illustrates inductively emergent sub-themes describing three kinds of influential personal preferences that drive the participants to enter a university career. In addition, women in the study specified different combinations of their personal preferences for (a) a longstanding passion for the specific academic field of study, (b) attraction for academic profession values, (c) and having priority of being able to

manage between career and out of work responsibilities for their academic employment decisions. The second matrix (table-12) below therefore has charted 1) different configurations of preferences; 2) women's categories based on their selection of various combinations of reported and coded personal preferences, and 3) a brief description for each cluster of chosen combination that led them to enter a university career.

Table-11 Study Participants' Family Background Characteristics, the Role of Personal Preferences and Work Opportunities in their Academic and Career Choice Selections

	A	B
	Female professors' categories as per their family Background	**Personal preferences**
Group-1	Sameen	• Passion for academic discipline
	Naveeda	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job • Preference for work-life balance
	Faiza	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Sarwat	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Tabinda	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Noureen	• Passion for academic discipline
	Neelam	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job
	Naeema	• Passion for academic discipline

	Mehak	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Shabnum	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job
	Amber	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Fatima	• Passion for academic discipline
	Reema	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job
	Shazia	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job • Preference for work-life balance
	Nasima	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job
	Komal	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Farkhinda	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Ghazal	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job • Preference for work-life balance
Group-2	Saba	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Zara	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job

	Jabeen	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Mirza	• Passion for academic discipline
	Yasmeen	• Passion for academic discipline
	Sabira	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job • Preference for work-life balance
	Nazia	• Passion for academic discipline
	Momina	• Passion for academic discipline
	Mubeena	• Passion for academic discipline • Attract to professional values of university job
Group-3	Rub	• Passion for academic discipline
	Nadia	• Passion for academic discipline • Preference for work-life balance
	Ruqia	• Passion for academic discipline

Table-12 Women's Categories Based on their Selection for Different Configurations of Influential Personal Preferences

A	B	C
Number of categories	**Women's categories**	**No of cases**
1	Women's passion for a specific academic field of study drove them towards the course of action: inspiration to get higher education in the particular discipline, enter the higher education and eventually join an academic career. (Sameen, Noureen, Naeema, Rub, Ruqia, Fatima, Mirza, Yasmeen, Nazia, and Momina)	10
2	The second category of women reported choosing university careers because of their academic interests in the particular field of study and preference to balance work and life. (Firdaus, Sarwat, Tabinda, Amber, Nadia, Mehak, Komal, Jabeen, Farkhinda, and Saba)	10
3	The third category of women specified their personal attraction for a particular field of study, and academic career work norms motivated them to join a university career. (Mubeena, Zara, Nasima, Reema, Shabnum, and Neelam)	6
4	The fourth set of women is classed on their similar accounts referred to all three kinds of personal considerations for certain academic discipline, university job, and work/life balance as the underlying factors that inspired them to join academic careers. Naveeda, Ghazal, Sabira, and Shazia)	4

3.5.3 Analytic interpretation of the role of motivating preferences in academic career selections

Study participants' family gender role attitudes, educational values, and guidance undoubtedly play an incredibly supportive role in shaping their ability to access public spaces for education and career. However, empirical findings suggest that their personal preferences also drove women's academic and career decision-making processes in this study. A set of three types of responses have been revealed, coded and displayed as subthemes of preferences under the central theme of 'personal preferences' undertaking a combination of coding methods (detailed above). Further female professors are categorised based on different configurations of influential personal preferences that contributed to establishing their aspirations and decisions

towards an academic career. Apart from patterned responses and experiences, the female professors across the categories also used a combination of various individual notions to highlight the relevance and significance of their preferences for their educational career decision-making process. The current section interprets inductively emergent subthemes, and pertinent categories of study participants presented empirical evidence for the influence of personal preferences in shaping their academic career aspirations and outcomes.

Ten women were grouped in the first category as a result of their shared narratives highlighting their passion for a specific academic field of study, driving them towards the interrelated course of action, including- aspiring to get higher education in their preferred academic discipline, entering the higher education and eventually joined the academic career. This first category consists of women from mixed family backgrounds and is listed in the third row of table-12 above. There is a pattern in these ten women's responses as they expressed a clear and strong sense of the specific disciplinary field, they wanted to pursue for university qualifications. Accordingly, these women had led the decision to enrol in their preferred studies field for university qualifications and beyond (PhD). However, they stated different explanations to underscore the significance and relevance of their interests in academic disciplines preferred for their university qualifications.

Moreover, they described how they chose to act out of their interest in the academic discipline. Noureen was one of the participants who took the lead in deciding on the subject studied for higher education. She highlighted the strength of her passion by comparing her decision to select engineering with broader gender role expectations of her time when engineering was a 'no go' area for girls for their higher education and career options. Noureen's longstanding and explicit passion for engineering was allowed and supported by her family despite the surrounding traditions. She believed that her clear-headed choice was a leading reason behind the academic specialisation in her preferred field of study and choosing academia for a career. According to Noureen, ''I intensely wished and determinedly decided to enrol in engineering university and become an engineer like my father''. In contrast to Noureen, who had the full support of her family to choose her desired field of study

freely, a subset of two women from this first category decided themselves on academic subjects for their university qualifications despite their fathers' opposition to their decisions. These two women started experiencing a temporary conflict with their fathers in selecting a degree program for university admission. However, both Naeema and Sameen were hugely passionate about their preferences. Eventually, they convinced their fathers to agree with their choices of academic disciplines for university education.

Ruqia was like those women in the sample who associated their subject priority with performance and talent. She believed that her extraordinary achievements and success in college degrees led her to choose this subject for her university education and eventually develop her academic career field. Ruqia recalled:

> I chose Psychology, and only one month was left. When the result came out, I stood first in Psychology. Everyone was surprised that I had studied for one month only. However, I felt that it was extremely easy compared to science subjects and more importantly, it matched my aptitude. Afterwards, I continued with Psychology for my university qualification.

In addition, the women from this category also cited that their longstanding learning passion for gaining a university degree in their preferred field of study had eventually paved their paths toward an academic career. Again there was a pattern in their experiences during the university education period that connected these women with research work opportunities and opened the path toward university employment. These women claimed that a university degree in their chosen academic discipline made them realise that university employment could offer opportunities and resources to develop their research and academic specialisation in their preferred academic subjects. Like other women in this group who associated their university career selection with their academic interests and higher education in their preferred field of studies, Rub mentioned that research experiences during university education had refined her interest in seeking a university career in her preferred field of study. As a result, all participants from this category preferably sought a career in academia or immediately accepted work opportunities offered to them, even during their stay in university, to acquire an MA degree or beyond.

A difference has been observed in women's experiences regarding sources of their passion for a particular field of study. Though all ten women in this category claimed to have positive and ambitious attitudes towards gaining higher education in their favourite field of study, in five cases, the interviewees did not state the exact source of their personal preferences for specific academic disciplines. Instead, they generally stated passionate interest, fascination, and personal inclination toward research and higher education in a particular academic discipline and recalled always having specific academic preferences. However, the other five women within this first category underscored family members' active and explicit involvement in shaping their academic preferences for university higher education. While discussing their learning passions for a specific field of study, these women identified a link between their passion for achieving academically in their preferred field of study and the sources from which this passion originated.

In their accounts of personal academic preferences, this subset of five women first spoke of their preferences and then identified the sources of their learning passions for the specific field of study. For this, they mentioned family or social circles' role in terms of offering motivation, inspiration, information, guidance, and advice led them to develop interests in a particular field of studies, choosing these subjects for their higher education study programs and joining academic career subsequently in these preferred fields of studies. For example, Yasmeen believed childhood routines of family socialisation emphasised the learning and practice of religious and moral values, and schooling from a religious institution had a significant and impactful contribution to shaping her aptitude and academic interests in Islamic studies for university education and career in academia. In the same way, Nazia perceived that her family's literary practices of folk poetry and literature provided a context in which she gradually explored her interest in Punjabi folk literature (regional language).

Mirza linked her passion and efforts to achieve academically in university education to her elder brother. According to Mirza, the successful academic career of her brother did not only inspire her to follow in his footsteps, but her brother was also actively involved in providing information and guidance for scholarship

opportunities and subject-related resources. In comparison, Momina and Fatima believed their decisions to enrol in PhD studies in their preferred academic subjects were influenced by university teachers who offered inspiration and advice. For example, Momina believed her university teacher's timely support and awareness to select the university career among the other available work opportunities facilitated her achieving her long-ambitious life goal of earning a PhD. Fatima gave credit to the influence of higher-degree training context and teachers on the development of her inspiration and determination to enrol in a PhD program in her dream field of education in the following words:

> Then I applied to XYZ University. The people there as teachers were legends. I am so lucky that all the best artists of Pakistan were there. Having all these legendary academicians was a turning point in my career. They inspired and guided me to get a PhD to specialise in Arts and cultural theory.

Another set of ten participants was classed as the second category (fourth row of table-12) because of the commonality in their views regarding the influence of subject priority and preference to fitting career into parental responsibility on their university career selections. With subject priority, these ten women added their predilection to have the ability to manage work and family life as a reason for choosing an academic career. No exception, all women in this category identified their perception about the combinability of an academic career with parenting helped them choose a career in academia. After completing their PhDs, a subset of two women joined the non-academic profession and then moved to a university career. For their decision, they highlighted contextual benefits and work conditions of academia have made it their optimal choice as it fits with their parental responsibility preferences. Farkhinda had a prior non-academic career after doing a PhD. She linked her entry to a university career after spending two years in the industry with her motive to balance work-life priorities in the following words:

> I became increasingly aware that I would not continue working in an environment where no boundaries of finish time were far less than ideal with my care need throughout working there. So, I opted to seek a long-term university career with much flexibility in managing time for multiple realms of life.

In summary, this set of ten participants was classed as a second category due to their analogous narratives about the contribution of their higher education achievements in the particular field of study and their preference to balance work and life in choosing university careers.

A group of six women specified their attraction to a particular field of study, and university career values and work norms motivated them to start an academic career. These six women alluded to the longstanding passion for their subjects and perceiving a good fit between their career pursuits and the demands of academia behind their decision to join university employment. These six women in the sample combine having a longstanding passion for a particular subject and perceiving/believing a good fit of their career pursuits with the values and norms of academia, without mentioning precedence to balance work and life priorities as being a reason for their career choice to join academia. This set of six participants is listed as a category in the fifth row of table-12 above.

Apart from patterned responses and experiences, the female professors across the categories used various individual notions to highlight the relevance and significance of their preferences for their educational career decision-making process. Such as among this category of six study participants, further sub-categories emerged based on various permutations that these women described explaining the role of their learning passion and university career pursuits in influencing their academic career decisions. For example, being good in the subject, talent, performance, achievements, and ambition to enrol in a PhD were stated to register their passion for a specific academic subject. A subset of three women associated their passionate interest in the chosen field of study with their strengths and aptitudes to excel in their preferred field of studies. These women's belief that they can only excel academically in their chosen field of study was recurrent notions in their accounts of longstanding passion for their subject. Accordingly, this recognition of passionate interest in a particular academic discipline and being good at the subject fuelled their desire to acquire higher education in their dreamed and well-performed field of study. It was evident from the comments below by Zara and Shabnum that their learning passion motivated them to enrol in a PhD programme

in their preferred field of study and pursue an academic career afterwards. According to these women, their chosen field of study was the only preference for their university degree.

Zara expressed her interest in the following way:

> I never regret my decisions. First, I decide, and then I keep myself determined to make those decisions. As my preference is psychology, and I can only excel in it. Actually, I started to dream PhD in psychology during my college days. I told my father that I would apply only for MA in psychology at ABC University if I could not get admission in this subject. Then I would discontinue studying further.

Like Sameen and Naeema from the first category, Zara argued with her fathers over her preferred fields of study. These three women were told to explore and recognise their academic and career interests in the early years of higher education. According to them, they were ambitious and motivated to develop and excel in their chosen career fields. Despite the parents' desire to enrol their daughters into their recommended study programs, these women's motivation and outstanding academic performance during the early years of higher education enabled them to attract their parents' support and alignment for their educational choices. Another woman, Shabnum, linked her extraordinary academic performance to intrinsic interests in a particular field of study, research, and writing that shaped her motivation for pursuing an academic career in this subject. According to her:

> Everybody thought genetics was a complex subject, but it was the easiest one for me. I liked it very much. So, when it came to MSc admission, I selected botany because I decided to pursue a PhD in genetics. Moreover, in genetics, I got the highest marks. Because everybody has an aptitude, and I had my aptitude for microbiology. I was motivated to pursue PhD in microbiology due to my longstanding passion for research in this field of study from the start of my college education. So right after my MSc, I also accepted a job offer from the same department.

According to these women, their aptitude and strength in specific fields of studies have resulted in excellent academic performance, led to a course of action (entering higher education, pursuing PhDs) and eventually joining an academic career. Another interviewee, Mubeena, spoke passionately about the course of actions that flowed from her preferences for a particular academic discipline and field of career.

She, however, associated her academic interests in the specific disciplinary field of study with ambitious attitudes toward entering a professional career, especially her inclination to join a university career. As she believed her preferred field of study for a university degree was likely to offer more employment opportunities compared to enrolling for a university degree in some other academic disciplines:

> There was a big reason behind my personal choice of a university degree in the academic discipline of ABC, as I was job-oriented from my early life, consciously or unconsciously. Actually, I was always ambitious to make a career. Moreover, I always took such steps and decisions that might take me forward to start a professional life. When I was doing a BA (Bachelor of Arts), I realised that with my major subjects in BA, I could hardly find a job, 'hardly found' does not mean that I could not qualify for a job. It means there were very scarce opportunities for jobs in these subjects. I thought my gold medals in my academic degrees would not guarantee a career (laugh ironically). So, I choose education as a core subject for a university degree. Because it seemed that there was some guarantee of secure jobs in this subject, especially to pursue a university career

Reema, another female professor in the sample who initially began her career in a non-academic profession, linked her decision to move from a non-academic to an academic career to her fascination for professional values and work norms of academic career and research opportunities. Reema recalled a combination of factors that led her path toward university employment:

> I used to attend research seminars during my days in medical college. My area of practice and interest was MCH (Maternal & Child Health). So, I kept engaged in relevant research projects with different research organisations besides my medical education out of my instinctive and passionate interest in research in preventive medicine. After getting married to an academic husband, I got opportunities to visit academic institutions relevant to my research interests across the globe, ultimately driving me to do a PhD in public health and join academia afterwards.

In addition to the similarity in these women's motivation to pursue higher education in their chosen academic discipline, they were grouped in this category due to their shared belief that their personal career preferences for professional autonomy, research, writing and teaching have a good fit with the culture and norms of academic work that driven them to join university career. These women strongly believed that their intellectual curiosity influences their choice for a faculty career as academia's scholarly activities can largely actualise their curiosity. In their accounts

of the academic career as their prime choice, these women claimed that they were seeking to work in a university career as norms that guide academic (professional freedom, writing, research, and creativity) were compatible with their personality, aptitude, and professional preferences. Indeed, what Mubeena expressed as "opportunities of intellectual freedom and professional autonomy that a university career did offer for fulfilling and pursuing my interests, needs and ambitions for writing, research and autonomy, were the compelling traits of university career behind my decision to choose academia" was the frequently mentioned and highlighted reason by women across the sample for their academic career choice after their strong desire for a particular subject of study for university qualification.

Similarly, Neelam, who associated her entry to an academic career with a variety of interrelated elements of agency and aspects of her personal preferences: talent, performance, and inclinations to acquire higher education in a particular field of study, also cited an inherent fit between her professional pursuits and personal inclinations for research and writing as a strong motive for choosing an academic career path. Finally, another interviewee from this category, Nasima, referred to a university job as her prime choice. She initially started her academic career by teaching at the college level and ultimately moved to university employment as she got an opportunity to join a university career. Nasima stated that her passion for achieving academically in her chosen field of study and her preferred work values of thinking, research, and writing inspired her to seek for university career:

> Nevertheless, I have some issues working in college as I could not work autonomously, which is the difference between working in college and university. Moreover, during my PhD, I intensely wished to build up my research profile in my field of study, which was obviously not possible in a college job as it is restricted to only teaching. Therefore, I wanted to join ABC University to work more comfortably and independently in my research field. So, without any delay, I applied for a university job when it was advertised.

In brief, this third category of women specified their longstanding passion for a particular disciplinary field and their career attraction for professional autonomy, research, and creativity as a strong motive to join a university career.

Four study participants are classed into this fourth and final category based on their similar narratives, citing all three kinds of personal considerations for specific

academic discipline, university job, and work/life balance as the underlying factors behind their university career entry. These women suggested that all three elements of personal preferences shape their decision for an academic career. These women are placed in the sixth row of table-12 above as a category. A preference for being around multiple responsibilities and perceiving a good fit between personal and professional inclinations (love for teaching and research) were recurrent themes offered to explain the influence of all three kinds of personal priorities in shaping these women's academic trajectories. For example, Naveeda passionately chose academia for two reasons: teaching at university allowed her to satisfy her passion for teaching and addressing the audiences, and secondly with flexible and reasonable work timings of academia allowed her to continue working in TV in the evenings:

> My first choice of career would have been Performing Arts. However, that was considered amateur activity. Since I did not have the option to go into the performing arts as a full-time professional career, so, I decided to go into a teaching career because it is the next best thing to performing arts. You have a captive audience in the classroom. You have a prepared script, you go, and you perform that. It also gave me much time because the university was over at about 2:30, and I could work on Pakistan Television in the evening. So, it was a perfect choice; in that sense, it allowed me to do more things linked to family and hobbies

Sabira has also specified all three elements of personal interests to describe her academic career decision-making process. Recalling the childhood fantasy of her great love for a particular academic field of studies, Sabira narrated, "I always dreamed of doing PhD in my current field of academic specialisation even when I did not know the exact meaning of PhD in year 8 of my school education". She professed her childhood admiration as a foundational factor behind her motivation and efforts to pursue her dreams of achieving educational and career success in her desired field of study. Moreover, Sabira sought to work in academia as university employment/work values and practices were compatible with her professional priorities and life goals. She linked her academic career choice to her priority for work/life balance in the following words:

> During my studies, I got married, and right after my education, I got a job. Moreover, this lectureship has made a good balance with family responsibilities regarding job timing and availability of summer vacations.

> With flexible arrangements in academia, you can manage both sides of personal and career lives well, especially as a woman.

In addition, Sabira was like Nasima from the third category, started her academic career from college-level teaching and then moved to university as she got an opportunity to join a university career. Sabira stated her intellectual desire for work autonomy, research, and creativity as a strong motive to join the university career. Finally, similar to Saba and Farrah from the first category, Shazia joined the non-academic profession after completing their PhDs and then moved to a university career. According to Shazia, she left a prestigious non-academic career position after assessing the long-range positive components and consequences of a university career. Talking about the decision to resign from her highly paid non-academic career to join university, Shazia said:

> The years I spent working in the industry gave me important insights into how the research learning I had become accustomed to during my qualification, especially research training in PhD studies, was wasted and underutilised in the government sector's managerial position. So I accepted my PhD supervisor's offer to join a university job as an assistant professor after working for more than ten years in the industry.

The study participants across the sample reported being profoundly career-oriented and motivated to achieve academically and join professional careers. Most women (26/30) started their careers from an academic job, inspired or determined decisively during their university education years to pursue a university career. The remaining four female professors started careers in non-academic fields and later joined university employment. For this transition, they mentioned multiple reasons: their work experiences in non-academic culture, consideration for flexibility, and passion for research, which redirected them to an academic career path. Analysis of these women's narratives revealed the relative value they attached to academic careers compared with other options that have influenced these women's decisions to move into and sustain a career in academia. In brief, these women moved from non-academic careers to university careers by gradually eliminating career options to select academia better to fit their preferences, skills, and life circumstances.

Moreover, the common thread connected study participants across the four categories were their academic discipline-related priorities and the opportunities

and benefits of pursuing a PhD qualification that shaped women's employment decisions to join academia. A career goal to enrol in a doctorate was a patterned decision that was consciously embraced. An overwhelming majority of women in the study (22/30) cited their passion and attraction for a specific field of study as a great source of their inspiration and motivation to get higher education in their desired academic discipline led them to join an academic career. They also referred to their work/life management considerations, and flexible schedules were important appeals behind their choice for an academic career. In addition, they perceived that academic career culture and work norms are well suited to their family care priorities.

It shows for a large section of women in the sample that their attractions to a particular academic discipline, teaching and research constitute the foundation for establishing their academic career choices and decisions. Alongside discipline-related choices and professional interests that influence women's perceptions of academia as their viable career choices, the contribution of women's gender role priorities to their choice for an academic career has also been identified. In summary, at first, women's strong sense of academic specialisation, recognition of the congruence between their personal needs, professional preferences, and the central characteristics of an academic career (research, autonomy, and flexibility) resulted in their consciously and purposefully chosen career paths towards professoriate.

3.6 Summary and Concluding Remarks

The empirical findings of this first chapter of analysis suggested that women's university education and academic career decision-making processes were shaped by several interrelated elements of family influences and their personal preferences. Qualitative analysis of career biographies of a sample of thirty female professors from public sector universities of Punjab revealed multiple overlapped elements of family support and infrequently resistance faced by these women on their trajectories towards the professoriate. Without any exception, all women received a great deal of parental support in the form of active involvement, high aspiration, upbeat parenting style and reinforcement. In addition, this chapter also focused on exploring and analyzing the personal factors (interests, beliefs and preferences) that

shaped women's aspirations toward an academic career. A sample of thirty female professors was coded and classed into different categories based on their selection for different combinations of personal preferences that made them get inspired to join an academic career. The qualitative analysis of women's accounts revealed three personal preferences that the women regarded as central to their academic career choices. Patterned narratives that emerged from the analysis of study participants' accounts were their particular academic interests, which, combined with their compatible professional pursuits and their considerations for work/life balance, were driving factors behind their career decision-making process (Blanco, 2011; Aziz and Kamal, 2012; Bubić and Ivanišević, 2016; Kobia-Acquah, 2020).

There is a considerable amount of evidence from women's narratives to reveal a core contribution of family members and fathers, particularly to women's academic accomplishments. Father's role has been celebrated as the primary source of psychological and instrumental support. Especially in a few cases, the study respondents identified their fathers as atypical because they empowered their daughters by standing with them in situations where conservative gender role attitudes or lack of resources constrained their access to opportunities.

Family cultural capital, such as family progressive gender role attitudes and educational aspirations, are underlying reasons behind family support and involvement in their daughters' academic outcomes. Although all parents in this study offered moral and emotional support, active involvement and instrumental help are not consistently experienced across the entire sample. There is a variation observed in the level of parental participation within and across the families. Parental/family involvement comes in varied ways, ranging from assisting their daughters in commuting, and guiding women's academic learning to participating in their educational decisions. In addition, women's narrations have captured the leading effects of parental involvement on different phases of their education history; that was ranging from the early years of life when parents took the initiative and decisions to send their daughters for formal schooling, continuing achievement supporting behaviour to offset the surrounded opposition and permit/ensure their daughters to get admission in a university and start a professional career. In addition,

female professors talked about various ways related to parents' involvement across the different stages of their academic journey, from enrolling on university qualifications to pursuing a long-term professional career. Findings suggest that most parents from professional backgrounds are proactively involved in the decisions related to a university qualification. Whereas parents with low education mostly appeared to accept their daughters' academic choices and decisions.

The pattern of parental participation continued to influence their daughters' decision about selecting a university degree program and career field in their young adulthood. In this regard, a series of conflicts between fathers and daughters has been reported as fathers used to insist and pressure their daughters to enrol in their preferred degree program. However, daughters opted to enrol in the subjects they considered the most suitable to their aptitude to learn and achieve. More importantly, these conflicting arguments did not engender barriers on their paths to pursuing their determined targets; instead, gradually, the women convinced their families to accept their choices. Such episodes demonstrated favourable family contexts where fathers gave value and importance to their daughters' choices.

Social capital in the form of supportive and resourceful relations appeared to exert influence across the academic routes. Alongside parents, a few women described the profoundly significant role that their siblings, particularly brothers, played in guiding and helping them to get through the different steps of educational achievements. In some cases, extended family members like grandparents and cousins provided support regarding role modelling, encouragement, information and direction for the degree program selection. Study women were classed into different categories due to their analogous narratives about the active role of family members and associated circles in motivating, guiding, and directing that led them to join higher education in a particular field of study and enter an academic career. In addition, the help from circumstances was always reported when neither type of personal consideration was presented to explain career outcomes.

Family educational history was an important background condition to influence how family appeared to support & restrain women's academic trajectories. Parents' education and occupation status significantly influenced their beliefs and values for

their daughters—parents' wishes for having professionally qualified daughters can be understood by considering family education traditions and history. Especially in cases of deprived educational and occupational family history, parents' top priority for their children's academic success and different kinds of support did not only enable these women to access and entry into a secure profession but also gave them an opportunity for generational mobility compared to parents' economic struggles and unfulfilled educational ambitions and gains in their past. This research also provides an opportunity to understand how women (though a small subset of the total sample) academically grow and succeed with disadvantaged family circumstances (parents' education, occupational class & rural residence). Progressive and aspiring attitudes of less-educated parents toward women's education appeared as a shield against their limited ability to engage in home-based learning and provide academic resources personally. Instead, these beliefs instigate their efforts and willingness to support their daughters' academic journeys in alternate ways.

The findings on family socioeconomic status (measured by father's occupation and education) indicate that background advantages have appeared to influence women's career journeys powerfully as advantaged family backgrounds caused progressive family beliefs and supportive parental attitudes. Better educated and affluent parents have relatively more socioeconomic capital. Consequently, they are likelier to encourage and facilitate their children's achievement-related behaviours than parents from the lower socio-economic class. However, the extent to which parents are willing to support their children, mainly their daughters, also depends upon their attitudes and family cultural values towards women's education and career-making. In the same manner, the women have accredited their successful academic career outcomes to the fundamental role of their family's willingness to send them for university degrees and their parents' active involvement in overcoming the relational and structural barriers irrespective of their family educational history.

Study findings linked to the previous literature show a positive association between a family's affluent socioeconomic status and the formation of children's academic

and career aspirations and achievements (Whiston and Keller, 2004). In accordance with the existing literature, the findings of this study suggest that a family's socioeconomic status, especially parental education is a significant predictor of study participants' career aspirations, choices, and attainments (Gottfredson, 1981; Sellers et al., 1999; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Eccles, 2005). Such privileged family background circumstances were a case for most study participants, which appeared to ensure multiple socio-economic capitals for the social reproduction of education and career achievements. Therefore, the family's progressive attitudes and supportive actions can be linked to family academic background and affluent parents, allowing study participants to achieve the end or overcome barriers.

On the other side, socioeconomic status has a direct effect on unequal aspirations and expectations. Lower-class individuals faced more obstacles than middle- and upper-class individuals, limiting their career aspiration levels and attainments. In particular, previous research shows that parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to influence their children's educational trajectories positively despite being aspired and involved (Gottfredson, 1981; Farmer, 1985; Hill et al., 2004; Ashby and Schoon, 2010; Memon, Joubish and Khurram,2010). However, in my study, family values of believing in the importance of gaining professional education were commonly highlighted across the sample. Similarly, the family culture of equally encouraging and supporting children of each gender's education was more likely reported than traditional gender role beliefs and gendered practices across the sample, irrespective of women's socio-economic background.

Presently, a growing body of literature suggests parental interest, aspirations and family progressive gender role culture may moderate the negative interaction between disadvantageous family socioeconomic position and educational and career achievements in family members (Brown and Barbosa, 2001; Ceja, 2004; Ali, McWhirter and Chronister, 2005; Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010; Fan, 2014; Yamamoto, 2015). Similarly, for the minority section of the academic women studied, who came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the effects of poor background conditions of the family, notably lower levels of parental education and deprived rural residence, appeared to have been mediated by having at least one parent/

relative/sibling who was exceptionally supportive towards these women's access and participation in the realms of education and work. Contrast to the previous studies indicated that a family's low socioeconomic status and rural residential location result in a reduced family's contribution to shaping and realising student's career aspirations and achievements (Sewell and Shah, 1968; Whiston and Keller, 2004; Ma and Yeh, 2010; Memon, Joubish and Khurram, 2010; Byun, Meece and Irvin, 2012; Bæck, 2017), women in my study from the less privileged backgrounds recounted various methods of family support that worked as the proxy for fewer socio-economic resources and offset the impact of lower parental educational gains and disadvantaged rural living. Furthermore, it shows that family career aspirations and progressive gender role values are central in shaping women's academic career trajectories regardless of their socioeconomic status. Conclusively, elements of causal structures (family class and geographical location, and parental education) can be impeccably combined with elements of interpretive focus (interactive co-constructed values, beliefs and actions/ practices of women who are being studied) to offer understanding and explanation for the outcomes in the form of women's higher education choices and career achievements. Finally, the qualitative analysis features thirty high achiever Pakistani women who offer new perspectives on private patriarchy as a source of progressive, gender-equalitarian and enabling attitudes towards women's participation in public university education and employment regimes.

Chapter 4: The Role of Interpersonal and Institutional Elements in Early Academic Career Advancement

4.1 Introduction

The central focus of this PhD study was to seek an answer to how a sample of thirty Pakistani female academics succeeded in reaching the position of professor and what were the institutional enablers and barriers to these female academics' career achievements and progression. Analysis of interview data has flagged up rich and detailed narratives- highlighting a linear career advancement journey ranging from appointment to early years of career achievements and struggles to gain recognition and visibility as professors at public universities in Punjab. The first empirical chapter focused on exploring and analysing the influence of family-related elements, including (family demographic characteristics, parents' educational aspirations, family gender role values, and academic guidance), and the role of personal preferences in crafting their educational and career routes. This second chapter of qualitative findings presents and interprets an analysis of study participants' accounts that underscore the role of university and family institutions as the sources of barriers and support to women's entry into an academic career and the early years of their faculty career trajectories. The chapter's sections are structured as follows: firstly, a detailed description of the coding methodology used to uncover, code, and cluster early academic career development experiences will be provided. Next, matrices' display and brief descriptions of tables will be shown. Finally, a descriptive and analytic interpretation of data matrices for patterned and unique experiences across the interviewees' categories will be presented.

4.2 A coding Scheme for Early Academic Career Experiences

This section introduces the central coding methodology and sequential procedural steps employed to code common and rare elements and develop analytic interpretation clusters. Long and detailed interview scripts have been produced in response to a list of predefined, literature-driven questions about how women in this study joined their first academic job and what facilitated and thwarted their early years of university career advancement. The existing field of literature informed the

formation of interview questions about the influence of authority, colleagues, work conditions, professional development resources, and family needs on shaping women's academic career trajectories. During interviews, answering interview questions, all study participants spoke about experiencing the influence of institutional elements (e.g., persons, attitudes, actions, strategies, events, rules, conditions, and resources) that supported or inhibited women's early academic career development. Saldana's stage-based coding methodology has assisted in labelling, sorting, clustering, and patterning the lengthy written interview scripts into analysable themes, sub-themes, and pertinent categories. Firstly, paragraphs of interview data were indexed under the provisional themes (e.g., work offers/ entry to an academic career, boss, colleagues, professional resources, work-family needs, family support). Secondly, I developed two conceptual meta codes and titled them with interpersonal and institutional factors to place previously coded data paragraphs under the pertinent meta code. For example, narratives about workplace relations that refer to attitudes, perspectives, and actions of academic leadership and colleagues and their influence on women's early career development, are clustered under interpersonal factors. In addition, women's accounts of experiencing work and professional development opportunities, resources and workplace cultural practices regarding academic work and family care needs have been classified under institutional factors. A recurrent theme of family life's influence on the early career phase also emerged. There are two aspects of family life cited by the women in the study: firstly, family care needs, and secondly, family support for both career and care needs. The family influences are also placed/entered into the institutional factor heading.

