



Masculinity, Marginality, and Emotional Labour: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Male Security Personnel at the University of Punjab, Lahore

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Abstract

Security personnel serve as the frontline workforce responsible for maintaining safety, order, and access control in institutional environments. Despite their essential presence, their labor is often rendered invisible and undervalued. This qualitative study investigates the everyday challenges faced by male security personnel at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, and drawing attention to the broader socio-economic, cultural, and emotional dimensions of their work. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twelve security personnel, the study explores the motivations behind choosing this occupation, the nature of their duties, and the emotional labor embedded in their professional roles. Findings reveal that limited educational opportunities, persistent unemployment, and financial strain are key drivers pushing individuals into security work. Once employed, they contend with extended duty hours, inadequate pay, limited recognition, and emotionally taxing expectations linked to dominant notions of masculinity. Participants also report experiencing disrespect from students and neglect from administrative authorities. Although a few positive interactions are acknowledged, the overall environment remains taxing and under appreciative. The study highlights the urgent need for institutional reforms that recognize security personnel as integral to the university community, alongside improved support systems, particularly in relation to mental health and workplace dignity.

Introduction

Work has always been necessary for people to survive. In all cultures and eras of history, individuals have strived to attain identity, respect, and a sense of belonging in addition to meet fundamental requirements like food, safety, and shelter. The assumption that men should be the main or only provider for their families, however, adds another level of stress to men's lives in patriarchal society. According to cultural norms, masculinity is associated with authority, financial responsibility, emotional control, and strength (Connell, 1995; Bourdieu, 2001). Men learn early on that their worth is derived from their capacity to "supply" for others. Failure to fulfil this role is often met with shame, social judgement or inadequacy (Messner, 1997). This stereotype puts immense pressure on men and often leads them to take on emotionally and physically demanding jobs regardless of pay or recognition. One such occupation is that of the security personnel which is often considered as a high-risk and low-paying job. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the security personnel at Punjab University with the goal of documenting and analysing the intricate connections among socioeconomic difficulties, gendered expectations, emotional labor, and institutional negligence. In particular, the study will investigate how hegemonic masculinity influences behavior at work, how emotional control impacts their health, and how obstacles like long hours, low wage, and public disrespect impact their personal and professional lives. Globally, security personnel find themselves in a contradictory situation they

provide safety and order while often remaining unnoticed within organizational hierarchies. Their work involves long shifts, physical danger, emotional labor, and limited pay. Although society heavily depends on their presence to uphold peace and security in public areas like universities, airports, and hospitals, their contributions are often unappreciated and ignored. Daniels (1987) describes this phenomenon as “invisible work,” where the importance of their labor is not acknowledged through institutional recognition or benefits. As reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2016), security personnel in many countries are subjected to long shifts often 12 hours or longer while having limited access to social protection and fair compensation. Another critical issue is emotional labor. Hochschild (1983) first introduced this idea to explain the effort that workers exert to regulate their emotions to align with workplace requirements. Security personnel are expected to remain calm, respectful, and authoritative even when faced with verbal abuse or dangerous situations, resulting in continuous emotional fatigue (Hsieh, Jin, & Guy, 2012). In addition to these problems, low pay and unstable employment are still major worldwide issues. Even though they work in highly responsible positions, a sizable portion of security workers receive pay that is at or below the minimum wage and are infrequently provided with benefits like health insurance or pension plans, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR, 2023). The majority are employed via private contractors under temporary, low-wage agreements that offer minimal or no benefits and lack job security. A research conducted by Saleem, Jamil, and Khalid (2017) focusing on university security personnel in Pakistan indicated that long duty hours and inadequate pay were the main sources of stress among them.

To guide our this study we will use two theories in our literature review

1. Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (Connell, 1995)
2. Emotional Labor Theory (Hochschild, 1983)

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it sheds light on the frequently overlooked challenges that university security personnel, especially those at Punjab University, encounter. Despite their important role in campus security, these security personnel endure emotional stress, long shifts, low wage, and disrespect. They continue to be overlooked and undervalued in spite of their importance. The study advances sociology and labor studies by concentrating on their socioeconomic circumstances, masculine demands, and emotional labor. Additionally, it assists policy makers and university officials in enhancing working conditions.

