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Development and Validation of Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL)

Sajjad Hussain[1], Arif Nadeem[2], Rabia Khawar[3]

[1]PhD Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
[3]Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
Correspondence: arif.nadeem.79@gmail.com[2]

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Psychosocial stressors are common among lawyers but there is no indigenous scale available to measure psychosocial stressors in Pakistani lawyers.

Methodology: In the present research, a phenomenological exploration was carried out through individual interviews with 20 lawyers to explore the indigenous psychosocial stressors faced by the lawyers making an initial item pool of 49 statements. After the exclusion of repeated items and rephrasing the ambiguous ones, 41 items were retained for expert validation. 12 experts including senior practicing lawyers and psychologists ascertained the content validity of the 41 items and 36 items were retained after this phase. A pilot testing was carried out on 15 conveniently sampled was carried out and after finding the list of these statements user-friendly, the list of 36 statements was converted into a 5-point self-report measure ready for the final and main study. Finally, this self-report measure named the Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL) along with a Demographic Sheet was administered on a sample of 227 layers (*M age*= 36.35 *SD*= 8.70) selected using a convenient sampling technique.

Findings: The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed 5 factors of PSSL i.e., Work-related Stressors, Social Stressors, Financial Stressors, Health-related Stressors, and Familial Stressors. This scale was found to have high internal consistency (α= .78 to .92) and test-retest reliability (r= .86, p< .001) with significant inter-factor and factor-total correlations (r= .65 to .81, p< .001). The results were discussed in terms of the implications of the Psychosocial Stressors Scale in further research, assessment, and counseling services for lawyers.

Conclusion: The current study, as a ground-breaking effort in Pakistan, resulted in a reliable and valid self-report measure to assess the psychosocial stressors of lawyers. The five-factor model with acceptable factor loadings of all the items (i.e., greater than .40) provides strong evidence that PSSL is a multi-dimensional tool to measure the said stressors. The scale can be used in future research and can serve as a baseline in counseling/therapeutic plans developed to deal with these issues of the lawyers.

Keywords: Psychosocial Stressors, Lawyers, Scale Development, Test Construction.

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Introduction

Psychosocial factors play a crucial role in the development and prevention of disease as well as the promotion of health. They also have implications for addressing health-related issues in the workplace. When it comes to the stress experienced by individuals in the workplace, various factors in the work environment and social context can contribute to its perception and impact. The American Psychological Association defines psychosocial stressors as life situations that create an unusual or intense level of stress, which may contribute to the development or worsening of mental disorders, illnesses, or maladaptive behaviors (VandenBos, 2007). Examples of psychosocial stressors include events such as divorce, the loss of a child, prolonged illness, highly competitive work situations, threats to social status and validation, threats to social and public image, challenges to acceptance within a group, threats to self-worth, and uncertainty about future outcomes. These psychosocial stressors can significantly impact an individual's well-being, mental health, and overall functioning. Recognizing and addressing these stressors is crucial for promoting a healthy work environment and supporting individuals in managing and reducing the negative effects of stress. However, psychosocial stressors in the context of occupational health cannot be solely evaluated in light of ongoing changes in the workplace and occupational structure, as well as associated social and familial issues. Second or third-generation workers are frequently employed in mass manufacturing, for example, and their psychosocial factors—such as monotonous routines that are timed by machines and provide them little influence over their work environment—as well as repetitive and boring tasks that affect their health (Rutter & Sandberg, 1992).

For lawyers, psychosocial stressors include the specific factors within their professional environment and social setting that contribute to elevated levels of stress and potential negative effects on their well-being. Lawyers often face unique challenges and pressures in their work, which can lead to significant psychosocial stressors. Some common psychosocial stressors experienced by lawyers include high workload and time pressure, high responsibility and accountability, work-life imbalance, client expectations and pressure, emotional demands, ethical dilemmas, professional ethics, and organizational factors which may affect lawyers' mental and physical health, reduced professional efficiency and quality of life. Indeed, the well-being of lawyers is of paramount importance. Lawyers, like any other professionals, try to strive for overall well-being, including emotional health, occupational satisfaction, intellectual growth, spiritual fulfillment, physical well-being, and social connections. Lawyers' well-being is not only crucial for their personal lives but also for their professional competence and ethical responsibilities. Lawyers who prioritize their well-being are better equipped to make sound decisions, maintain a high level of competence, and provide quality representation to their clients. When lawyers are emotionally and mentally healthy, they can approach their work with clarity, focus, and professionalism (Kausar et al., 2019)

Thus, among 180 lawyers, a cross-sectional study investigated the relationships between burnout and professional stress as determined by the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) and demand-control support (DCS) models. The study's findings indicated that job control, psychological demands and effort, and the prevalence of self-perceived work stress were all comparatively greater. In addition, compared to non-litigious lawyers, litigious lawyers have higher levels of decision-making authority, workplace social support, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout. Furthermore, there was a correlation found between high psychological demands, effort, and the effort-reward ratio and both personal and work-related burnout (Tsai et al., 2009).