A four-level response typology of 'positive, mixed, negative, and not mentioned' related to different elements of interpersonal and institutional factors was established conceptually after employing magnitude codes. Next, female professors are positioned in these four-point coding schemes. This clustering of cases is based on their accounts identifying how different elements of interpersonal and institutional factors influenced women's early career outcomes. For example, women in the sample with positive experiences only talked about interpersonal and

institutional elements' positive and enabling influence. In contrast, negative early career experiences resulted from detrimental and intruding impacts of interpersonal and institutional factors. In contrast, women with mixed experiences highlighted both the positive and negative influence of the interpersonal and institutional factors in shaping their early career experiences.

Next, table-13 is conceptually drawn to display and compare women's experiences regarding the influential elements (boss, colleagues, workplace conditions, and family role). The study participants are sited hierarchically from positive stories to those not mentioned, along with the number of cases for each cluster of experiences in column-A of table-13. The interviewees referred to a wide range of interrelated components to describe the influence of workplace relations, conditions and family life. All such interviewees' descriptions are slightly changed, summarised and coded in column-B. To develop clusters of responses, I first traced the common contents that united the descriptive codes and reassembled them into analytic themes. As a result, a specific number of pattered themes emerged by condensing and clustering the coded elements and are charted as subthemes in column-C. Finally, women professors are further categorised according to their selection for different combinations of influential elements (leadership, colleagues, resources, family role) and listed in column-D.

Table-13 Categories of Study Participants according to their Varied Experiences regarding the Influence of Interpersonal and Institutional Elements on the Early Years of their Academic Career

A	B	C	D
Variability of influence	**Components/ descriptive codes**	**Meta codes/Patterns/clusters of response**	**Study participants' categories**
Positive leadership N=15	Visionary leadership, professional mentors, encouraging, enabling, inspiring, and empowering leaders, professional role models, empathic leader, leader created professional &progressive environment, promote research culture, appreciation and recognition on academic initiatives, provided support guidance for family care requirements.	• Leaders are the source of guidance, inspiration and professional monitoring. • Leaders ensure to provide professionally progressive work conditions • Leaders recognise/reinforce abilities	• A category of ten women mentioned career guidance, and inspiration as the main ways of support received from academic leaders. • A set of five women specified career recognition and provision of professional work conditions as the main kinds of supportive leadership.
Mixed leadership experiences N=3	Benevolent & accessible boss, Motivational, empowering &encouraging leader, professionally insecure boss, Deceive and punitive leader Biased, discriminatory & manipulative leadership, Non-progressive leader, Misogynistic, leadership, underestimate women's values as equally competent professional, engaged in alternatives to counteract the negative role	• The same boss was positive and then harmful to the same person at different times. • Change of leadership during the initial phase instigated mixed experiences. • The same boss's personality was a mixture of both positive & negative elements	• One interviewee discussed experiencing negative situations due to the change in academic leadership. • Another woman experienced changes in the same boss's attitudes over time. • One woman mentioned being affected by the same academic leader's positive and negative behavioural elements. • Straggles/strategies to make through adverse conditions by leaders

Negative leadership N=4	Non-progressive leader discredit women's work, traditional leadership resisted changing, Unaccommodating leader and condemning attitudes toward family needs, Leaders refrained access to authority, resources and opportunities, delays in achieving PhD due to the negative role of PhD supervisors, monopolization of resources, and rules, discriminatory allocation of academic work & resources	• Unfair allocation of resources and academic work • lack of recognition & appreciation • Condemning attitudes towards family care needs • Engaged alternatives (either used agency or other sources of support) to counteract the negative role of leadership	• A subset of three interviewees linked their experiences of abstaining access to resources, lack of appreciation, and biased work distribution allocation to unfair and biased leaders. • Another woman mentioned all three patterned ways of negative leadership styles. • Struggles/strategies to make through unfavourable conditions by leaders
		Not mentioned (N=8)	
Positive collegiality N=17	Cordial, kind, and respectful colleagues, teamwork & helpful colleagues, professional recognition, appreciation, encouragement/motivation, and guidance	• Professional recognition &Interpersonal reinforcement. • Guidance &and feedback • Teamwork & academic networking • , pastoral care &mutual respect	• A set of nine women specified all patterned ways of support from colleagues. • A set of four women identified respect, recognition and appreciation as key ways of interpersonal support in the workplace • A set of three women identified career guidance and reinforcement as important ways of interpersonal support.
Mixed experiences N=4	Motherhood stigma, and gender stereotypes that undervalue women's competencies, patriarchal mindset, constrained access to leadership and administrative positions, male-dominated decision-making bodies, and power structures, gendered	• Cultural sexism/gendered ideology characterizes the interpersonal/ social interaction in the academic workplace. • Analysis of women's accounts unpacked practices of implicit discrimination	• A category of four cases is formed based on their accounts of mixed collegiality experiences. First, it presented stories of those women who did not directly and explicit ways of colleagues' involvement influenced early careers negatively.

	attitudes towards women's ability for administrative and leadership duties, conservative work environment, male hegemony, professionally jealous and insecure colleague,		Instead, they spoke about the prevalent patriarchal mindset and male-dominated power positions as the sources of gendered access to academic opportunities and gendered evaluation of women's values/skills as equally competent professionals. • They mentioned having workable and pleasant interpersonal interactions at the workplace without providing detailed accounts.
Negative experiences N=5	hypocrite &manipulative colleagues, hostile &bashing colleagues, lack of appreciation and recognition, Professionally jealous & insecure colleagues, professional rivals, toxic colleagues, devil colleagues, taxing work relations & organizational polarization, interpersonal confrontations & grievances, harassment, assassination & negative propaganda, departmental politics,	• Direct and explicit patterns of destructive interpersonal/social interaction contributed to shaping negative early career experiences. • Negative networking & harassment, blocked access to resources /facilitates, lack of recognition and appreciation, and undervaluing work abilities are commonly identified ways of negative workplace interaction. • A gendered/patriarchal mindset exists reflected through embedded and implicit routines of discrediting /undervaluing female staff.	• A set of five women presented stories that featured a number of interrelated ways their colleagues were involved in negatively affecting these women's early career outcomes. • A number of different devaluations being referred to as criticism, being ignored, marginalising from decision making, and not being given credit for the success
Not mentioned= 4			
Accessible facilities & development opportunities N=14	Support for academic initiatives, professional learning through administrative, research and teaching tasks, sustainable and expended national/ institutional contexts, ample research resources, and PhD/postdoc funded opportunity, comfortable &flexible work	• Access to professional development opportunities is fair and merit-based. • Positive work/family culture and flexible work norms • Opportunities for academic learning and professional grooming through teaching, research supervision and service work.	• All women appreciated the progressive/ professional environment in terms of having opportunities for PhD/postdoc scholarships, funded research, academic networking, and career growth.

	conditions, appreciation and recognition, fair, open and competitive access to research opportunities and academic resources, accessible academic guidance and professional mentoring, the opportunity of academic networking, work initiatives and international collaboration	• Progressive/professional workplace conditions include academic networking opportunities, a supportive environment for academic growth, and research work facilities. • Accessible academic guidance/supervision and professional mentoring	• Participants from this category linked smooth early career progress to supportive family/work culture. • They all believed that seniors' professional guidance is part of their workplace culture. • A set of nine women stated that learning and professional grooming through different kinds of academic work are key elements of a conducive work environment. • A set of six women identified fair and merit-based access to professional development resources as enabling work conditions.
Mixed experiences N=9	International academic networking chances, Lack of research resources, academic growth opportunities, lack of family support services, the culture of non-accommodative work allocation, funded research resources, absence of formal professional training opportunities, PhD scholarship, professional grooming and networking opportunities, lack of experts and supervisory facilities, lack of research culture, discipline disadvantages, and discriminatory allocation of resources, child-friendly work, environment, fair access, progressive & research-oriented workplace	• Mixed experiences presented stories of those women who experienced both positive & negative circumstances in terms of workplace conditions, opportunities and resources simultaneously • Have shifts in conditions from positive to negative or the other way around during the early years of a career.	• Two women cited a lack of research facilities despite having fair access • Another two participants experienced delays in gaining PhDs due to a lack of subject experts. However, after PhD, they got many networking opportunities and international travel for career growth. • Two participants faced an adverse change in work conditions and were pushed to leave for a better work environment. • Another set of three women has resources and appreciation for initiatives, though gendered mindsets and male-dominated structures were a hurdle to leadership roles. • Only one participant mentioned a culture of no training for the new

			faculty member, though she received informal support from seniors.
Constrained access experiences N=6	Absence of family care support & childcare facilities. Insufficient professional development resources and research opportunities Weak research infrastructures System deficiencies & administrative drawbacks Disadvantages in terms of having inadequate resources due to academic discipline Lack of professional & academic guidance & advocacy Lack of research supervision facilitates Obsolete research approach Lack of subject experts and supervisory facilities non-research-oriented work conditions The dominance of religious &political networks the unjust distribution of academic tasks	• Insufficient professional development resources and research opportunities • Lack of subject experts and supervisory facilities • non-research-oriented work conditions/nonconductive research culture • The dominance of political and religious lobbies • Absence of childcare facilities and lack of cultural support for family care needs • Outdated research infrastructure and backward academic work management	• One woman specified all patterned circumstances as the source of negative work experiences. • The second participant identified a lack of supervisory facility, scarce resources and non-research-oriented conditions. • The third woman cited weak infrastructure, nonprofessional work environment and lack of family support services. • The fourth woman mentioned nonprofessional conditions and condemning cultural attitudes towards family care needs. • The last woman highlighted a lack of resources and a non-research-oriented approach
Not mentioned=1			

Positive family role N=22	Husband's share in child care, the family supported in child care beside living away, living in the joint family was a source of child care support, mother came /stayed to share childcare, maid for child care, support for career decisions, family role in shaping academically valuable skills, husband's academic career background was a source of support for early-career matters.	• Living in a joint family system & support for childcare alongside the support of domestic servants • Husbands as academics provided professional support and career guidance • Family members, particularly mothers of either side, came to stay with the couple for child care or children were left to stay with grandparents when women were away for career responsibilities. • Influence of family training in shaping valuable skills • Family's support for career-related matters	• A set of ten study participants cited family members' support besides living away alongside the husband's contribution to sharing child care. • A set of five women explicitly highlighted support in child care received from living in the joint family system. • Another set of three women specified their husbands' contribution to forming positive career experiences due to their academic background. • A set of four women reorganized the family's positive influence in the form of their support for these women's career demands and decisions • In addition to the family's role in sharing child care needs, women also identified different kinds of support for their careers in terms of appreciation, career guidance, and career skills linked to family socialization.
Mixed experiences N-7	Mother's support in child care, mother-in-law emotional support, husband opposed career, pressures of dependent age children, career breaks due to chronic health issue of the daughter, dependent childcare, delayed PhD, not avail international travelling, pressures of joint family, husband support in PhD, work/family conflict. Have career losses in terms of being unable to	• Combination of both positive and negative elements to instigate mixed experiences regarding the family role for early career outcomes	• A set of four women collectively admitted to having family support to share their child care. However, they faced delays in their career tasks, especially in gaining PhD due to the care needs of dependent child issues. • One woman has special child career needs led to career breaks. • The husband's attitude curtailed another woman. • Non-cooperation of in-laws created work/family conflict, and career loses

	avail international travelling due to the controlling role of in-laws.		
Negative family influence N=1			• Only one woman cited multiple negative experiences resulting from pressures of joint family responsibilities, lack of family support for childcare and discrediting/devaluing attitude towards professional career responsibilities
Not mentioned=0			

4.3 University Leaders and Study Participants' Early Academic Career

Analysis of study participants' accounts identifies that academic leadership (e.g. departmental head/chair, research supervisors, professional mentors, senior colleagues, and higher-level authorities beyond the immediate bosses) has significantly affected their university career's early years. Such career narratives have been coded and categorised as one of the influential elements of interpersonal workplace relations for women's academic career achievements (coding strategy and process explained above). Views on the implications of leaders' contribution ranged from enabling through mixed to manipulative/discriminatory leadership. A significant majority of successful women in this study (22/30) talked about different ways in which academic leaders contributed to their initial career years. Among this single big category of twenty-two interviewees who cited multiple kinds of supportive or constraining leadership, fifteen participants underscored different interrelated ways in which they routinely experienced supportive leadership. Another set of three participants was grouped as a mixed category based on their accounts- identifying a combination of positive and negative elements of leadership. At the same time, four women were classed as a category of the negative influence of leaders after combining and clustering their accounts presented the only negative role of academic leaders. Eight participants did not discuss the influence of academic leadership on their early career years. In brief, academic leadership- one of the two aspects of workplace interpersonal factors, has been cited as a central source of positive and mixed experiences (in most cases: n=18), with a small minority of four women who did not experience positive leadership early in their career

4.3.1 Supportive role of academic leaders

In describing academic work experiences during the early years of a university career, fifteen study participants stated to experience conducive and overall enabling work conditions. They have mainly spoken about the inclusive, healthy, flexible, and progressive departmental culture pivotal in their initial professional growth. In addition, these interviewees referred to university leadership as the leading source of creating empowering and progressive work contexts and supportive interpersonal professional relationships.

Points of similarity and variation exist in these fifteen study participants' notions which they used to describe the various kinds of the positive contribution of academic leaders (teachers, supervisors, heads of departments, senior administrative leaders) to the early years of their university career. Three patterns of responses were sub-themed to explain the implications of inter-related ways in which they routinely experienced supportive leadership (listed in column-C of table-13). These are as follows:

1. Leaders are the source of guidance, inspiration, and professional mentoring
2. Leaders provide progressive work conditions
3. Leaders recognise and reinforce women's academic abilities and professional contributions.

The further categorisation was done based on these women's selection of different combinations of supportive leadership styles (charted in column-D of table-13). For instance, ten women mentioned guidance, advice and career inspiration as key forms of support received from academic leaders. Among these ten women, Fatima believed that her university teachers, who later became her colleagues, have enormously influenced her artistic skills, academic specialisation and teaching style. In her own words:

> Look! I believe the defining persons are my teachers, who have greatly inspired me. Through my journey from Arts College to joining academia, they had inspired and guided me to develop interests and specialisation in 'Arts Theory'. Due to my specialisation in 'Arts Theory' (the first one in Pakistan Arts' academia), I did not face any challenges and tough competition from entry into university career to progression to professorship.

All these ten participants also connected the start of their academic career to the motivation, advice, information, and work offers they received from their academic networks, including teachers or research supervisors and heads of departments during or after completing their university degree. For example, they stated that they were being offered to join the same higher education institutions where they achieved or were studying towards their higher education degrees (MA, MPhil & PhD). In addition, these women received an offer to temporarily join the department from their supervisors or academic mentors during higher qualifications because of

their exceptional academic records and performance. For instance, Faiza linked her decision to join a university job to career inspiration and guidance received from her research supervisor:

> For positive experiences, I will quote my supervisor, who made me do a PhD and brought me into teaching. Although I was always a position holder, you always need guidance and inspiration. He brought me here. I liked him because he was too upright, and I learned uprightness from him. The second thing I learned from him was that he never complained about anyone or anything. It was a source of inspiration for me, and I learned positivity and work ethics from him.

Similarly, Tabinda, Yasmeen, Shabnum, and Momina identified their senior colleagues' advice and guidance in exploring and selecting PhD and academic career opportunities as the central element in their effective academic decisions and successful early career outcomes. Yasmeen, Tahir and Shabnum added further that they were slightly confused and less informed about the correct route to seek PhD options after starting a university career on a temporary contract basis. However, on their research supervisors' advice and guidance, they selected the PhD path that eventually helped them get a permanent faculty position. According to Momina, her university teacher did not only guide and motivate her for a PhD but also helped her in convincing Momina's father to permit her for a university career:

> I think so; a positive would be the mentoring of my teacher. He guided me to be here at the university. Obviously, that was the turning moment of my life to get an opportunity for my dream goal of a PhD. Even he wrote a letter to my father to allow me to come to university and let me complete the PhD. If my supervisor would not convince my father, I might not be the person what I am today.

Momina was determined to join a university career to pursue her aspiration to enrol for a PhD qualification. On the other hand, Shazia had an established non-academic career in the government sector after completing her PhD. She joined the academia at her PhD supervisor's consistent work offer. Shazia admired the contribution of her academic mentor to her academic career formation in the following words:

> Look, there were many turning points in my life where I received help and support. If my supervisor did not insist on me, I do not know where I would be. Overall, my teacher's role was always very significant in my studies and career formation. They had contributed more to my life than I had. Dr Zakir,

> my PhD supervisor who was VC, offered me to come and join him at CD University. This job offer has transformed my career life totally. Nevertheless, I am happy and satisfied that I accepted his advice as my current academic success is linked to this advice.

In addition, a subset of three participants cited the positive involvement of immediate bosses in guiding them to overcome challenges and difficulties related to their personal and professional lives. For example, Nadia believed the support she received from departmental leaders played an integral role in offsetting challenges and barriers related to her disadvantageous background and her status as the first female academic in the department. She linked her professional grooming to the visionary and supportive senior academics of her department in the following words:

> I was the first female academic who was appointed. It was especially challenging for females like me, coming from a small town, to adjust to the professional environment of a big city. To be honest, I also felt a little unconfident or a gap compared to urban students, you know, as in small cities, we could not get opportunities to groom our personalities. However, I had overcome all my drawbacks. For this, I must say the department did play an indispensable role in my professional and personal development. Secondly, it also depends on who is heading the show. In my case, senior academicians and the head of the department were visionary in implementing the genuine concept of empowerment so that you could see a female like me transformed into an active and empowered academician.

In the same way, Ruqia applauded the role of a senior colleague and teacher as a central source of support for her career journey in multiple ways:

> I always believe that you have options. You can find somebody who is pseudo to follow. I think some people in life were there when. I think if they were not there, I would not have been the same person. Like one of them is Dr N, whom I always credit for many contributions. When my father died, she supported me when I had a PhD crisis; she supported me. So, these are the people whom Allah (God) sent for you in your life.

Whereas Sarwat had a child with health care needs, she believed she could only manage her daughter's illness and job because of her head of department's support and guidance. Further, Sarwat's boss had provided her with an opportunity to join as part-time faculty instead of quitting her job during the initial phase of her university employment, significantly contributing to her career continuation.

The other five women specified their leaders' contribution to offering career recognition, appreciation, progressive, and research-led academic environments. Such working conditions have allowed faculty members to access opportunities and resources that helped them realise their professional values and achieve career goals. For example, Noureen believed that being trusted by her seniors to engage in multiple academic performances contributed significantly to building her professional skills:

> I get full support from the university's higher authorities. Shoulder to shoulder with higher authorities, I worked in various capacities and actively contributed to university excellence. I never experienced being discriminated against in accessing chances of work and opportunities for professional development. They (university leaders) honoured me and acknowledged my services. They kept giving me incentives or inspiration, and I kept working.

Noureen's description linked the prevalence of professionally progressive and fair work conditions to the academic leader who did not only provide fair access to workplace resources and opportunities but appreciated Noureen's academic abilities and performance. Similarly, Farkhinda and Reema are examples of women in the study who received progressive work opportunities and professional recognition from seniors. Both women were given multiple academic tasks and administrative duties because seniors recognised their academic and administrative skills built up through the joint influence of their academic performance and professional reinforcement. In addition, Reema linked her early career achievements to university leaders who supported and appreciated her initiatives to establish a new academic department. Rub, another woman with positive experiences regarding the leader's influence appreciated and augmented her Vice Chancellor's research vision. His efforts in structuring and promoting research activities/culture offered professional growth opportunities for many people and led to the university being ranked number one nationally. The role of leaders as the source of professional learning, recognising abilities, reinforcing academic performance, and promoting fair, professional, and research-oriented work conditions were also recognised by Nasima, another interviewee. She called her department a model workplace. For this, Nasima credited her seniors and chair of the department in the following words:

> Our department's environment is notably better compared to other departments as the seniors of this department were always very helpful and cooperative. They never look down upon their juniors. The head does not want anyone to be superior to him/ her. In contrast, my PhD supervisor and head of the department, Dr SH, was a backbone to establishing an apolitical work culture. She guided us in many ways. Especially I appreciated her teaching, research, administrative and leadership skills that later facilitated me in similar roles. Dr SH provided us with an environment where we only came to work and make our careers more sustainable.

Academic leaders, either in the departmental heads/ chairs, senior academic colleagues or study supervisors, were acknowledged as a vital source of professional inspiration, motivation, and career guidance. This first category of fifteen women reported that the overall culture and work environment was progressive and professionally inclusive. As a result, faculty members can access opportunities and resources to realise their professional values and goals of career advancement. These women credited their academic leaders with making this possible. Together, women from the first category specified that their leaders' empathetic approach and personal engagement significantly facilitated them in overcoming difficulties and taking reasonable and timely career decisions that led to their successful academic positions. In summary, academic leaders' enabling role for teaching, research and career planning contributed to shaping these women's smooth early-career achievements. These findings are consistent with existing academic literature that advocates positive links between faculty members' ability to overcome professional challenges/barriers, career growth and having social capital in the form of enabling and supportive workplace leadership and academic mentors (Leslie, Lingard and Whyte, 2005; Files et al., 2008; Bland et al., 2009; Fountain and Newcomer, 2016; Webber, 2017).

4.3.2 Mixed leadership experiences

Three women cited mixed experiences regarding the role of academic leadership (column A of table-13). Three ways of mixed influences of leaders were reported:

1. The same boss was positive and then harmful to the same person at different times,
2. Change of leadership during the initial phase caused mixed experiences,

3. The same boss's personality was a mixture of positive and negative elements (listed in column-C).

These three women shared experiences with the first group of women about the positive role of academic leaders. Like the first category of fifteen respondents, these three women have also identified similar features of supportive leaders that guide, reinforce and provide professionally progressive conditions (listed in column-B of table-13). On the other side, 1) discriminatory allocation of academic work, 2) restricting women's access to resources, and 3) discrediting attitudes towards female academics' abilities and family needs were identified as negative elements of leaders' contribution to these women's early years of an academic career (also listed in column-B). Two women have also linked their heads of departments' discriminatory and punitive attitudes to professional rivalry.

Sameen, one of three women with accounts of mixed experiences regarding the role of academic leaders, discussed experiencing a change in circumstances from professionally progressive to a hostile work environment due to the change of academic leadership during the early years of her university career. Analysis of Sameen's account revealed her head of department's role as a key/ central enabler in providing career guidance, training, and monitoring during her first academic job. Furthermore, she connected her current professional achievements to having an inspiring boss who not only played a significant role in shaping her abilities to succeed but inspired Sameen in her leadership role later in her career:

> It was because of having a perfect head of the department, a very supportive head of the department. He was very open, very benevolent, and had a real sense of mentor. You know, he shifted me from literature to linguistics and guided me to see the importance of ELT and linguistics in the Pakistani academic context. He supported our aspirations. So I think Riaz Hassan, Riaz Hassan's accessibility, open-door policy, and benevolent attitudes toward younger faculty that I want to have. And I try my best to employ all these inspiring qualities in my leadership role.

Before going for a PhD, Sameen's early years in her academic career were facilitated enormously by her immediate boss, who guided Sameen in making well-informed decisions related to her academic specialisation. After that, however, Sameen experienced a change from a positive to a hostile work environment due to the

change in academic leadership (she joined a different university after completing her PhD). In the new workplace, she faced bigoted attitudes and discriminatory practices from her boss due to his professional incompetence and insecurity. Furthermore, according to Sameen, she was deprived of fair allocation of academic facilities and financial benefits associated with different academic tasks:

> It was done on purpose as I was given the first class in the morning and the last class in the afternoon. You know, my boss did not give me a proper office and forced me to sit in the administrative zone, though I was the first faculty member to join the department with a PhD from a foreign university. Another damage to my career was when two top-ranked universities tried to contact me through the department for academic collaboration and work opportunities. However, he did not pass the information to me. Then they contacted the Dean of the faculty to approach me.

Finally, in response to her boss's systematic and purposeful discriminatory practices, Sameen decided to leave the university to find a better workplace environment. As a second woman with mixed leadership experiences, Zara faced changes in the same boss's attitudes over the early years of her academic career. She initially had a positive work environment and was supported by her leadership.

> With tremendous support and encouragement from the department head, we, as a team, developed a distinctive research culture at DCU University. We have initiated multiple academic projects. One of them is to start a journal, the Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology. Even the VC used to be very supportive and appreciated our all efforts.

She commented further that these practices of supportive leadership, teamwork, flourishing work culture, and research collaboration have ended once the behaviour of the leadership transformed into a retributive attitude. As a result, Zara experienced a toxic work environment in terms of unfriendliness, leaves not being approved, and calls for explanation over minor things. Like Sameen, Zara also believed to experience the negative role of her head of department in restraining her access to avail professional development resources and workplace facilities due to her boss's professional insecurities. She told:

> I thought my multitasking, research initiatives, academic networking, and projects made my boss extremely insecure, even in junior positions. The first time, I was exposed to my boss's retributive attitude when I was offered a big consultancy from US-Aid. It was a highly paid opportunity. After a few days,

> I received a letter that my chairperson had not approved my application to avail the consultancy opportunity.

However, Zara's situation received support from higher authorities to overcome the barriers placed by her immediate boss. She talked to VC, and he has permitted Zara for this consultancy by using his special powers. It shows that if one leader blocked Zara's professional growth, the other leader was positive and enabled her to overcome the blockage. Earlier, Zara and Sameen reported experiencing their bosses directly involved in creating punitive work conditions, which hindered these women's access to career development resources. However, the third interviewee, Mirza, mentioned that during the early years of her university career, she routinely encountered a misogynistic leadership style that generally underestimated and discredited women academics' presence and performance. She stated:

> Deans, vice-chancellors, and senior academic colleagues mainly were men, leading to the mindset that women were not competent enough. A new VC had joined my university, and he did not know anyone. During a meeting, if I raised my hand and simultaneously a male colleague did as well, he always picked the male colleague over me. I felt as if my opinion had no weight. After several interactions, he realised that my opinions did make sense. His initial perception was that women are all chatter and noise and know nothing. However, I provided evidence, logic and proof that my opinions were sound.

The above descriptions by three interviewees differentiated between explicit and implicit negative roles played by academic leaders. In contrast to Zara and Sameen, who were directly targeted due to professional rivalries, Mirza claimed to be overlooked due to male hegemony and misogynistic mindset resulting from the male-centred academic workplace. Zara and Sameen chose to leave their workplaces to join other universities due to taxing and deceptive leadership and delays in promotions despite their consistently excellent career performance. In contrast, Zara constantly struggled to register her professional competencies and eventually, she began to receive acceptance and recognition for her professional endeavours within the same workplace. There is an important analytical consideration – how success can be explained if an interviewee (s) did not experience positive leadership or experienced an adverse change in a leader's role? If leadership was against them, the analysis of those women's accounts revealed alternative sources of support to

explain how they have come out of these disparaging situations or counteracted the negative leadership role through their agency.

4.3.3 Negative leadership

The first category of fifteen interviewees highlighted the role of leaders in providing work conditions of professional growth and offering career guidance and professional recognition/reinforcement. In contrast, four women were grouped in this third category based on their accounts presented a wide range of interrelated negative elements of leaders' roles during the early years of their academic careers. All these concepts/notions are coded, slightly changed/summarised and listed in column-B. Four patterns have emerged by clustering women's accounts with similar content regarding the negative role of their leaders. After reassembling several interrelated elements coded from these women's narratives, a set of three patterns were identified as the primary forms of negative leadership biographies. All four women also spoke of their responses as a strategy for dealing with undesirable conditions thrown on them by their leaders). They are listed in column-C and given as follows:

1. Unfair allocation of resources/restricting access to resources and lack of recognition and appreciation
2. Discrediting attitudes towards female academics' abilities and inflexible attitudes towards family care needs
3. Discriminatory allocation of academic work
4. Embrace different agentic strategies to counteract the negative role of leadership

These four women described different ways of negative leadership to explain their early career experiences. Three interviewees identified non-access to resources, lack of appreciation and biased allocation of work distribution. The remaining interviewee mentioned all three negative leadership styles (listed in column-D). In all these four cases, the interviewees also spoke of individual ways of struggling through unfavourable circumstances created by their leaders.

Most of the study participants (combined positive and mixed- more than half of the sample=18) reported experiencing their bosses' enabling role in providing a

professionally progressive work environment that facilitated their access to resources and facilities. However, a small section of the participants (4) claimed that their boss's authority over resources and decisions regarding allocating academic work and opportunities has resulted in an unfair allocation of resources and work tasks. For example, two study participants with accounts of negative leadership biographies identified departmental heads' explicit and direct role in constraining these women's access to available professional development resources during their early career phase. Neelam claimed that her head of department's misuse of authority and resources constrained the faculty's access to professional development opportunities and facilities. According to Neelam:

> As an autonomous department, we have the budget to facilitate the faculty to attend international conferences, but this happened never. Resources were there. HOD himself did not go for such things and did not like others. The main hurdle was the head of the department. He misused the departmental resources; for instance, he did not give teaching tasks to permanent faculty members, appointed visiting faculty, and spent all the funds there.

She added further to face professional discredits, losses and unfair allocation of resources and responsibilities due to her boss's prejudicial treatment:

> I proposed to start a Master's degree in industrial organisational psychology at our university. The director accepted my proposal and told me to develop the courses. When 99% of the work was done, my director gave the project to another lady who was the Boss' favourite. She was promoted against me without merit. That project is now known by her name, and I was not given any credit.

Naeema is the second woman with negative leadership experiences. Naeema was the most qualified faculty member in her case, yet she was denied a leadership position. The university's vice-chancellor chose a male colleague for the lead role instead. In contrast to Neelam, Naeema did not remain silent and spoke to her VC about this biased allocation of work responsibilities. The above illustrations showed that Naeema and Neelam were excluded from receiving recognition and fair access to work chances despite having skills due to their bosses' favouritism. In both cases, academic leaders manipulated their administrative authority to control resources and decisions to marginalise and disadvantage these women compared to other colleagues. The main difference is that Neelam was not given credit for her academic

contribution due to her boss's grudges and preference for other female colleagues. Whereas Naeema believed the VC denied her right to authority position due to politically connected male networks who prefer to support other male colleagues, as she said, ''the system has opportunities, but this was still a male clubhouse. VC preferred to give headship to another colleague because he was male, and I was female''. Naeema and Neelam talked about the lack of appreciation and recognition for their academic skills and work performance. They faced career setbacks due to deceptive leaders who discredited and undervalued their academic performance. However, both women believed their excellent academic profiles like- high-impact research publications, achieving a PhD in the early years of their university career, and different academic initiatives at the departmental level enabled them to overcome all odds. Moreover, they did not let biased leadership constrain them further for a longer time. As a result, these women were swiftly promoted and became leaders in their university careers' early to middle years.

Mehak, another participant with tremendously negative experiences regarding the influence of departmental leadership, faced restrictions from her head of department on instigating academic initiatives at the departmental level during the early phase of her university career. Compared to Neelam, who linked his boss's restrictive attitudes to his non-progressive personality, Mehak felt that professional rivalries and departmental politics were the reasons behind her boss's discriminatory treatment. She stated:

> In my initial career years, I was the victim of manipulative and biased treatment by my boss. My selection for a university career was finalised by another senior colleague who was a big rival of the departmental head. So political clashes between senior colleagues had caused damage to my career.

Adding further, she shared, ''an atmosphere of fear and [the] chair of the department's toxic scrutiny did not allow me to achieve my research and publishing career ambitions despite my determination''. During the early phase of her university career, authoritative leadership appeared to curb Mehak's motivation to work on career growth targets. However, after changing departmental leadership and Mehak's efforts to network with like-minded colleagues, she established her professional and research profile (discussed in the next theme of collegiality).