The research supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including
SDG 8: Economic Growth and Decent Work
SDG 10: Decreased Inequalities

All things considered, this study supports more equitable and inclusive institutional practices and offers voice to an invisible workforce.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the key workplace challenges faced by male security personnel at the University of the Punjab.
2. To analyze how societal expectations of masculinity shape the emotional labor and professional conduct of security staff.
3. To investigate how institutional practices and workplace conditions affect the personal and family lives of security personnel.

Research Questions

1. What socio-economic factors influence individuals to pursue employment as security personnel at the university?
2. What specific workplace challenges do male security personnel encounter in their daily roles?
3. In what ways do these challenges impact their emotional well-being, mental health, and relationships within the family?

Literature Review

Introduction

Security services industry is becoming a major player in ensuring the safety and operations of various surroundings, such as universities, commercial towers, and residential apartments. Nonetheless, the work life of the security personnel is less studied through academic researches even though it is pertinent to matters of socio-economic vulnerability, professional identity, health and well-being. The proposed literature review depicts the past research on the misimpression of the security personnel imposed on them globally, especially focusing on the working condition and job satisfaction, psychological and physiological stress factors, gender relations, and organizational support. Altogether, these studies offer important insights into how social and economic structures inform security work and how the structures continue to marginalize people working in security.

Working Conditions and Job Satisfaction

The well-being of the employees is a multidimensional term including job satisfaction which is dependent on various workplace factors. In the context of the occupational sector sub-field of security, a study reported the dreadful working conditions of security personnel in Teynampet, Chennai: low pay scales, inferior physical working conditions and unfair treatment by employers. The study advocates the convergence of the social-legal structures and welfare policies to reverse sustenance poverty among security personnel, hence triggering systematic change and long-term reform (Sasitha et al., 2023). In another study, wage policies, and work satisfaction of the Turkey-based private security personnel. In their findings there is strong relationship between compensatory packages and employee retention where larger remuneration packages greatly decreased turnover intentions specifically in labor markets which were saddled with fiscal instability, like those dominating in the private security employment (Demirci & Ergen, 2020). An analysis of security personnel' jobs in Coimbatore, India, identified distinct duties, including patrols, surveillance monitoring, the administration of access-control systems, and responder roles. The researcher argue that fully informed analysis of these roles is critical in maximizing job satisfaction, retention, and general mental and physical well-being, which has both been cited as problematic within security work, and is often viewed as undervalued (Suganya & Sujith, 2025). Beyond the boundaries of the security sector, a study in Pakistan's reported a notable positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance in Pakistan's construction industry, reiterating that enhancing satisfaction is vital for achieving organizational success across all industries (Memon et al., 2023). The literature reviewed within the scope of the current studies emphasizes the importance of focusing on the mutual dependence between the employment conditions, job satisfaction, and psychosocial well-being of employees, thus, stimulating the relevance of security-related policies that directly deal with such aspects.

Psychological Well-Being and Precarity

Economic insecurity along with unstable working conditions brings a strong influence on the psychological well-being of security personnel. A study explored the mental health issues faced by security personnel serving schools and found a high level of stress together with a social stigma

related to the insecurity of employment and the lack of mental health support options. The authors, in turn, proposed the intervention programs of a special informal support, focused on developing regions, as the needed mode to consider these mental health issues in the officially unrewarded employment spheres (Fathima et al., 2024). Similarly, another study also present parallel discoveries that analysed the lives of Southern African security personnel and provided the information that a big chunk of young citizens take these jobs due to lacking education apps and job opportunities in the country. The research described low compensation, uncongenial working conditions, absence of job safety, intense emotional work-load, diminutive remuneration, as well as sustained psychosocial stress. As such, the researchers have suggested dramatic policy reforms to be made to enhance professional standard, work environment, and mental health among these workers (Tayali & Sakyi, 2020). Collectively, these findings highlight the necessity of the further development of active interventions targeting the underlying issues impacting the psychosocial well-being of security-based practitioners operating in the precarious labor-market precarity environments.

Economic mobility and Professional Identity

The aspects of economic mobility as well as the development of professional identity are both important aspects of modern security work. One study examines the experience of being a low-wage security guard in Singapore, and observes that the overall meritocratic, pro-business culture of the country makes these low-wage workers boxed up in a low-wage dead-end job without much at all in terms of a potential career prospect. The author proposed a range of policy solutions designed to break down structural barriers and enhance the socioeconomic status of security professionals (Gog, 2013).