To determine the predictive power of seven stressors (decision latitude, psychological demands at work, physical demands at work, social support from colleagues, ergonomic stressors, relationships with clients, and job insecurity) for job dissatisfaction, depression, and psychosomatic problems in a sample of 702 Brazilian lawyers, another study was conducted on the sources and reactions to stress in these lawyers. A Brazilian translation of the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) was used to gather the data. The findings indicated that psychological demands and work uncertainty were the primary positive drivers of stress, while decision latitude and social support were the primary negative predictors (Costa & Ferreira, 2014).

In addition, studies on the sources of professional stress among attorneys and other legal professionals in the legal sector were carried out. There were two comparable empirical investigations conducted in 2006 and 2012. An international questionnaire called the Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI-2) was used to perform a web-based study on occupational stress. The primary causes of occupational stress among attorneys and other legal professionals were found to be conflicts between home and work, administrative responsibilities, inadequate acknowledgment, and difficulties. The five stresses faced by lawyers and other legal professionals were found to have a negative and statistically significant association with job satisfaction. The majority of attorneys and other legal professionals adopted a coping approach focused on issue solutions. As a result, using social support from friends, family, and peers was also common (Teichmann et al., 2015).

The relationships between burnout and occupational stress as assessed by job demand-control (JDC) were found in a sample of 290 Sri Lankan lawyers. High scores for psychological job demands and job control were found in the findings. In addition, high levels of social support, client-related fatigue, and personal burnout were noted by the respondents. Additionally, the research showed associations between the psychological demands of these lawyers' jobs and personal and work-related burnout (Samarasekara et al., 2016).

In a study involving 200 lawyers, Chlap and Brown (2022) looked at the connections between psychological stress, burnout, affective distress (such as anxiety and depression), and job factors. The findings demonstrated the relationship between psychological stress and burnout in lawyers and higher levels of work stress as well as a perceived lack of organizational support. In turn, these relationships were linked to low levels of empathy in lawyers. Furthermore, it was concluded that lawyers may experience stress, affective distress, and burnout as a result of difficult and unsupportive work environments, which may have an impact on their interactions with clients.

A fairly recent study examined the impact of workload, latitude, and mediation through involvement and over-engagement on legal burnout. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of engagement, latitude, and workload on tiredness. A self-administered survey with 181 French lawyers' responses was conducted. According to the findings, lawyers' levels of burnout rose with workload but dropped with decision latitude. Work involvement and over-engagement played a complete mediating function between latitude and burnout, according to mediation analyses. Furthermore, over-engagement served as a partial mediator between burnout and workload. Several useful ramifications emerged from these findings (Nickum & Desrumaux, 2023).

The above-mentioned studies were conducted to determine the occupational stress and/or psychosocial stressors among layers, a major gap can easily be identified as the researchers measured the stress or stressors of lawyers using scales developed to assess stress in general. In the realm of research, various stress-related scales, such as the Perceived Stress Scale (Reis et al., 2010), Perceived Stress Questionnaire (Shahid et al., 2012), DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), have been devised to assess an individual's perception of stress, stressful life experiences and their encounters with stressful life events. However, there is a noticeable absence of any standardized scale specifically designed to identify psychosocial stressors in the lawyers. Therefore, the main objective of our study was to develop a culturally relevant tool tailored to help in the assessment of psychosocial stressors prevalent among lawyers, which could help devise a management plan from cultural perspectives, later on. Furthermore, there exist legal system differences, contextual differences, language considerations, and policy and intervention relevance from culture to culture and society to society. So, developing an indigenous scale could allow for the identification and assessment of stressors that are specific to Pakistani legal professionals, providing a more accurate representation of the challenges faced by lawyers in Pakistan.

