

Tariq & Farooqi, 2018

Volume 4 Issue 2, pp. 1136-1144

Date of Publication: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.42.11361144>

This paper can be cited as: Tariq, A., & Farooqi, R. (2018). Effect of First Low Wages' Job on the Self-Esteem of Pakistani Middle-Class Fresh Graduates. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2), 1136-1144.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

## **EFFECT OF FIRST LOW WAGES' JOB ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF PAKISTANI MIDDLE-CLASS FRESH GRADUATES**

**Amina Tariq**

University of Management and Technology, Department of Psychology, Lahore, Pakistan  
[aminatariq8@gmail.com](mailto:aminatariq8@gmail.com)

**Rabia Farooqi**

University of Management and Technology, Department of Psychology, Lahore, Pakistan  
[rabia.farooqi@umt.edu.pk](mailto:rabia.farooqi@umt.edu.pk)

---

### **Abstract**

*In Pakistan, the number of educated people at graduate level is quite high but according to that number employments are limited. This causes job dissatisfaction and also abolishes the relationship with the co-workers (Farooq, Ahmad, & Ali, 2008). This study aimed to explore the effect of first low wages' job on self-esteem of Pakistani fresh graduates in terms of satisfaction level, hope level, productivity and wellbeing using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014). In this study qualitative approach is used. For data collection, purposive sampling technique was used along with the semi structured interviewing from local private schools. Four female teachers with an age range of 20- 25 years were the sample of the study. One-to-one interviews with the participants were conducted after taking their permission to participate voluntarily in the research, and tape recording of their interviews for transcription of data. Grounded theory approach was used to analyze collected data as no work has been done in Pakistan in this context and I want to develop theory which will be helpful in employer's context and working satisfaction. For reliability check, triangulation method was used. The theory of self-esteem grounded here suggested that first low wages' job for the Pakistani fresh graduates*

*has negative effect on the level of hope and satisfaction whereas their productivity and wellbeing has positive effect on them.*

### **Keywords**

Self-Esteem, Job Satisfaction, Low Wages Job, Level of Hope and Wellbeing

---

## **1. Introduction**

Education is the utmost requirement for the personality grooming as well as economic benefits. Everybody who joins an undergraduate program in university has some dreams in his mind about his future. Students work hard to complete their degrees with high score to achieve their dreams. In Pakistan, the number of educated people at graduate level is quite high but according to that number employments are limited. This causes job dissatisfaction and also abolishes the relationship with the co-workers (Farooq, Ahmad, & Ali, 2008). This study aimed to explore the effect of low wages' job on self-esteem of fresh graduates in terms of satisfaction level, hope level, productivity and wellbeing using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014).

Wages, training and incentive have a progressive bond with career performance however wages have a stronger connection with career performance than training and incentive (Idrees, Xinping, Shafi, Hua, & Nazeer, 2015). Job satisfaction is related to the personality and salary package of the employees. It can be improved by taking care of employees' personality and salary packages (Fesharaki, et.al., 2013) as salary level disturbs workers' self-esteem, which then, disturbs the employees' performance (Gardner, Dyne, & Pierce, (2004). It was found that job turnover is associated with the minimum job salaries due to the lack of job satisfaction (Meer, & West, 2015). Range-frequency theory is a model created individualistically inside psychology expected that wellbeing is secured partially from the individual's classified rank of a salary within an evaluation set. It was a confirmation of the rank-dependence effect on employees' salary satisfaction (Gordon, et al, 2005; Gardner, Dyne, & Pierce, 2004). Increased well-being of the employees with higher salaries were reported by the COR theory proposed by Hobfoll, (1989 and 2011). Same result was reported by Ryu (2015).

The increased income cannot cover the loss of satisfaction in job from low education and job match in the non-profitable sector and public sector as much as it covers in the profitable division (Lee, & Sabharwal, 2014). The evidence advocates that it is suitable to consider the cost of prospective job losses from an upper lowest salary contrary to the compensations of salary raise for other workers (Neumark, 2015).