Gender Relations and Workplace Discrimination

The issue of gender relations has a determinant effect on participation and advancement in the security sector. A study in Japan explored the psychological factors influencing career choices based on gender, highlighting how traditional self-concepts and gender identities shape the level of participation in the male-dominated fields like security work. These results point at the need to implement educational programs aimed at reducing fixed career paths induced by strict gender roles (Adachi, 2023). Another study examined the sociological systems and cultural norms that limit women's upward mobility in certain professions. Theirs suggest that stereotypes and exclusions in the culture of organizations hinder the progress of women even in those' settings where the policies of equality between sexes are in practice. These same sociocultural processes are found in so-called hyper masculine cultures in the security sector (Bishu & Headley, 2020).

Emotional Labor and Identity

In the context of the research in security sector, the importance of emotional labor as a management and social problem is often underestimated, although it has a significant impact on both organizational identity and the welfare of individuals. A study illustrates how male migrant security personnel in China warn of the instability of traditional masculinity officiating with their experiences of employment. On the economic level, these security personnel face precocity, social marginalization, thus involved in reconfigured identities with features of self-sabotage and entrepreneurship (Choi & Li, 2021). One study explored the emotional labor performed by security personnel working at apartment complexes of South Korea. Such guard jobs always involve being subjected to verbal humiliation, disrespect, and unrealistic requirements by residents, which, as a whole, lead to persistent stress and demoralization. Following these discoveries, Cho supports the implementation of a stronger form of community policy with the view to improving the social perception of security officers by expanding formal law-based protection. (Cho, 2020). The overall accounts of emotional labor that are conducted by security

workforces promote the understanding of the mutual interaction between the procedures of emotional labor and the identity development.

Violence, Victimization, and Organizational Support

In the private security industry, the emergence of violence and victimization against security staff members is a matter of great concern that requires a timely investigation. Modern studies thus question not just the imminent physical and mental sufferings of the security practitioners, but also the institutional policies that seek to counteract such employment risks. The latest contribution focuses specifically on the psychological, social and professional consequences of victimization, as well as on the inadequacy of support systems functioning both at micro-level, i.e. addressing the well-being of individuals, as well as at macro-level, i.e. mobilization and productivity of the workforce. One study examines violence toward the retail security personnel in Britain. They found that lack of corporate support contributes to poor emotional outcomes, builds up feelings of alienation with regard to work, and heightens the desire to quit. In this regard, the researchers emphasized the importance of extensive support systems on the assertion that such is essential not only to the wellbeing of the employees but also to the sustainability of the retail security industry in the long term (Koeppen & Hopkins, 2021). In South Africa, a historical trend of the victimization of security personnel in Gauteng province was characterized by frequent aggression and a strong degree of disrespect occasioned in the execution of frontline tasks.

Physiological and Human Factors Challenges

In emergencies, security personnel are critical to their work, which is why an expedited increase in the workforce is required; this scenario exposes those people to excessive physical and mental pressure. The relationship between biological stress and occupational burnout and systemic exposures to vulnerabilities including those roles that are intended to be incidentally assumed by security practitioners has recently tended to feature specific interests with those parts of the population that either take night duty or work within high-tech contexts such as cybersecurity. One study examined the issue of working night shifts of security personnel to show that circadian misalignment is linked to hormonal disruption and increased risks of cardiometabolic strain and chronic disease. Such results clearly highlight the need of organizational adaptation on business level (Cannizzaro et al., 2020). Another study focuses on an area of stress and burnout combined with cybersecurity as a human element and evaluates security fatigue as a ranking risk yet to be widely assessed with a negative impact affecting individual performance and a negative impact on organizational resilience.

Organizational Factors, Governance, and Professional Standards

The effectiveness of the private security service does not only depend on the contacts put at stake and the dangers with the locations but also on their organizational systems of governance, institutional systems of governance and the normative systems by which the profession is held to account. The structure of governance of an organization lays down the working norms and subsequently determines the validity and efficiency of security personnel. In a study conducted on the corporate governance of the Kenya based Private security industry, it was confirmed that the effective governance systems have a positive impact on the organizational performance through provision of effective strategy oversight, ethical leadership, and strong stakeholder engagement (Sewe, 2024). Another study discussed private security officers separately from other actors in broader systems of governance stressing their importance alongside public safety. Even with such important roles in social control and public safety activities, security officers continue to be unappreciated professionals lacking sufficient status recognition (Nalla & Wakefield, 2022).