Method

The Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL) was developed in four phases as follows;

Phase-I: Items Generation

The first phase was based on exploring the phenomenology of the construct "Psychosocial Stressors of the Lawyers". For this purpose, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 20 conveniently sampled lawyers from Faisalabad District Court (Punjab, Pakistan) to generate an initial items pool for the scale using an open-ended phenomenological question to explore the indigenous psychosocial stressors faced by the lawyers. The verbatim of the interviewees were transformed into statements afterward. The responses (i.e., verbatim) of the respondents were collated making an initial item pool of 49 statements. After the exclusion of repeated items and rephrasing the ambiguous ones, 41 items were retained for expert validation. Finally, a league table was constructed on these statements and then transformed into a 5-point Likert scale.

Phase II: Expert Validation

In the second phase, individualized opinions were collected from 12 experts with at least 10 years of professional experience in the field (Lawyers and Psychologists) for validation of collected statements for the scale. The experts were given the list of 41 statements along with the operational definition of the Psychosocial Stressors of Lawyers and were asked to rate these statements to which extent those were related to the construct/phenomenon being studied on a 5-point Likert scale (0-4). The statements with an average score of 3 and above (i.e., 36 statements) were selected for the next phase of the study.

Phase III: Pilot Study

The third phase was intended to evaluate the user-friendliness of the statements finalized through expert validation. For this purpose, 15 lawyers were selected using a convenient sampling technique. They were informed about the purpose of the testing and were asked if there was any ambiguity in understanding the statements as well as the response options. The participants did not report any issues related to understanding and comprehension in this regard. Hence, all 36 statements were retained, were converted into a 5-point self-report measure and this set of statements was given the name "Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL)" which was ready for the final and main study.

Phase IV: Main Study

This phase aimed to determine the psychometric properties of PSSL.

Participants

The population of the study comprised all the male and female lawyers practicing in three District Courts of Punjab province, Pakistan. A sample of 227 lawyers (*M age*= 36.35, *SD*= 8.70) was selected using a convenient sampling technique.

Measures

Demographic Sheet. The demographic sheet was used to gain the demographic information of the participants including gender, marital status, education, experience (in years), area of expertise, working hours, family system, and the nature of the job.

Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL). The newly developed indigenous scale (PSSL) was used to measure the psychosocial stressors of the participants. The scale consisted of 36 items and the response options were based on a 5-point Likert scale (0= Not at all, 1= Very Rare, 2= Some Times, 3= Often, 4= Always).

Procedure

After getting permission from concerned authorities, the sample was selected as discussed earlier. Proper data collection was started and before administering the scale verbal consent was taken from the participants as per the ethical requirements of the study. Moreover, the participants were assured about confidentiality and anonymity of the collected data and they were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. They were told that the participation was on a volunteer basis without any financial incentives. The newly developed scale along with the demographic sheet was administered individually and also in groups (i.e., up to 7 participants) as per the availability and convenience of the participants. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the study measures. The participants were duly acknowledged and the data gathered was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version-23 (SPSS-v23).