Nazia did not just experience restricted access to resources, discriminatory allocation of work, and lack of appreciation; she also faced an inflexible attitude of her leadership towards her family care needs. Analysis of Nazia's narratives revealed that she was a unique case as being the victim of experiencing multiple kinds of direct and explicit exploitative and biased treatment by the head of the department and other senior colleagues. According to Nazia, she experienced multiple disadvantages as a woman in the junior faculty position. She recounted her PhD supervisor's deliberate discouragement and linked his supervisor's discrediting attitude to his gendered mindset that did not accept women's progress on equal footings:

> When I commenced my PhD, I wrote a paper, and I rewrote it ten times to make it better, following corrections suggested by my HoD. I gave my draft to the HoD, sitting with other male colleagues. He threw it on my face and said, "pick it up. You want us to give you a PhD degree so you can compete with us and sit with us at the same level?" I half-heartedly picked my draft and came out of the office patiently.

The prevalence of non-appreciative work culture in which Nazia was rarely appreciated for her contribution to various academic services. Further, sharing about the early years of her university career, Nazia reported being given excessive work without any recognition and appreciation:

> I organised multiple academic tasks routinely, and senior male members took credit for them. I was overburdened with work. Senior colleagues would send a message telling me to take a class on their behalf. I also organised six international conferences for my boss, who took the credit for these conferences. All the appreciation went to him.

Nazia also highlighted her HoD's condemning and non-accommodative response to her childcare needs. She said:

> I had never been supported for my childcare responsibilities. If there was an emergency ever, my boss never accommodated me. I was not entitled to more than ten days of maternity leave. When my baby was ten days old, I could not avail my maternity leave and was asked to perform my duties. I was also ordered to reach the department for my subject examination despite heavy rain and blockage of all roads due to flooding.

Nazia believed her status as the first and only female faculty member was the reason behind the discriminatory role of leadership caused career losses such as being

delayed in PhD and research achievements. However, given such hostile work conditions, she suggested her passion for having a career in academia contributed to building her stamina to fight her way through it all penitently and saliently. The above description by the third category of four women shows that in each case where leaders blocked an interviewee, they had alternative sources of support that enabled them to overcome the blockage.

In this study, the initial phase of academic women's careers was hugely shaped by work conditions and workplace relations established by university leadership, especially by chairs of their departments. Fifteen women (with positive experiences) and two women (with mixed experiences) gave credit to their academic leaders whose reassuring leadership contributed to enriching and smooth early career growth. Conversely, a small number of the study participants (four with negative experiences) and (two with mixed experiences) identified the explicitly negative role of their academic leaders. It shows that most interviewees reported experiencing a significantly positive role of academic leaders in providing a learning culture and empowering workplace relations that encourage them to reach the best level of their career performance. In contrast, a small minority of women have antagonistic relations with leaders who acted to discredit these women's professional identity, growth, and contribution. Nevertheless, this small minority of participants succeeded despite the lack of enabling role of leadership or had negative experiences with leaders. In all these cases, the interviewees highlighted alternative courses of action (either their agency or other sources of support) that helped these women counteract intimidating relations with academic leaders and enabled them to succeed.

4.4 Influence of Relations with Colleagues on Study Participants' Early Career Years

Along with a perceptible role of departmental leadership in shaping the early years of a university career, study participants' accounts identified various ways in which colleagues positively or negatively influenced their career journeys. Views on the contribution of workplace social interaction (collegiality) to shaping the early years of an academic career ranged from positive experiences to not being mentioned.

Again, most respondents (26/30) talked about how colleagues positively or negatively influenced their initial career years. More than half (seventeen) of the interviewees routinely experienced the positive role of co-workers. Four women had mixed accounts regarding the influence of their relationship with colleagues, and five women had negative experiences. Four women did not mention the influence of their colleagues on their careers (listed in column-A of table-13 above).

4.4.1 Positive collegiality

Across the sample, women reported positive experiences arising from social workplace interaction. More than half of the interviewees (17/30) underscored various interrelated ways in which they routinely experienced the supportive role of colleagues. While recalling the initial years of their academic career during the interview, women with accounts of workplace enablers often mentioned collegiality and positive engagement in a professional relationship as significant ingredients in their smooth academic career growth. All such elements describing- positive collegiality are slightly summarized and placed in column B of table-13). After combining coded collegiality elements that have common/shared meanings, a set of four clusters of responses were charted in column-C. Four types of colleagues' enabling contributions are 1) source of professional recognition and interpersonal reinforcement; 2) providing guidance & feedback; 3) indulging teamwork & academic networking, and 4) offering pastoral care & mutual respect.

In addition, women with positive collegiality accounts were categorised based on their choices for different combinations of positive workplace interaction with colleagues and listed in column-D:

1. Nine women specified all patterned ways of support from colleagues.
2. Four women identified respect, recognition and appreciation as influencing ways of interpersonal support in the workplace
3. Three women identified career guidance and reinforcement as contributing ways of interpersonal support.

Study participants in the first subcategory used different notions to explain how workplace relations with co-works positively influenced the early years of their academic careers. For example, these women highlighted departmental teamwork

culture that has offered/ provided the opportunity to receive recognition, feedback, and reinforcement for their academic performance; this teamwork was also a vital source for accomplishing professional and institutional tasks. Nasima, as one of these nine study participants with positive collegiality experiences, specified that her colleagues were not only the source of multiple positive influences on her career, but as a team, they contributed to individual faculty members' growth and departmental development:

> Colleagues that expressed support, recognised and gave appropriate feedback have played a crucial role in my professional development. The credit also goes to our department head, who inculcated values of respect and professional coordination and maintained empowering culture. Not only that, but positive networking also played a significant part. We shared, discussed, and provided constructive feedback. As a team, we collaborated with foreign agencies, contributing to our individual growth and benefiting our institution.

Earlier, Nasima enormously praised her head of department for her multiple positive influences. She again linked professionally constructive workplace interaction with colleagues to her boss's role in maintaining a professionally positive workplace environment. In contrast to Nasima, Mehak, another woman from this subcategory, had faced non-professional circumstances for her academic career growth due to her boss's restricting and discriminatory leadership style. However, after her boss's retirement, she developed professionally empowering networking with her colleagues that contributed to her individual growth and institutional strength:

> You know I found a better environment after my boss's retirement. I initiated the lunch of a journal, built a team of like-minded colleagues, and collectively started multiple research projects. I started the Journal of Media Study published online for the past 7-8 years. I got to know about the snowball effect. I encouraged the whole faculty to join me in this initiative; I was very fortunate that Dr A was always with me. She encouraged me, "Write! Write.". Now there is an excellent team that initiates multiple academic projects. We also liaise with other universities – nationally and internationally. I am happy that I have made my department a better and professionally conducive workplace with long-term and widespread positive influence.

Neelam appreciated her colleagues' reinforcement in shaping her strength and motivation to overcome hurdles created by the departmental head. Mehak and Neelam are examples of situations where an argumentative boss is counteracted by

having helpful colleagues. It suggested that lacking one typical driver/enabling element of success (having supportive leadership) can be overcome by other means such as assenting workplace relations with colleagues.

Fatima, Naveeda, Jabeen, and Sarwat linked their professional maturity and career achievements to working with colleagues on different departmental tasks. They believed that teamwork practices have become a source of improving their problem-solving skills and linked them to career development resources. Sarwat shared, ''facing insufficient research facilitates internally, we colleagues work as a team to find research funds and collaborate with external resources''. On the other hand, Fatima and Jabeen connected their academic networking initiatives to their teamwork efforts that have positively shaped their career growth and built up the department's professional credibility and reputation in different national and international forums. Rub, another woman provided detailed accounts, describing a range of interrelated elements of supportive and professionally enabling workplace interaction with colleagues. According to her,

> We have a friendly environment and promising culture of appreciation here. Especially our faculty members were so helpful as we worked in collaboration. We, as a team, helped and reinforced each other. We arranged multiple academic activities like conferences. I must say that every person helped in the arrangements as we have efficient teamwork. So, yes, through our teamwork, we had completed a long list of academic tasks.

What is said by Rub was a shared narrative among this subset of nine women with accounts of supportive collegiality. In addition to mutual respect, teamwork, positive academic networking, and interpersonal reinforcement as significant kinds of enabling workplace relations, professional support and career guidance were mentioned by the second subcategory of three women as a vital source of their professional satisfaction, commitment toward academic responsibilities, productivity and professional accomplishments during early years of their university jobs. Sameen stated that having monitoring and professional support from colleagues who shared similar scholarly interests and values was the leading factor behind her early career growth outcomes:

> And then I have a very cooperative colleague. He was a male, and it was not a bedrock to access at all. He was a comrade, and we read the same books. He was a few years senior to me; he also taught me a lot, providing feedback on my course outline very positively while we were having a cup of tea, even to the extent that he taught me how to type quickly. He was a very benevolent and jovial colleague who had a good sense of humour and pushed you to do your best as he guided me in my academic specialisation. Having him made the early years of my career incredible. Moreover, I credit my colleague's monitoring for my current success.

Apart from charting a wide range of interrelated ways of colleague's involvement in positively shaping Sameen's initial phase of her university career, the description also revealed a unique feature of their relationship. As Sameen mentioned, their gender was not a hurdle to developing professionally enabling and emotionally enriching communication. Sameen's attempt to identify and emphasise a trivial link between gender and collegiality can be understood in the surrounded cultural values and gender-segregated structures that traditionally discourage open, frank and equally reciprocal interaction between men and women. Similarly, Ruqia recalled the early years of her university career when her senior colleagues' sincere advice and guidance cleared her confusion about the procedures and motivated her to take up a PhD scholarship opportunity. Naveeda told while sharing about her colleagues' contribution to supporting her in managing early career challenges related to workplace adjustment. She recalled guidance and encouragement from experienced senior colleagues for teaching methodologies when she started her university career at the very young age of 21 without having formal training systems for teaching and other professional tasks:

> Sir. Sartaj ! was so kind to me and always showed his confidence in my ability to do; even I was permitted to sit in his class to get some experience and exposure to teaching young adults at the university level.

Third subcategory of four women particularly connected positive experiences during the early years of their academic career to appreciation, recognition and respect received from colleagues. For example, Noureen was the first female academician to start her career at an engineering university. During the interview, she narrated various personal efforts to become visible in a substantially male-

dominated university. In addition, she claimed to have respectful colleagues who recognised and honoured her contribution:

> They call me Iron Lady. I do not know what happened; one of my colleagues stood and said, "Madam…I feel like I must give you a standing ovation and salute you." I thought that finally, the day had come. I am getting the fruit of the hard work I did in my life. I think it was a great honour for me, and I own those words. My male colleagues always appreciated, honoured and recognised me. I do not think something is worth more than these words and respect.

In contrast to Sameen, who believed that gender identity did not counteract the formation of positive interaction between male and female colleagues, Noureen felt honoured to receive appreciation and reinforcement from male colleagues who were stereotyped to show less appreciation for females' contributions and skills. Three participants, Amber, Ghazal, and Saba specified similar experiences of having respectful interactions with male colleagues. As the first and only females in their respective departments at recruitment, these women believed themselves privileged to have kind, mutually respectful, and cordial relations with male colleagues. All three women emphasised Pakistani culture's traditions of respecting women as a core foundation for forming respectful workplace relations despite starting their careers in male-dominated contexts. For instance, Umbreen attributed a kind and respectful work environment for women to the traditional culture of female respect in Pakistani society:

> We have a tradition of respecting women. We, as women, have an advantage about it. Our value of respecting women advantaged us (women) in their professional lives too.

Several studies cited positive organisational interaction as a vital source of professional satisfaction and career growth (O'Meara And Stromquist, 2015; Harman and Sealy, 2017). Similarly, women in this study connected their experiences of interpersonal reinforcement and positive collegiality to their professional satisfaction and commitment, which led to their productivity and career achievements during the early years of their academic careers. In conclusion, this first category of seventeen study interviewees described positive social interaction with colleagues at a departmental level as a source of support, constructive feedback and strengthening

a sense of connectivity, teamwork, and collective strategies for personal and organisational growth.

4.4.2 Mixed experiences

The first category of seventeen interviewees cited various interrelated positive ways their colleagues influenced their early academic career years. Compared to them, a set of four women, while discussing barriers and support systems faced in the initial years of a university career, presented stories of mixed experiences with colleagues. This second category of four cases is formed based on their accounts- presenting stories in which these women did not face direct and explicit ways of colleagues' involvement to influence their early years of university careers negatively. Instead, analysis of these women's accounts unpacked practices of implicit discrimination as they spoke about elements revealing cultural sexism, gender stereotypes and male hegemony (charted in column-B of table-13). Furthermore, they referred to the patriarchal mindset, and male-dominated power structures functioned as the sources of female faculty's constrained access to academic opportunities and discriminatory evaluation of women's capacities as equally competent professionals. On the other hand, they mentioned having generally workable and pleasant interpersonal interactions without providing detailed accounts. Two kinds of responses emerged after assembling coded elements. These are 1) the presence of supportive and obstructive colleagues and 2) a gendered mindset generally existing that is reflected and operated through social interaction and routines of implicitly undervaluing female staff (listed in column-C).

Previously, women with positive collegiality accounts believed that male-dominated workplaces did not negatively affect the early phase of their careers. Further, they claimed to have been privileged to have respect, care, and support from their male colleagues as the only female faculty members at the start of their academic careers. In contrast to these specified benefits of male-dominated workplaces, Naeema pointed out that male-dominated organisational structures and institutional arrangements were mainly responsible for creating different hurdles and career losses for female academics. She believed a culture of implicit

discrimination because of male control of both informal networks and official committees restricted women from getting access to career opportunities:

> Though there was no blatant discrimination as equal pay and equal facilities, there was implicit discrimination. For example, the system has opportunities, but there is still a male clubhouse. Males share information because they sit together and chit-chat around a cup of tea in the evenings. However, females were not privy to how many posts would be announced on upcoming selection boards. More importantly, females were not visible in our era's finance and planning committees, development committees, or administrative committees. Women did not hold administrative posts even. So, this was a difficult time for our generation of professional women.

The above narrative shows that Naeema presented a three-level phenomenon- a. implicit discrimination, b. based on male power and networks, and c. having the effect of restricting women's access to opportunities. In other words, she linked career disadvantages to male-centred university structures and the lack of presence of academic women in authority and decision-making positions. In addition to Naeema, who linked career disadvantages to the dominance of male colleagues in authority and leadership roles, Reema, Shazia, and Mirza mentioned male colleagues' stereotypical attitudes towards women's ability for administrative and leadership duties and the culture of discrediting women's competencies as sources of women's restricted access to leadership positions. Both Reema and Mirza referred to cultural sexism surrounding social interaction in the academic workplace, which led to the gendered evaluation of female academics' competencies in terms of women are not seen as equally competent professionals as male faculty, especially for leadership positions. Reema pointed out the prevalence of the misogynistic mindset she used to face in her administrative roles. According to her:

> A typical predominant mindset at the university level is not ready to accept and appreciate women's decision-making positions. Such gender role beliefs deemed women unable to perform administrative tasks and leadership roles relative to male co-workers.

In the same way, Mirza identified what she experienced while performing administrative duties during the early years of her university career:

> Males do not accept you (a woman) as a boss and do not want you to be in decision-making positions. Right. You are a junior, a colleague, right? You are

> doing work; that is good. Even you work for them (males) as well, but they do not like you as their superordinate.

The above descriptions reveal gender role beliefs reinforced that men would lead and control, and women would be in passive positions. Women's accounts of implicit discrimination in this category can be understood through the theoretical lens of domestic and public patriarchy interplay (Walby, 1986). In other words, domestic patriarchy, and its focus on controlling women are now reproduced in workplace interaction, leading to other devaluations experienced by these women in terms of being ignored, marginalising from decision making, and underestimating women's professional abilities.

4.4.3 Negative collegiality

Notably, more than half of interviewees' narratives (17) counted in positive experiences related to the role of collegiality, unlike a small minority of participants (4) who cited stereotypical attitudes and patriarchal ideologies as contributing factors to implicit routines of undervaluing female staff members. On the other hand, the third category of five women presented stories featuring several interrelated ways their colleagues were involved in direct and explicit actions to affect these women's early career outcomes negatively. A range of harmful collegiality elements have been identified and coded from interview scripts and listed in column-B). Further 1) negative networking & harassment, 2) blocking or restricting women's access to resources and facilities, 3) lack of recognition and appreciation, and discrediting women's professional abilities and looking down on family care needs are clustered as patterns of negative workplace interaction led to career losses for this set of five interviewees during their early years of the academic career. These women have also spoken about different strategies or other sources of support that they used to counteract damaging workplace relations.

This category of five participants specified a range of ways in which their colleagues engaged in creating hurdles for their academic performance. In addition, different kinds of career losses and delays were also linked to the negative contribution of colleagues' actions. For example, Sabira experienced the curtailing role of her male colleagues routinely:

> The male faculty members of my department are politically very vocal and active inside the department and across the university. I used to face undue criticism from male colleagues in departmental meetings. I resigned from my administrative duties because of my male colleagues' constant and irritating comments. Such excessive objections cause delays in administrative decisions. After my resignation, a male faculty took the coordination of the program. In administrative duties, my performance was up to the mark because I always proved my existence through my performance.

Sabira's narratives contained compound events where she made a claim – a. I was given tasks because I was competent, b. It was done on merit, c. this was disregarded, d. by male colleagues because I was a woman. The above description showed a range of interrelated actions of Sabira's colleagues that brought about professional disadvantages, such as being compelled to step back from professional responsibilities. At first, Sabira identified her male colleagues as engaged in devaluing her academic identity and work performance. Furthermore, she described a lack of recognition and appreciation for her professional performance. She faced undue criticism and disapproval from her male colleagues on being in leadership roles. Especially in the initial years of her university career, according to Sabira, whenever she took on leadership roles and administrative tasks based on merit and performance, the critical challenge was to perform these tasks that involved authority and decision making. Her male colleagues were not ready to accept her in influential roles or work under her leadership. Sabira further recounted that eventually, she had to resign from her administrative duties due to the undue interference from male co-workers despite her professional recognition in accomplishing assigned duties.

Mubeena, another woman from the category of five women with accounts of the negative role of colleagues, reported experiencing career losses due to a gap between her professional performance and the non-professional attitudes of her colleagues. Mubeena's story revealed how she struggled through non-competitive, traditional, and manipulative work culture where a group of colleagues engaged in leg-pulling and kept trying to limit her professional ambitions and research targets. She recalled:

> Attitude to work did not remain appreciable further. Instead, it was considered flawed, and my colleagues created multiple hurdles. Even it became extremely tough to do research projects. Then I stopped doing that. It

> was alleged that such people like me always just focus on research and earn money.

Mubeena further described the mindset behind her colleagues' detrimental actions: ''Then, people complained about not being a part of these projects and how I could involve them if they never contributed''. Mubeena had terrible experiences in this regard as she gave many chances to her colleagues to join her research team, but they were just there to enter their names on project reports. According to Mubeena, ''all work, I had to complete at the end, though I used to write their names despite their zero contribution''. She believed such benefit-seeking behaviours and a non-competitive environment damaged the research culture in the department. As a result, she decided to keep herself away from research work as a strategy. However, she revised the research wing after a few years and started multiple research projects. In Mubeena's context, she had been surrounded by multiple research resources and professional development opportunities. However, she was being criticised for getting money through multiple research projects and not giving undeserved credit to her colleagues. On the other hand, Shabnum claimed that it was hard to support her research lab as she did not get as much funding as needed due to insufficient resources at the university level. In addition, she reported departmental politics and negative networking of her colleagues, who purposefully restricted her access to use available resources and stopped her from applying for new resources. While recalling the early years of her university career, Shabnum shared how she was tenaciously, purposefully, and systematically denied availing resources and opportunities for her lab work and academic projects.

> Whenever I forwarded my request for material and equipment from joint departmental resources, it was returned without approval. It continued to happen for several years. Even my colleagues tried very hard to stop VC from entering the lab I established by winning individual research projects.

Shabnum cited multiple ways as her strategy to struggle through restrictive access to research resources due to her colleagues' politics. She shared some creative ways to establish her lab with a limited budget:

> You would be amazed if I started telling you about how I then innovatively arranged materials/equipment for my lab. I contributed a proportion of my

> salary to manage the financial issues to establish my lab. I won research projects individually. I managed this money in many ways. I spent the budget in a very sophisticated way as I did not have a large amount of it, so I purchased the serum bottles that were 6 rupees per kilo compared to the actual lab bottle, which was 60 rupees per bottle.

For her colleagues' curtailing role, like Mubeena, Shabnum believed her professional competency spawned political networking and negative propaganda to stop her from pursuing academic tasks.

> Simply, they want to be a hurdle in my way and try to stop my progress. In my case, they all united to create trouble for me. Because a confident, competent, yes competing woman is always a problem and indigestible reality for both men and women. My professional dedication, hard work, and apolitical personality made it difficult for me to adjust to the department's politically rich and divided culture.

''Even on one occasion, it was written on my office door by digging (carved into the wooden door) "Kanjari" (bitch) and compelled students to speak against me just only to disturb me'', she sadly added. Recounting the early years of her career journey, Nazia, another woman from this set of five women, claimed to face unfair work allocation and a lack of recognition for her contribution from her senior colleagues. With accounts of the negative role of colleagues, she described encountering manipulation in teamwork, biased and unjust distribution of academic work, resources and opportunities, and colleagues' non-appreciative attitudes towards her academic contribution. According to Nazia, she performed multiple extra tasks given by her seniors but rarely received any credit. She detailed:

> My early career life was full of struggle. It was a nerve-breaking experience. I spent fifteen years of my professional and personal life full of hard work, stress, and tension. It was like male colleagues used to think that "she is a female, and junior, she could not have the courage to surpass us''. I also faced unfair work allocation as a junior as I was always burdened with a lot of teaching. I had organised six international conferences for my boss, and in the end, the whole appreciation went to seniors.

She further linked her colleagues' unfair treatment to her gender and professional status as a junior faculty member. Among this set of five women with accounts of destructive workplace relations, Zara's case was highly critical in terms of direct, explicit, and disparaging political bashing by colleagues that ultimately forced her to

leave the university to find a better workplace. Zara seems a representative case of all located/coded patterns of negative collegiality experiences: a) negative networking & experiences of being negatively grouped in ways that inhibited her academic work; b) blocking or restricting her access to resources and facilitates; c) lack of recognition and appreciation, and d) discrediting her professional abilities. She stated that her colleagues purposefully lobbied to plan a variety of damages to her career. Analysis of Zara's accounts revealed that the negative networking & propaganda against her was not limited to colleagues' grouping; instead, the students were pursued to write a letter against her. ''My colleagues compelled the students to involve in politics. They totally disagreed with the propaganda against me as I used to be a very popular teacher. Still, I am'', she described. Zara further shared that her colleagues did not stop their attempts to deny her the right to be selected for career opportunities. Further, they also launched slanders to damage her professional recognition. To defame her professional integrity, she was alleged of academic plagiarism, and such allegations made things further worse for her; recalling this event, she sadly said:

> They united against me and made a big case of plagiarism against me; I do not know what rubbish things they did against me. Then they started to assassinate my character**.** Later these cases were forwarded for inquiry. For this, I had to retrieve the proof in many ways and sources for every allegation. At one point, I clarified myself from every allegation.

In contrast to Nazia, who believed her gender and junior position caused her male colleagues' discriminatory acts against her, Zara mentioned a range of harmful acts undertaken by both male and female colleagues. Further, she linked these intruding acts to her colleagues' professional insecurities. Workplace politics had taken Zara to a point where she decided to resign and join a new university. Referring to the sources of negative collegiality experiences, except for Nazia, all other four participants in this category commonly linked their academic competency and work performance to creating professional rivalries, insecurities, and jealousies among colleagues, resulting in negative interpersonal workplace interaction.

For example, Mubeena described:

> Women in powerful positions, especially strong-headed and competent women, were not a favourable option. Furthermore, I suffered a lot and faced many career losses because of insecure and jealous colleagues

Like Mubeena, Zara also linked these targeted manipulations to professional rivalries, jealousy and insecurities. According to Zara, her academic performance, even in a junior position, threatened and unsecured her colleagues:

> All my contributions and work have become a problem for others. My multitasking, research initiatives, academic networking and projects raised my academic repute across the university and professional community that became a cause for professional jealousy and workplace rivalries.

All women with negative collegiality experiences believed that their professional excellence was a source of workplace rivalries and their colleagues' negative networking that worked together to derail their career journeys. In short, it seems that colleagues who could not compete with these women on equal grounds of professional competency and academic performance tended to adopt punitive ways to derail these women's career progression.

Again, more than half of the participants (17/30) referred to different kinds of support from their colleagues. However, conversely, nine women (combining both negative and mixed experiences constitute a set of nine women) reported that both explicit and implicit ways of their colleagues' negative engagement caused professional losses during their early career trajectories. These can be summarised as some further devaluations: a) lack of recognition of the value of women's academic work, with women not being given credit for success, b) experiences of professional jealousy and insecurity, c) experiences of unprofessional work culture, d) and experiences of being negatively grouped in ways that restrict their academic work and access to resources.

4.5 Women Biographies related to Workplace Conditions: Professional Development Opportunities, Facilities and Cultural Practices

Female professors in this study identified various academic workplace conditions that shaped their early career development experiences. In response to the questions

related to organisational environment and its influence on their careers, a wide range of interrelated structural features and cultural practices (resources, facilities, supportive and enabling outlooks and norms or restrictive mindsets and practices) were reported. These narrated and coded contextual conditions are slightly summarised and placed in column-B). Views on the influence of the workplace's conditions (structural features and cultural practices) ranged from a positive experience to not being mentioned.

Nearly all study participants (29/30) highlighted a range of institutional arrangements and structural features that positively or negatively impacted their initial career years. Almost half of the interviewees (14/30) as a first category stated enabling and progressive workplace conditions that led to their smooth early career progression and achievements. Another two sets of nine and six interviewees were classified as mixed and negative experience categories, respectively, based on their accounts-discussing either a combination of both positive and negative workplace conditions or only experienced detrimental workplace environments. Only one interviewee did not mention the influence of workplace conditions.

In addition to various kinds of workplace arrangements and structural features, the women in the study commonly spoke of favourable academic job market conditions and accessible work opportunities. During interviews, in response to asking about how they joined their first academic job, almost all women (28/30) reported that they did not face any difficulties in the form of discrimination in their recruitment process or the lack of work opportunities. Instead, they mentioned having multiple job offers at a time and had to choose one work opportunity by refusing other offers. However, there were two exceptions. One woman faced delays in joining an academic career because of limited work chances when she started to apply for an academic career after completing her PhD. Another study participant was refused an appointment letter despite her selection on merit due to her gender. Given traditional gender role beliefs, it was not considered appropriate for a woman to teach at an engineering university with male-dominated structures at that time in history.

4.5.1 Positive experiences

Almost half of the study participants (14/30) cited enabling workplace conditions instigating smooth early career development outcomes. The first category of fourteen women with positive accounts regarding workplace conditions presented stories of enabling and supportive work environments regarding institutional arrangements and cultural practices. After multiple rounds of reassembling narrations having similar contents, five clusters of responses emerged to explain positive experiences regarding the different kinds of workplace conditions. These are 1) fair access to professional development opportunities and resources; 2) positive work/family culture or flexible work norms; 3) progressive work environment in terms of opportunities for research/publishing, academic networking, and initiatives; 4) opportunities for academic learning and professional maturity through teaching, research supervision and administration tasks; and 5) accessible academic guidance and professional mentoring (listed in column-c). These women were also categorised based on their selection for different configurations of emergent kinds of enabling workplace conditions (placed in column D). Progressive workplace conditions in terms of accessible opportunities for career guidance, resources for PhD/postdoc scholarships, funded research, academic networking, and supportive work/family culture were mentioned as sources of smooth early career progression experiences by all women from this category. In addition, these fourteen women used different ideas to explain their biographies regarding enabling workplace conditions. For example, a subcategory of six women talked about having fair access to chances of participation in academic and administrative tasks. In terms of fair access to professional development resources, these women mentioned that their experiences of access to available opportunities and resources for research projects, international travel for higher studies and training were gender-neutral and merit-based. Farkhinda told:

> I did not experience any discrimination in accessing the available opportunities due to my gender. Such as I did not feel like someone else is getting priority in accessing work schedules and opportunities on me just because he is a male.'

Momina, another professor with fair access experiences, linked her research training opportunities during the early years of her university career to the gender-neutral and research-oriented departmental norms in the following way:

> By the way, in our department, there was no gender discrimination, and I never felt that, being a woman, I could not achieve anything. There is no discrimination that a woman is disregarded only because she is a woman. There are equal chances and opportunities for everyone to achieve them.

All the study participants were sampled from public sector universities. Two women linked accessible professional development resources and training opportunities to the scope of their specific academic disciplines and their university status as a public sector higher education institution. They highlighted that Pakistan's public universities have sustainable and expanding structures and resources. These women believed their career journeys have benefited from ample professional development resources as part of the public higher education institutions. Another subset of nine participants linked their experiences of professional maturity and academic learning to opportunities for research, teaching and service work during the early years of their university careers. According to these women, work responsibilities were the source of their learning in many ways. For example, Rub believed that having multiple administrative assignments and tight academic work schedules helped her learn professional skills and gain confidence. Noureen mentioned that university systems related to the distribution of academic work operated on merit that offered her opportunities to participate in multiple academic and administrative duties. She believed a professionally fair and enabling environment with multiple work opportunities contributed to building her professional credibility and competence:

> Dear, you get support for your abilities. When you are devoted and struggle, the system supports you. Nothing happened because of favouritism. I got everything on a merit basis. Those who are honest toward their duties, then the system supports them. Alhamdulillah (thanks to God), I get full support from the university's higher authorities. The only reason was that I had never compromised on duties. I worked in various capacities and actively contributed to university excellence. They honoured me and acknowledged my services. They kept giving me incentives or inspiration, and I kept working.

In terms of training and learning through professional responsibilities, Nasimaa and Nadia believed that having chances to participate in multiple departmental tasks during the early years of a career played a part in acquiring valuable work skills that facilitated them later in their leadership roles. Likewise, Tabinda recognised her student's teaching and research supervision experiences as sources of her professional satisfaction and academic maturity and linked administrative duties performance to her professional maturity during the early years of her university job. In addition, all fourteen women from this first category appreciated their department's progressive and professional environment, allowing them to indulge in research activities, exercise professional autonomy, take academic initiative, develop networking, and access professional mentoring. Mubeena previously mentioned career losses due to her colleagues' nonprofessional attitudes despite having multiple research work opportunities at the departmental level. However, she specified that ample academic work opportunities and research resources contributed to her early career development outcomes in the following word:

> At the beginning of my professional life, I started to work extensively on research projects initiated by the collaboration of national and international academic and developmental institutions. As I told you earlier, I was part of mega-national research projects in my initial career life. Moreover, I got an opportunity to observe and write some of my writings for UNESCO. That was, again, a fabulous experience. We started literacy projects, visited remote rural areas, and developed primers and books. Not only did research but did doing things, not only contributed through our research findings but doing action research like literacy projects. All this work was a source of professional enrichment.

Sabira linked academic freedom for research and publishing to a research-oriented work environment at her department that enabled her to actualise her scholarly research vision and achieve her career ambitions.

> If I said quite straightforwardly, my department's research-oriented culture was an underlying condition behind my research productivity from the initial years of my university career. I am now a professor in this department—one of the most senior faculty members. Then credit goes to all opportunities as provided by this department. I have never been hurdled/ constrained to do research work and grow. I had never been stopped from doing research. Nobody has constrained me to publish.

Fatima claimed that the uniquely progressive environment of her university played an influential role in nourishing her passion for taking academic initiatives to use the Arts to create public awareness of social issues. In Fatima's opinion:

> The growing contribution of female artists like me in [the] male-dominated Arts Market of Pakistan resulted from the university's research culture that ensures freedom, encouragement and appreciation, particularly for female artists.