Campus Security Perceptions

Over the past years, securitization of learning spaces, especially in universities and schools, has become a subject of academic prominence due to a surge in security concerns, especially terrorism worldwide and the rise in student activism. Studies have questioned how students perceive safety security feature in their campus, factoring into the arguments their consequences in terms of equity and inclusiveness, and also social psychological outcomes in terms of impact to the learning environment. Among the publications, the first systematic empirical study of how students experience security services and policing at UK universities deserves attention. The findings demonstrate the insights of socio-culturally diverse learners, including the issues related to ethnocentric trust gaps, racialized policing, and other security practices, which produce disproportionately strong influence on campus life. The study also highlights students' interpersonal relations with security personnel, emphasizing how these interactions shape perceptions of security and belonging. The report sheds light on the debate encapsulating the violence-prevention efforts that lack attention to realities of marginalized groups and institutional policies built on student voices that prevent consolidation of social inequities (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2023). A study employing a conceptual framework that examines the dynamics between security pressures posed by the state and the institutionalization of responses evaluated perceptions of terrorism as they emerge in the educational setting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan.

Research Gap

Nevertheless, even though the scope of operations of the security personnel in various sectors has risen significantly, there has also remained an apparent research gap of detailed literature reviews on the socio-economic issues particular to security personnel operating in the university setting. Despite the fact that the literature conducted so far has questioned job satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and organizational support in wider security contexts, it has paid comparatively less accent towards the unique challenges in universities. In addition, in such studies, it is common to study isolated variables: compensation, working conditions, etc., without considering their effects together on mental health, job satisfaction, and professional identity. Lastly, gendered dynamics and emotional labor embedded in the security work in academic institutions are little known, which suggests that conducting empirical research that fills existing gaps is essential.

Theoretical Framework

To better understand the complex experiences of university security personnel, this study draws upon two key theoretical frameworks:

Emotional Labor Theory (Hochschild, 1983): This theoretical approach helps in explaining how employees can manage their emotions to work as expected as they normally hide their real emotions. In security situations, security personnel should maintain an ideal emotional conduct in situations of being stressed through either surface acting (transformation of open expressions) or deep acting (rearrangement of inward affect). Depending on the applied set of rules, usually of an emotional nature, on how to feel, the regulatory process tends to generate fatigue, increased burnout vulnerability, and associated mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, thus interfering with performance and even safety outcomes. Security officers face unique causes of work stress due to the unstable emotional pressure in their affairs with angry people, criminals or crime victims. It is hence important to address emotional labor to protect the wellbeing of security personnel as well as monitoring of productive security practices. The recommended techniques are mental health training interventions, a peer-to-peer support system, and organizational support of self-care.(Eric Davoine, 2025; Sentinel Security Plus, 2023; Sousa Oliveira et al., 2024; Wharton, 2011).

Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (Connell, 1995): The current paradigm questions how the dominant masculine norms organize the modern workplaces and the hierarchies of all strata. In the field of security labor, security personnel need to be perceived as rough, powerful, and emotionally detached and at the same time suppress the image of being soft and vulnerable and inhibit seeking help. This system of discipline promotes surface acting or deep acting in an attempt to portray an unperturbed person, which aggravates pressure at the occupational scene and burnout. Those security officers who fail to comply with these prescriptions usually face ridicule or being shoved to the sidelines. Occupational risk is also a product of Hegemonic masculinity in making it normal whereas mental-health challenge should not be recognized, thus marginalizing the people who fail to comply with the dominant masculine ideal and maintaining social exclusion and organizational hierarchy. The dynamics get inflected by intersectional forces of classes and ethnicity, and we must appreciate the intersectional contribution of these facets, as norms in these spheres end up raising the emotional-work burden and suppressing well-being in the security industry.(Easy Sociology, 2025; Frye, 2022; Street & Dardis, 2018). The use of critical theoretical points of view helps to explain how security work has been determined not only by emotional trends but also by gendered cultural expectations, which in turn would explain why security personnel particularly those who work in universities face are affected by occupational challenges.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Research Model