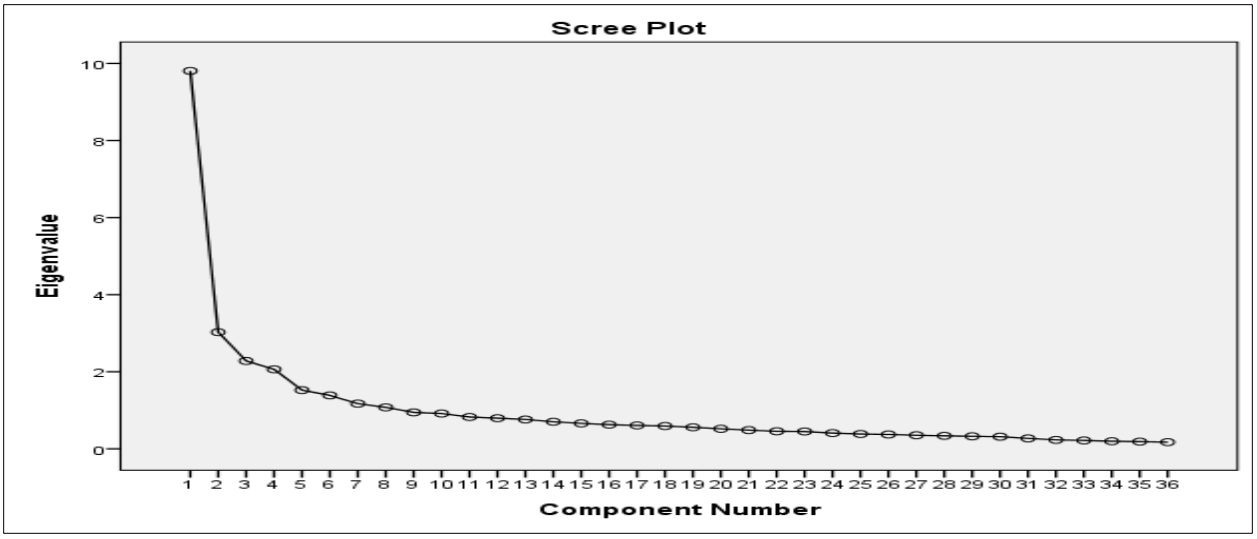
Results

Table 1: *Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=227)*

Demographic Characteristics		***f (%)***	***M (SD)***
Age			36.35 (8.70)
Gender	Male	205 (90.0)	
	Female	22 (9.7)	
Marital Status	Single	66 (29.1)	
	Married	161 (70.9)	
Education	BA/BSC/LLB	141 (62.1)	
	MA/MSC/LLB	82 (36.1)	
	M.Phil./LLM	4 (1.8)	
Experience (in years)	1 to 5 Years	80 (35.2)	
	6 to 10 Years	102 (44.9)	
	11 to 15 Years	40 (17.6)	
	16 and above Years	5 (2.2)	
Area of Expertise	Civil	70 (30.8)	
	Criminal	32 (14.1)	
	Both	125 (55.1)	
Working Hours	1 to 5 Hours	36 (15.9)	
	6 to 8 Hours	143 (60.0)	
	8 to 12 Hours	48 (21.1)	
Family System	Nuclear	77 (33.9)	
	Joint	150 (66.1)	
Nature of Job	Government	5 (2.2)	
	Private	222 (97.8)	

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants including; gender, marital status, education, experience (in years), area of expertise, working hours, family system, and the nature of the job.

Figure 1



The Scree plot indicated a five-factor solution which was run with orthogonal rotation to carry out exploratory factor analysis. The Eigen values of the first to fifth factors were 9.81, 3.02, 2.80, 2.06, and 1.52 respectively. Further, Factor loadings of the component matrix were considered for factor loading of each item. Brown et al. (2012) and Field (2000) suggested the criteria for loading items is .40 and above so in this research items were selected according to the criteria of Brown et al. (2012) and Field (2000).

Table 2: *Factor Loadings for Component Matrix of the 36 Items of PSSL (N= 227)*

	Component				
Items	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
PSSL11	**.756**	.191	-.051	.136	.112
PSSL36	**.667**	-.163	.210	.106	-.103
PSSL2	**.654**	-.143	.248	.202	.149
PSSL31	**.636**	.028	.184	.088	-.074
PSSL24	**.622**	.172	-.033	.124	.221
PSSL21	**.620**	.144	.221	.115	.157
PSSL23	**.605**	.207	.021	.181	.160
PSSL27	**.589**	.155	-.003	.101	.065
PSSL10	**.589**	.278	.070	-.027	.324
PSSL16	**.562**	.216	.090	.183	-.025
PSSL12	**.537**	.152	-.035	.009	.120
PSSL5	**.531**	.072	.243	.270	.106
PSSL14	.097	**.726**	.176	-.057	.277
PSSL20	.035	**.688**	.202	.088	.027
PSSL19	.174	**.673**	.169	.064	.234

PSSL22	.167	**.661**	.050	.216	-.012
PSSL15	.214	**.610**	.225	.153	-.064
PSSL28	.107	**.573**	.066	.062	-.023
PSSL26	.082	**.572**	.158	.246	.097
PSSL17	.099	**.462**	.138	.198	-.005
PSSL35	.219	.177	**.776**	.106	-.095
PSSL1	.096	.130	**.706**	.238	.068
PSSL18	.052	.239	**.682**	.106	.109
PSSL8	-.055	.076	**.653**	.313	.003
PSSL33	.156	.154	**.653**	.052	.094
PSSL29	.153	.197	**.629**	.087	.123
PSSL34	.048	.161	**.556**	-.066	.304
PSSL7	.137	.061	.236	**.772**	-.059
PSSL4	.141	.146	.166	**.725**	.124
PSSL30	.225	.189	.085	**.684**	.009
PSSL32	.207	.136	.030	**.661**	.229
PSSL13	.229	.123	.175	**.657**	.051
PSSL9	.082	.260	.044	**.607**	.219
PSSL25	.204	.089	.106	.073	**.809**
PSSL6	.309	.109	.165	.285	**.667**
PSSL3	.197	.041	.286	.330	**.597**