These fourteen women also recognised accessible academic guidance, supervisory facilities, and professional monitoring as embedded cultural norms in their academic departments. A detailed description of cultural practices of academic guidance has already been provided under the subtheme of supportive leadership. All women from this category also mentioned being given opportunities of travelling overseas to attend conferences, training and other academic forums that provided platforms for academic networking and professional growth.

In addition, to accessible professional development resources, opportunities for academic learning and professional maturity, flexible work norms are also underscored as the source of the conducive and enabling workplace environment. This set of fourteen interviewees with positive experiences regarding the institutional facilities expressed gratitude for flexible, comfortable, and accommodative work norms, forming their positive early career experiences. Furthermore, compassionate leadership styles and a relatively less competitive work environment have been specified for maintaining flexible work routines that helped them multitask and balance their academic duties and childcare requirements. In summary, provision and fair access to institutional opportunities and resources were claimed as central facilitators of this first category of fourteen women's professional growth during the initial phase of their academic careers.

4.5.2 Mixed experiences related to workplace conditions

Compared to the first category of fourteen interviewees with positive accounts related to workplace conditions, the second category of nine women presented stories identifying a combination of enabling and obstructive workplace conditions they came across during their early career trajectories. Narrations surrounding mixed experiences are slightly summarized and listed in column B of table-13. Two

clusters of responses were identified to explain mixed experiences related to workplace conditions. These are 1) experiencing both positive & negative workplace circumstances in terms of opportunities and resources simultaneously, and 2) facing transfers in conditions from positive to negative or the other way around during the early years of a career (placed in column-C). This second group of nine respondents is further categorised according to their experiences related to changes in workplace conditions. For example, a subset of two women (Sarwat and Mirza) reported having been given equal and fair chances to access professional development resources. However, both women highlighted difficulties in performing academic and research tasks due to the underdeveloped and insufficient research infrastructures in terms of the required technology, equipment, and materials shortage. Mirza stated that despite the scarcity of research materials, and inadequate and outdated research infrastructures in the university, she was not restricted in access to use these resources:

> Though facilities and opportunities for research were limited, I did not face discrimination to avail them. Obviously, I can get only from them (laugh) which resources are available, which are never enough in our university.

In the same way, Sarwat highlighted poor research infrastructure in terms of limited facilities and outdated research systems because of a lack of funds. However, she appreciated the departmental culture of teamwork and a research-oriented work environment that united faculty members to invent ways to overcome difficulties related to the shortage of resources by applying mega-funded research projects as a team. Another sub-category of two women (Komal and Jabeen) experienced a lack of subject experts and supervisory facilities that significantly delayed their PhD acquisitions. They highlighted facing multiple hurdles and delays in completing their PhD due to the non-availability of research supervision facilities and professional guidance in their respective academic departments. These women linked the lack of supervisory facilities to their academic disciplines that did not have subject experts and qualified academicians to supervise their PhD research across the national universities. On the other side, they both have progressive experiences of having accessible institutional opportunities and resources to travel internationally

for training, postdoc, and academic networking that built their confidence and academic credibility.

Non-research-oriented workplace culture and outdated systems of academic work management were marked as restricting workplace conditions by Sameen and Zara. Both women cited experiencing changes in conditions from supportive and research-oriented work environments to unprofessional, non-progressive work conditions that pushed them to leave their jobs to find a new job in a professionally progressive environment. According to Sameen, she had a professionally progressive trajectory in the early years of her university career. For this, she gave credit to the university system with multiple opportunities and resources for academic initiatives and progress at both individual and institutional levels:

> The university was very good and gave me a scholarship for an MA degree in linguistics. I learned broadcasting and scriptwriting from Kalampur. Moreover, they sent me for pronunciation training at Diestock House, BBC Diestock House, all that kind of things and training helped me decide to promote English language teaching in Pakistan. Then I got an opportunity to establish the English Language Teaching Centre sponsored by the Asia Foundation. It became a model centre.

However, Sameen joined a different university after her PhD where non-research-oriented workplace culture and obsolete systems in terms of teaching made her frustrated, and she decided to leave the university in order to join a progressive workplace:

> At that time, it was the annual system, and I felt I was not contributing to anything because very little original and creative work was going on. I was motivated to work in an environment where I could practice professional autonomy and actualise my academic potential. In addition to this horrible leader, I felt that the backward university system ultimately frustrated me enough to decide to leave.

In the same way, Zara's working environment was very professional and research-oriented, with multiple facilities and resources in the initial few years. However, later she linked her decision to join another university to changed work conditions in terms of retrograde work arrangements impeding her career aim of professional growth. A set of two women (Shazia and Reema) described that they could access ample research facilities, funded projects, international collaboration, and

networking opportunities due to the expansion of higher education and working in public sector universities. In addition, they appreciated the professional work environment with the opportunity to initiate academic projects that contributed to their academic learning and professional growth. However, both women mentioned an embedded gendered mindset that looks down on women's abilities and neglects them in leadership roles. Reema claimed to receive freedom and appreciation for academic program initiatives. She linked her professional learning during the initial phase of her university career to the opportunity and encouragement to get involved in instigating academic initiatives. She mentioned that the university gave her appreciation and the freedom to take academic initiatives for institutional development. However, she believed that a female academic has to struggle to take on an administrative and leadership post despite her competency and merit due to cultural sexism (motherhood stigma and gender stereotypes).

> Our workplace culture appears reluctant to hand over an administrative position to a female, even if her credentials are according to the requirement. Definitely, a male mindset has been a part of prevalent thinking that administrative position/headship is a hub of responsibilities, so a female will not be able to take or fulfil that in a way a man could do.

In brief, women with accounts of mixed experiences regarding workplace conditions chiefly talked about general cultural assumptions and gender role ideologies instead of citing these values' direct/explicit adverse effects on their careers in terms of delays and failures. In addition, one interviewee, Ruqia, spoke about the lack of institutional arrangements to provide professional training to new faculty members. Ruqia, with mixed experiences, appreciated an informal culture of support and professional guidance in her department. However, she mentioned difficulties in performing various academic teaching, research, and administration responsibilities because of the absence of structured and formal training and monitoring systems. She recalled her early career challenges due to the lack of training resources for professional adjustment in the following way:

> I was very young when I joined in 87, and you know, in our system, we do not train people when they join. So, in particular, the initial one to two years of my career was very tough to understand how to become a teacher, handle the classroom atmosphere, and keep a formal relationship with your

> students. So, it was much needed to have a vision and system of training for young faculty members for their professional responsibilities.

Except for Ruqia and Zara, who were unmarried and did not mention having conflicting care and career responsibilities, the rest of the participants with mixed accounts stated having accommodative/facilitative and child-friendly work environments that help them balance work and family demands. According to them, females with family career needs are typically facilitated in their work settings.

4.5.3 Negative experiences with workplace conditions

A set of six interviewees were classed as the third category of women with accounts of negative experiences related to workplace conditions. A range of elements was coded from these study women's accounts, describing disadvantageous conditions regarding resources, facilities, cultural/contextual practices, institutional arrangements, and prevalent ideologies. All these elements were summarised and charted in column-B. Six kinds of disadvantageous conditions were identified. These are 1) insufficient professional development resources and research opportunities; 2) outdated research infrastructures and backward academic work management; 3) lack of subject experts and supervisory facilities; 4) non-research-oriented work conditions; 5) influence of political and religious lobbies; 6) and absence of childcare facilities and lack of cultural support for family care needs.

Earlier, most of the study participants (fourteen women with positive accounts plus nine participants with mixed accounts constituting a large category of 23 women) claimed that progressive and enabling work conditions caused smooth progression during the early years of their academic career trajectories. However, in contrast, a small minority (six) reported experiencing direct career losses linked to disadvantageous conditions in their departments and, to some extent, in the broader university systems. One woman, Naveeda, specified all kinds of disadvantageous circumstances, focusing on gaps that she experienced between her professional values and her department's work environment as the primary source of her negative early career experiences. It was common to enrol in PhD studies after starting an academic career. In the current study sample, except for six women who completed PhDs before their academic careers, the rest of the twenty-four

participants started PhDs during the initial years of their university job. Supervisory facilities in terms of subject experts were crucial factors for those women in the sample who started to earn their PhDs from national higher education institutions at the start of their academic careers. A key challenge that a set of three women identified was the lack of subject experts in their field of PhD research. Two of them were from mixed experiences and one interviewee, Naveeda, was from the third category of women with accounts of adverse workplace conditions. Naveeda, like Jabeen and Komal, did not only face delays due to the non-availability of academic specialists in her area of PhD study, but she reported experiencing a shortage of academic materials in the form of relevant reading literature:

> Outdated and foundational level reading materials were available related to my research area. I had to go to libraries and look up everything in hardcopy form. So, finding the relevant literature was very difficult. Top of it, nobody was a specialist in the field of research that I was seeking for a PhD.

Naveeda further stated how she decided to give up her PhD due to the lack of understanding and non-availability of academic specialists for her proposed research specialisation:

> For twelve years, I struggled to find a supervisor as, at that time, only two academicians were PhDs in English literature in the whole community of higher education in Pakistan. First, I was suggested to enrol on the Urdu department. So, I applied to the Urdu Department. They wrote to me that you could not do it from Urdu Department because you will write it in English. I explained how much Urdu literature history is written in English. It was pretty back and forth. Finally, I gave up. Well, you know, at one stage of your career, you would no longer be appreciated, facilitated and assisted.

A few women faced difficulties and delays in completing their PhD degrees after joining academia due to the lack of academic experts in their chosen field of specialisation. It was likely because of the lack of human development resources, especially the dearth of scientists and academicians in national higher education organisations. Naveeda also identified a range of interrelated adverse events and underlying factors that negatively impacted her academic career's early years and eventually led her to leave the university. Naveeda belonged to a small set of three women across the sample of thirty female professors, whose narratives featured religious group intimidation due to its dominant presence across the administrative

and academic staff. The political role of religious parties inductively emerged from women's narratives related to institutional barriers. Historically, political & religious parties purposefully developed alliances within Pakistani universities' academic and administrative circles at multiple levels. These lobbies named and worked as Jamiayat (Islamic Student Federation) across the nation in all public sector universities to influence and control academic and administrative businesses of the higher education sector. Also, these federations were well-connected, male-dominated, and primarily supported by male personnel both in administrative and academic positions. A small minority of the interviewee women reported professional disadvantages incurred across different phases of their university career because of conflicts with these religious lobbies. Such as, Naveeda experienced many unpleasant events. On one occasion, Jamiayat (religious student federation) members locked her in the room and set fire to the door. She further shared, ''then there were other incidents when Nazim (Head of Jamiayat) was extremely rude to me in front of the vice-chancellor, and he was absolutely silent and did not say a word''.

Before deciding to leave ABC University, Naveeda spent almost 18 years in an environment she described as hi-jacked by a conservative mindset enforced by Jamiayat. Even academic work like teaching content was scrutinised and approved by Jamiayat and its allies to seize the teaching faculty's academic autonomy, creativity, and professional integrity. For instance, once, she was threatened and stopped from teaching a leftist poet in her literature class. ''This was because this poet's work stood in contrast to ideological perspectives of Jamiayat'', she added. According to Naveeda, she decided to leave the university in response to being targeted negatively for her liberal outlook:

> You would be fed up with having a compromise between the sense of your dignity and your sense of self-esteem. Nevertheless, I would continue for my students coming from deprived backgrounds. These people who could not speak English were sitting in my class being taught Hamlet, Milton and Chaucer. Moreover, I cannot abandon them. So, my idealism kept me on. for a long time, she stayed to teach the underprivileged section of society for her self-actualisation. Finally, however, I reached a point when I said **No**. I am destroying my soul and creativity.

Naveeda linked her early retirement decision before joining another university to weak and politicised administration and dominance of conventional norms and cultural attitudes that greatly contrasted her professional ethos. Naeema's story revealed similar experiences of being harassed and lacking support from university management. She shared:

> There was a herd of, I mean, about 40/ 50 young men who just rushed into my office. They locked my office from the inside, collapsed my office, opened the drawers, searched my handbag, and were alone in my office. They attacked me because I refused to process admission applications without merit consideration as in charge of the departmental admission committee.

The dominance of this religious group was evidenced by the helplessness and failure of higher academic leadership to support these two women in such harassing situations. Both women were not supported by the university administration whenever they launched an official complaint against such workplace harassment. Instead, Neeama's application for leave to take up a Fulbright scholarship was stopped because she complained about this group. So ultimately, she was advised to withdraw from her complaint against the religious group's intimidation to approve her fellowship application. Naeema sadly recalled:

> That was severe harassment. I did not get any support from the university. Later I had to go for a Fulbright Fellowship. I was asked to write a forgiving certificate. Then we gave you NOC (nonobjection certificate)to go abroad. So, I had to withdraw from my application. They, without any delay, then issued me NOC for my Fulbright senior fellowship. So, you talk about discrimination. You talk about hard labour. That is what women like me have to face.

Both Naeema and Naveeda faced multiple hurdles in performing academic tasks and achieving career goals due to the nonprofessional interference of religious lobbies. Moreover, their emotions and career identities were also adversely affected. Naveeda had to retire early, and Naeema was denied justice for workplace harassment. Nonprofessional and non-research-oriented work cultures were raised by the rest of the four women (Mehak, Nazia, Shabnum, and Neelam) in the conversation about their experiences related to organisational hurdles and disadvantageous work conditions. Recalling the early years of their career, all these four women stated having been denied due credit and recognition for their

professional contribution to departmental tasks. In addition, they could not access departmental career development resources due to the manipulative culture held by senior colleagues.

These women believed departmental politics and hostile alliances among colleagues resulted in professional jealousy, rivalries and insecurities, and conflicts of interests caused adverse work conditions. In addition to identifying causes of nonprofessional work conditions, they also shared about career losses and delays that these women faced due to being surrounded by the culture of constrained and gendered access to resources for their academic work. For example, departmental politics and opposing alliances targeted Shabnum to deny her fair access to professional development resources and facilities. At the same time, Neelam reported facing the culture of unjust distribution of resources and credit. Like Neelam, Nazia also reported experiencing manipulation in teamwork, biased and unjust distribution of academic work and opportunities as sources of her early career losses. Nazia also cited the gendered mindset of devaluing women's performance to explain the discriminatory work culture in her department:

> It was a commonly experienced circumstance of being ordered to organise multiple academic tasks, and senior members took credit. I struggled a lot to get recognition at my workplace and at home. Recognition is gifted to men by society. You can observe if a female is speaking or doing any literary talk or discussing international literature or social movements. Then people will be like, someone must have told her. She must have taken the guidance of someone. However, if a male discusses the same thing, people will be like, Wow, Great!

The earlier cases of 'devaluing' women's work referred to being given a task and then criticised for not doing it well. Here it seems the issue is different: when a task is done well, it is being said that it must have been a man who helped. Thus, women in the study cite different types of devaluations to explain their early career experiences. Moreover, the narrations, quoting devaluations, also reveal their origins as either coming directly from other persons involved in affecting women's career trajectories or linked to embedded devaluing ideology reflected through implicit discrimination routines. Describing workplace conditions, Mehak mentioned that she spent the early years of her university career surrounded by big politics among

senior colleagues responsible for providing frustrating and discouraging work conditions for junior colleagues. She shared how the political environment of her department restricted her abilities and creativity that flourished after the change of leadership and the decline of negative grouping:

> Nobody gave me the confidence that I was somebody because there was too much authority and scrutiny. So, I did not find myself. We were all scared and afraid. There was an atmosphere of extreme negative grouping and leg-pulling that did not allow me to grow.

Though Mehak always remained apart from departmental political alliances, her narratives revealed the powerful influence of political culture in creating toxic work conditions halted her professional aspirations and career aims and ultimately delayed her career progression. Lastly, four women highlighted another aspect of unfavourable workplace conditions: the absence of a family support policy and lack of family support culture. For example, Naeema and Naveeda criticised insufficient and irrelevant policy services related to maternity leave and childcare facilities within the campus. Further, both women cited the dominance of men in the centres of professional authority & a gendered mindset as the key sources of the university's higher authorities' lack of concern in providing formal and institutional family care facilities. At the same time, Nazia and Neelam mentioned difficulties faced due to their respective departments' lack of accommodative and flexible work conditions.

Lack of professional guidance, absence of family care need services, gendered ideologies/ undervaluing attitudes, lack of recognition, unfair distribution, and constrained access to resources were cited as harmful workplace conditions resulting from male hegemony, professional rivalries, and religious lobbies. In brief, looking at what causes women to be negatively affected during the early years of their academic career, the same set of women repeatedly reported experiencing negative influences of interpersonal (leadership and colleagues) and structural (workplace conditions) factors across the sample. However, a comparative analysis of women's accounts of workplace conditions suggested that most participants did not experience structural constraints. In other words, they are categorised to have positive experiences regarding institutional resources, facilities, cultural attitudes and norms at their workplaces, showing that structures are the least restrictive.

Conversely, a minority had negative experiences related to workplace relations and conditions. In brief, such negative early career experiences may exemplify the presence of deleterious subcultures in these specific women's respective academic departments.

4.6 Role of Family in Shaping Early Career Outcomes

A recurrent theme related to family influence on the early career phase emerged in women's biographies while talking about the initial years of their university careers. The women in the study reported two aspects of the family role: firstly, family care needs, the second, family-supportive or constraining role for both career and care demands. The family influence is also considered an institutional element as a parallel institution to the academic workplace. Women's accounts of family influence on early career years ranged from supportive to mixed, negative, and not being mentioned. All study participants discussed various ways family members were involved in playing a role in shaping their early career outcomes. However, most interviewees (22) only talked about positive family relations in terms of different kinds of support they received from families for their childcare and career needs. In parallel, the second category of seven interviewees was classified as having mixed experiences based on their accounts, reflecting a combination of both positive and negative contributions of their family circumstances or family members to affecting their early career years. Only one interviewee identified a range of ways in which her family members negatively influenced the early years of her academic career.

4.6.1 Role of family support in the early years of the academic career journey

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (22/30) claimed to have experienced enormous support from family members to manage their work and family needs. All such claims are summarized and placed in column-B. Two types of family members' involvement are reported: helping in childcare and providing different kinds of support for career-linked matters. Five patterns of family support for early career years were clustered: 1) living in the joint family system as a source of support for childcare needs; 2) family members' support in child care despite living away; 3) husband's active role in child care; 4) husband as being in the university career provided professional support and career guidance; and 5) family's positive

contribution to career-related tasks and decisions (listed in column-C). This first category of twenty-two participants is further classified into subcategories based on their selection for different combinations of family support patterns (charted in column D). For example, a subset/subcategory of ten study participants cited family members' support in sharing childcare responsibilities besides living away and the husband's active contribution to sharing childcare responsibilities. For this, two kinds of childcare arrangements were stated: 1) family members, particularly mothers of either side, came to stay with the couple for childcare; 2) children were left to stay with grandparents when women were at the workplace or away for career responsibilities. With accounts of positive family relations, these ten study participants acknowledged the long-standing assistance of their mothers or mothers-in-law in sharing childcare responsibilities while staying with them during the early years of their careers. For example, Momina shared her mother-in-law's contribution to childcare in the following words:

> My family really supported me. My mother-in-law was very caring. She used to come to our home whenever I had exams. Whenever I had to do assignments or have the bulk of work, I just called my mother-in-law, and she always came. If my family did not support me, it was definitely tough to grow professionally. Even when I was in the UK for the postdoc, my children stayed with their grandmother for one year in Pakistan. So actually, I got the grownup kids.

Whilst Mubeena appreciated her mother's willingness to stay with them to share childcare; she believed her mother played a profound role in her children's moral socialization:

> Apart from my husband's active role in sharing childcare, my mother stayed with us. She gave a lot of love to my children. She played a substantial role in sharing my children's responsibilities. It was genuine support and contribution to my family life. In addition, she socialized my children in excellent manners, which was a significant contribution.

Mirza and Nadia mentioned domestic maids who looked after the children under their mothers' supervision. Like Momina, Sameen and Farkhinda left their children to stay with their parents when they were abroad for their PhD studies. Another respondent, Farrah, from this category, connected her ability to perform

academic tasks to the supportive role of her maternal aunt and mother in sharing her childcare responsibilities during challenging early career years:

> My mother has supported me a lot by looking after my kids while I was doing PhD in the UK. My maternal aunty! She looked after my children. Whenever I had any problem, I used to call her that I had to go someplace so please look after my kids. So, she came and supervised them or said to drop the kids at her home. I think I managed my career and family life together due to three relations (father, mother, and aunty) in my life.

On the other hand, Sameen's husband had looked after their daughter. Plus, her parents and brothers were actively involved in sharing childcare responsibilities during Sameen's stay in the UK for her PhD. In addition to family members' support for childcare needs, these interviewees identified the active role of their husbands in sharing childcare responsibilities. For instance, Mubeena appreciated her husband for his contribution to sharing childcare:

> My husband gave a complete dedication to children's upbringing. For example, if I looked after the children at home and took care of their meals, he regularly took responsibility for school pick and drop. He performed this tough duty for almost 15 years. Husbands rarely behave like that. Moreover, he did it without any objection; actually, he did it very happily.

Neelam recognized her husband's contribution to sharing childcare by rescheduling his work timings for a longer time:

> He is very supportive. He works in PTV (Pakistan Television). For five years before our son went to school, he did his duty in the evening. He had sacrificed and shifted his duty to evening for five years. We rarely met with each other but did not ignore our child.

The second subcategory of five women unequivocally highlighted support in childcare received from family members while living in the joint family system. All these women mentioned that the joint family system was a source of great help in their circumstances, making it possible to concentrate on academic tasks at the workplace without tension and hassle. These women also mentioned credible support of domestic maids for childcare while living in a joint family system. For example, Tabinda felt thankful to have trustworthy family servants in addition to having a supportive and encouraging husband and joint family arrangements:

> My husband is very cooperative, which you cannot imagine. In every success, his contribution is more than mine. Fortunately, we used to live in a joint family system where we had very loyal servants to look at our children. There are separate servants for children and domestic work. Until now, we have had the same culture in our homes.

Similarly, another subcategory of four interviewees mentioned not only their husbands' cooperative approach but also appreciated their inlaws' understandable and positive attitudes toward their career commitments and their hugely supportive role in childcare. ''My mother-in-law's support to look after my children was a real pillar. However, the most important contribution is that she never objected to my delayed return from work as she fully understood my career demands'', Nasimaa stated while accounting key enablers of smooth early career experiences. In addition to the family role in sharing childcare responsibilities, different kinds of family support are referred for career-related matters by these women with accounts of family support. According to Mubeena, ''appreciation, non-interference, and acknowledgement from my husband's family was an additional blessing in circumstances when multiple tasks surrendered me during early years of career''. On the other hand, Nadia cited her parents' financial contributions as a great help during her early years. The women also commonly linked the formation of their specific professional skills to parental socialization and family culture. They drew links between parental socialization, socially and academically valuable skills acquisition, and their ability to successfully manage workplace challenges and difficulties. For example, Fatima and Tabinda believed that learning and acquiring positive personality traits through routines of parent-daughter interaction significantly enabled them to handle the career challenges and workplace obstacles during the early years of their academic career. In the same way, Farkhinda linked her abilities to tackle challenges and hurdles during the early years of her career to her father's role in socializing on specific skills. Farkhinda stated:

> I always used to say that I was here just because of my parents. I have many things in my personality from my father. I have learned many job ethics from my father. He guided me through every problem. He says handle this problem in this way, that way. So I am impressed with my father very much.

During her early university years, Neelam believed her career achievements in article writing and research performance resulted from her father's role in refining her writing skills. Neelam linked her father's influence in shaping her research interests to his profession as he was also an academician and had a strong record of research publications. Besides the husband's positive role in sharing childcare responsibilities, three women cited husbands as being in the academy provided professional support and career guidance and information during the early years of their academic careers. These three women connected their early career achievements to emotional support, verbal encouragement, and practical assistance from their husbands. Nadia appreciated her husband's role for his career guidance in the following words:

> My husband's academic background supported me in many ways, especially his guidance in selecting a PhD scholarship among multiple options, which led my career in the right direction.

What Nadia said about her husband's support for career decisions, similar kinds of positive contributions of husbands to career-related decision-making were echoed by Saba and Reema, whose husbands were also from academia. Finally, a small set of four unmarried women assumed relative independence from family responsibilities compared to the other married women with caring responsibilities. However, previously these four women provided detailed accounts about the hugely supportive role of the family in their higher education attainments and the beginning of an academic career (first chapter of analysis). Now, these women generally identified the family's positive influence in the form of their support for these women's career demands and decisions. In addition, all these four unmarried study participants cited their family's willingness to accept and respect their career choices as a vital source of crafting their career management skills.

4.6.2 Mixed experiences

A set of seven interviewees were classed as the second category of women with accounts of mixed experiences regarding the influence of family life on their early academic career years. The main difference between the two categories of supportive and mixed family role experiences is that the study participants of the former group did not highlight any career delays and losses linked to family-related factors.

However, the latter group identified the intruding role of family needs in delaying achievements during their early career years. A subset of four women referred to experiencing delays and interruptions in completing their PhDs due to dependent childcare needs/extended family responsibilities apart from restrictive and demanding workplace conditions. However, they also reported receiving family support in managing family and career needs. For example, Komal and Faiza had to temporarily suspend PhD studies a couple of times due to juggling dependent aged childcare requirements and the pressure of departmental tasks. However, in both cases, the women took a break from departmental duties to complete PhD research. Like three women with academic husbands from the first category, Komal's husband was also an academician who helped Komal overcome hurdles in finding relevant academic material for writing the PhD research proposal and thesis. In addition, he thoroughly looked after their children when Komal had to go abroad for some training and postdoc studies. Jabeen, another woman with mixed family influence experiences, reported being delayed in her PhD completion due to multiple family responsibilities. However, she was supported by her husband's support in asking relatives to stop visiting so she could complete her delayed PhD:

> I always had so many responsibilities in my family life, and because of them, I could not concentrate on my work and finish it on time. My inlaws are a huge family. Much of my time was spent looking after them, especially when they visited us over the summer. My husband had to ask his family to stop visiting so I could finish my work. My husband understood that the research had dragged on too long. That summer, I stayed up all night working and slept 4 hours a day.

Sarwat's mother and sisters were actively involved in sharing Sarwat's childcare responsibilities; however, her daughter's serious health issues pushed her to take multiple career breaks. As a result, she was restricted from working full-time during her university job's early years until her daughter fully recovered. Another woman, Ghazal, was constrained by her husband's non-acceptance of continuing her career. Conversely, her mother-in-law encouraged her to continue her career even after separating from her husband. Compared to the rest of the study women across the sample, who mainly appreciated their in-laws' supportive and encouraging contribution towards their career and care needs, Sabira identified the extremely

controlling and non-supportive role of her in-laws towards her career and childcare obligations. On the other hand, she admired her husband's hugely supportive role in both her career and care responsibilities:

> Mutual understanding with my husband played a significant role as my husband switched to a part-time career just to support me in my career. In addition, my husband supported me, especially in the care of children, so that I could meet the demands of work and joint family responsibilities.

Sabira was the only woman in the sample who kept her children in daycare despite living in a joint family due to her in-laws' refusal to look after her children. She narrated a variety of ways in which her in-laws influenced the early years of her academic career negatively, especially not being able to avail herself of professional development opportunities:

> I used to live in a joint family system. That is very challenging and tough. Even I was not permitted to bring my PhD related work home as many responsibilities were to be performed. So, my inlaws asked me to draw a line between work and family. They said you had spent a whole day at work, so you must look at your responsibilities after entering the home. If we have not interfered in your office hours, your office tasks should not take your attention. Because of my inlaws' uncompromising approach, I could not manage to travel internationally for my career growth.

Nearly all study participants reported not facing pressure to look after joint family care needs, even in those situations where women lived with their in-laws. More importantly, these women had full support from their joint family system (in-law families) in taking care of their children when they were abroad for higher studies for an extended time. Conversely, Sabira mentioned facing career losses as not travelling internationally due to the burden of joint family requirements and the lack of family support for her childcare responsibilities in her absence. She added further regarding the restrictive role of her in-laws:

> Can you imagine that my father-in-law took my all salary for a long period because he managed the expenditures of this joint setup. Then I needed to ask for money from him for my expenditures. Actually, a highly qualified woman is controlled by structure in our society. Moreover, she has to confirm the norms to save the image of the educated working woman. If a working woman rebels, her education and job will abruptly be blamed for such dissent. She is unduly boycotted.

Sabira's description, though it was not a representative example of the sample of this study, connected her experiences to the restricting role of structural forces. More importantly, she believed traditional values regarding gender role expectations remain decisive in regulating women's lives despite their achievements in education and career. Sabira was one of the three interviewees who faced family opposition to enrolling on university education and starting a career despite getting married according to traditions and expectations of the family, especially of their mothers and extended family. Given the family opposition, Sabira's father permitted her to continue her education. Her father also spoke to her husband to support her daughter in continuing her PhD studies and making a career after marriage. Sabira's case presents a unique story compared to the rest of the study participants, as most of them did not report facing conflicting and struggling circumstances due to traditional gender role norms embedded in the cultural fabric of Pakistani society. Though Sabira is not a representative case of this study sample, in her words, ''a highly qualified woman is controlled by structure in our society''; she used the frame of reference to illustrate the typical situation of Pakistani women. So, she might be referred to as representing broader cultural attitudes that traditionally and historically continued to curtail women's lives in Pakistani society. However, she can be a unique case compared to typical Pakistani women in terms of having the progressive role of patriarchy (e.g., her father and later her husband) to support her in overcoming hurdles linked to conservative gender role ideologies and practices.

Only one woman, Nazia, cited multiple negative family-related influences, including- pressures of joint family responsibilities, lack of family support for childcare, and family demeaning attitude towards her academic specialization. Nazia claimed to experience multiple adverse problems in managing work and dependent childcare during the early career years due to the absence of practical support and accommodative attitudes from family and workplace regimes. According to Nazia, she patiently managed work and family pressures. However, her inlaws' biased and insulting approach towards her academic discipline was really discouraging and emotionally painful:

> In my inlaw's family, two kinds of views prevailed when my inlaws discussed me with an outsider in a way: "our daughter-in-law is a university lecturer. So what! She is a professor of Punjabi, not of English or something else". Second thing, I was tagged as null in childcare responsibilities. They just used to make fun of me. Without any support and acknowledgement, I cooked, washed dishes and cleaned the house for all joint family members alongside childcare and a full-time university job. I rarely got any relaxation and support.

Compared to the rest of the study participants who had stable support from their families for their childcare needs even in the absence of accommodative workplace conditions and facilities, Nazia spoke of multiple constraining factors. Primarily, her family did not support her with childcare responsibilities and career demands. In addition, Sabira and Nazia experienced discouraging and controlling attitudes from their inlaws' families toward their career identities and demands compared to the rest of the participants. As most interviewees appreciated the support, they received from their husbands' families, not only for childcare needs but constant support and appreciation for their career tasks and achievements. In contrast to Sabira, whose husband was hugely supportive in childcare requirements, Nazia did not report any significant source of support (e.g., while encountering multiple unfavourable conditions in both workplace and family domains).

Analysis of women's narratives about the role of the family in shaping early career development experiences shows that almost everyone has positive experiences regarding family influence. The first category of twenty-two women identified multiple ways of family support. At the same time, the second category of seven respondents' experiences combined supportive and restrictive elements. Only one interview presented multiple negative family-connected factors. Combining women with supportive and mixed experiences makes/constitutes a large overall group (29/30) who tell us that family is not a barrier. Instead, family members constantly supported them in achieving career goals during the early years of their academic careers. A significant majority of the women appreciated family members and family living arrangements for their contribution to helping them to manage work and family needs. However, despite having a supportive family role in sharing childcare needs, the female professors recalled episodes of tensions and conflict while juggling career aspirations, professional requirements, and family demands during the early

years of their academic careers. It shows that women in my study, like working women more generally, mothers the world over specifically, shared the need to reconcile the demanding juggling of career aspirations and targets with the cultural roles of mothers, wives and daughters/daughters-in-law (Craig, 2006, Connelly and Ghodsee, 2011; Rehman and Waheed, 2012; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Guy and Arthur, 2020).