From the above mentioned literature, there was a need felt to have study related to the first low wages job experience of the fresh graduates in terms of their self-esteem as the self-

esteem of fresh graduates at their first job was not identified yet. For this reason, this novel study was planned. Under this topic, the study explored the following questions related to the self-esteem of the fresh graduates at their first job in Pakistani industry. The self-esteem was defined in terms of the job satisfaction, level of productivity, level of well-being, and level of hope. The objective of this novel study was to explore the following questions:

- What are the effects of low wages jobs on the self-esteem of Pakistani freshly graduated middle-class job holders?
  - What is the effect of low wages jobs on the productivity of freshly graduated middle-class job holders at their first low wages job?
  - How would the first low wages job influence the level of satisfaction and well-being of freshly graduated middle-class job holders
  - What is the level of their hope due to the first low wages job experience in the prospect of their future?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Participants**

In this study qualitative approach is used. The data was collected by using purposive sampling technique from local private schools. Four unmarried female teachers with an age range of 20- 25 years who were freshly graduated belonged from middle class; got first job with 4 to 5 months working tenure and wages range from 8000 to 12000 per month were the sample of interest.

### **2.2 Procedure**

The interview guide was formed under the light of the previous literature and after visiting the education industry to have a deep understanding of the issues in the systems. The researchers scrutinized the questions of the interview guide, for which a linguist was hired. After the finalization of interview guide, the fresh graduates were contacted via visiting the schools, a suitable time and date was decided for the interview at the place decided by the participants. Semi structured interview was conducted to collect the data. Verbal and written consents were got signed from the head of the institutions and also from each participant to take and record their interviews. One to one interviews with the participants were done after taking their permission to tape record their interviews for transcription of data. The interview was of approximately 20min.

Analysis: Grounded theory was used as a tool to analyze collected data as no work has been done in Pakistan in this context and the researcher wanted to develop theory which will be helpful in employer's context and working satisfaction. For analysis, open, axial and selective

coding was done (Silverman, 2011). For reliability check, researcher triangulation method was used to validate the transcription of data collected by interviews. Conformability has been done to support the findings of the research.

From analysis, nine codes were found which explained the self-esteem of the Pakistani fresh graduates at their first job. These nine codes were; job specifications, Source of knowledge, personality, teaching skills, enthusiastic approach, rules and regulations, Future plans, career plans and financial prospects. These nine codes were explained in the result section.

### **3. Result**

In this study, there are nine selective codes. First code was job specifications which comprised of job settings and administrative expertise. Job settings include the employees' experience of the job's environment.

**“I enjoyed this.”**

Administrative expertise referred to have good public relation and managerial skills.

**“Ease in many public relations.”**

Second code was Source of knowledge. It consisted of one axial code i-e. Improvement in knowledge which means learning is the part of job.

**“Knowledge is increasing”.**

Third selective code is personality. It included outlook of the employee.

**“Main quality is her look”.**

Teaching skills is the fourth code which covered the working way and vocal expertise. Working way means performance level and vocal expertise means communication expertise.

**“A sweet voice”,**

**“Maintain student's concentration”,**

**“Then her work”**

Enthusiastic approach is the fifth code which included stress-free life, enjoyable and increased performance level. Stress free life means do not have stress of workload.

**“No clear effect on me, my life and my activities.”**

Enjoyable showed enjoy working at every level, for instance,

**“Enjoy working”.**

Increased performance level is, for example,

**“Performance is positive”.**

Sixth code is Rules and regulations. It contained enhancement in conduct i-e,

**“Feel improvement in conduct”**

and responsibility means

**“Feel responsibility of teaching”.**

Seventh code is the future plans which contained job transferal which showed the talk about job changing.