Qualitative research involves interpretivist school of thought. Interpretivism supports subjectivity against science. It says that social actors are very important and their perspective has to be acknowledged. Therefore, the data we receive in a qualitative research is in the form of description, words, experiences, and stories (Hennink et al., 2011). Qualitative research says that "social reality resides inside the minds of people and they are the ones to construct and give meanings to their actions. In the same way, Weber said that "an action can never be meaningful until social actors attach some meanings to them in a context". Hence, in a qualitative research, the reality is context specific. We have to go to the people and talk to them for understanding the meanings they have attached to their actions. Moreover, their social reality is not static rather flexible, fluid and keeps on evolving with time. Thus, qualitative research is an interactional and constructional process (Hennink et al.,2011).

Research Design

In qualitative research there is no rigorous planning and designing phase rather it is temporary. The relation between the qualitative research and theory is "inductive". We do not assume any theory or abstract ideas about how this world operates before the field. Whereas, we get in the field, collect the data, interpret, analyse and then develop the theory. Hence, in a qualitative research the theory emerges from within the data. However, in today's time qualitative research benefits from deductive theory as well. Due to the excessive information available in the form of literature review and other existing theories; a qualitative researcher now develops half of his knowledge before going into the field. Therefore, you can assume and make certain decisions at planning phase but they can be changed during data collection. As qualitative research is very flexible and allows the researcher to move back and forth for redefining the steps (Hennink et al., 2011).

Research Population

In qualitative research, the research population refers to the group of individuals who share specific characteristics relevant to the study objectives. This population serves as the source of information from which meaningful insights are drawn. Selecting the right population is essential

for ensuring the credibility and relevance of the findings. It provides the groundwork for understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of those who are directly connected to the research problem. A research sample is defined as the group of individuals who are of interest to the researchers for the purpose of generalizing the outcomes of the study. The population may also be defined as the total number of units (individuals, organizations, events, objects, or items) from which samples are selected for analysis. (Creswell, J.W. (2014). The population of this study consisted of twelve security personnel who worked at the Punjab University.

Data Sources and Sampling Strategies

A sample is a subpart of a population that a researcher is interested in to study. Hence, sampling refers to the area or context you want to study. You do not talk to the majority of the community. In qualitative research, we use non-probability sampling technique i.e., not everyone has an equal and same chance to be selected. We have to be judgmental for knowing who can provide us the best data. Hence, samples are small and studied in-depth for getting large amount of information. Non-probability sampling techniques include convenient, purposive, theoretical, snowball and quota sampling. For in-depth interviews, purposive sampling is used as it can give the researcher the detailed information; he/she is looking for the problem under discussion (Statistics Solutions, n.d.). Purposive sampling is also known as judgment or selective sampling since the researcher selects the participants on his or her own judgment. The advantages of purposive sampling are that it is cost and time effective and an appropriate or suitable approach in case of fewer available primary data sources. However, its disadvantages are the errors that can occur due to the researcher's judgment and the research findings through this technique are hard to be generalized.

Data Collection Methods

In qualitative research, there are three techniques that help you collect primary data. These are in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and observations. All of these methods are relevant depending upon your research study. Such as "Focus group discussion" refers to an interactive discussion among 6 to 12 people selected through a criterion set by the researcher and are then asked specific questions. This sort of discussion helps you get a wide range of information in a short time. However, it is not an ideal method for collecting individual level information. Whereas, "Observation" enables researchers to systematically observe and record people's behavior, actions, interactions and the context. Hence, it allows researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings. In addition, you observe not only to understand the context but also its silent social norms and values that could not be expressed in interviews. The tool for observation is either Participant observation (i.e., when you participate with members of your sample) or Non-Participant observation (i.e., when you observe the social setting or the participants from far). In-depth interview, on the other hand, is a one-to-one method of data collection involving an interviewer and interviewee discussing a specific topic in detail. It is a conversation with a purpose to gain an insight of an issue. It is not a two-way process, only the interviewees share their stories while the interviewer tries to understand them. The tool for in-depth interview is an interview guide that is your memory-aid based on the literature review, existing concepts or personal experiences. An interview guide can be structured (when your questions are well-ordered because of the available information), unstructured (when you have no data available on the topic and that is why, your questions are not in a permanent order and can be changed in the field) or semi-structured (when order and language of questions is decided but there exists the flexibility to skip or change them according to the need). Hence, the order, language and number of questions can be changed according to the present situation.