Note. *Factor 1 = Work-related Stressors; Factor 2 = Social Stressors; Factor 3 = Financial Stressors; Factor 4= Familial Stressors; Factor 5 = Health and Mood-related Stressors.*

The Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers (PSSL) was validated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA). A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on the 36 items of PSSL. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was used for the sample adequacy. Kaiser (1960) mentioned a minimum value KMO for the adequacy of the sample is 0.5 (0.5-0.7 = mediocre, 0.7-0.8 = good, 0.8 - 0.9 = great, and above 0.9 is superb). KMO was measured for PSSL, which falls in the category of great (0.86). Bartlett's test for Sphericity was found highly significant, χ^2 (227) = 3697.65, p< .001, which showed that the correlation between items was sufficiently large for PCA (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). An initial analysis was run to attain Eigen-values from obtained data for each component and 8 components found Eigen-values over Kaiser's criteria of 1 and in combination explained 62.04% of the variance, but most of the components were immature. Considering the support from qualitative findings and content validity of PSSL, on five components, PCA was run and in combination explained 51.94% of the variance was found. The scree plot (Figure 1) recommended a five-factor solution.

Table 3: *Item Characteristics of PSSL (N= 227)*

Items	***M***	***SD***	***Item total Correlation***	***α* if item deleted**
PSSL1	1.60	1.32	.50	.90
PSSL2	1.69	1.53	.51	.91
PSSL3	2.09	1.58	.53	.92
PSSL4	1.63	1.56	.52	.90
PSSL5	1.58	1.40	.55	.92
PSSL6	1.45	1.44	.57	.91
PSSL7	1.43	1.27	.49	.91

PSSL8	1.08	1.27	.39	.92
PSSL9	1.69	1.55	.47	.91
PSSL10	2.01	1.47	.53	.92
PSSL11	1.96	1.31	.55	.91
PSSL12	1.90	1.27	.37	.92
PSSL13	1.63	1.44	.52	.91
PSSL14	2.07	1.48	.47	.91
PSSL15	2.03	1.31	.51	.92
PSSL16	2.07	1.65	.49	.91
PSSL17	1.98	1.88	.37	.92
PSSL18	1.74	1.41	.48	.91
PSSL19	2.04	1.55	.53	.92
PSSL20	1.68	1.21	.43	.91
PSSL21	1.91	1.32	.57	.91
PSSL22	1.74	1.28	.47	.92
PSSL23	1.85	1.50	.54	.91
PSSL24	1.80	1.27	.50	.92
PSSL25	1.84	1.54	.42	.91
PSSL26	1.88	1.28	.47	.92
PSSL27	1.65	1.50	.43	.91
PSSL28	1.65	1.55	.33	.92
PSSL29	1.51	1.42	.48	.92
PSSL30	1.70	1.36	.51	.91
PSSL31	1.77	1.50	.45	.91
PSSL32	1.39	1.39	.51	.92
PSSL33	1.35	1.38	.46	.91
PSSL34	1.37	1.47	.36	.92
PSSL35	1.80	1.53	.53	.91
PSSL36	1.89	1.71	.38	.92

The results of Table 3 indicated that all the values of the item total correlation was above .30 and alpha if the item deleted was above .80.

Table 4: *Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics of PSSL (N= 227)*

Variables					***Range***			
	No of Items	***M***	***SD***	***α***	***Potential***	***Actual***	***Skewness***	***Kurtosis***
Work-related Stressors	12	9.47	6.44	.88	0-48	0-24	.24	-.93
Social Stressors	8	10.45	7.05	.82	0-32	0-27	.22	-.96
Financial Stressors	7	22.09	11.41	.84	0-28	0-47	-.25	-.54
Familial Stressors	6	15.05	7.77	.84	0-24	0-38	-.39	-.52
Health and Mood-related Stressors	3	5.38	3.81	.78	0-12	0-12	.17	-1.27
Total Score of PSSL	36	62.45	26.94	.92	0-144	5-121	-.18	-.68

The data presented in Table 4 showed that PSSL has the acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha indicating a strong internal consistency of the items i.e., Work-related Stressors (α = .88), Social Stressors (α = .82), Financial Stressors (α = .84), Familial Stressors (α = .84), Health and Mood-related Stressors (α = .78), and Total of PSSL (α = .92), whereas the values of kurtosis and skewness were also found in acceptable range.