**“Have not planned anything about this job because I move on next”**

**“Will drop teaching”.**

Career plans is the eighth code which comprised of job choice.

**“I am waiting for a good opportunity”**

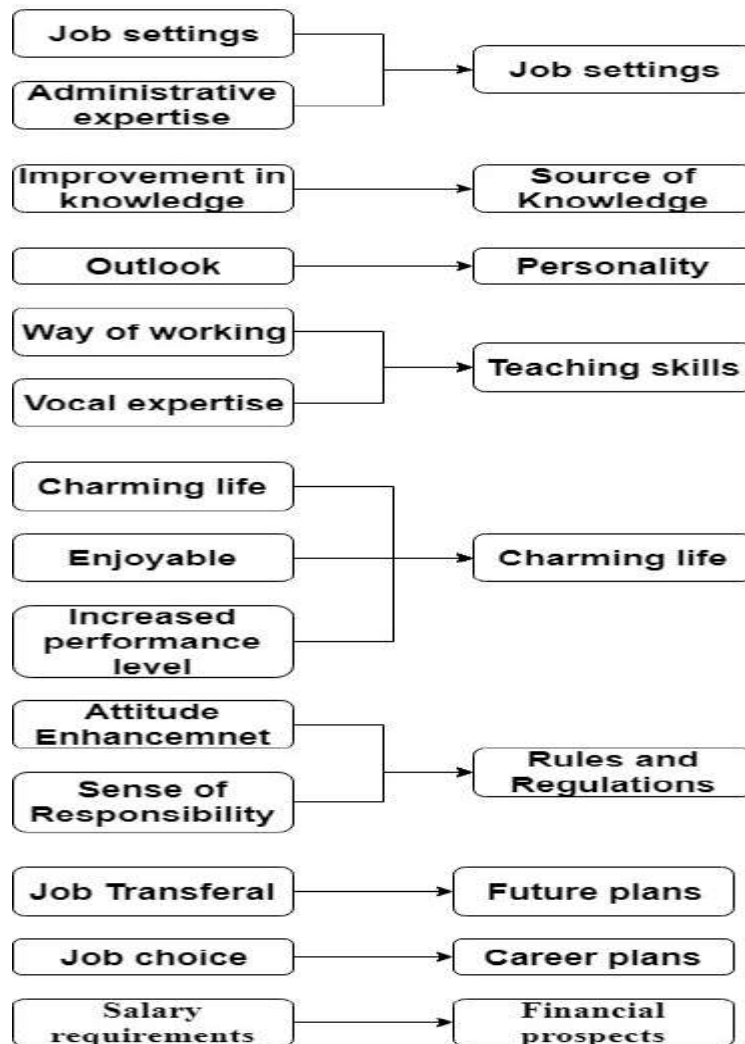
**“Ahead in the banking”.**

But during answering one participant show the desire of continuation of the present job.

**“Yes I will continue this job now and in the longer run”**

Last code is financial prospects which included salary expectations.

**“I want to earn more” and “salary package is low”.**



**Figure 1:** Axial and selective coding

#### **4. Discussion**

This particular research was conducted to develop the insight of the self-esteem related factors, i.e. level of productivity, level of hope, wellbeing and level of satisfaction which are affecting the job performance of fresh graduates at their first job with low wages in Pakistan. The findings of the study revealed that the fresh graduates have low job satisfaction and level of hope due to the lower wages at first job but have a higher level of well-being and productivity as they have reported the first job as a source of learning skills and getting knowledge about the ways of working.

Firstly, the level of productivity is on increasing pace regardless of the low wages paid at first job to the fresh graduates. Most of them know about low level of wages and had more expectations during graduation but on their productivity level there is no effect reported. The findings of the research negated the findings of Idrees, Xinping, Shafi, Hua, and Nazeer, (2015) who reported a strong connection of wages with the job performance as a whole along with the training and incentives.