In brief, two types of explanation can be drawn by reporting numerous positive family contributions to smooth early-career achievements. Firstly, family support, especially from male members, presents a challenge to the idea of patriarchy as a system rooted in a typical Pakistani family structure and is primarily used to restrict women's participation and progress in public regimes of education and career. Secondly, in contrast to most Pakistani women who do not experience family support for their careers, the family has appeared as a necessary/crucial ingredient in this study's interviewees' lives. These women's success in the Pakistani context is therefore connected to having super supportive allies from the family institution even surrounded by such situations when support might be lacking from other regimes/ channels (workplace, society level).

4.7 Analytic Interpretation

The current PhD research about the career journeys of a sample of thirty female professors highlights structural explanations for their success. This second chapter of qualitative analysis presents a unified understanding of institutional enablers and barriers to female academics' career achievements and progression during their early academic careers. The interviewees referred to a wide range of interrelated elements to describe their early career development experiences in response to a series of questions regarding the influence of workplace relations, conditions and family life. Several theory-driven themes (workplace conditions, boss, colleagues, and childcare management) have been engaged to develop interview questions to explore what did work and what did not work during the early years of women's academic careers (Lindstrom and Benz, 2002; Boyd, Cintron and Alexander-Snow, 2010; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012; Ion, 2014; Caretta et al., 2018). These questions were asked to explore and document study participants' perceptions concerning the implications

of academic leadership, workplace relations, work conditions, and means of work/life management for their career outcomes. Also, how did women respond to en-route opportunities, challenges and constraints were explored? Therefore, qualitative analysis of study participants' accounts underscored the role of workplace and family institutions in providing different barriers and support to the initial phase of their academic career trajectories.

Analysis of study participants' accounts around beginning/entry to an academic career and early years of university job is presented at two levels of interpretation. In the previous section, descriptive interpretation - accounting for the specific number of women in each category and drawing on multiple women's quotes to illustrate the experiences of each category of women about patterned influencing factors is explicated. This descriptive interpretation has provided various categories of interrelated institutional factors to build a model to explain the success of every case (woman). Therefore, this section is designed to present analytic interpretations-discussing the relative contribution of influential elements to shape study participants' early career outcomes. A theoretical model will be drawn from descriptive analysis to identify institutional elements' relative influence to explain all cases. In other words, a deeper analysis that engages with the relative significance of influential elements and the question of how to explain those participants who did not experience positive influence of these elements early in their careers? Moreover, how can these participants' success be explained by other factors 'despite' the lack of a particular element?

Firstly, a three-fold typology of early career development experiences (largely positive, largely negative, and mixed) is constructed. These three kinds of early career experiences represent three levels of influence (either positive, negative, or mixed) relating to 1) academic leadership; 2) colleagues; 3) workplace resources and facilities, and 4) family roles. To develop the explanatory model for the relative effect of influential elements, I grouped all interviewees into three categories based on their selection of varied combinations of enabling or intruding contribution of interpersonal and institutional factors to their early career outcomes. The main logic behind their classification is evaluating the strength, intensity and direct influence of

different themed elements (Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). According to the researcher-assigned assessment, individual cases were assigned to the following three categories:

a) women with mostly positive experiences
b) women with mostly negative experiences
c) women with mixed experiences

The criteria for classifying women across these three levels of ranking/typology are as follows:

Eighteen interviewees were assigned to the 'mostly positive early career experience' category due to the multiple supportive or mixed experiences regarding interpersonal and institutional factors (analyzed in the previous section). These women's accounts widely and repeatedly featured the enabling role of interpersonal and institutional factors with the limited occurrence of mixed experiences. None of them mentioned having the negative influence of interpersonal and institutional factors. At the same time, eight cases were cited as examples of 'mixed experiences' related to different influential elements. Therefore, eight women were assigned to the mixed category because of a combination of positive, mixed, and negative influences. Those women with mixed experiences (8/30) presented stories of both positive & negative circumstances related to interpersonal and institutional elements simultaneously or faced shifts in conditions from positive to negative or the other way around during the early years of their career. In comparison, only four women (4/30) have 'mostly negative biographies' due to interpersonal and institutional factors' presence, intensity, and frequency of negative character/role. These four women were classed as having mainly negative experiences due to their accounts highlighting multiple and overlapping constraints compared to a few mixed and positive experiences.

Another logic behind the classification of women across these three categories is the reporting of career losses and delayed outcomes that the study participants faced and linked to different elements of interpersonal and institutional factors. For example, women with mixed and negative experiences did not only cite multiple negative and mixed influences. They also identified and linked various career losses

to interpersonal and institutional elements compared to women from mostly positive experiences who gave credit for their smooth career progression and professional achievements to enabling role of the identified elements.

Next, for the explanatory model, I conceptually drew a case-ordered matrix to display and compare clusters of study participants according to their experiences regarding the influential factors (roles, relationships, attitudes, conditions, resources & structures). Table-14 shows that the cases are ordered from women with chiefly positive through mixed to frequently negative early career experiences in column-A. Participants' experiences regarding leadership, collegiality, workplace conditions and family role are charted in columns-B, and C, respectively. For matrix display and cell entries, I employed a traffic light coding system (green, yellow, and red) to indicate vibrant and explicit illustrations of positive, negative, and mixed experiences regarding the examined main variables. This case ordered descriptive meta matrix and traffic light colour strategy allow displaying patterns of various influential factors and compare early career experiences across categories and even among participants. The use of traffic light coding and case-ordered display clearly illustrates that most female professors had very positive experiences (indicated with the green colour). Those with negative experiences (marked with red) tended to have multiple overlapping negative experiences.

Moreover, the negative experiences tended to be concentrated in the narratives of minority interviewees (4/30). Cell entries for undiscussed/non-mentioned responses relating to influential factors have been left without colour coding. In addition to the contribution of interpersonal and institutional factors, women also highlighted their attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and actions as strengths and skills that amplified career success or a strategy and way of resistance to overcome interpersonal and institutional barriers.

Table-14 Categorization of Study Participants according to their Biographies about the Influential Elements (boss, colleagues, workplace conditions, and family relations and structures)

A	B		C	
Biographical assessment and No of cases	**Interpersonal Factors**		**Institutional factors**	
Mostly positive experiences (18)	**B-1**	**B-2**	**C-1**	**C-2**
	Boss	**Colleagues**	**Workplace conditions**	**Family role**
1. Nadia	supportive	Positive	Accessible	Supportive
2. Faiza	supportive	N/D	N/D	Mixed
3. Tabinda	supportive	Positive	Accessible	Supportive
4. Noureen	supportive	Positive	Accessible	Supportive
5. Sarwat	supportive	Positive	Mixed	Mixed
6. Amber	N/D	Positive	accessible	supportive
7. Fatima	supportive	Positive	Accessible	supportive
8. Reema	Supportive	Mixed	Mixed	supportive
9. Shazia	supportive	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
10. Nasimaa	supportive	Positive	accessible	positive

11. Farkhinda	supportive	N/D	Accessible	supportive
12. Ghazal	N/D	Positive	accessible	Mixed
13. Saba	N/D	Positive	accessible	supportive
14. Yasmeen	supportive	Mixed	Accessible	Supportive
15. Momina	supportive	N/D	accessible	supportive
16. Mirza	Mixed	Positive	Mixed	supportive
17. Rub	Positive	Positive	Accessible	Supportive
18. Ruqia	Positive	Positive	Mixed	Supportive
Mixed experiences (8)				
1. Sameen	Mixed	Positive	Mixed	Supportive
2. Neelam	Negative	Positive	Negative	supportive
3. Naeema	Negative	Mixed	Negative	supportive
4. Mubeena	N/D	Negative	Accessible	supportive
5. Jabeen	N/D	Positive	Mixed	Mixed
6. Komal	N/D	N/D	Mixed	Mixed
7. Mehak	negative	Positive	Negative	supportive

8. Sabira	ND	Negative	Accessible	Mixed
Mostly negative experiences (4)				
1. Nazia	negative	Negative	Constrained access	negative
2. Zara	Mixed	Negative	Mixed	Supportive
3. Shabnum	Positive	Negative	constrained access	Supportive
4. Naveeda	Mixed	Positive	constrained access	Supportive

Notably, most of the study women's narratives included positive experiences related to the role of different interpersonal and structural elements, unlike a small minority of interviewed women who were restricted due to the negative encounters, stereotypical attitudes, discriminatory practices, and system deficiencies. Most female professors reported the positive influence of different interpersonal and institutional factors as necessary conditions and associated with early career success. However, reporting multiple and most negative experiences by a small section of the study sample led to looking for and adding additional factors that help explain success without themed explanations.

Ordering cases hierarchically from mainly positive to largely negative experiences and mapping of focused variables' values across the rows show that most cases have positive experiences in terms of having multiple enabling elements and sustainable family support with few problems or experienced none negatively. Conversely, being held back is the experience of only a minority. Moreover, most negative elements happened to the same women across the sample. It suggests that a small section of the study sample had multiple negatives as they repeatedly reported experiencing the negative influence of multiple elements of interpersonal and structural factors. In most circumstances, these women with accounts of adverse workplace conditions were the same women who reported facing a negative influence of workplace relations with bosses and colleagues. It shows that the same cluster of study participants experienced multiple disadvantages.

Though most women had felt advantaged by one or more of the supportive factors discussed in this chapter, understanding how success was still achieved even in multiple negatives is needed to explicate success for all study participants. The clustering of positives (most cases have multiple positives) and the clustering of negatives (a small number of cases shares most negatives) provide some patterns to build a model that helps explain success for all cases. For most participants, a range of influential elements of the academic boss, colleagues, institutional opportunities, progressive work conditions, and family support appears to be substantial patterned conditions that play a role in these women's success. However, these are not sufficient factors or necessary conditions to explain success for all participants, as a

small minority of cases succeeded without the positive contribution of these patterned elements. These women were even restricted and faced career delays due to the influential factors' negative positioning. Therefore, we need to refer to rows to reveal different combinations to explain how these women with multiple problems managed to succeed. Looking through the rows, in cases where any element was weak, absent, or playing a negative role, other factors were in play that allowed success. Such as, if an interviewee (s) did not experience positive elements or experienced an adverse change in institutional elements early in their career, the women talked about alternatives to explain how they have come out of these adverse situations or counteracted the negative impact of influential factors.

In addition, analysis of this small set of women with mostly negative early career experiences revealed at least one of the supporting characters (persons) or structures that contributed to their career attainments compared to most participants who re-counted multiple positive elements for their smooth early career progression. For example, family support was central among all positive elements, except for one case, all women applauded the continuation of enabling family contribution to the smooth early career progression. In brief, for a small cluster of women who lacked support from the workplace or had multiple barriers, 'family support' in various forms allowed success, in contrast to previous studies focused on relating gender gaps in career performance to family responsibilities (Forster, 2001; Misra, Lundquist and Templer, 2012; Beddoes and Pawley, 2014). More importantly, analysis of women's accounts in my study placed family-related variables central to positive early career experiences that might enhance understanding and attention to under-examined however significant structural and systemic support practices within the family culture.

In addition to the presence of multiple enabling conditions and supporting characters as criteria to explain success in more than half of the study sample, views on experiencing career delays and losses can also be added to the explanatory model of success. Data analysis revealed that most sample cases refer to multiple supportive features and smooth early career progression but did not mention significant losses. Conversely, a few enabling conditions present in those cases with the most negative

experiences, and this small minority of cases also mostly experienced career losses and delayed early career outcomes. It can be inferred that a small cluster of cases cited experience multiple forms of institutional barriers and career delays. On the other side, all participants spoke about experiencing at least one of the coded supportive elements connected to interpersonal and structural factors, which suggests support from different angles was a shared experience even if they come in different forms from different sources. Moreover, it shows that a large section of the sample had underlying sustainable sources of support that caused smooth early career progression experiences. In other words, in most cases, early career trajectories featured a set of enabling circumstances comprising structures and persons that recognize and support women's talent in my study. In contrast, a small minority of participants' trajectories were affected negatively due to persons and arrangements that failed to support their talents. Relevantly class and patriarchal structures are fundamental themes and dominant realities to explain academic women success in the present study. Qualitative analysis of female professors' progression trajectories presented strong evidence that family class backgrounds and cultural values related to gender roles and women' education combined to play an enabling role in shaping these women's career success. Notably, in most cases, patriarchal structures within families, and university institutions were attributed/accounted /cited for academic and career achievements. However, supportive role of institutional elements and structures cannot downplay their constraining influences. As a researcher, I look beneath the participants' narratives and find underneath disagreement/ tension exists between women's accounts and patriarchal mindset and structures limited these women's progress journeys. Across all such contexts, there were other persons (in most cases, other patriarchs) who contributed to shape these women's agentic traits or support them in overcoming en-route hurdles and reaching the professorial position.

Last but not least, some aspects of the agency have been revealed as explanatory theory across all negative accounts about different interpersonal and institutional factors (boss, colleagues, ideologies, institutional conditions, and family). The interviewed women's agentic responses were a combination of resistance, struggles,

conformity, and accommodation. Apolitical attitudes, non-confrontational approach, temporary pause and restart again, willful decision to leave the harmful conditions in order to find a better place, be assertive, prime preference for balancing work and family needs, and follow ideal work norms were displayed across the cases especially when structural support declined, or structures and interpersonal relations played a restrictive role. These women believed their strategies facilitated them to survive, encounter, and overcome barriers in their specific contexts.

A positive connection between advantaged family background in terms of parental educational and occupational status and study participants' successful continuity of education and career has already been established in the previous chapter. Again, looking at clusters of negative experiences, these women's agentic responses or abilities to overcome the barriers can be understood in the background predictors of family education, family wealth, and family attitude. In other words, privileged backgrounds (a dominant context as most women belonged to middle or upper-middle socio-economic class) continue to facilitate women's career trajectories by shaping their competencies to compete and succeed or instilling skills and attitudes that help them manage challenges and overcome barriers. An analytical interpretation of common and rare experiences may conclude in a more profound sense that the study sample is connected through the string of socio-economic class and relevant capital (s).

Chapter 5: Promotion Trajectories

5.1 Introduction

This qualitative PhD study draws on biographical interviews with thirty female professors. It examines the career trajectories of these women in public universities of Pakistan with the main focus on identifying some of the key enablers of and barriers to their career progression to the position of professor. The preceding two chapters of findings analysed and interpreted the role of individual, interpersonal, and institutional factors in shaping (1) female professors' educational and professional aspirations and attainments and (2) early university career development experiences. In this third and final chapter, study participants' experiences of academic career progression along different stages of their promotion trajectories will be analysed and explained.

Career advancement in academia typically follows the traditional linear career progression model that makes up distinctive stages and competitive professional requirements that must be accomplished to move up the top ranks of professors in universities (Acker Webber and Smyth, 2016; Ahmad, 2017). Similarly, the structure and the process of academic career progress in Pakistani public universities are linear in terms of having a set of hierarchical career positions, starting from lecturers to the top ranks of professors. Promotion from the junior rank of lectureship to the highest academic position of professor is linked to acquiring higher qualifications (MPhil, PhD) and research performances and outputs in academic publications. This chapter is structured to present an analysis of interviewees' promotion experiences in two sections. Firstly, the methods and process of coding, labelling and categorising interview data will be explained. After a description of the coding of interview data, the next section will present and discuss key findings. The central analytic strategy is qualitative data matrices through which, firstly, emergent themes and three conceptually clustered types of promotion trajectories are displayed in table-15. Next, a detailed descriptive and analytic interpretation of the findings will be presented. For interpretation of findings, women's experiences from each type of promotion trajectory will be described separately following a discussion highlighting and summarising similarities and differences in study participants'

experiences of enablers, hurdles, and strategies to overcome barriers to reach the position of professor.

5.2 Coding Methods for Women's Promotion Trajectories

In this final chapter of the analysis, study participants' experiences of academic career promotion to the professorial position will be explored and analysed. One key research question with sub-questions was designed to explore women's promotion trajectories in terms of speed, delays, support, and barriers. In response to a series of questions that aimed to understand how the study participants came through the different promotion stages, the women in this study accounted for various factors for their promotion across the academic career ladder. The primary coding strategy is stage-based to uncover and code influential factors from interview scripts (Saldana, 2016). At the first coding stage, I chose 'holistic and descriptive' coding types to segment and label interview transcripts with the predefined concepts that frame different dimensions of the academic career promotion route. A descriptive code is defined as 'it assigns labels to data to summarise in a word or short phrase- most often a noun- the basic topic/theme of the passage of qualitative data' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 80). At the same time, the 'holistic coding method is used to apply a single code (title or label) to a large unit of data in the corpus, rather than line-by-line coding, to capture a sense/focus of the overall contents' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 82). By combining descriptive and holistic coding approaches, paragraphs across the thirty interview scripts were labelled and indexed with different descriptive words – featuring the central theme of the promotion process, influencers, and outcomes.

Next, coded data units were classified as enablers or barriers to reaching the professor's position. The coded narratives described positive and supportive elements were titled as enablers and labelled with green colours (magnitude codes). In contrast, women's accounts indicating impeding elements to their promotion journey were named barriers and illustrated with red colours (magnitude codes). The further analyses of coded data as enablers or barriers have revealed their origins: they were sourced from study participants' personal, interpersonal, or institutional contexts. Next, coded data has been grouped into personal, interpersonal, and

institutional factors (enablers or barriers). Therefore, three clusters of responses- identifying barriers and enablers resulting from the personal, interpersonal, or institutional contexts- have been drawn from study participants' biographies regarding promotion outcomes. For instance, coded interview scripts that contained claims about the impact of academic credentials in the form of PhD, publication, experience, attitudes, or actions were assigned the title of personal factors. On the other hand, across the coded data, interview units that highlighted interpersonal/interactional processes such as actions undertaken by colleagues and academic bosses to support or constrain women's career progression on their path towards professorship were labelled as interpersonal factors. Lastly, women's narratives attributed to promotion systems, university promotion policies, and organisational practices for their positive or negative promotion experiences were coded as institutional factors.

All thirty study participants ultimately reached the professorial position, in eighteen cases progressing smoothly without any critical interruption, six cases experienced slight interruptions along the way, and six had multiple interconnected hurdles across their promotion trajectory. The respondents have then distributed into three types of promotion trajectories as per the magnitude of positive and negative influences that the researcher assessed through the lens of magnitude coding. This classification of participants into three categories was largely data-driven as women cited different combinations of personal, interpersonal, and institutional enablers and barriers. Furthermore, combining theory-driven and emergent concepts, I decided on titles (researcher assigned assessment) for these categories according to the presence, severity, and frequency of perceived positive and negative impact of personal, interpersonal and institutional factors (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). First, those interview data that contained claims of timely and uninterrupted promotion experiences were categorised as a fast-track promotion trajectory. Next, cases wherein women experienced temporary and minor-scale interruptions were classed as slightly interrupted promotion routes. Finally, those women who repeatedly experienced overlapped and multiple hurdles and interruptions were grouped as interrupted promotion journeys.

These three categories of study participants for cross-case comparison have been drawn at the second coding stage to define and discuss similarities and differences in study participants' promotion experiences. For this, table-15 below illustrates the key points of similarity and differences between and across the categories of study participants. Table-15 (case-ordered & conceptually clustered) placed participants as per category from fast-track promotion journey to interrupted promotion history in the second column from the left side. Influential factors, both negative and positive, ranging from personal to institutional, are summarised and entered in the respective columns. Again, traffic light coding methodology is applied to illustrate three kinds of promotion experiences: a) fast-track routes, b) slightly interrupted, and c) interrupted routes were labelled with green, yellow, and red codes, respectively.

Similarly, the role of various emergent influential themes was illustrated in cell entries through traffic light colouring. Factors that have been perceived as enablers were labelled as green. The negative contribution of emergent themes was labelled as red. At the same time, the elements noted to experience as both an enabler and hurdle were coded as amber.

Data matrix display shows similarity and contrast concerning vital influential elements of personal, interpersonal, and structural factors. Such as, the main difference between female professors with a fast-track promotion journey and professors who were delayed is the deployment of networks by competing colleagues, and promotion system gaps cause interruptions in reaching the professorial position. Moreover, the primary use of the following matrix display is to present a clear graphic basis for different claims made as an explanation by study participants for their diverse career promotion experiences. Such as for analytic purposes, this matrix display is set to clustering, cataloguing, and comparing all the claims about being more competitive and having merit leading to a smooth promotion journey with all claim-making about politics and system faults causing interrupted promotion journeys for analysis. In conclusion, the main logic behind the matrix display is to identify and present categories of cases with different combinations of influential factors. Thus, merit networks (international referees, publications, qualifications) that allowed them to succeed and negative networking

(political manoeuvring) delayed women's promotion outcomes are placed in opposition by outlining them with a traffic light coding.

Table-15 Categorization of Study Participants according to the Relative Contribution of Perceived Enablers of and Barriers to their Promotion to the Professorial Position

Sr.	Promotion track Fast track/ uninterrupted (18)	Personal factors			Interpersonal	Institutional	Strategies
		Publications	International referee letter	Pioneer in Academics field of specialization			ND
1	Momina	Publications	ND	ND	ND	Fair & timely promotion boards	ND
2	Nazia	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Less competitive + fewer competitors	ND
3	Rubab	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Fair + tough competition	ND
4	Nadia	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Fair & timely promotion+ fewer competitors	ND
5	Ruqia	Publications	ND	ND	Anticompetitive practices Informed/ guided by colleagues	Fair competition & promotion board	ND
6	Yaseem	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Fair competition	ND
7	Mirza	Publications	ND	Pioneer in academic specialization	Temporary age discredit + favouritism for senior colleague	Fair & timely competition	ND
8	Saba	Research outcomes	ND	Non-academic field experience	N/D	Fair & timely promotion	ND
9	Ghazal	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Less competitive criteria+ fewer research requirements	ND
10	Farakhinda	Publications	ND	ND	Temporary delayed announcement+ devaluing attitude	Fair competition and unbiased system	ND

11	Nasimaa	Publication	ND	ND	N/D	Fair &timely+ ample opportunities	ND
12	Shazia	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Fair & timely + ample opportunity	ND
13	Reema	Publications	ND	Pioneer in academic specialization	N/D	Fair & timely promotion boards	ND
14	Fatima	Publications	ND	Pioneer in academic specialization	N/D	Fair + timely	ND
15	Amber	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Timely & fair competition	ND
16	Naeema	Publications	ND	Pioneer in academic specialization	Age discredit favouritism for senior	N/D	ND
17	Noureen	Publication	ND	Pioneer in academic specialization	N/D	Fair /unbiased & timely promotion board	ND
18	Sarwat	Publications	ND	ND	N/D	Fair &timely promotion boards	ND
Slightly interrupted (6)							
19	Sabira	Publications	ND	ND	Insecure boss+ anticompetitive practices	Fair competition	ND
20	Shabnum	Publications	International referee letter	Pioneer in academic specialization	Biased form of inference+ favouritism +age discredit +organizational connections	System drawbacks	ND
21	Neelam	Publications	International referee letter	ND	Favoritism +biased form of inference + intimate connections+ unfair advantage	Fair competition	ND
22	Tabinda	Publications	ND	Shy and hesitant to apply in the presence of senior	N/D	Delayed &insufficient opportunities	ND

				colleagues in lower ranks			
23	Faiza	Publications	ND	ND	Favouritism +biased form of inference + organizational network+ unfair advantage+ unfair treatment	N/D	voiced against unfair treatment
24	Sameen	Publications	ND	ND	Insecure & biased boss+ scheming to delay, unfair treatment	ND	Left to join another university
Interrupted (6)							
25	Mubeena	Publications	international reference letter	ND	Networks Anti-competitive practices+ political + delayed opportunities+ unfair treatment, blocked access to opportunity	Fair &tough promotion selection procedures, delayed and irregular promotion board, insufficient opportunity	ND
26	Zara	Publications	international referee letter	ND	Political connections+ anticompetitive practices+ unfair treatment+ delayed announcements	Delayed & insufficient opportunities	voiced +left + seek support from authority
27	Jabeen	Publications	international referee letter	ND	Unfair treatment+ family connections+ favouritism + delayed opportunities, biased boss	Delayed & insufficient opportunities	Seek support from authority
28	Komal	Publications	International referee letter	ND	Colleague's anti-competitive practices, biased boss	Delayed and irregular promotion boards, unbiased system	seek support from the political network
29	Mehak	Publications	ND	ND	Political connections + scheming by colleagues + delayed &lack of opportunities +organizational politics	Delayed & insufficient opportunities, irregular promotion selection boards	Voiced, approach to authority

30	Naveeda	Publications	ND	ND	Favouritism+ organizational networks+ unfair advantage	Delayed & insufficient opportunities, irregular promotion selection boards	Voiced+ left to join another university

5.3 Fast-Track Promotion Trajectory

More than half of the interviewees in the study (18/30) had progressed up the academic hierarchy without significant delays and losses, which allowed me to classify their promotion journey as a fast-track route. In response to questions asked about their promotion experiences, these women cited both personal and institutional factors that either individually or in combination acted to shape their smooth promotion selections against different academic designations. These are 1) academic qualifications and research performance, 2) meritocratic fair procedures, 3) regulated and structured promotion system, and 4) less competitive promotion selection boards. Together with highlighting the influence of enabling factors, a small subset of four women mentioned temporary and short-lived hurdles that had not significantly delayed their promotion to upper grades. Though all women from this category stated the influence of personal and structural factors, they used various notions to explain the implications of these influential factors for their fast-track promotion trajectories. All women with a fast-track promotion trajectory linked their outstanding academic record and research performance to their passion for writing in their field of specialisation. In addition, they believed their research performance was the leading factor for their career success whenever they got a promotion opportunity. For example, Momina stated how she was easily promoted to senior ranks because of her passion for research and writing, which enabled her to secure research requirements for promotion:

> I started writing articles during my PhD. I never wrote for the promotion's requirements; instead, only for my research passion. I realised the importance of those articles when I applied for the announced associate professor seats. Other faculty members were rushing toward writing articles, but (thanks to God) I had secured the required number of articles. And when I applied for the professor, my articles were even more than promotion requirements.

While a sub-set of four women specifically highlighted their understanding of the importance of academic publications for career success that kept them well prepared and well published. Thus, they did not face any delays and problems during promotion selection interviews due to their career vigilance in maintaining the required number of research publications before announcing the promotion

opportunity. It suggests that women's ambition for writing articles and their practice of maintaining publications were the underlying factor that facilitated their quick and smooth promotion. Without any exception, all eighteen women highlighted the contribution of their academic performance to their smooth promotion outcomes. In addition, all these women unanimously connected their uninterrupted promotion outcomes to the occurrence of fair and regularised promotion selection boards. They identified fair, structured, and timely promotion selections as central promotion systems in their respective departments or universities. These women believed that regulated and meritocratic promotion selection boards have complemented their research performance and led to their fast-track promotion trajectories.

While stating their promotion experiences, a subset of five participants' accounts cited frequent recruitment and promotion opportunities linked to the expanding university structures for quick promotion outcomes. They further stated that promotion section boards were not as challenging and competitive as they were pioneers in their academic field of specialisation. These women did not face competition as they were the first to specialise in their specific field of research, so they were promoted without many competitive contestants. Fatima excitedly shared that she was promoted throughout her career without any competitive candidate due to her academic specialisation:

> I have been very fortunate because nobody was in my competition compared to my degrees. Until the professor's place, no one specialised in Art Theory except me in Pakistan. Now people are coming into this field, and it will be competitive. So, in that sense, it was easy for me at that time.

In the same way, Mirza, with fast-track promotion route, claimed that she achieved uninterrupted promotion success via both her competitive academic specialisation and the structured, regularised, and fair promotion system in her university:

> It had happened at a good time and in the right way. At that time, I was the only one in Pakistan with a specialisation in my field of research. Perhaps such a good track record as I said that such as the gold medal, you know, PhD from Cambridge, and postdoc with such a short time consecutively. And definitely, credit also went to the university's fair system of selection that made it possible for me to get promoted without any delays.

Moreover, a subset of nine women believed they were successful because the system was unbiased; they added less competitive promotion criteria as another dimension of promotion structures in their universities. They linked their fast-track promotion trajectories to their performance and less competitive and non-research-oriented promotion requirements in universities. In the past, research publications and PhDs were not solely emphasised criteria for promotion from junior ranks of lectureship to assistant professor. For example, while comparing the promotion criteria of her time with current academic work conditions, Ghazal believed that non-research-oriented promotion norms and few publication requirements made her get promoted without any tough competition:

> In our times, universities were mostly teaching universities. There was a lack of focus and emphasis on research. I am personally involved in research and publishing out of my own ambitions. I never faced any tough competition in my promotion as, during our times, it was not difficult. Now eligibility criteria are too demanding, and the teaching load has also increased.

In the same way, Nadia gave the credit for her fast-track promotion experiences to both her academic talent and less-competitive promotion context:

> Somehow, I felt fortunate as I did not confront difficulties during different phases of my promotional career. Thank God I always fulfilled the requirements whenever promotion opportunities come to me. Another factor is that there very few people were competing at our time. Now the competition and requirements are grown to a very high level. There was no such competition for a position that perhaps made my career on the fast track back in our time.

Most of the women suggested that promotion interviews were not highly competitive as few people were there to compete with them in their field of specialisation. Conversely, only one interviewee, Rub, stated a fair but tough competition promotion selection board as all candidates had strong and competitive academic profiles. She detailed her experiences in the following way:

> Throughout my promotion, I have been selected through fair and tough competition. Especially when I gave the interview for the professor, that was the hardest decision as all of us were PhD, and all had strong CVs in terms of relevant experience & publications. Alhumdullilia (all thanks to God), I was again on the top. It was a pride moment with the competition and tension as a very competitive and challenging interview.

She further pointed out that merit was a privilege in the local (national) context, where promotion selection boards were likely to exploit rules to benefit certain people at the expense of demeaning merit. ''I must say that they did not disturb the merit; this is their kindness. What could I do if they could not follow the merit'', she added. Like Rub, women in this study with interrupted promotion experiences highlighted the presence of organisational culture to manipulate rules and merit in promotion selection decisions that had delayed their promotion outcomes. This theme will be discussed in the interrupted promotion routes section.

All eighteen women linked their fast-track promotion trajectories to their academic performance and structured, fair, and merit-based promotion systems that allowed them to move up the academic hierarchy without significant hurdles and interruptions. Among them, four interviewees referred to minor hurdles linked to workplace relations that temporarily discredited their academic eligibility or delayed them from gaining promotion opportunities. These women suggested that their colleagues manipulated the rules and deployed anti-competitive practices to gain an unfair advantage at the expense of creating temporary delays in their promotion chances. For example, Naeema and Mirza shared that they had been discredited in availing promotion chances due to their age and norms of favouritism practised commonly at their workplaces. Both were told to wait briefly to favour senior colleagues whose promotions were stuck due to their lack of required research publications. Naeema stated:

> People used to be promoted without having PhDs in the past. In the early 80s, there was beginning a trend of emphasising publications. I became a well-published researcher. Even as a lecturer, international publications. Now I got a career boost from that. I became an assistant professor quickly and then an associated professor within a few years. And professor took some time because my teacher was competing with me. She did not have requisite publications, which I did. Time was given to her to complete publications.