Data Collection Phase

For data collection you first, make an appointment with your participants, ask for their consent, select a suitable location, schedule the meeting, make your participants feel comfortable, ensure

their privacy, develop a trust-worthy relationship with them, do self-scrutiny, make notes of the interviews, and record the data for data analysis. Hence, in qualitative research, a researcher is so much involved in the research that he himself becomes the tool for data a collection. Therefore, a researcher must ensure his/her integrity by detaching oneself from the research. Moreover, during data collection; new questions can arise or you redefine your questions on the basis of your preliminary analysis (Hennink et al., 2011).

In-depth Interview Method

In our study, we have opted to use the in-depth interview method because we wanted to know the personal experiences of our participants by interacting with them individually and face to face. Our purpose was to learn and understand the reality through their expressions, gestures and words which could be possible only when we will choose to study them separately and in detail. Before beginning the interview, we gave a short introduction about our research area and then told them about the ethics of the study i.e., they would not be judged, the conversation will be kept private and they should open up without hesitating. All of our participants were extremely true about their feelings and to our experience, we had a very open conversation and none of them were pretending. We were interviewing the participants and recording them as well. The session with each participant lasted for about 45 minutes to an hour on an average. The age groups of participants were varying as some of them were in their late twenty's while some in their early thirties or above.

Interview guide

An interview guide is a tool used in research to help focus and organize the line of thinking and questioning during an interview. It is a list of high-level topics and questions that serve as a reference during the interview process, allowing for efficient coverage of important information. "The interview guide is a list of questions or topics that the interviewer plans to cover during the interview. It ensures continuity across interviews while allowing the interviewer to explore developing themes as they arise." (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). For our study, the discussion guide had 16 to 18 questions in total that consisted of introductory, probing and closing questions that were neither too emotional nor too private. Even some of our participants did share some extra information as well for that they were too comfortable and willing to participate as a relevant source in our research. The interview guide used in this research included five key sections: demographic information, reasons for choosing the security profession, workplace challenges, emotional and mental well-being, and the impact of the job on personal and family life.

Research Site

A research site refers to a place where you go and talk to your participants. However, it has to be a place where your participants must be at ease, may not have any threat to their privacy, feel important and safe to speak. Hence, the interviews can be conducted both indoor and outdoor as long as the location is quiet, private and comfortable. The conversation must take place where your participant's information cannot be overheard, misinterpreted or interrupted such as through telephone calls or unnecessary arrival of people. Distractions and noise must be avoided for the seriousness to be maintained. Therefore, a researcher has a great responsibility towards the physical surroundings before beginning to collect data. As for our study, since we had decided to explore the work place challenges security personnel face in a university setting. Therefore we decided to conduct the interviews with male security personnel at the University of Punjab, Lahore. We decided to hold our interviews at the university gates, security offices, or in any open areas where they felt safe, comfortable, and confident in sharing their opinions.

Strategy for Entering Research Sites and Conducting Fieldwork

The strategy to enter the research sites is to communicate with the gatekeepers, participants and the other community members who hold the authority to allow you with your research in their area. You have to guarantee the participants their privacy and that no one would be harmed emotionally, physically or mentally otherwise; the researcher would stand responsible. Therefore, we negotiated with our participants before starting up with interviews and ensured them that none of your colleagues/bosses or other staff members would hear about our conversation. We assured them that the research would be kept confidential and it would not impact their job, work or life in future. We first obtained a formal permission letter from the university administration before conducting the interviews. Once the security personnel saw the official approval and understood the academic purpose of the research, they felt more secure and willing to share their experiences. They responded positively and participated in the study with full cooperation. As, we have selected the in-depth interview method therefore, we developed a thematic interview guide as well. An interview guide must consist of clear, short and simple questions. Moreover, different perspectives and opinions should be encouraged during this process. Your conversational style must be comfortable and questions should be few in number so that the participants must have sufficient time to respond to each one of them. In the end, we did thank all the security personnel participants and reassured them that their responses would be kept confidential and utilized only for academic research. No personal or identifying details would be disclosed, and their involvement would not influence their employment or work atmosphere in any manner. The entire process was conducted with full respect for their privacy, dignity, and voluntary consent. Below are the strategies we followed for entering into the research sites and in conducting our interviews;