Secondly, their level of hope is low that they are not hopeful about their future in the same job because of salary and specific subject of their graduation. Mostly, it was reported that first job is just to get experience and it is just a ladder to move up. It was not the expected outcomes and the final goal was not achieved while having a low salaried job which creates hopelessness as Meer, and West, (2015) reported that higher salaried job is a requirement of every employee caused the job turnover.

Thirdly, the wellbeing was reported as at good level because first job experience is the learning tenure and all reported it as a good and healthy learning experience. The findings of present study negated the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1986, 2011; Ryu, 2015) which explained that the higher level of wages has a positive effect on the wellbeing of the employees.

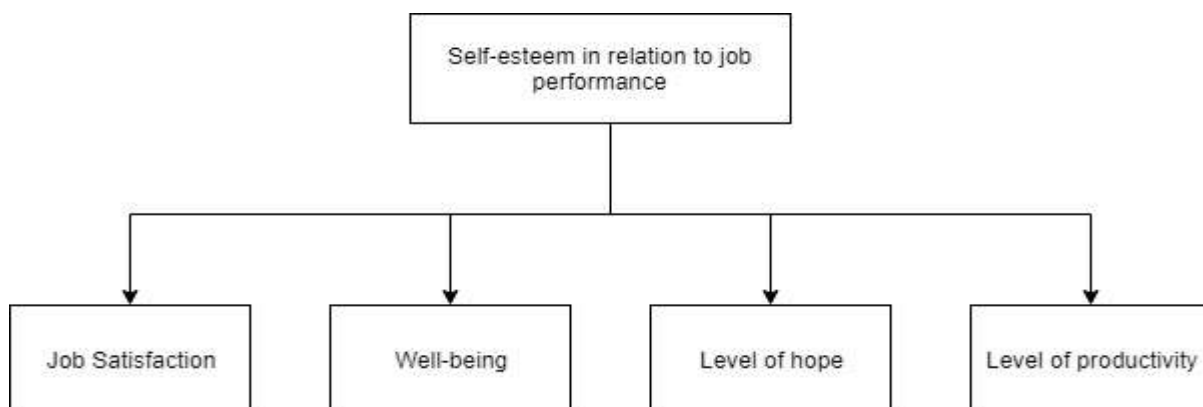
Lastly, the satisfaction level is reported as low because fresh graduates do not have their requirements fulfilled completely. All reported that they will not continue this very job as they want to have job with higher salaries supported by the findings of Meer, and West, (2015) who argued that more job turnover has been explored in the low wage jobs as compared to the higher wages job and according to their subject specialties' which are minimum in the school teaching.

So, the theory of self-esteem grounded here suggested that first low wages job for the fresh graduates has negative effect on the level hope and satisfaction whereas their productivity and wellbeing has positive effect on them. These findings negated Gardner, Dyne, & Pierce, (2004) conclusions of the study that salary level disturbs workers' self-esteem, which then, disturbs the employees' performance. The findings of this research has a supportive relationship

in context of job satisfaction which is related to salary package of the workers as most of the participants showed the interest of switching the job after having a good opportunity. It can be maintained by taking care of employees' personality and salary packages (Fesharaki, et.al., 2013). Idrees, et.al.(2015), concluded that wages, training and incentive have a progressive bond with career performance however wages have a stronger connection with career performance than training and incentive which supported this new emerging theory of self-esteem. The new grounded theory of self-esteem negates the confirmation of rank-dependence in employees' salary satisfaction as the findings of the present study suggested that low wages on first job affects the employees' salary satisfaction which is not based on the rank-dependency (Brown, Gardner, Oswald, & Qian, 2008).