In Naeema's case, a due promotion board was held back for a year to allow a senior colleague to upgrade her research work compared to Naeema, who has already fulfilled all requirements. Mirza also experienced short-term delays in her promotion due to her age and culture of favouring senior faculty members. Mirza completed a

PhD and postdoc before entering an academic career. So, she was eligible to be directly recruited as an assistant professor because of postdoc qualifications, but she was appointed a lecturer instead. Mirza shared the following biography in response to the question asked about how her academic career began to progress:

> I was appointed as a lecturer because an assistant professor's vacant seat was unavailable. Later, the department announced two vacancies. One was for the lecturer and the other for the assistant professor. By merit, I fulfilled all requirements to apply for assistant professor. However, I was asked to apply for the junior position of lectureship instead. Another person was ten years senior to me, and the department was interested in regulating him. That is why he was appointed as an assistant professor, and I was a lecturer permanently. However, a seat was vacant within a year, and then I was promoted to assistant professor.

Mirza linked temporary delay and disadvantages to organisational cultural beliefs that young faculty members have a long career time to avail opportunities. So, seniors with low profiles were routinely promoted compared to young faculty members with higher achievements. In contrast, Ruqia accounted for her competing male colleague who used his connections and arranged a promotion selection board for the professor post when she was abroad for postdoc training. By promotion rules, interview selection boards could not be arranged if an applicant was outside the country and took permission before leaving. She told, ''he attempted to undo my name from candidates aimed to exclude me from the competition so boards can be arranged''. According to Ruqia, she was able to set off her colleague's scheming by getting informed by another colleague and came back to Pakistan to appear before the promotion selection board. Ruqia's description was an example of mixed experiences related to workplace relations. On one side, her colleague's uncompetitive interference professionally constrained her; however, having the social capital of supportive colleagues enabled her to overcome schemed barriers. Farkhinda, another participant with narratives of minor difficulties, shared that colleague at the time of her promotion for the professorship indirectly devalued/ discredited her academic achievements. She described:

> What happened was much hidden. I have been teased and stressed by colleagues that my credentials were not better than other candidates' CVs. But thanks to Allah Almighty, my paperwork was completed, and I had

> fulfilled all the requirements. However, such teasing and discrediting interaction really affected me emotionally.

The logic behind assigning these four women to fast-track routes despite sharing emotional and practical barriers is that their narratives- identifying promotion experiences were good and smooth overall. According to them, en-route hurdles were minor and short-lived and did not impact their promotion journeys by a great length. The rest of the fourteen participants did not mention any harmful interference from colleagues. They believed that even with the organisational culture of using social networks and manipulating merit to support favoured candidates in selection procedures, their promotion journeys were not affected by these biased forms of interference.

All eighteen women appreciated the contribution of meritocratic and structured promotion selection boards to their uninterrupted promotion outcomes. In addition, they accounted for their research performance for their timely success. All claimed that they were well-prepared and well-published before the promotion announcement of academic designations of different ranks. In brief, all respondents with a fast-track promotion history often used the terms 'lucky' and 'fortunate' to signify their promotion gains without hindrances and delays. For this, they unanimously gave credit to their academic credentials. In addition, they highlighted the role of some key features of university promotion systems (regularised & structured promotion boards, less requirement for research publications) that caused smooth promotion journeys.

5.4 Slightly Interrupted Promotion Trajectory

Six women in the study were classed as having a slightly interrupted promotion trajectory based on their reporting of a range of interpersonal factors that inhibited these women's access to promotion opportunities during their career phases. However, women's experiences vary in relation to their colleagues' deceitful acts of interference to limit these women's access to promotion opportunities or delay their promotion outcomes. Similar to the study participants with fast-track promotion routes from the first category, these six women also stated their academic research performance was exceptional and fulfilled the promotion requirements. However,

according to these women, their academic performance and achievements caused professional insecurities among competing colleagues. As a result, they faced biased and discriminatory treatment planned/schemed by insecure colleagues and bosses to constrain their chances of accessing promotion opportunities. In parallel with the first category of eighteen participants, this second category of six women also credited the university's promotion procedures that counted merit and fair competition. However, these women referred to different anti-competitive practices undertaken by colleagues to disadvantage their promotion trajectories. Favouritism, biased forms of interference, family connections, political connections, organisational/workplace networks, and intimate connections were claimed to be employed by competing colleagues against their (the interviewees') qualification, experience, publications, and merit.

For example, Sameen, and Sabira, two of the six women from this category, linked their early career promotion to fair and merit-based procedures and their research performance. Conversely, some delays these two women faced in their promotion to a professorial position were suggested to have come from unfair treatment and manipulation of authority. They both identified varied ways their colleagues and bosses were involved in stopping or excluding them from equal promotion opportunities. According to Sameen, her early career promotion from lecturer to assistant professor was quick and without hurdles. However, later her promotion to higher ranks was constrained because of the negative role played by her insecure and biased bosses:

> My promotion from lecturer to assistant professor was easy because I had an excellent head of the department who always ran the departmental matters on merit. However, later, when I applied for associate professor, my new boss blocked me every time though I met all requirements. So ultimately, I left and joined another university with a higher grade as an associate professor. Although I deserved to be promoted to associate professor in my previous university job.

Sameen joined the new university as an associate professor. At the new place, she described facing further delays for her promotion to the professorship. She detailed how her academically strong credentials made her female boss insecure, who then schemed to hold back promotion

interviews in order to avoid having competitive colleagues for the most senior administrative position:

> To reach a professorship took a further seven years. My publications were complete. Nevertheless, women can also be very challenging in some ways. University advertised post in 2003. But my boss (a woman) was very scared as she was well aware of my academic credentials. She believed that if other women like me became a professor, they would easily compete with her for leadership positions. So, she did not want to allow anybody to become a professor to compete with her for the senior authority post. The interviews were intentionally delayed and held in 2007 when she was retiring.

The above descriptions by Sameen showed how her boss used the power attached to academic and administrative leadership positions to influence institutional arrangements and structured procedures for unfair advantages. It can be further inferred that people in powerful positions sometimes seemed stronger than systems. As a result, structures become contingent on persons' choices who are expected to run the system through structured and imperial rules. Sabira was also promoted to associate professor without any interruption. She attributed her academic records and research outcomes as the leading factor to her speedy and smooth promotion to associate professor.

Sabira described how her passion for research advantaged her throughout her promotion journey:

> My application for promotion to every position always stood out compared to my competitors, with many differences in terms of my academic achievements. It was my performance before the selection board that I got this opportunity to be selected here. I have written articles and two books out of my passion for my academic discipline. All this research work was not a requirement for promotion then. However, my passion for this subject and my love to do something drive me to involve in research.

Later for promotion to the professorial position, Sabira, like Sameen, reported facing delays due to her female boss's professional insecurities. She believed that when people in a senior post could not compete on merit, then they become fearful and because of this fear, they create hurdles for others. Added further, she said:

> When I did apply for the professor, then I had 40 articles. A very strange thing happened. My chairperson stopped me from applying for the professorial position to avoid competition. She said that she had the right at first to apply.

> So, 'I did apply first, and you should not.' I did agree and did not apply. When she was promoted without competition, a seat was again advertised after one year. I applied for that afterwards and was promoted to a professorship with one year delay.

Sameen's and Sabira's explanations for the unfair treatment by their bosses identified some differences in their experiences. Sameen's boss was already a professor. According to Sameen, delaying the announcement of due promotion boards on time was her boss's scheming (who occupied the senior leadership role) to avoid having other professors in the university who could compete with her for the authority position. In contrast, Sabira and her boss were competing for a promotion to the professorial position. Using her organisational authority, Sameen's boss implicitly schemed to linger on the promotion selection boards. Sabira's boss, however, directly persuaded her not to apply for the promotion opportunity until she would be promoted without having Sabira as another competitive candidate. The common element between Sameen and Sabira's experiences was their bosses' insecurity about competing with them on merit. Thus, they used their position of authority to limit these women's chances of equal and timely promotion opportunities.

Another sub-set of three women from this category cited discrimination in their chances of being promoted on merit due to their bosses who used their authority and manipulated rules to support their favourite colleagues. These three women commonly used the binary opposition between talents versus uncompetitive practices and merit versus overturned rules as story-telling devices to explain their promotion interruptions. In their narratives, organisational connections and workplace relations are framed as negative networks deployed by politically connected colleagues to gain promotion unfairly at the expense of disadvantaging these women's promotion trajectories. These women defined themselves as embracing non-political outlooks and relying on or following merit to advance their careers. For example, Faiza described that the prevalence of political and cultural attitudes at the workplace towards developing and using resourceful connections caused career damage to people of apolitical or non-political approaches like her:

> Fortunately, my promotion was smooth except for an unpleasant situation when qualifying for associate professor. Rather than arranging a selection interview on time, my chairman had re-advertised this post to favour one of the male colleagues, who was a two-year junior. Now, after two years, he was eligible for that post too. Actually, they wanted me not to be a senior to him. I am the kind of person who always focuses on my work and never gets involved in politics. So, I was unaware of how people in my surroundings manipulated the situations to get promoted rather than waiting to be chosen on merit.

Faiza's descriptions showed that her boss held back the promotion interview for two years, which unfairly delayed Faiza's due promotion. Moreover, after that, the boss re-advertised promotion selection boards to inappropriately give a junior colleague the chance to enter the competition when he became eligible. On the other hand, Neelam stated not being promoted from lecturer to assistant professor despite having an excellent record of publication due to her boss's favouritism for another colleague; she told:

> In my whole career, nothing terrible happened more than this. When I applied for the post of assistant professor at that time, I had 8 or 9 publications out of my interest. Some of them were in impact factor journals though there was no understanding of the impact factor in that era. Compared to me, the other lady was nil in publications. However, she was the boss's favourite and took favours by developing intimate relations with him. So, she got selected, and I was not—too much discrimination.

Neelam's narrative identified the collective influence of system paucities and inappropriate forms of interference. A few decades earlier, partially structured criteria to evaluate the quantity and quality of research and the lack of emphasis on research publications for early-career promotion have made it easy for a person in authority (Neelam's boss) to manipulate merit in order to favour other colleagues. Earlier, Neelam significantly credited her father for his contribution to shaping her academic writing skills. According to Neelam, the habit of writing made her well prepared for promotion opportunity requirements. However, despite having outstanding research publications, she was not promoted to assistant professor due to the culture of favouring others on personal connections in her department.

Using informal social connections and inappropriate forms of interference to manipulate rules for getting promotional benefits from lecturer to assistant professor were likely in place as publications were not the sole eligibility criteria for promotion

until assistant professor a few years before. In contrast, such political scheming for promotion to the professor's senior rank was unlikely to be used because promotion applications for associate and full professorial positions could not be processed without academic research outcomes. Moreover, promotion to senior ranks (associate and full professor) required candidates' academic credentials and research publications must be evaluated and marked by foreign academicians. Reports from foreign evaluators are then read on the selection board. Thus, if two of the three foreign evaluators' reports assigned excellent remarks, he or she must be selected for professorship alongside the candidate's performance in front of the selection board. As per this procedure, Neelam and Faiza escaped from further exploitation and discrimination they faced during their early career promotion stages due to the political manoeuvring of their colleagues. In the later stages of her career promotion, Neelam mentioned progressing quickly due to the objectively structured performance assessment criteria. She joyfully shared:

> Then the post of associate professor came after six months, and I was directly promoted to associate professor from the lecturer. I was eligible because of my publications for associate professor. And the lady who was favoured at the expense of disqualifying me, she could not even apply. Allah(God) did justice. I was senior to her after some time. And then, without hurdles and delays, I reached the professorial position. Again it was quick because of my exceptional research performance.

In contrast to Neelam and Faiza, Shabnum was quickly promoted from lecturer to associate professor. However, she faced temporary delays in her promotion to the professorial position. Although the earlier claims-making by Neelam suggested that promotion to full professor and even to associate professor were based on 'objective' criteria, Shabnum's claims revealed that unfairness even operated at a higher level. Shabnum also linked discrimination faced in her promotion journey to the politically connected colleagues involved in scheming rules to favour a particular colleague. For example, she described how promotion rules were altered to benefit a senior colleague who would be retired without being promoted as a professor. This deployment temporarily put Shabnum out of the competition despite fulfilling all required demands, including publication, funded research projects, student supervision and excellent foreign evaluation reports. According to Shabnum, her

extraordinary foreign evaluation reports, however, saved her from being excluded from the selection process:

> All three foreign referee reports were decisive in my favour as nobody did work in my research field before. So, it could not be turned out so easily. However, with higher authorities' consent, the department made a unique decision by devising two categories of the age group for promotion to the professorship. Like, one group comprised of faculty members with many chances in future due to their age, and the second group contains those academics who were very close to retirement. So a senior colleague was promoted to a professor just a few months before his retirement even though I was on top according to my foreign evaluation. And the day he retired from that day onward, I would be appointed as professor.

Tabinda, the sixth interviewee from this group, achieved quick promotion to associate professor without hurdles. However, she was promoted to a professorship just one year before her retirement. According to her, the lack of opportunities and her attitudes caused delays in reaching the professorial position. In addition, Tabinda stated that she suffered more in her promotion journey due to her personality. For this, she linked her shyness and respect for her senior colleagues to her hesitation to avail promotion opportunities:

> I feared having a professorship despite all eligibility. Because if I were promoted to professor, I would become senior to all colleagues once they remained my teachers and elder. They were my juniors in service as they did their PhDs a few years after my Ph.D. So I never applied for the post of a professor as their competitive candidate. So I waited for them to be promoted before me.

Tabinda's description can be understood in broader cultural values that emphasise and moralise respect for elders across public and private regimes and even at the expense of having personal disadvantages. Moreover, in most cases, the study participants, like Tabinda, started their academic careers at the same institutions where they acquired their university degrees. The women in the sample, who mentioned facing promotional delays due to senior colleagues, added that their competing colleagues were their teachers once. Therefore, competing with seniors had created moral and organisational pressures on them to hold back promotion until the seniors were promoted. Tabinda also said that despite the lack of promotion opportunities, she did not consider using her organisational connections to request

academic authorities to announce positions compared to other people who routinely did that in the university system for promotional benefits.

Professional insecurities and departmental politics were identified as significant explanations for interviewed women's promotional delays in this second category. It means insecure colleagues who were afraid of being disqualified while competing with these women on merit employed different ways to control and subvert the women's equal chances of promotion. Additionally, women with slightly interrupted promotion biographies suggested that the organisational promotion process in the local (national) context was embedded/grounded in the customary values and practices of using political or social connections to gain personal promotional advantages. As evidence, the women in this group experienced temporary delays in their promotion outcomes due to the influential connections used by their colleagues to get their promotion gains. On the other side, for the higher-level promotions, the means of academic network resources (reference letters) have been specified as helpful in advancing these women by overcoming internal network resources being deployed against them. As a result, all these interviewees gained full professorships despite social network actions that temporarily inhibited them from being promoted. In brief, a common narrative/story-telling device that women used to explain their success is the binary opposition between their talents versus their colleagues' scheming acts of interference. Initially, merit was temporarily discounted to gain an unfair advantage through these inappropriate forms of networks. However, 'merit' was later reinstated to evaluate women's performance and counted to explain why they did get promoted.

5.5 Interrupted Promotion Trajectory

A group of six women in the study were classified into the interrupted promotion experiences category based on their narratives. They experienced multiple overlapping factors that constrained their career across different phases of their promotion trajectories. For example, a) lack of promotion opportunities, b) use of political connections, c) un-empathetic leaders, d) struggle to approach system support and e) decision to leave the university were responses coded and clustered from these women's narratives. They cited both barriers on their way to

professorship and their strategies to overcome these hurdles. Again, women in this group presented themselves academically more competitive than other candidates; however, they were repeatedly inhibited from moving up the organisational hierarchy due to workplace politics and drawbacks in the promotion system.

Unlike the interviewees from the first two categories, who linked their smooth promotion experiences to the happening of regularised and structured promotion selection boards, all women in this current group mentioned limited promotion opportunities and partially unstructured and irregular promotion procedures in their respective departments that caused multiple delays. However, while recounting promotion experiences, all these women mentioned that they met the promotion criteria and were eligible to apply against various academic designations in due time in their career routes. Nevertheless, they experienced delays resulting from the scarcity of academic positions, particularly a lack of promotion opportunities for top-level positions of professors. Moreover, they had some delays linked to the sporadic and irregular processing of promotion selection boards. Variations exist in women's experiences regarding what causes recklessness in promotion procedures. Like Zara stated to face delays due to the irregularities in promotion processes linked to sluggish management:

> I kept waiting an entire year as the university did not make a TTS assessment (Tenure Track System) for my due promotion to the professor, so it delayed the promotion process. Because of these procedural delays, I was stuck in my career even though I met the criteria of professorship a couple of years before the seat was announced.

In the same way, the rest of the women from this group mentioned having a long wait to be promoted across the different phases of their career trajectory due to the non-availability of vacant academic positions in their respective departments and other system-related hurdles. All six women in this group were from the social science departments. They believed there were generally fewer chances of promotion in their field of studies than in biological sciences because the allocation of academic positions in their departments was not made regularly. Therefore, they experienced delays at different promotion stages due to the system's insufficient chances of selection and irregularities in selection procedures. Mehak linked the lack of

promotion opportunities to the structural position of her academic department in the national context of Pakistan, wherein media and politics come together to influence internal academic matters of her department. She told:

> The VCs in the media sciences department have to please many people. And there is always pressure from people of media and political backgrounds on VC whenever it comes to the policies, especially the promotion decisions. So, I have suffered more as it is the Media department.

Mehak further explained that due to the interference of national political and media figures, she was stuck across different phases of her promotion for a long time. According to Mehak:

> Rather than regulating the promotion selection boards on merit that could support permanent faculty members like me to apply for upper-level positions, academic leaders routinely appointed contractual faculty to vacant positions to please interconnected internal and external political networks.

At the same time, Jabeen shared that she experienced a long wait for the promotion to professorship due to the political and legal clashes at the university level. She explained how undue/unfair advantage to the wife of the vice-chancellor and mishandling of university management held back promotion selection boards for an extended period:

> I am one of the victims who suffered due to the university's legal battle resulting from a clash between two groups of faculty members who took the case to court. As per the court's order, interview boards had been suspended across the university. University management further spoiled the situation by irregularly processing promotion interview boards. In 2017, one year before my retirement, I was promoted to professorship though I fulfilled the criteria in 2008. This post was advertised in 2009, but the interview was held in 2017 due to the culture of favouring others on personal choices and system gaps.

Jabeen was saddened while sharing how the interweaving influence of mismanagement of the system and uncompetitive practices caused serious and long-term losses to her career. She was promoted just one year before her retirement even though she met all required qualifications and applied for the post a decade before the actual occurrence of the promotion selection interview board. In addition to the negative role of system irregularities in shaping interrupted promotion experiences, an analysis of these women's promotion biographies revealed claims-making

regarding using political connections (non-merit-based networks) by colleagues to gain an unfair advantage. However, women's experiences vary to some extent in terms of different strategies that their colleagues deployed to constrain these women's chances to access promotion opportunities or exclude them from competition for promotion positions. For example, a sub-category of four women reported the detrimental impact they experienced along their promotion trajectory due to the political scheming of their competing colleagues. Mehak, who earlier mentioned facing delays due to lack of promotion opportunities and system-linked losses, further connected her disadvantageous promotion experiences with her competing colleague's un-competitive interference. Mehak added that her colleague dismantled fair competition by using his organisational connections and approaching academic authorities for personal career advantages:

> My male colleague used the influences at the promotion time, but I did not. He became senior to me through his political connections. That is how political networking at the workplace disadvantage people like me who just work through honesty and integrity. See how the neutral and formal promotion process was manipulated for personal benefits.

Voicing multiple interrelated difficulties that Komal (another woman with multiple delays) faced throughout her promotion journey, she also identified the manipulative role of her insecure colleague, who was afraid of competing with her on equal grounds. She shared how her colleague blocked Komal's application for the post of professor at the stage of evaluation by using his political connections and networking:

> We both started our academic careers together as a lecturer, and then I was promoted to assistant professor. I was selected based on my performance in the promotion interview. After that, he did not risk letting me reach the interview stage to compete with him. At the time of promotion to the professorship, I had been excluded even from the evaluation process based on quite irrational points.

Komal's competing colleague used his links with administration and academic leadership as he was an active member of a faculty organisation backed by religious lobbies. As a result, Komal's application was seized to process by the management

and later, she was informed about declaring ineligible by her dean despite meeting all requirements. She detailed:

> Management used to make alluring statements that we had forwarded the case of both candidates for approval. However, they had kept me in the dark for six months. And during that, all processing for my colleague was done. He was the only candidate, so he was promoted to professorship without having me as his competing candidate

Like Naeema and Mirza from the first category and Shabnum from the second group, Mubeena reported facing career disadvantages in her promotion trajectory due to her age. Like those women, Mubeena had competing colleagues who were older. However, they were junior in academic rank or had lesser research achievements than Mubeena. So, in Mubeena's case, similar to Naeema, the advertisement for the academic post was held back until colleagues who were older in years became eligible to apply. However, in contrast to women from the first two categories, who reported facing short-term delays due to the institutional culture of favouring senior colleagues for promotion despite their research performance gaps, Mubeena faced manipulation and delays for a more protracted period. In her words:

> I passed through a quite challenging time and faced many hurdles throughout my promotion journey. When the position of (associate professor) became vacant, senior faculty members did not let it get advertised. For nine years, the post was not being processed. Until they became eligible to apply for it. All of them were males and had created hurdles in what they could do in their capacities

The analysis of these four women's narratives revealed a common claim-making. In all these cases, male colleagues were reported to involve in using political connections and manipulating rules to subvert women's promotion opportunities. In addition, they all claimed that men had the ability and preference to make connections and use them for personal and professional benefits compared to women. In brief, given the insufficient promotion opportunities and system drawbacks, these women were also restricted in accessing scarcely available institutional opportunities due to their colleagues' networking to manipulate merit. The leading factor frequently reported for this discriminatory treatment was the active involvement of women's competing colleagues to engage influential

organisational connections to get their tasks of professional gains done at the expense of delaying, manipulating, and blocking these women's career progression.

The interviewees in the third category also mentioned experiencing unprofessional, unempathetic, and non-considering responses from academic leadership towards their promotion needs and hurdles. In addition, these women cited their bosses' involvement in dismantling their equal chances of availing of promotion opportunities. In her continued talk regarding adverse promotion experiences across different career phases, Mubeena added details about delays that she faced at the time of her promotion to professorship when her boss stopped her from applying for this opportunity; she explained:

> Once a senior position had been vacant, many eligible candidates competed for one professorship post. Then I came across that my foreign evaluation reports were the best. Despite this, my director told me that other candidates were being promoted to professorship as you have plenty of time and opportunities for growth and advancement. I always suffered due to this 'statement' that I have a lot of time.

Previously, Mubeena cited facing delays due to her colleagues' implicit scheming. About those colleagues, Mubeena claimed to gain an unfair advantage by holding promotion advertisements until they reached the eligibility criteria. Later in her promotion journey, Mubeena was directly restricted from applying for a promotion opportunity with the argument that she had an age advantage in accessing chances compared to a competing colleague who was senior in age but with low academic profiles. Jabeen was also disadvantaged along her promotion journey due to the non-professional behaviour of her academic bosses. She was shocked at her dean's assessment, who rejected her application for promotion to professor on a non-academic basis. Jabeen told how to favour a woman who had family links with academic leadership; she was declared ineligible to apply for the post of professor in the gender studies department:

> My own dean (male) of social sciences declared me ineligible as he said a sociologist could not be appointed as a professor in gender studies. Earlier, he appointed a retired professor of Islamic studies as the head of gender studies because her husband was a close friend of VC. Indeed, interpersonal resources and contacts play a significant role in your career success. Otherwise, you must struggle by yourself. So it was very disturbing to see my

> own dean discouraging me, despite having known me doing academic research on women's issues for many years.

This third category of six participants described interlinked restrictive factors that they faced across various stages of their promotion routes. By analysing these six women's promotion trajectories, the dearth of opportunities and lack of merit were clustered as common causes of disadvantageous promotion experiences. The main difference between slightly interrupted and interrupted promotion biographies is that women from the former group reported facing a short-lived delay due to unfair treatment and discounting of merit rules. However, compared to them, women from the latter category came across multiple hurdles linked to workplace relations and system gaps over the extended period of their promotion routes.

While referring to colleagues' uncompetitive practices, both male and female colleagues were identified as using such practices to gain unfair promotion advantages at the expense of disrupting these women's promotion routes. Again, a binary opposition commonly operates in the narratives of many interviewees based on the idea that 'other' colleagues were unfairly advantaged. However, the interviewed women rarely claimed to experience any advantages and/or disadvantages in career promotion due to their gender. Instead, eight women connected discriminatory treatment and career losses to other female colleagues. Those competing colleagues used multiple forms of alternative networking linked to family, marriage, and personal intimacies that 'they' (the interviewees) claimed allowed 'other' women to gain insider advantage, which they (the interviewee) and, by extension, also male colleagues would not be able to deploy. For example, Sameen and Sabira's female bosses kept them away from the competition, whereas Neelam's male boss disadvantaged her because another female had intimate relations with the boss. A sub-set of four women also reported facing inequality and discrimination in their chances to get promoted due to other female colleagues. However, in these cases, the beneficiary women were favoured by male bosses who manipulated rules to disadvantage the study participants.

All study participants spoke about their academic profiles and cited themselves as remarkable academically compared to competing candidates. In addition, the

interviewees (many of them at least) have a powerful sense of their entitlement to be promoted. It is interesting to have explored a common narrative device used by almost all interviewees from the second and third groups: 'good versus bad' and 'merit versus error' story-telling in their explanations for career success and temporary delays in reaching the position of professor. Nevertheless, all interviewees gained full professorships. For this, the study participants with interrupted experiences appeared to convince that they were competent and deserved to be successful, whilst every barrier results from system shortcomings and biased forms of interference/unfairness. It is useful to note that such a self-belief may explain something about their success. This strong self-belief would 'act' to drive a person forward – like a deeply held conviction to grow and advance. In other words, it does seem that self-confidence and a deep sense of entitlement are drivers of these women's success. Whether or not they were genuinely better than everyone else is not within the scope of my research. However, the fact that study participants believed they were superior to everyone else seems very clear, symbolising remarkable and unique features displayed by women in a patriarchal society. The above diagram has also outlined these claims across the sample of thirty interviewees. Study findings reveal a contrasting understanding to the existing literature, which found that women's doubted self-perception about their abilities was the source of their hesitation to avail of career promotion opportunities (Baker, 2010; Trusson and Rowley,2022). Contrarily, women professors in my study were so strong in their beliefs that they deserved the highest level of academic advancement and were better than everyone else. In brief, all participants claimed 'merit' recognised and rewarded their competencies for complementing their career progression. On the other hand, system faults, perceived 'networks' and manipulations deployed against them were claimed for their career delays.

5.6 Women's Responses to Barriers to their Promotion Trajectory

Analysis of women's promotion biographies has also identified how these women responded to various factors that delayed and interrupted different stages of their promotion trajectories. Fourteen participants across three categories with various levels of interrupted promotion experiences pointed to the means of networks and

sometimes system drawbacks when explaining how they were disadvantaged. As a first response, they all chose to remain silent on unfair treatment by colleagues or system-related disadvantages. However, the interviewees from the third category referred to different strategies employed in handling multiple delays linked to informal networking and system irregularities. These are: 1) leaving the university to join a better workplace, 2) appealing to academic leadership to fix system disadvantages, and 3) using social networks. Nearly half of the study participants (14/30) linked their promotional disadvantages of different ranges to political strategies used by their colleagues to advance their promotional gains at the expense of delaying these women's promotion routes. Nevertheless, all women in the study showed a distaste for approaching and using influential organisational connections for their career achievements.

Earlier, four women across three categories said they faced delays because the departmental or university authorities decided to hold promotion advertisements so the preferred competing colleagues could reach eligibility criteria. Conversely, when Komal needed the same career concession, she mentioned remaining silent rather than approaching support from organisational connections. 'Komal said, ''it was commonly practised to stop advertising the post if some faculty member needs some delay due to reaching his/her eligibility''. She described further:

> When I was going to promote from assistant to associate professor, my PhD thesis was in an evaluation process. One evaluation report had come up, and the second was almost going to declare. So I could not be eligible to apply for this promotion. Though after one month, my result was announced. It was not a matter of a one-year delay. But I did not request anyone. I was hesitant to discuss and request my head of department.

A typical story-telling device that interviewees often used was to point to other people's networks when explaining how their colleagues used them to gain promotion advantages. In accounting for their success, the women disliked joining any political alliance or approach connections to gain professional advantages. However, a small number of three women discussed appealing to higher academic leadership for support as they experienced a long delay in their promotion to the professorship due to the lack and/or misuse of opportunities. According to these

women, the limited number of promotion positions did not link to the real dearth of academic positions in their respective departments; instead, this shortage resulted from the delays and negligence in announcing promotion opportunities by university management. In response to the consistent delays in announcing advertisements for vacant positions, all these three women stated that for their legitimate right to be promoted on time, they had to make claims and requests to announce the promotion boards for the vacant positions that keep unfilled despite having eligible faculty members. For this, they had to bring to the notice of higher authorities to announce the vacant positions of professors. Mehak faced multiple hurdles throughout her promotion journey. She told to make a long wait for her promotion to professor due to the non-announcement of promotion board selection for the academic position of the professor:

> Everything is ready, work experience, everything and I kept waiting for the announcement of the position. But there was no announcement. We had written several times on record. We had written 3 to 4 letters telling the VC and the present VC twice to advertise the position as we were applicable/eligible for professor.

By rule, vacant academic positions were announced to be filled at regular and structured intervals. However, Mehak's narratives showed that she struggled and approached authority even to access available opportunities. Komal mentioned earlier being made ineligible by her competing colleague's deployment of contacts with higher authorities, including the dean. Later, the dean who rejected her promotion case showed quite a non-considering response towards Komal's application when she attempted to approach him to revisit her ineligibility for promotion to professor:

> I met all the requirements at the time of promotion to professorship, including the number of publications, despite that my dean declared me ineligible. Some friends suggested that I should appeal for reconsideration. I forwarded the application and met my dean, but he did not properly respond to me. Again, in my second meeting, he did not bother to reply and gave cold shoulders.

While sharing her promotion journey from assistant professor to professor, in contrast to Komal's decision to remain silent, Zara identified a series of struggles and

efforts to counteract/overcome en-route barriers. Before joining academia, she had a PhD and a good publications record, so she was recruited directly as an assistant professor instead of a lecturer for her first academic job. According to Zara, she was eligible to be promoted directly to the professorial position from her current assistant professor position due to her excellent academic profile (publications, international collaborations, consultancy, and funded projects). The promotion system/rules allowed this fast-track promotion if a candidate met the required research criteria. However, she was initially stalled from applying for this fast-track route due to the delays by management in announcing promotion advertisements. Later, Zara applied for the long-awaited position of a professor when the seat was officially announced after her consistent reminders to university management. After that, Zara's path to a professorship was intentionally blocked despite applying for the announced position. Zara described, ''my colleague who was not eligible to apply for the professorship deceitfully convinced the VC to re-announce the promotion positions again by excluding the announcement for professor seat''. Zara added that for this misuse of the system, she approached academic leadership:

> It was done on purpose. Just to exclude me, as perhaps my rivals thought I did not apply to the lower position. So, I went to VC, but he casually took this situation and said, no worries, you can apply for associate professor; then, I told him that I have been eligible for a professor on TTS since 2010. Now, this is 2012. Though it was not a big deal to re-advertise the post, much feeding was done, so he did not want to do things for my rights.