Moreover, around 20% of the participants of the study were retested with PSSL with an interval of 20 days to establish the test-retest reliability of the scale. The reliability coefficient (r= .86, p< .001) depicted the strong temporal stability of PSSL.

Table 5: *Inter-factor Correlations of the Factors of PSSL (N= 227)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Work-related Stressors	-	.40**	.36**	.48**	.46**	.81***
2. Social Stressors	-	-	.45**	.36**	.42**	.73***
3. Financial Stressors	-	-	-	.38**	.41**	.70***
4. Health and Mood-related Stressors	-	-	-	-	.44**	.65***
5. Familial Stressors	-	-	-	-	-	.72***
6. Total of PSSL	-	-	-	-	-	-

**p < .01; ***p < .01

The results displayed in Table 5 revealed that work-related stressors were significantly and positively correlated with social stressors (r= .40, p<.01), financial stressors (r= .36, p< .01), health-related stressors (r= .48, p< .01), familial stressors (r= .46, p< .01) and total of PSSL (r= .81, p< .001). Similarly, social stressors were significantly and positively correlated with financial stressors (r= .45, p< .01), health-related stressors (r= .36, p< .01), familial stressors (r= .42, p< .01), and total of PSSL (r= .73, p< .001). Same as, financial stressors were significantly and positively correlated with health-related stressors (r= .38, p< .01), familial stressors (r= .41, p< .01), and a total of PSSL (r= .70, p< .001). While, health-related stressors were also significantly and positively correlated with familial stressors (r= .44, p< .01) and total PSSL (r= .65, p< .001). Familial stressors were also significantly and positively correlated with the total PSSL (r= .72, p< .001)

Factors Description

Factor 1: Work-related Stressors

This factor consists of 12 items measuring work-related stressors e.g., stress from overwork, stress from pending cases, trust issues from clients, insecurities in the workplace, and lack of availability of sources. The sample items are "experiencing severe stress due to cases", "lack of proper library and books related to law in courts and bar rooms", "suffering mental and physical fatigue in preparation of cases", "stress due to cases being pending or not being decided quickly", "stress due to clients not trusting the lawyer", lack of practical skills or knowledge", "having security issues, mental stress due to overwork" and so on.

Factor 2: Social Stressors

This factor consists of 8 items, which measure social stressors e.g., stressors due to political monopoly, political factionalism, criticism from society, and threats from the opposite party. The sample items are "facing the political monopoly of large and powerful groups", "difficulty building your reputation in society", "feeling frustrated by political factionalism", "not being seen with respect in the society or not getting respect", "receiving threats from the opposite party", "facing criticism from society", etc.

Factor 3: Financial Stressors

This factor consists of 7 items assessing financial stressors e.g., financial burden, resorting to fraud, more expenses than income, inadequate facilities, not having a proper job, and a not fixed monthly salary. The sample items are "facing financial or economic problems in the first few years", "resorting to fraud due to financial problems", "exceeding expenses over income", "not getting a government job", "not having a monthly salary", "not getting adequate facilities at the government level" and so on.

Factor 4: Familial Stressors

This factor consists of 6 items, which measure self and family-related stressors e.g., unavailability for family, disappointment in family, homesickness, personal care, and low self-esteem. The sample items are

"not being able to give adequate time to family members", "not living up to family expectations", "facing homelessness or distance due to lack of time", lack of time for personal care" and "lack of belief in one's ability or success" and so on.

Factor 5: Health and mood-related Stressors

This factor consists of 3 items measuring health and mood-related stressors e.g., inaccessibility of free treatment, and mood disturbance. The sample items are "unavailability of free treatment facilities", "irritability in mood; and hardness or stiffness in nature, etc.

Discussion

The current research aimed to develop and validate the Psychosocial Stressors Scale for Lawyers PSSL. Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to explore the factor structure of PSSL. The factor analysis explored five factors, i.e., Work-related Stressors, Social Stressors, Financial Stressors, Health and Mood-related Stressors, and Familial Stressors.