Negotiation, Rapport Building and Disclosure

We have to build a trust worthy relationship with our participants before beginning to conduct interviews with them. Since we already knew some of the security personnel in our department therefore, we did not have to put so much effort in developing the trust there but with security personnel in other departments, we played a significant role in making them comfortable and easy to go with us. Some Security personnel in other departments were cooperative and felt excited to provide us the data when we told them about our research area and showed them the official permission letter. They were extremely supportive and provided detailed information to us without trimming or molding their responses. They were very vocal, open, and unbiased in their views, and their data really helped us in understanding the challenges faced by security personnel in the workplace however some of them felt that they might not be a good source as they were not educated enough. They thought this can have an adverse effect on our research. So, we helped them understand that they are as good as any other person here and allowed them to speak the language they are comfortable with. Moreover, we did not ask these security personnel to reveal their name and this is where they felt the surety that their data cannot be used against them in future. Hence, the interviews really went well and without any sort of outside pressure or disturbance.

Reflexivity

A qualitative researcher must be conscious throughout the data collection process. Reflexivity or self-scrutiny is the process of keeping the researcher's subjectivity: beliefs judgments, practices and opinions far from affecting the research and the participant's responses to questions. In qualitative research, reflexivity is crucial because it enables researchers to critically assess their own roles, biases, and influences on the research process. (Finlay, 1998)

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a primary focus in research studies because where there are humans there are certain limitations and rules that a researcher has to look forward to (Oxford University Press, 2015). The bottom line is that a researcher must be careful and responsive towards the participant's needs and queries. One must not do any harm to them be it physically, emotionally or mentally. These ethics are crucial especially in qualitative research because here the interaction with the participants is the most important aspect. In qualitative research, we interact with the community or the sample so we can receive information that sometimes can be personal, controversial or secretive therefore, a qualitative researcher must develop an honest and reliable relationship with its respondents. Above all, a researcher must be respectful towards its participants' values and beliefs (American University, n.d.).

Informed Consent

Participants can get conscious or may not feel ready to share the data with the researcher therefore: it is necessary to take their consent whether written or verbal. Informed consent means that the participants are fully aware of the research, its purpose and use. Moreover, if a participant does not want to take part in the research process, then he or she must be free to leave. One must not be forced or deceived to share information rather it must depend on the person's own choice. In our study, where we conducted 12 interviews our participants were fully informed about our research, what will be asked from them, where it will be used and what could be the possible future risks of taking part in the research. They all provided us the verbal consent to be the part of the research.

Privacy and Anonymity

Privacy refers to the fact that the participants must be free and pleased to reveal their information. They must not be forced or pressurized to open up or disclose about things they do not want to reveal (Sieber, 2001). During the data collection process, our participants were given the choice about what data they want to share and what they want to hide from us. We even asked them to not respond to the questions where they feel emotional, vulnerable or under some sort of threat. Whatever data we collected in our research were according to their will and trust. Anonymity, on the other hand, encourages cooperation among participants. We did not even ask our participants to reveal their names any other personal or sensitive information such as their ethnicity, caste,

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is as important as the privacy of the respondents. Confidentiality is to keep the personal or any other information provided by the participants a secret. It is the researcher's responsibility to not pass on or ask personal information such as their name or place of residence if it is not the demand of the research. This will safeguard the trust and respect that exists between the researcher and the participants (Sieber, 2001). Hence, confidentiality and anonymity are the ethical practices that protect the privacy of the participants during data collection, analysis and data reporting. In our study, we were aware of the participant's nature of work and that is why we did not ask the participants to reveal their salary, marital status or the number of their children. Some of them were from our department so they discussed this on their own and on the basis of the trust that existed among us.