Zara's above narratives indicated the interlinked influence of networking and authority positions on subverting system rules. She believed that if the merit system was intact, she deserved to be promoted even earlier. Her narratives further revealed that she used multiple strategies in response to a compound of factors that interrupted her promotion journey over the extended course of her career. Such as after not receiving support from authorities for delays in gaining/achieving promotion, Zara decided to get a promotion even to the lower rank of associate professor to avoid further career losses. She stated:

> What can I do except I applied for the associate professor on TTS (tenure track system) and BPS(basic pay scale) systems? What bothers you is the designation. I cannot submit my nomination for PhD examiner due to my

> designation as an assistant professor. I could not do many consultancies and could not work as an editorial consultant even though I was eligible for the professor and still working as an assistant professor.

Zara's story-telling suggested that she had a great degree of self-belief and seemed professionally highly ambitious. She was determined to do multiple academic endeavours that were stacked due to the cited barriers in her promotion to the professorial position. Zara was ambitious to be promoted directly to the professor so she could pursue her academic and professional goals. According to her, it can be achieved because the system allowed this quick promotion route. However, the system was hijacked through manipulative networks to restrict her path and goals.

In contrast to female professors who have chosen to remain silent or approached academic authorities for support, three participants with interrupted promotion experiences decided to leave the university due to the hurdles to moving up the academic hierarchy. ''I was destroying my growth by staying further as there was nothing except disappointments and disillusionment'', expressed Naveeda. She had decided to leave the university when she was not being promoted to associate professor despite meeting all academic requirements compared to a woman who did not meet the criteria but had connections. Naveeda added details:

> Ultimately and finally, I gave up when it came to being an associate professor. There was only one position. I was set aside because there was another lady. She had connections with people on the top ladder. Though she had no documents because she had lost them, she had absolutely no research work. However, she was promoted, and the vice-chancellor told us that she had a few years left for retirement, so we thought we do it quickly. It absolutely makes no sense. They would never have done that for us.

Naveeda's descriptions above show that she was also disadvantaged and constrained due to her young age. According to Naveeda, the competing woman preferred to be promoted due to her nearby retirement and fewer chances of promotion than Naveeda. On the other hand, she (Naveeda) was conversely perceived to get multiple opportunities due to her comparatively young age and longer time in her career. As a result, Naveeda moved to join another university and was promoted to the senior academic and administrative position after taking early retirement from ABC University, where her promotion prospects were stunted due

to organisational favouritism for certain colleagues. Similarly, Zara decided to leave the university due to the politically connected colleagues disrupting her promotion opportunities. Zara repeatedly expressed that her right to be a professor was due from 2009, but she continued work in the lower rank till 2012. So, she ultimately decided to leave XYZ University at the end of 2013 and joined ABC University as a professor. She explained her decision in the following words:

> Why am I still away from a professorship? I must have to do something to secure my career. I am fed up. This is my limit to tolerate more. If I can get the opportunity to grow from another university, why do I stick to one place? If people's behaviours are causing me to delay my promotions, why should I keep waiting, and why should I not avail myself of the opportunity in another place.

The above narratives by Zara underpinned the evidence for a strong belief in her ability to be a professor and the use of her agency to secure her career. Moreover, such beliefs seem to play a vital role in her success. This high level of self-confidence kept her motivated in struggling and moving to find ways against perceived barriers linked to either system deficiencies or other people networking.

Women in this study repeatedly mentioned the existence and influence of organisational politics and informal networks on career gains. Mainly, competing colleagues' use of these networks adversely affected women's promotion outcomes. However, only two women in the study discussed seeking support from influential channels (academic authorities and political networks). Zara and Komal described approaching support from authority and circles of influence to protect their career rights and overcome the negative impact of system drifts and politics on their fair chances of promotion. Zara's story-telling revealed a chain of interrelated barriers and her strategies to overcome these hurdles. Finally, she left her workplace to join another university as a full professor. However, the administration in her previous workplace was not ready to relieve Zara despite her selection in a new place as a professor. For this, Zara stated to seek advice from the VC of her new workplace:

> I wrote a letter to my existing department to relieve me so I can join my new job. I was told that they would not relieve me at any cost. The VC of ABC took minutes to decide. As he suggested, ''I could join them without getting relieved and then take leave from us without pay, so your joining will go

> without breaks. Go and complete a three-month notice job, then come back and start to work here''. As his timely and wise support saved me from further career losses.

Whereas Komal, on the continual delays in her due promotion, decided to request support from influential political circles in the university in response to their offer for help:

> I requested to dean and head of the department to create the academic position of professor for my owing promotion but all in vain. Elections were going to be set in the university to select teacher union members. One of the faculty members who was going to contest this university election asked me what issues I faced. I said that I had no issue except that I was eligible and deserved that promotion. He helped through that. He promised to arrange a seat in the academic structure of the department. Then my case was processed, and my foreign evaluation reports were also excellent. I was then promoted to a professorship after a long wait.

This section analysed women's accounts of responding to questions about what they did to overcome experienced barriers. Analysis of study participants' promotion narratives revealed that means of political networking are historically positioned and deeply rooted in Pakistani academia. Women in this study repeatedly suggested that other women and all men used workplace connections to succeed by passing the merit. Such as, in almost half of the cases, the interviewees used the framing device by attributing other people's practices to using networks and political influence for their career losses and promotion delays. Interestingly, mostly, women did not give credit to merit when they explained other people's success. Conversely, all women explained their achievements without networks and linked them to means of pure merit. At the same time, only a small minority of the study participants mentioned approaching workplace connections in their interviews. Instead, using networks to access institutional opportunities and benefits has been regarded negatively by all interviewed women.

It is pretty interesting to note a claim-making regarding the belief that they are entitled to success due to having all required academic achievements is something that the sample seems to have in common. In addition, women with smooth promotion routes referred to the regularised and meritocratic promotion selection boards as a source of recognition and reward for their entitled success. They firmly

believed the system stands with them in realising their success aims. Conversely, women with interrupted promotion experiences pointed to the system and other people who instead constitute barriers stand in their way to achieving their entitled success. This strong self–belief about being entitled to success seems to play a vital role in shaping women's choices and actions in response to overcoming en-route barriers. All relevant narratives contain claim-making and framing devices that imply a very high level of confidence and strong self–belief for their entitlement to success. Even when a few women chose to approach authority or use networks, these women framed their decisions on ideas of inequality and injustice in the system, pushing them to ask academic leadership to investigate the restricting practices or system paucities that curtailed them from achieving their entitled success. As a result, they shifted all burden to a system or other people networking for career delays. Consequently, approaching the higher authority to fix the system stacking against them or choosing to leave the university to find entitled success were two common strategies taken to overcome hurdles. In brief, women's responses to barriers are clear evidence of their strength and high confidence level that keeps them pushing for what they want to achieve. Women in this study push for what they want and have the power to get what they push for might suggest that what is different here is that women are demanding, and their demands are heard.

5.7 A Comparative Look at Women's Promotion Experiences and Concluding Remarks

In the final findings chapter, an analysis of promotion biographies identified a combination of personal, interpersonal, and structural factors as enablers of and barriers to promotion trajectory from junior academic positions to the level of the professorship. This final section briefly presents core findings, followed by an interpretative discussion of similarity and variation in study participants' promotion trajectories. In response to the question "how did you experience different stages of promotion?" women in this study identified, discussed, and reflected upon the individual and institutional factors that influenced their academic career promotion from junior ranks to top positions on the academic ladder. These influencing factors were grouped as personal/ individual, interpersonal, and institutional enablers, and

barriers by employing coding strategies and combining interview data with theory-driven concepts. Thus, three main kinds of promotion trajectories represent three different configurations of elements relating to (1) personal credentials & strategies to manage delays, (2) workplace relations, and (3) university promotion systems. More than half of the study participants (18/30) claimed that they advanced due to multiple factors, including lack of competition in terms of fewer requirements for research publications and structured and merit-based selection processes alongside the background of their academic excellence. Based on accounts where study participants told getting promoted without interruption and losses, they were categorised as fast-track promotion trajectories. In particular, these women linked their uninterrupted progress up the academic hierarchy to the merit system and institutional values of higher education organizations where symbolic value is vested in scientific output. These findings relate to the existing literature that observed the dominance of academic qualification and research publications as the main criteria for applying for and succeeding in reaching the top rungs of the academic career ladder (O'Connor, Gahn and Bowen, 2012; Śliwa and Johansson, 2014; Karataş- Özkan and Chell, 2015).

Apart from these predominantly positive promotion experiences, further exploration of the issue revealed some significant differences in experiencing negative factors across different stages of career promotion. Such as, less than half of the study participants (12/30) were grouped as slightly interrupted and interrupted career trajectories based on their accounts, suggesting the involvement of small-scale/ temporary and multiple interconnected factors in constraining different stages of their career promotion. These women's biographies are marked by the binary opposition of merit versus colleagues' uncompetitive practices for their disadvantageous promotion experiences. The results related to women's negative promotion experiences contribute to the literature that found female academics were more likely to be discredited/faced promotion delays due to the culture of institutional networking in workplaces dominated by males in power positions. Previous studies have also observed that academic women faced delays in their academic promotion due to their limited access to influential connections central to

promotion outcomes (Šandl, 2009; Zinovyeva and Bagues, 2015; Socratous, 2018; Kuzhabekova and Almukhambetova, 2021). In the same way, women with delayed promotion experiences linked barriers to colleagues' uncompetitive practices of using connections to gain promotion at the expense of delaying these women's routes.

It is important to note that research outcomes in terms of publication were not mainly required for promotion from junior ranks of lectureship to assistant professor at that time. Moreover, the promotion reward model did not heavily emphasise research performance a few decades before. Also, this model lacked structured research assessment criteria at that time in academic history. Nevertheless, all women still had good publication records in national and international journals that placed these women at the top among all other competing candidates. Many similar experiences emerged from women's narratives across all three groups when they were asked what helped and constrained them to achieve career promotion. The linear structure of academic career progression presents a straight and unidirectional career development model led to a single route of success required by the demands of completing a doctorate, publishing, academic networking, and community influence (Kulis et al., 2002; Terosky, O'Meara and Campbell, 2014; Webber and González Canché, 2018). All women used a common framing device to claim that they completed relevant promotion requirements within an ideal timeframe. According to them, the 'ideal timeframe' indicates that their academic profiles were intact before announcing any promotion opportunity as per requirements. Additionally, story-telling that symbolises system shortcomings and the use of resourceful connections was commonly accounted for career delays.

The findings also suggest that women presented binary opposition between talent versus uncompetitive practices and merit versus error as an explanation for their varied promotion routes ranging from fast track to repeatedly struck promotion route. All women believed they were successful because they were talented and had a competitive research profile, which made them exceptional and placed them on top to be recognised and rewarded among all other candidates. They repeatedly stated that their success in reaching a professor's position resulted from their exceptional

research performance despite the limited research requirements and cultural practices of using influential organisational contacts/ social networks to manipulate merit to support favoured candidates in selection procedures. Even those women who linked some career delays to bad networks and institutional problems commonly claimed to reach the top ranks of the academic ladder when a genuine assessment of their competitive research performance was being reinstated. Furthermore, it is unlikely to subvert merit for promotion to the top position of the professor as the assessment standards for promotion to these higher ranks are competitive in terms of publication and foreign evaluation, reducing the chances of using political connections to gain personal favours and manipulate the rules. Therefore, most women in the study reported having outstanding academic records compared to other candidates for their promotion to the professorship, which allowed them to promote swiftly or decreased their chances of further exploitation they faced during their early career promotion. However, a sub-group of six women were even inhibited in their promotion chances of moving up the position of professor via a range of schemes employed by their competing colleagues and bosses.

In addition, these interviews also revealed some context-based experiences. For example, six women experienced restrictions and delays due to being comparatively young than other competing candidates. All these women stated to have better academic profiles than colleagues who were senior to them in age. However, at the time of promotion, instead of following means of equal chances, it was informally and internally decided to prefer senior colleagues in promotion compared to competing study participants. In other ways, promotion boards were held back until seniors became eligible. In three cases, the seniors were also teachers of the competing women. Given the cultural belief in respecting and obeying seniors in any context, all six women chose to remain silent on this unfair treatment. Secondly, the culture of using influential contacts and approaching authorities to seek benefit or discredit colleagues were another context-specific explanation given by study participants for their promotional delays. Support from influential connections and

political behaviours of competing colleagues were repeatedly attributed to the constrained and delayed promotion experiences.

Another important pattern emerged from comparing women's claims about the influential elements for their promotion outcomes. Such as, none of the participants attributed their gender to explaining their varied promotion routes ranging from fast-track to frequently interrupted promotion journeys. Women generally believed that it was not their 'gender' that impacted how they experienced discrimination and inequality in their chances of getting promoted. Instead, they often mentioned the norms of using the connection and approaching authorities by both genders to seek unfair benefit or discredit competing candidates brought losses to their career promotion. It was further highlighted that gender was not a factor in shaping these women's experiences of interpersonal hurdles in their promotion. Instead, their professional excellence was an underlying reason that instigated professional insecurities among competing colleagues of both genders who used different connections to seek promotional gains by demeaning these women's promotions. Therefore, biased leadership and influential contacts are comparably more influencing factors to instigate interrupted promotion experiences for almost half of the study participants than gender-based discrimination.

Some other patterns emerged from women's promotion narratives. Such as, the study participants commonly distinguish between influential elements in terms of how they had impacted their promotion paths. Some elements were acclaimed as credits for success, and others were discredited as sources of career delays. So international reference letters are taken as evidence of merit and credited for their success. Meanwhile, local/native networking employed by colleagues is discredited as a source of delays. In addition, evidence for the women's awareness of workplace politics and informal networks can be derived from their explicit and recurrent claims about the routine practices of using a political connection for career success. Most of the women in the sample said that they were aware of the culture of employing networks to gain professional benefits. However, in most cases, they claimed to distance themselves from seeking favouritism, mainly for promotion, even if their career rights were manipulated despite knowing the powerful influence

of resourceful contacts in success. Instead, they preferred to be silent and kept waiting to be chosen, except in a few cases where women approached influential sources for support to respond to discriminatory circumstances perpetuating delays in their genuine right to be promoted. Those study participants (12/30), who faced minor and short-lived or multiple and long-term hurdles, also spoke of strategies they embraced to struggle through these en-route barriers. Through their constant claims that they were objectively better than everyone else and advanced on merit whilst others deployed political networks, the study participants tended to justify different responses that they chose to overcome perceived barriers. Mainly two interlinked patterns in women's responses regarding their strategies to overcome barriers can be noted. Firstly, they approached higher authorities or influential connections (social and political associations) for support. Alternatively, they decided to leave the university to find a workplace with better promotion prospects. Notably, it is valuable to note and discuss evidence for the significant influence of family support/environment and background indicators on shaping women's self–belief and ability to perform and achieve skills that are prerequisites for success. Firstly, throughout accounting for their promotion experiences, all participants stated their belief about the connection between their talent, hard work, merit, and competitive academic credentials as a formula to rise versus other people's advantages (connections). An interesting 'narrative' device for story-telling used by every woman in the sample was to claim that their success was due to their talent and merit. All their obstacles resulted from other people's plotting when they lacked merit. This frequent use of counterpoint of merit versus inappropriate networking as narrative devices in the interviewees' responses has offered some interesting reflections that can be used to explain what makes these women different.

It is not the scope of the study to determine that either these women were genuinely uniquely superior or objectively better than the 'others'. However, their narratives are based on the story-telling that they are 'better, and other people manoeuvre' reveal a 'belief' in their superiority, confidence, and a sense that they should be promoted. That is a story-telling, but it is important because it tells us how these interviewees view themselves and highlight their high confidence levels and belief.

This expression of self-confidence seems to help explain why the study participants are different. Mainly women used the language of 'rights' – the belief that they have fulfilled the relevant formal criteria that entitled them to become a professor. Furthermore, it shows high confidence in both 'the rules' and themselves. It can be inferred that being very confident in themselves and the system must be a rare quality in a deeply patriarchal society, which makes these women very unusual for the most part since the female professors came from the privileged families of society. Therefore, study participants' perception that the system is there for them and believing themselves as uniquely superior to others can be sourced from family background and associated capital that allowed them to build confidence, abilities, skills and strategies to overcome barriers. Nevertheless, even in cases where the interviewee is not from such a privileged background, the belief in their merit and that the system 'should' and 'will' promote them must make these women very distinct. Such as confidence to go and see the VC (voice chancellor) to demand they be promoted or claim that being held back a year was unjust? Alternatively, the decision to leave the university can be linked to such a conviction of being superior that acts to push these women forward to take these steps- targeted to overcome perceived barriers.

Finally, and importantly, the issues of merit, ability to perform and self-confidence are vital features in the dynamic of promotion and self-promotion. These characteristics are pretty relatable to privileged family background indicators and a supportive and progressive family environment. It repeatedly appeared that academic qualifications and publications were what the women most often cited as evidence of 'merit'. It raises the issue of credentials relative to experience and networks. The account given by respondents repeatedly valued paper-based credentials (degrees and published works) over experience, team working, and networks. The issue of credentials as 'proof' of quality relative to experience has a particular history that appears to be unfolding in Pakistan as it has done elsewhere, especially in western academies. Bourdieu, in 'Homo Academicus' about the intellectual culture of the academy and higher education, observes that extending qualification time, particularly academic work such as earning advanced degrees,

advantages those who can have socio-cultural capital to manage their stay in the qualification game for that length of time, relative to those who have to start earning as soon as possible (Bourdieu, 1988). Similarly, women in my study as daughters and later wives of highly educated and successful patriarchal fathers and husbands were better able to embark on the protracted process of achieving skills/credentials, which are rewarded and awarded for academic promotion. In brief, the background advantage lens offers an opportunity to conclude that promising life opportunities for education and career provided by affluent social origins have developed and boosted women's ability and performance (agency) to meet merit criteria, connect institutionally, succeed through en route barriers, and achieve their current positions (professoriate).

Chapter 6: Final Discussion & Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter of discussion and conclusion explicates the contribution of my study's key findings to confirm, advance, and, on some points, problematise prior knowledge. The discussion of findings begins with reiterating the study's primary focus, methodological choices, and summary of significant results. I then discuss the contextual significance of study findings in addressing the literature gap by exploring the lives and experiences of a social class of educated skilled and professional Pakistani women. Afterwards, I situate the study's findings within prior knowledge of the field to discuss how this research integrates, extends, and challenges the current explanations- argued in the literature review. Towards the end, I propose some future research themes that emerge from reflections on the study's limitations. Finally, I suggest some findings-driven recommendations for practical action and policy change.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The female academics sampled in my study have attracted little attention and historically remained invisible from scholarly debates and media's focus, unlike widespread understanding about typical Pakistani women's living conditions on different knowledge forums. Therefore, I designed this PhD study to examine what did help and what did not help a sample of thirty female professors to succeed in reaching the position of professor in a male-dominated university career and broader society. More specifically, I focused on documenting, analysing and presenting results related to institutional enablers and barriers that women faced on their routes to the position of a professor.

Qualitative findings have offered answers to the questions drawn from my personal and professional interest and theoretical and contextual considerations about the career progression's enablers and barriers. Biographical semi-structured interviews with a sample of thirty female professors from public universities of Punjab province produced rich and detailed knowledge of the interplay and influence of personal, institutional, and structural elements in shaping their career histories. A qualitative

data matrix strategy is employed to organise interview scripts into explanatory themes and relevant categories of study participants based on their selection of different combinations of explanatory themes. I created a typology of themes and female categories via an 'abductive' coding strategy that involves connecting notions from existing theory with new ones that emerged from the data analysis. Thematic interpretation of female professors' career progress is structured into chronological order, from forming their academic and career aspirations, decisions, and entering an academic career through early career development experience to promotion trajectories towards a professorship.

In the first chapter of empirical findings, the analytic explanation is organised into four themes that illustrate different influential factors for women's life key stages of higher education and career decision formulation. First, study participants cited personal preference for a university career, different kinds of family support, social & academic connections, and academic career opportunity structure as leading factors for their success or least constrained entry to an academic career. Second, for the role of personal factors, taken together, female academics chose different combinations of personal preferences to explain their choices for an academic career. Namely, female professors referred to a longstanding passion for a particular field of study, compatible academic career values, and work/life balance considerations as important personal inclinations in shaping their decisions to join academia.

Next, an analysis of women's narratives in response to questions about the family's role highlighted parents' and family members' powerful and inspiring contributions to shaping their academic and career choices. All thirty women in the study talked about multiple ways in which their parents, siblings, and other family members were individually or jointly involved in facilitating their academic and career outcomes. These are 1) parental educational aspirations for their daughters; 2) family encouraging and reinforcing attitudes for educational attainments; 3) family guidance and advice for higher education and career formation, and 4) tangible support to overcome hurdles and opposition were categorised as kinds of family support.

On the other hand, a small minority of women (6/30) in the study experienced conflict and resistance to achieve their educational ambitions. For instance, three women had been opposed to enrolling in a university degree program instead of getting married. At the same time, the other three participants insisted for their academic preferences for a university degree program. These stories of disagreement ended as fathers stood by their daughters against the family's opposition to higher education and showed a willingness to accept their daughter's academic and career choices. All study participants applauded family support without any exception. In brief, regardless of family background differences in the sample, though most participants were more likely to come from socio-economically advantaged families, all women professors voiced parents' enabling role as a critical pillar behind their current successful careers. In addition, most of the women in the study also talked about the inspiring and guiding contribution of academic supervisors and teachers to accessing academic career opportunities. Women's accounts highlighted that career support and practical direction in the form of advice and information given by teachers played a significant role in shaping their career decisions.

Furthermore, more than half of the study participants had been offered work opportunities from the same academic departments where they undertook their higher education degrees. It shows that women's higher education and career selection phases are marked by a combination of social, cultural, academic, and intellectual capital(s), producing their academic achievements and successful entry to academia without any significant hurdles except in a few cases in which women faced cultural and structural hurdles. Therefore, the study's findings are significant in representing the lives of a particular category or social class of educated and professional women who are relatively small in numbers. However, they are active players in terms of contributing and exerting power and influence in their families and society. Alternatively, the learning from this study may not be much representative of those women who came from historically restrictive and traditional contexts in which patriarchy is deeply entrenched to limit women's opportunities or women from low-income family backgrounds.

Next, influential factors were categorised as interpersonal and institutional enablers and barriers to the early years of female professors' academic careers. Interpersonal factors included the influential role of colleagues, bosses, and supervisors. Institutional factors were further divided into work and family conditions. The family environment has been discussed in relation to the arrangements of childcare needs and the family's attitude towards women's care and career needs. Interpersonal elements and institutional conditions that played a role of career enabler, categorised further as 1) accessible opportunities for teaching, research, and administration; 2) having accommodative and flexible workloads; 3) inspiring boss and cordial colleagues; 4) interpersonal reinforcement and career guidance, and 5) sustainable ways of family members' involvement in supporting childcare and career demands. Women professors often mentioned relational support from family and workplace settings, fair access to professional development opportunities, and family-accommodative workplace conditions as central enablers for their smooth early career development experiences.

Conversely, a small minority of interviewed women were restricted by negative interpersonal interaction, lack of relational support, university system shortcomings, inadequate career progression resources, barriers, and discrimination in accessing resources and opportunities. In brief, such experiences of career delays and losses represent characteristics of these specific individual women's lives or their surrounding family and departmental/ university contexts. Female professors also accounted for socially and academically valuable attitudes and skills for their smooth early career progression. Again, on most occasions, the participants link back their positive career attitudes and professional skills used to manage career challenges and demands to family influences, especially the role of parents in imparting these valuable abilities. Moreover, study participants were grouped into three categories of largely positive early career development experiences (18/30), mixed (8/30) and largely negative early career phase (4/30) based on their selection of different configurations of enabling and constraining roles of interpersonal and institutional factors.

Finally, accounting for their promotion trajectories, female professors specified academic credentials (PhD and research performance), workplace networking and university promotion policies and practices as influential factors in producing three kinds of promotion journeys. Accordingly, women's experiences of linear promotion in this study ranged from positive, mixed, and negative in terms of enabling and constraining role that personal, interpersonal, and structural factors played. All thirty study participants ultimately reached the professorial position, in eighteen cases progressing smoothly without any manifest interruption, and six cases experienced slight interruptions along the way. Six cases had multiple interconnected hurdles across their promotion trajectory. The fast-track promotion route narratives (18) featured competitive academic records, fair opportunity, & merit-based assessment as core enablers. Women with slightly interrupted promotion paths (6) accounted for colleagues' anticompetitive practices and promotion system flaws as hurdles for their slight delays in the promotion. Lastly, women with interrupted promotion trajectories (6) highlighted multiple delays in reaching the professor's position due to colleagues' anticompetitive practices, promotion system drawbacks, and lack of promotion opportunities. Interestingly, while explaining the background to joining academia, most women attributed their successful entry into university careers to family and academic connections that directly and indirectly facilitated them. Later, informal networking is called good teamwork during the early years of their academic career. However, social connections are seen as illegitimate, and it is to be called negative manipulation of those of women's promotion competitors. In brief, academic and career achievements of female professors in the present study are grounded in privileged family backgrounds. On the other side, academically and professionally successful women from non-traditional backgrounds constitute the exceptions of a few cases who have made their paths along en route barriers in their mobility to socially reproductive educational and career systems through engaging alternative institutional sources of intellectual, financial and social capital (s).

6.3 Implications of Female Professors' Social Background, and University resources for their Career Progression Trajectories

This section will synthesise the main findings to explicate the influence and relevance/significance of family contextual factors -1) family socio-economic background variables; 2) family cultural and relational elements, and 3) organizational opportunities for study participants' journeys to reach the position of professor. I will do this by placing the discussion of findings in the context of literature on family class background, associated capital (s), institutional resources, and students 'educational and career aspirations and achievements. As several scholars linked the differentials in educational and employment outcomes to graduate skills shaped by family class background and socialised within the family institute (Critelli, 2010; Reay, Crozier and James, 2011; Tsiplakides,2018). An analytical categorization of study participants' background traits shows that women professors in the sample have advantaged family backgrounds regarding parental education, family occupational class, and residential location. In most cases, the women in the study had parents (typically fathers from professional careers) to rely on for financial resources, advice, and guidance. Women's economically and educationally advantageous family conditions were strong predictors of multiple capital (s) and sources of social reproduction of their education and career success. Noticeably, the findings citing women professors' perceptions and experiences regarding sources of their career aspirations, plans and achievements identify the significance and influence of inherited family class capital in terms of offering/providing multiple interpersonal and structural support. Women professors in this study represented their families as a significant source of support. They identified the influence of family involvement in shaping their career-related interpersonal attributes- skills and interests. In addition, they linked different ways of family engagement to their parents' educational and occupational gains and the family's values related to gender roles and education.

An analysis of the causes of female professors' academic success revealed a dominant/significant role played by the family environment and its operating values that govern the different ways of family support for female academics' career

journeys. Women's biographical conversations revealed that parents'/families' gender role beliefs and educational expectations regarding their future adult roles have considerable implications for their academic interests and career outcomes. Across the sample, female professors often highlighted the motivational function of parental academic expectations that work as a guiding force in establishing their academic orientations and interests. These aspirations have been internalised through routines of parent-daughter interaction and have served as standards that women strived to achieve. Likewise, in all cases of this study, family values of believing in the importance of gaining professional education and family culture of equally encouraging and supporting children of both gender (s) education were more likely mentioned than traditional gender role beliefs and restrictive practices.

A family's encouraging attitude and enabling role can be interpreted in relation to female academics' social origins exert their significant influence in shaping women's aspirations and ability to succeed. Most study participants were raised in households characterised by professionally qualified parents (especially fathers), and urban settlements where attending higher education is a routine expectation. In addition, liberal/progressive gender role values, reinforcing attitudes, and supportive practices are often found in affluent families (dominant family socioeconomic status in my study) that advantage women's educational and career participation and achievements. Similarly, a persistent pattern in literature claims that students from privileged family backgrounds are more ambitious in their career aspirations than their socio-economically disadvantaged peers and more likely to participate in professional career pathways. As available data suggest, historically, university graduates, especially high achievers, or first-class degree recipients, are more likely to come from traditional backgrounds (which is taken as middle or upper-middle-class families). It is also a persistent pattern that students from ''non-traditional'' backgrounds are less likely to achieve academically (Triventi, 2013; Brändle and Lengfeld, 2017). Similarly, students with higher socioeconomic backgrounds more often join academic tracks than pupils from lower socio-economic origins who are overly represented in the occupational labour economy (Wakeling and Laurison, 2017; Zimmermann and Seiler, 2019). These unequal educational pathways and

occupational outcomes attribute to parental status and differences in skills and capital acquired over the life trajectory. Therefore, the findings of this study strengthen and extend academic literature advocating the connection between socioeconomic class, associated capital (s), and the formation of the ambitions and abilities/skills to achieve academically and professionally (Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Buchmann and DiPrete, 2006; Noureen, 2011; Azhar et al., 2014; Archer, DeWitt and Wong, 2014; Bubić and Tošić, 2016; Al-Bahrani et al., 2020).

My study's findings apply to a particular category of Pakistani women who most likely come from affluent family circumstances and urban settlements with sustainable relational and institutional/structural support sources. However, on the other side, a small set of female professors (3/30) in the study were from non-traditional families (here, this term is used for economically and educationally deprived family backgrounds). Empirical research also revealed the links between historical gender disparity with fewer women's educational and career participation and attainments and cultural and class-related impediments, especially rural Pakistani women, face in gaining higher education (Noureen and Awan, 2011; Tayyaba, 2012; Ambreen and Mohyuddin, 2013; Shah et al., 2018). The career success of this small sample of women can be understood in relation to their parents' aspirations and willingness to send their daughters to school for formal education, especially university education. Although university education was not a norm in those families and even on the broader societal level at this point in history. These women explained that their parents limited educational and career biographies and contrasting/deprived socio-cultural locations shaped their willingness and motivation to encourage and support their daughters against all structural and relational limitations in achieving higher education and career advantages.

Recently, the segment of university graduates from non-traditional backgrounds with achievements tends to increase in the 'crowded graduate market' (Devlin, 2013). Fewer studies, by comparison, have prioritised the experiences of high-achieving university students from non-traditional backgrounds (e.g., less privileged backgrounds). The studies that examined working-class experiences in higher education highlighted the importance of family's cultural values in crafting students'

career inspirations and achievements. These studies argue that in the absence or lack of class-linked socio-cultural and economic capital (s), a pro-education family environment, parental and peer support play a mediating role in shaping certain dispositions (personal motivation, focused efforts, and hard work) that lead to academic and career success of graduates from working-class backgrounds (Dennis, Phinney and Chuateco, 2005; Wong, 2012; Fuller, 2014; Abrahams, 2017; Wong, 2018; Wong and Chiu, 2019).

Likewise, findings of female professors' career success from the limited educational and occupational family backgrounds contribute to the literature arguing that parental progressive beliefs and means of support formed through families'/ parents' individualized biographies and socio-economic status (especially in the lack or absence of economic advantages) seemed effective in breaking the cycle of deprived academic outcomes, promoting educational achievements and enabling vertical generational mobility to prestigious/high-status careers in terms of education and income (Li, 2001; Dale et al., 2002; Ceja, 2004; Auerbach, 2007; Lindstrom et al., 2007; Shah, Dwyer and Modood, 2010; Harden et al., 2012; Irwin, and Elley, 2013; Sawitri, Creed and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2014; Sawitri et al., 2014).

Given the broader context in which woman's education was a rare phenomenon because of traditional gender role beliefs and the absence of educational facilities, the success of women in my study results from two elements in combination: family economically and educationally advantaged background and family beliefs and facilitating environment regarding girls' education and career. Notably, women's success from non-traditional backgrounds resulted from parents' aspirations of having professionally qualified daughters and willingness to send their daughters for university education; even such 'values' are more common in affluent families than in poorer ones. In brief, the evidence reveals the prominence of parents' own deprived biographies and class backgrounds in shaping their career orientations to, and means of engagement with, their daughters' academic and career roles.