Factor 1 of PSSL measures work-related stress such as stress from overwork, stress from pending cases, trust issues from clients, insecurities in the workplace, and lack of availability of sources. Among lawyers, overwork is a common problem. Lawyers frequently encounter tremendous workloads, long hours, and high-pressure workplaces, which can lead to undue stress, burnout, and detrimental effects on their health and personal life. Therefore, the literature suggests that lawyers with higher stress reported poor mental health such as high depression. Clients frequently have high expectations, expecting lawyers to be available at all times and respond quickly. Meeting these expectations may cause lawyers to feel forced to work beyond of their usual hours. Lawyers sometimes manage many cases at the same time, each has its own set of difficulties and deadlines. Managing a large caseload might result in lengthy work hours and little time for leisure and recreation (Pierson et al., 2018). Moreover, stress and burnout among lawyers are associated with greater work stress and absence of perceived organizational support, and stress, as well as burnout is found to be related to lower empathy in lawyers (Chlap & Brown, 2022). It is also established previously that the everyday work of lawyers is characterized by the ongoing pressure of deadlines and judgments, as well as the rising complexity of laws and legal procedures; the requirement for updated education on jurisprudence, laws, and doctrine; high client demands; competition with other lawyers; the extended work-hours; the separation from the family due to overwork; the law practice of extremely scholarly activity; the continuous interaction with aggressions, accusations, and conflicts are very common among lawyers, which increase stress among lawyers (Elwork, 2007).

The second factor of PSSL measures social stressors such as stressors due to political monopoly, political factionalism, criticism from society, and threats from the opposite party. In Pakistan, lawyers confront a variety of difficulties due to political issues and external influences. It is common in Pakistan that the legal profession is influenced by a political monopoly, in which the ruling party or major political group has a strong influence over the judiciary and legal system. This can be stressful and problematic for lawyers who see a lack of independence, impartiality, and justice in their job. Lawyers working on politically contentious matters or for clients linked with a specific political movement may experience significant stress. They may face severe scrutiny, criticism, and hostility from competing factions, making their job more difficult and sometimes dangerous. Lawyers frequently play a critical role in lobbying for the interests of their clients, which can lead to public scrutiny and criticism. This can happen when lawyers represent unpopular clients or take stances that are contrary to common opinion. Negative public impressions can cause stress and increase the strain on lawyers to maintain their professional integrity while navigating public scrutiny. Lawyers defending clients in politically charged or high-stakes matters may suffer intimidation or threats from the opposing party or its supporters. These threats might vary from personal insults and harassment to threats to their or their loved ones' safety. Such circumstances can have a substantial influence on a lawyer's well-being and foster an atmosphere of anxiety and tension. In this regard, Jex (2002) claimed that lawyers usually exhibit type A personality traits (e.g., self-made, goal-oriented, highly achieving, composed, etc.). Having type-A personality qualities along with work

obligations undoubtedly contributes to a large number of mental and social difficulties among lawyers (Azeem et al., 2020).

The third factor of PSSL assesses financial stressors e.g. financial burden, resorting to fraud, more expenses than income, inadequate facilities, not having a proper job, and a not fixed monthly salary. Chai et al. (2015) also found that financial stressors are common among lawyers and higher financial stress leads to more mental health problems among lawyers. Financial pressures may have a substantial influence on lawyers' well-being and lead to a variety of problems. Lawyers frequently suffer tremendous financial difficulties, particularly if they have responsibilities for sustaining themselves and their families. Stress and financial instability can result from high societal demands and the obligation to maintain a particular level of living. Due to financial pressures, some lawyers may turn to unethical or criminal practices such as false billing, embezzlement, or other financial wrongdoing. These activities not only increase the possibility of legal and professional repercussions, but they also add to enormous stress and ethical quandaries. Beginning a legal practice or operating as a single practitioner can be financially difficult, especially early in one's career. The expenditures of establishing a law practice, such as office space, employee wages, legal research tools, and marketing, can occasionally exceed the cash earned, causing financial stress. Lawyers who work in businesses or organizations with insufficient facilities, outmoded technology, or limited resources may face significant stress. A lack of adequate infrastructure can impede productivity, efficiency, and the capacity to provide excellent legal services. Because of the nature of their employment, many lawyers, particularly those in private practice, may have variable incomes. Legal costs are sometimes dependent on favorable outcomes, making revenue uncertain. This erratic revenue pattern might lead to financial strain and uncertainty.