## **5. Conclusion**

This new emerged theory has viewed the self-esteem in a broader way as the literature was lacking with regards to the fresh graduates' expectations from their first job and what are the effects on the job performance after getting the career beginning job with low wages. The theory suggested that the negative effects on the level of hope and satisfaction are led by the low wages job at the beginning of the career among Pakistani fresh graduates whereas the feeling of dissatisfaction and hopelessness do not contribute to lower the level of productivity and wellbeing as it was concluded that low wages job produce positive effect on them as it is consider as a learning process by the fresh graduates in Pakistan. In previous researches, these four variables were studied separately but no one has found their effect on the participants as a whole. Secondly, no one has studied the effect of these four variables collectively on the fresh graduates experience related to their first job and previous expectations. It will be helpful to get the idea of how fresh graduates feel about their first job experience and level of self-esteem.



**Figure 2:** *New emerged theory of self-esteem*

The future scope of this research is very vast as the idea of expectations of the fresh graduates at low wages job can be explored at multi-industries to discover more differences and to have deeper knowledge. Cultural difference among the inter-organization and intra-organization in the same sector can also be explored to have new findings. Gender wise comparison can be made to explore the gender specific issues and expectations of the fresh graduates as in Asian culture, males are considered to have greater responsibility to support the finances of the family as compared to the females.

## **6. Scope of the study**

The results of this novel study are helpful for both the fresh graduates and the employers as it has provided the evidence about the low level of self-esteem of fresh graduates at their first low wages job. This study is of great use in every field as every year thousands of fresh graduates are passing out from the universities with the strong desire of a good job related to earnings. This study will provide the employer, the bases to improve their organizations' standards that will be up to the thoughts of the fresh graduates as well as this study will be a guideline for the trainings of fresh graduates by the institutes from which they will get their degrees.

This study will be helpful for the industry to develop significant measures to help maintaining the level of self-esteem in fresh graduates with first low wages job. It will also provide guidelines for the educators to groom the fresh graduates to cope with the environment ahead. So, it will be a good addition in the literature too.

## **7. Limitations**

This study has sample limitations that it is only applicable on fresh graduates and only four fresh graduated with first low wages job were recruited as a sample.

## **References**

Brown, G., Gardner, J., Oswald, A., & Qian, J. (2008). Does Wage Rank Affect Employees' Well-being?. *Industrial Relations*,47(3), 355-389. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-232X.2008.00525.x>

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Farooq, S., Ahmad, U., & Ali, R. (2008). Education, unemployment and job satisfaction. *Pakistan journal of commerce and social sciences*, 1.



- Fesharaki, M.G., Aghamiri, Z., Mohamadian, M., Habibi, M., Anvari, S., & AzadMarzabad, E. (2013). Effect of Manager Leadership Behavior and Demographical Factors on Job Satisfaction of Military Healthcare Personnel. *Journal of military medicine*, 15(1); 37-42.
- Gardner, D. G., Dyne, L., & Pierce, J. L. (2004). The effects of pay level on organization-based self-esteem and performance: A field study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77(3), 307-322. <https://doi.org/10.1348/0963179041752646>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513-524. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2011). Conservation of resource caravans and engaged settings. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(1), 116-122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.2010.02016.x>
- Idrees, Z., Xinping, X., Shafi, K., Hua, L., & Nazeer, A. (2015). Effect of Salary, Training and Motivation on Job Performance of Employees. *American Journal of Business, Economics and Management*, 3(2): 55-58. Retrieved from: <http://www.openscienceonline.com/journal/ajbem>
- Lee, Y., & Sabharwal, M. (2014). Education–Job Match, Salary, and Job Satisfaction Across the Public, Non-Profit, and For-Profit Sectors: Survey of recent college graduates. *Journal public management review*, 18.
- Meer, J., & West, J. (2013). Effects of the Minimum Wage on Employment Dynamics. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w19262>
- Neumark, D. (2014). Employment effects of minimum wages. *IZA World of Labor*. <https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.6>
- Ryu, G. (2015). Public Employees' Well-Being When Having Long Working Hours and Low-Salary Working Conditions. *Public Personnel Management*, 45(1), 70-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026015601143>
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.