In addition to the advantages of women with relatively educated parents, who have built-in mechanisms of mentorship and sponsorship, women's career success in academia also significantly depends on different kinds of capital and accumulated

knowledge built through their higher education and professional experiences. In this regard, the contribution of university education and the early years of a university career to shaping women's knowledge about what is needed to succeed is clearly evident. Moreover, the early years of their academic careers played a vital role in enhancing their professional abilities by providing them with monitoring and sponsorship opportunities. These findings are consistent with existing literature claims that a combination of institutional resources and personal preferences leads to high-ability students with aspirations for a professional career who were much more likely to complete university qualifications and excel professionally (Lindstrom and Benz, 2002; Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Whiston and Keller, 2004; Schoon and Polek, 2011).

On other side, empathetic admission policies, structured/institutional advocacy/ mentoring, and financial assistance are noted as primary sources of academic success for graduates from non-traditional backgrounds (Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2002; Robbins et al., 2004; Colvin and Ashman, 2010; Thomas, 2011; Burke, 2013; Boliver, Powell and Moreira, 2018). In the same way, the career success of female academics from less privileged backgrounds who have historically been deprived of economic and cultural capital(s), highlights mediating role of institutional resources and agentic traits that enable them to enter higher education or find faculty positions. These findings contribute to extend theoretical and empirical literature revealed the importance of organisational funding, access programs, institutional strategic initiatives for diversity, inclusion and equality, and support services (advisors, awards, and celebrations) for university students and staff from marginalised classes (Hurd and Plaut, 2018; Aitken et al., 2019; Tamtik and Guenter, 2019). Especially, unlike the established perspectives about the role of universities in reproducing different kinds of capital for upper-status families or creating and reinforcing social inequality, my study results identified the potential of higher education as a vehicle of social mobility, class transition and career progression experiences of a small section of study sample from nontraditional backgrounds.

To conclude, women professors' successful careers in my study appeared to link with having high educational aspirations, perceiving themselves to have a high

academic standing, and being highly skilled sourced from their socio-economically advantageous family conditions, family's egalitarian gender role norms, socio-historical conditions, and organizational resources and opportunities.

6.4 Theoretical & Methodological Relevance & Contribution

Qualitative learnings from this research create opportunities to build up and shed new light on the theoretical perspectives of the study's topic. In this section, I discuss how the knowledge gathered on the perceptions and experiences of Pakistani female professors links up with, extends and, on some points, problematises the existing body of knowledge. The study's findings add to contextual, theoretical, empirical, and methodological literature on the phenomenon of women's career advancement in some ways. In addition, the study makes some noteworthy contributions to the existing knowledge on gender roles and women's lives and experiences in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan. Five key findings can discuss the study's contextual significance or relevance.

Firstly, this research connects with a unique school of thought that challenges the dominant perception and representations of women's realities in a traditional Muslim society like Pakistan as a homogenised group of oppressed, controlled and veiled women. (Donnan and Selier, 1997; Afiouni, 2014; Khurshied, 2016; Syed and Metcalfe, 2017). My study aims to reflect on women's experiences with identities at some point in history by acknowledging cultural specificity and the multiplicity of women's roles and life achievements linked to their class, professional, geographical and historic locations in a given society (Elliott and Kelly, 1980; Shaheen, and Awan, 2011; Shah and Shah,2012; Wolf, 2013; Batool and Batool, 2018). Instead of placing key emphasis on the role of gender in understanding study participants' career routes, my study's findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge that highlight the interplay of gender with socioeconomic class, family identity and environment as a central to understanding the production/reproduction of inequality and privilege in accessing to educational and career resources/opportunities (Elliott, and Kelly, 1980; Naqvi and Shahnaz, 2002; Acker, 2006; Shaukat, Siddiquah and Pell, 2014; Syed, Ali and Hennekam, 2018). Prior knowledge also suggests that women's life choices, career interests, chances,

strategies, and gains differ depending on their education, profession, and socioeconomic background (Holvino, 2010; Ali et al., 2011; Arifeen, 2011; Afiouni, 2014; Rodriguez et al., 2016). However, very little was found in the literature on the lives of professionally successful women in Pakistan. The study introduced a professionally qualified class of women coexisting with typical Pakistani women usually oppressed by traditionalism. In other words, the limited empirical data on the topic of university women professors' career trajectories highlighted the need for research that provides a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of institutional factors that influence women's career paths towards professorship in university settings. Therefore, this study has added to the scant body of literature about the social class of educated and professional women of Pakistan who historically remained invisible within different knowledge forums.

Secondly, this research has contributed to the sociological understanding of the social conditions and influencing factors that lead study participants to reach the highest position of the universities in Pakistan's largest province. This present research has built upon the ground-breaking work of Haeri (2002). She conducted ethnographic interviews with six educated middle and upper-middle-class Muslim women with diverse professional backgrounds in Pakistan. Haeri's study aimed to understand these women's worldviews on different socio-political issues of Pakistani society and how they reflect on their personal issues of identity, marriage, profession, and sexuality. Professionally educated women in Haeri's research mainly discussed religion and culture and explained how they contest existing authority structures, traditional powers, and gender hierarchy. Like Haier's work, I focus on professional and educated Pakistani women. However, I chose a relatively large sample (30 female professors) from a specific profession- university academic career to unpack their career success journey toward a professorial position. I am particularly interested in exploring different kinds of support and constraints mainly sourced from women's interpersonal and institutional environments. Therefore, I employed a qualitative thematic analysis to explore female professors' educational and career journeys and influencing factors. These academically and professionally high achiever professors from public universities are among the very few women who

could reach this level of education and career success in the patriarchal setup of Pakistan with historically entrenched gender disparities in decision-making autonomy, mobility, and authority. Academic women's career trajectories in my study show that in addition to the role of these women's personality attributes, a set of institutional elements and conditions have contributed to causing their success.

Thirdly, another context-specific theoretical significance of research findings is to reveal a new form of patriarchy. This particular form of patriarchy characterises a range of supportive, progressive, and flexible presentations of patriarchal figures who want women to succeed academically and professionally in this study. In the patriarchal family setup of Pakistani society, male family members have traditional power to lead decisions, especially decisions related to women's participation in public domains. However, the narratives of Pakistani female professors reveal that parents, fathers particularly, embraced progressive gender role beliefs even though they were raised in a society that bestowed them patriarchal privileges to control and restrict women's lives. Haeri's empirical work also defied the misconception of unitary patriarchal images of ever-domineering husbands/fathers and obedient/victimised daughters/wives through her study participants' portrayal of their fathers as more broadminded and flexible than mothers despite living in traditional hierarchical family units. Advancing her claims about diversity in the gender division of power and authority, the findings of this study introduced a particular category of the patriarch in the role of fathers, brothers, husbands and male colleagues who facilitated women in a variety of ways in contrast to traditional representation of Pakistani males.

Statistics related to Pakistani women's educational and occupational participation present significant gender disparity and traditional gender role divisions across Pakistani society's domestic and public regimes, where nothing is more substantial than traditional customs related to gender roles. Several international and national reports and empirical studies on the status of women in Pakistan also reported that women's educational attainment, occupational participation, career, and workplace relations are shaped by highly patriarchal socio-cultural context and traditional norms (Begum Sadaqat and Sheikh, 2011; Ali, 2013; Amir et al., 2018; Priola and

Chaudhry, 2021). As a result, even with class, ethnic and geographical differences, females continue to face varying levels of resistance to exercising autonomy and independence, primarily related to their academic and career choices and participation (Korson, 1970; Shah, 1975; Shaheed, 1999; Hafeez and Ahmad, 2002; Hussain, Anwar and Huang, 2016). Historically, women's limited labour force participation is grounded in gender-related social norms in developing countries like Pakistan (Jayachandran 2021). In contrast to these traditional attitudes and practices, the participants in my study were not only encouraged but were actively supported to gain access to education and employment opportunities by male members of their families.

Analysis of women's biographies has identified that families had patriarchal structures in which fathers were head of the families and main decision-makers in all cases. However, family patriarchs in this study were appreciated for using their patriarchal privilege to support and guide women's choices and decisions. More importantly, they stand by the female participants in situations where other family members' conservative attitudes constrained women's access to academic and career formation opportunities. Surprisingly, women professors were also given respect and freedom to decide on their academic and career routes in a society where individuality, especially women's individual choices, is subservient to the collective values and traditional gender role expectations. It seems pretty clear that patriarchal fathers in this sample want their daughters to succeed or have been keen for their daughters to have a career. Of course, not all patriarchs want daughters to have successful careers, but it would be true in my sample that having a patriarchal family structure is not incompatible with daughter success. Instead, these patriarchs used their patriarchal privilege to help women overcome en-route barriers.

Fourthly, the empirical findings of this study provide a new and significant understanding of the positive and supportive role of public patriarchy. Prior academic literature gathered from Pakistani society commonly illustrated patriarchy and male hegemony as the primary sources of controlling and restricting women's mobility and decision-making autonomy within domestic and public regimes. Pointedly, the positive role of public patriarchy has never been explored and

understood in past literature in the Pakistani context. Interestingly, the findings suggest that domestic patriarchs and public patriarchal figures were consistent sources of support. This kind of role played by public patriarchs connected with yet extended women's success theorisation by proposing a new dimension of patriarchal support beyond their domestic domains. Exploring this construct (non-traditional role of patriarchal) illuminated my findings and presented a positive conception of public patriarchy that researchers could operationalise to understand further in future studies.

Fifthly, the study's findings enhanced our understanding of another non-traditional contribution of family members, especially husbands and mothers-in-law, who actively facilitated the female academics studied in their career and care responsibilities. Study participants identified multiple family arrangements/ networks, including- living in the joint family system, active engagement of family members in sharing childcare, and domestic maids as crucial sources of support for managing childcare needs alongside full-time academic careers. Prior academic research has claimed an extensive conflict between working women and the burden of family care responsibilities due to the traditional division of gender roles in Pakistani families (Khalid, 2017; Naz, Fazal and Khan, 2017). As a result, it commonly happens that many educated women have to confine to domestic roles and do not go out to work. Almost 50% of MBBS graduates could not continue medical practice due to the traditional gender role expectations after marriage (Junaidi, (2014). In contrast to existing literature and cultural practices, findings related to the family role during the early years of academic jobs present a variety of ways in which different family members sustainably and extraordinary facilitated women to balance and grow along with work and family needs. It can be inferred that the opportunity to have servants and family members' involvement in childcare arrangements is a typical/general structure in the local context. However, that has been neglected or is not being fully explored in prior knowledge, especially in studies related to women's career success in the Pakistani context.

To conclude, the data represented a category of Pakistani women who have been rarely opposed and restricted in their routes to career progress. Instead, they have

an array of sustainable interpersonal and institutional support (capitals) along their educational and career routes. The overall progressive form of patriarchal character, family class and environment, and accessible institutional opportunities are compelling predictors of women's success in this study. Therefore, my research findings challenge monolithic and uniform ideas of gender roles in Pakistani families. In other words, the findings built on the scholarship that gender role ideologies and practices are not static and uniform; instead, these are likely to vary across the social classes of society.

6.5 Methodological Contribution

An overarching aim of this study was to understand potential institutional enablers and barriers to female academics' career advancement. The career advancement journey of female academics in this study means moving up the career ladder from appointment to gaining recognition and visibility as professors within higher education institutions in Pakistan. In addition to supporting and advancing evidence for existing knowledge related to the topic, the study has also offered some methodological contributions by combining various analytic strategies to organise, analyse, interpret, and display the study's findings. I combined three strategies for writing and presenting the study's findings. Firstly, the organisational structure of the findings' display comprises a chronological style to highlight/ illustrate movement and progress towards a professorship. For this, study participants' life story accounts are organised into three stages to identify and analyse what did help and what did not help them reach the professorial position. These are 1) higher education, particularly university education and career choices and decision making; 2) early years of university career; and academic career promotion along a linear trajectory.

Secondly, the primary analytic strategy is a qualitative data matrix for cross-case comparison and the display of similarities and differences in experiences related to the posited themes of the study. Instead of staying with the conventional mode of data analysis and traditional thematic presentation of findings, I adopt a qualitative data matrix analysis strategy to approach, organise and interpret central thematic explanations. First, I organised findings into major explanatory themes and

subthemes describing different types of enablers and barriers. Thirdly I grouped women into categories based on their selection of various combinations of illustrative themes. Finally, explanatory themes and categorises of women are conceptually constructed, titled, and mapped out in matrices.

Thirdly, drawing on abductive theorising, I crafted a typology of themes- describing enablers and barriers across three phases of career development. In addition, I named influential elements by combining data-driven ideas and theory-based notions. Crafting a typology of constructs based on theory-specific notions and data-linked concepts not only provided "structural similarity" between something that is well understood and the phenomena you are studying but also contributed to and advanced prior knowledge (Tracy, 2020). For example, three routes of academic promotion were named as 1) fast track promotion trajectory; 2) slightly interrupted promotion journey, and interrupted promotion route through connecting established theory and participants' accounts, citing the different combinations of enabling and constraining elements.

Fourthly, the methodological contribution of this research is to systematically map out women's background features to reveal the background circumstances of a social category of women who succeeded in Pakistani culture. For example, female professors have been classed into three groups based on their parents (father's educational and occupational class as leading indicators). These class categories are further labelled with a traffic light coding system. The colour green indicates professional/upper-middle-class background, the amber is for the middle class, and the red is for the lower-middle-class background. Taken together, the significant majority of women (27/30) came from the middle and upper-middle classes.

Fifthly, another methodological innovation is to use a traffic light coding system to highlight three experiences related to enablers and barriers. Women's experiences were grouped into three categories. Such as, the colour green is used to code supportive element/ positive experience; the colour amber connects with mixed experiences or both positive and negative influences; the colour red indicates constraining element or negative experience. The dominant presence of green and amber colours through data matrices across three phases of the career advancement

journey shows that many women have multiple positive or mixed experiences emerging from interpersonal and structural sources compared to negative experiences resulting from constraining elements. In brief, the allocation of women across three types of experiences shows that most women have various positive and supportive factors compared to a minority of women with multiple opposing forces. However, women with harmful elements have at least some sources of support or/and were able to employ agency as a strategy and way of resistance to overcome relational and institutional barriers.

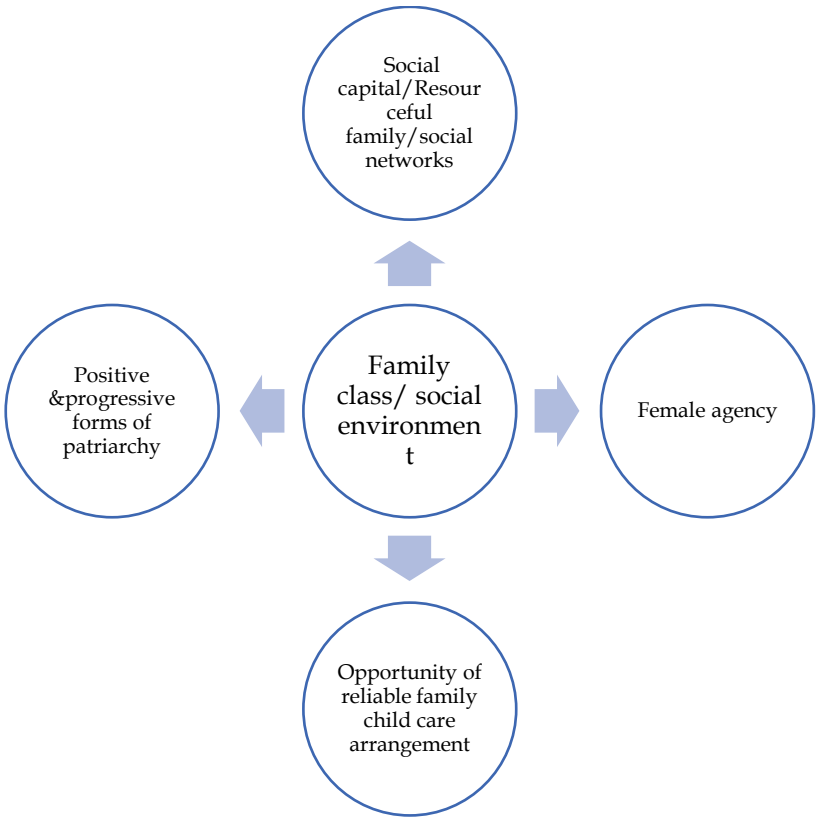
6.6 Explanatory Model & Concluding Remarks

The study findings integrate with existing literature on the different kinds of career enablers and add to our understanding by highlighting the relative contribution of enablers and barriers. Given that all participants progressed to the professorial position, a specific factor cannot be singled out as a necessary condition or cause of success. Instead of relating to or explaining success through the traditional analytic approach of describing enabling variables, I classed women in three categories as having largely positive, mixed, and largely negative early career development experiences comprised of different configurations of stated enablers and barriers. It means that other/alternative supportive elements would explain a specific participant's success in the absence of a particular enabler. In addition, it is the case that a minority had felt held back by multiple barriers whilst most women experience few or none of the issues discussed in all three analysis chapters. In other words, the majority did not experience institutional/structural constraints. Instead, they mentioned having positive experiences regarding institutional resources, opportunities, facilities, cultural attitudes, and norms showing that practices and structures were the least restrictive. The overall findings advance our understating of the role of institutional help and sometimes contradict previous studies claiming sexism and gender-based discrimination are institutionalised due to male dominance and patriarchy (Harford, 2020; Mirza and Jabeen, 2020; O'Connor, 2020).

In addition, the discussion of findings offers a critical lesson for what works and what does not for this sample of thirty female professors who must be among very few women who could reach the highest positions in their careers in a patriarchal

society. Given that all study participants reached a professor's position, I draw out the following explanatory model that illustrates and clarifies career success for a sample of thirty female professors in this study. Women's narratives around what works reveal patterns related to 1) positive and progressive forms of patriarchy; 2) opportunity to have informal family support networks to reconcile career and care needs; 3) opportunity to have resourceful connections, and ability to use them to gain access to further resources, and 4) agency. These are drawn out as central pillars of this explanatory model or central to women's success from the findings' discussion. Sources of the above enabling factors are advantaged/privileged background in terms of family education history, occupational class and residential locations, and family cultural values regarding gender roles and women's education.

Figure 3: Key Pillars of Explanatory Model for Academic Women Trajectory towards the Professorial Position



Family background/class and family social environment connect women's experiences across three phases of their career journey. The study questioned what made it possible for a sample of thirty women to rise in patriarchal institutional structures. The supportive family environment, relatively affluent family class, and connected social capitals worked as the formula for women's success in my study. The social and cultural capitals that the study participants acquired through their socioeconomic class positioning and social environments are central to women's learning of intellectual capital- skills, knowledge, and behaviour prerequisites of their success.

Social capital represents different resourceful persons from family and academic networks. Notably, this sustainable network of manifold social capital has inevitably positively influenced women's career achievements. First, they include educated family members who did not only help women to build a sense of self-belief and encouraged and guided the study participants through academic and career choices. Second, university teachers and research supervisors provided guidance and encouragement and linked women interviewed to career development opportunities and resources. Finally, bosses and colleagues were described as supportive of achieving career tasks and overcoming barriers to the promotion. In brief, women in this study have multiple sources to seek social support and career guidance across their higher education and career routes. These findings related to positive connections/ interactions between career success and resourceful connections closely resemble female academics' experiences in previous studies that found a variety of people served them as influential individuals in achieving career promotion and leadership roles (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999; Brown, 2005; Perna, 2005; Madsen, 2008; Hill and Wheat, 2017).

The second central pillar of success is patriarchy's progressive form- men from women's domestic and public regimes. This form of patriarchy characterises encouraging, guiding, and helping patriarchal men to overcome relational and structural barriers. Exploration of this form of patriarchy provided a new understanding of the enabling role of patriarchal men in explaining women's

success. This finding will be a base for future studies on this under-researched dimension of gender role relations.

The third central pillar to women's success is reliable childcare resources through servants, family arrangements/ joint family in which mother-in-law, mothers, husbands, and the wider family members play an active role in sharing women's care needs. In all cases, women's smooth career development outcomes are strongly linked to sustainable family-centred childcare patterns. My research findings on informal family care suggest that family networks are supportive rather than oppressive structures – at least in cases where families have progressive patriarchal and extended forms.

Agency as the fourth pillar of the success model is discussed to reflect women's relationship with family background and environment. In other words, I explored the attainment of different kinds of institutional capital as a means to develop and exert individual agency within the fields of family and university. Women's agency is analysed in terms of their ability to achieve, form choices, and make decisions in a society that perceives women's autonomy with ambivalence (Ahmad, 2012; Akhter and Akbar, 2016). The present study was designed to examine the role of institutional elements in female academics' routes to professorship. The critical finding was that women took us along their journey of relational and structural enablers, hurdles, and challenges through biographical conversation. Simultaneously, they reflected on their agentic features (values and actions). However, women professors presented personal qualities in relation to the surrounding environment, such as a number of enabling agentic traits and strategies were attributed to family upbringing experiences, university colleagues, academic bosses and professional mentors, sponsors, and networks which significantly facilitated them on their paths towards professoriate (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999; McNae and Vali, 2015; Aitken et al., 2019; Harford, 2020).

Therefore, study participants' agency, particularly their academic/career preferences and strategies to manage challenges and barriers, have not been analysed separately. Instead, their agency has been described and interpreted as reflections of women's relationship with their socio-cultural environment and background

conditions. Across the different stages of their career history, the participants have often provided evidence of how their agentic features are sourced from family background and family support culture. Firstly, while being in the process of choosing routes for university education and career, women in my study recurrently reflected on their ability to form choices and make decisions. They related various agentic elements as their ability to choose and exercise decision-making power, academic determination, career goals to family background, cultural values, and influence of family members. After joining the university career, the female professors voiced their perceptions about family background, especially their father's education and parent-daughter relationship, as sources of acquiring socially and academically desirable skills that enable them to manage career challenges and overcome barriers. In this study, the uniqueness of women's experiences compared to the typical lives of Pakistani women refocused our attention on the influence of privileged family background and progressive family values in shaping their success trajectories.

6.7 Practical Implications, Limitations & Future Research Recommendations

This study has added to the scant body of literature about the social class of educated and professional women in Pakistan. It also built grounds for future research on this category of women who remain largely invisible on different knowledge forums. Thus, in this final section, I discuss the relevance of the study's results for policy and practice concerning the changes in the organisation and governance of higher education in Pakistan. Also, I suggest some areas regarding future research that emerge from the unanswered dimensions of my research at present.

The study has provided answers to proposed research questions and has raised new directions for future research. I will discuss limitations and future research topics jointly as my study's limitations or less focused themes pinpoint issues that can be bolstered/explored in future research endeavours. Also, future research on recommended themes could strengthen a better and more comprehensive understanding of Pakistani professional women. The sociological analysis and interpretation of women's narratives have highlighted some issues that can be

focused on for future research. Such as at the time of the interview during data collection, most of the female professors (24/30) were also in academic and administrative leadership roles. They talked insightfully about their contribution and challenges as women academic leaders. However, I need to remain focused on documenting, analysing and presenting results related to institutional enablers and barriers that women faced on their routes to the position of a professor. Future research should focus on the significance of these influential women in power relative to the current research, which looked at how they came to power in the first place. Given the significant invisibility of empirical understanding of Pakistani women leaders' experiences, future research on women's leadership would introduce a field of research with potential themes (e.g., processes of gaining a leadership role, challenges and their impact as being a female leader) to be explored in Pakistani academia. In other words, the impact and transformation these women potentially bring about while in senior academic and leadership roles should be understood and analysed.

Next, the study site in my research is public universities in Punjab: the most populated and developed province among the four provinces. These four provinces of Pakistan have their distinct history, culture, and language and varied gender differences/development levels regarding educational and employment participation. Future research exploring female academics' career trajectories and leadership role experiences across these geographical boundaries will offer a detailed and nuanced understanding of variations in career experiences linked to ethnic, regional, and cultural differences. Another less focused but important dimension of Pakistani professional women's lives is how they craft and navigate their agency surrounded by traditionalism. This study is relatively limited by the lack of detailed and in-depth unpacking of women's agency, as much of its focus is to document and analyse institutional factors. Though the role of personal factors has been discussed, it was analysed by connecting them with structural forces. So, there will be an opportunity to design research that focuses on exploring how educated and professional women in Pakistan craft and navigate their agency as a complex artefact

of native traditions and values, coupled with ideas of science, rationality and thought learned from their western education background (Haeri, 2002).

The research focuses on what works and what does not and how women can succeed in (what we can assume to be) a male-dominated career field and broader society. The goal of my study made it clear that it is unlikely to be equally significant for policy and practice as it has mainly offered theoretical and empirical/methodological contributions to prior knowledge in the field of women's career progression. Nevertheless, the final reflections on this research's implications will also inform recommendations focusing on some solutions to address gender distribution disparity in employment participation on a broader level, particularly gender imbalance with significantly fewer female academics in the top ranks of Pakistani academia. For instance, a change of culture aimed at financially supporting girls and women from poorer families may be one route, enabling those from families that do not have the means of supporting their daughters despite having inspiring attitudes towards women's education and career participation. Through knowing what works for women's professional achievements, it can also be recommended that the solution most likely requires a cultural change for families to invest in talented women by encouraging their career aims and facilitating them in unpaid domestic and childcare responsibilities. Moreover, I briefly suggest some policy focus and practical directions drawn from the study's results regarding their relevance to the Pakistani university sector issues. Such as, in this study, understanding women's lives with successful careers includes knowledge of personal strategies for managing challenges and overcoming barriers. In addition, empirical evidence for the relative contribution of institutional support and restrictions can suggest some courses of action concerning improvements in the organisation and governance of higher education in Pakistan. Especially theorisation and examination of the influence of institutional structures and practices on women's upward career mobility have established the significance of the findings for potential interventions to address and fix practices that acted to restrict women's career progression. However, more importantly, to understand the key elements of enabling structures will guide us on how these supporting factors can be extended,

replicated, and institutionalised to ensure gender equality and diversity in top positions in universities and beyond. Significantly, strong evidence for the supportive role of academic bosses and research supervisors in shaping smooth early career development experiences advanced the literature. This knowledge can also be used to develop policies and practical steps to institutionalise and provide formal mentorship resources/opportunities and enhance academic leadership's contribution to female academic career progress by offering career role models, guidance, and professional support.

I conclude this study with its significant theoretical and empirical influence and contribution to building a large body of knowledge about female academics' career lives across the global academy. It has been done by addressing a significant gap in the literature by unpacking the enabling role of institutional structures and patriarchal men illustrated as the primary sources of barriers to women's progress in Pakistan in the background literature.

APPENDICES

Appendix-1: Topics for interview guide

The topics for the biographical interview have been framed around three phases of career trajectory- 1) Family and educational background; 2) Start of a university career and early years of academic career progression; and 3) Promotional trajectory. In addition, the interview guide topics will serve as an aide-memoire for asking open-ended questions. The main aim of the biographical interview is to explore the career progression process and its relationship with institutional structures and practices. In particular, the women will be asked to describe the hindrances/barriers they faced and how they handled them to move on. The interview conversation will also give substantial space to discuss the facilitators/ support mechanism through which they make it possible to achieve the current status of the professorship.

Family and educational background- this section will focus on the following topics

- Would you like to share about your relationship with your parents/family?
- Can you please talk about your early educational experiences?
- Can you please tell me what factors influenced/ motivated you to acquire higher education in your current academic discipline?
- How was your university education life?

Start of an academic career and university career experiences- this section will cover the following themes

- At what point in your education did you discover your interest in pursuing a career in academia?
- Then how and when did you join the university as a faculty?
- Can you please recall your work relationships with your boss & colleagues in the early years of your university job?
- What type of university/department environment & culture? Such as--

i) How do you describe the role of the university and your department in providing opportunities for growth and support that enable you to develop your career?

ii) What obstacles/constraints have you experienced in your work environment, and how have you addressed/surpassed them?

Work-family interface- this section will focus on following family dynamics

- How do you see the role of your family life and caring responsibilities impacting your career life?
- In your opinion, in which ways does your family support and curtail your journey of career development?

Promotional trajectory

- How do you see your experiences of career promotion from lecturer to professorship?
- Please share details; in your opinion, what challenges and difficulties did you encounter?
- What factors do you think to play an enabling role in your promotion journey?

Concluding reflections

- Can you please share some elements (e.g., person/ event/ situation etc.) in your life that have significantly helped (or hindered) you in developing your career?
- What legacy/message would you like to leave as a professor for your junior female colleagues?
- How do you think the university/ family and society may help women's career development?

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Research Title: Exploring Career Development: Reflections from Pakistan as Drawing upon Female Professors' Career Histories

Thank you for your time to read about the above project, which I am conducting as my doctoral research at the School of Applied Social Sciences, University of Durham, UK.

Please take time to read the following information carefully as it explains the essential aim of the study and what it would involve for you. Feel free to ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like to get further information. My contact information is at the end of this document.

This study will explore the career histories of female professors in Pakistan and examine their perceptions of what has helped or hindered their career progression. As your career and life outside work are intertwined, this interview will allow you to talk about your educational, family, and occupational lives while sharing your experiences of successes, failures, difficulties, challenges, and conflicts.

I cannot guarantee that this interview will provide a direct benefit to you. However, I hope that studying your experience can increase our understanding of women's employment in academia and may improve support policies and opportunities for future generations of female academics. If you agree to participate in the interview, it will take up to 90 minutes of face-to-face conversation and will be conducted at a location of your choice.

With your consent, I will record the audio of our interview for transcription processes, and I will delete the voice files of the interviews after transcription. At all times, I will protect your confidentiality and anonymity by storing all information on password-protected computers and using pseudonyms in all written documents. In addition, I will cautiously and

selectively use some quotes from the interview while ensuring your anonymity.

This interview is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse to answer a particular question or request to stop the interview and ask for your information removed from the study. I hope you will enjoy this opportunity to share your experience as one of the few female professors in Pakistan's public higher education system.

I look forward to meeting you. I will be grateful if you can confirm the date and time for the interview. I check my email regularly, so you can email (fouzia.sadaf@durham.ac.uk) or text me on my mobile number (+923364520652). Feel free to contact me if you need information about the study or have any questions or concerns. For questions about this research, you may contact my supervisory team: Dr Matthew David and Dr Vikki Boliver, at their email addresses: matthew.david@durham.ac.uk, vikki.boliver@durham.ac.uk.

Kind Regards,

Fouzia Sadaf

Post Graduate Researcher

School of Applied Social Sciences

University of Durham, UK

fouzia.sadaf@durham.ac.uk

+923364520652

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Project Title: Exploring Career Development: Reflection from Pakistan Drawing upon Female Professors' Career Histories

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information document for the above study and have been given the opportunity to ask questions, consider the information, and have satisfactory answers.

☐ I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

☐ I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any questions during the interview.

☐ I agree to the interview being recorded and later transcribed.

☐ I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant's Signature: ……

Participant's Name: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 4: Participant's Demographic Checklist

 The discipline of academic specialization - - -

Appendix 5: Ethics Approval

Ethics Approval

JACKSON, FIONA S.F. <s.f.jackson@durham.ac.uk>
Fri 11/08/2017 11:48

To: SADAF, FOUZIA <fouzia.sadaf@durham.ac.uk>
Cc: BOLIVER, VIKKI <vikki.boliver@durham.ac.uk>;DAVID, MATTHEW <matthew.david@durham.ac.uk>

Dear Fouzia

I am pleased to confirm that the Ethics Committee have approved your recent Ethics Application forms and you are now permitted to undertake the aspect of the field work and data collection referred to within them. Congratulations on reaching this exciting stage of your Research.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing a fully signed copy of your Ethics form is not available. A copy of this email, when presented along with your Ethics documents, is a sufficient record to show you have fulfilled Durham University's Ethics processes.

Best Wishes

S.Fiona Jackson

Durham University ***S.Fiona Jackson*** |
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Durham University | ***School of Applied Social Sciences*** |
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