The fourth factor of PSSL measures self and family-related stressors such as unavailability for the family, disappointment in the family, homesickness, personal care, and low self-esteem. Stressors relating to oneself and one's family can have a substantial influence on the well-being and general quality of life of attorneys. Lawyers may feel inaccessible to their family members due to the demanding nature of the legal profession, which includes long hours, frequent travel, and unpredictable schedules. This can lead to feelings of guilt and an imbalance between work and personal/family life, as well as stress and strain on personal relationships. Lawyers may experience pressure to match familial expectations, especially if their legal jobs are connected with high hopes or goals. Failure to achieve these expectations might lead to emotions of disappointment and further stress. Lawyers who move away from their families for professional prospects may feel homesick. Loneliness, isolation, and mental pain can all be exacerbated by being away from loved ones and familiar places. Whereas, lawyers frequently prioritize professional duties and client demands, sometimes disregarding their self-care. As a result, personal health, exercise, leisure activities, and other things that contribute to total well-being may be neglected.

The last factor of PSSL measures health and mood-related stressors such as inaccessibility of free treatment, and mood disturbance. Health and mood-related stressors can significantly impact lawyers' well-being and job performance. Lawyers may experience difficulties in obtaining free or low-cost healthcare, particularly medical and mental health care. The high expense of healthcare and the absence of complete insurance coverage can make accessing required treatment for physical and mental health disorders difficult. Meanwhile, lawyers frequently work rigorous schedules, long hours, and in high-pressure situations, leaving little time for self-care activities. A lack of time for rest, exercise, relaxation, and hobbies can all contribute to physical and mental health issues. The legal profession is notorious for its high stress levels, which can lead to chronic stress and have a bad influence on mood. Dealing with demanding clients, difficult cases, tight timelines, and contentious circumstances may all have an emotional toll on lawyers. Due to excessive workloads and client expectations, lawyers typically struggle to maintain a good work-life balance. Work-life balance issues can lead to higher stress, less time for self-care, and worse overall life satisfaction. Lawyers frequently have to deal with emotionally difficult cases engaging clients in painful situations, such as criminal cases, personal injury claims, or marital conflicts. Constant exposure to these emotionally intense circumstances might lead to mood swings and compassion

fatigue. Therefore stress is common among lawyers due to high health and mood-related stressors as found in existing literature (e.g., Rombough, 2022) suggesting a strong association between burden, poor mental health, and substance abuse among the participants.

Conclusion

The PSSL is a reliable and valid indigenous scale to measure psychosocial stressors of Pakistani lawyers with 5 factors i.e., Work-related Stressors, Social Stressors, Financial Stressors, Health-related Stressors, and Familial Stressors. The PCA supports the five-factor model and the factor loadings of all the items (i.e., greater than .40) provide strong evidence that PSSL is a multi-dimensional tool to measure the psychosocial stressors for lawyers. The scale is also found to be reliable with a strong internal consistency of all the factors and complete scale (α= .78 to .92) and test-retest reliability (r= .86, p< .001) with significant inter-factor and factor-total correlations (r= .65 to .81, p< .001).

Implications of the Study

The utilization of general stress scales to measure psychosocial stressors of lawyers exhibited a gap in the existing literature which has been filled through this study. This study offers an indigenous tool that provides cultural relevance, contextual understanding, language considerations, legal system differences, and policy and intervention relevance in terms of identified psychosocial stressors of Pakistani lawyers. Thus, it tool would provide a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of the stressors faced by Pakistani lawyers, enabling targeted interventions, policy development, and support systems that could cater to their unique needs. In this way, it would be beneficial to promote better working conditions and support the overall well-being of lawyers in Pakistan by providing evidence-based information to concerned policymakers to devise requisite policies and their implementation.

Limitations and Suggestions

Despite the ground-breaking findings of this study in terms of the identification of psychosocial stressors faced by Pakistani lawyers, it has some limitations that need to be addressed in future studies in this area.

- Firstly, the research was confined to a small sample size, specifically limited to three district courts in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. In the future, the studies should be carried out in different cities to have a truly representative sample of the study.
- Additionally, the study faced constraints in terms of financial resources, which hindered the establishment of norms for the scale. In the future, funded studies would be appreciated to establish country-wide norms of the scale.

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Conflict of Interest

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ORCID iDs

Sajjad Hussain [1] https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0097-776X
Arif Nadeem [2] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0004-0224
Rabia Khawar [3] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9588-6251

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