Field Work Experiences

Field work is all about gathering data which is aimed at understanding, observing, and interacting with people in their natural settings. Thus, when social scientists talk about being in the field, they are talking about being out in the real world and involved in the everyday lives of the people they are studying (saylordotorg, n.d.). Field work is an interesting way of doing research on any

particular aspect of a society which you want to study because it actually allows you to be able to get your hands on the raw information and data. For instance, the data collection method relevant to our study was in-depth interviews. These in-depth interviews actually helped us in grasping the detail information about our study and also allowed us to understand and explore different perspectives, understandings and experiences related to the topic which we wanted to study. Moreover, it gave a chance to our respondents to talk about things in a more elaborative way which they probably would not have if we were to use another method for collecting the data.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves a process of immersion in data which allows us to understand the unique perspective of our study participants, the meanings they attach with their behaviours to form an evidence-based understanding or a theory about their actions and believes. (Hennink et al.,2011). Thus, the analysis of data in qualitative methods involves a process of preparing, analysing and interpreting data. There are various steps or approaches to analyse the data in a qualitative study but our approach utilizes the broad principles of grounded theory. Grounded theory provides us a set of guidelines to analyse the data (Hennink et al., 2011). Such as in data preparation phase of data analysis, we start with writing verbatim transcripts. In verbatim transcripts we transcribe everything said by the respondents including their gestures and expressions. Hence all the sounds heard in the recording are noted down in the form of a transcript (Worthy, 2019). We also translate the data because most of the times the respondents prefer to give interviews in their own native language. For instance, most of our interviews were conducted in Urdu language and later on we translated them into English. After transcribing the data, we anonymized it i.e., we hide or remove the names or other personal information of the respondents. Once the data is anonymized, we start with developing codes. Coding is a process of identifying a passage in the text or other data items (photograph. image), searching and identifying concepts and finding relations between them (cessda.eu, n.d.). Codes are basically categorized into two different types; inductive codes and deductive codes. Deductive codes are derived from the existing literature while inductive codes are formed by the researcher himself. We generally read about one third of the data to develop codes and after a point of saturation is reached, we stop making codes. We give each code a name and definition accordingly and keep them in book code. Then we describe our data along with doing the comparison of the data. We describing the data include a description of the issues; it further involves clarification of these issues by making an issue distinct from other issues. Next, we categorize the data with similar attributes codes in broad categories which allows us to bring together a group of codes that collectively highlights a broader idea or an issue. Categorization of data followed by conceptualizing the data i.e., seeing our data as a whole in order to develop a broad conceptual understanding of our data (Hennink et al., 2011). After all these steps are completed, we finally are able to generate or develop a theory out of the findings.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant No	Name	Age	Service in years	Education
1	Ramzan	35	5	Matric
2	Nazir	28	6	Middle
3	Arshad	37	10	Matric
4	Hamed	32	7	FA
5	Naveed	38	8	Matric
6	Ahmad	42	10	Matric
7	Zeeshan	39	10	FA
8	Bilal	26	2	Bachelor's

9	Qadir	55	17	Matric
10	Umer	27	4	BA
11	Imran	35	3	FA
12	Nawaz	47	8	Matric

The findings are organized into three major themes. The first theme, reasons for choosing the job of security personnel, explores the socio-economic pressures and contextual factors such as unemployment, lack of education, financial stress, rural-to-urban migration, and study-work balance that influenced participants' decisions to join this field. The second theme addresses the challenges faced by the participants, including long shifts, physical exhaustion, emotional strain, job insecurity, and lack of recognition. The third theme shows the impact, of these challenges on their emotional well-being and mental health.

Reasons for choosing the job of security personnel

Security personnel is considered to be a high risk job especially in the aftermath of 9/11 when threats related to terrorism and security have increased. In many developing countries like Pakistan security personnel are subjected to long shifts often 12 hours or longer while having limited access to social protection and fair compensation. Even though the job is both physically and emotionally exhausting, many people choose it because they have very few other options. As we know, security jobs are generally low-wage positions often filled by individuals who have less formal education and are facing socio-economic challenges. In our interviews, the participants were asked about why they opted for the security personnel job. The reasons were diverse and now we will discuss each of these reasons, based on the personal experiences and narratives provided by the participants in their interviews.

Unemployment

Unemployment refers to the lack of job opportunities that compels individuals to accept any available work, even if it is low-paying or high-risk. Similarly our data reveals that most of the participants involved opted for this job due to unemployment and lack of stable income resources. They had actively searched for other forms of work but were unable to find suitable employment due to limited qualifications or lack of references. As a result, when they heard about a vacancy for a security personnel position in our university they applied for it immediately not because it was their dream job but because it was available. For them, it was a decision made out of necessity rather than preference. One of the participants, Ramzan who holds a matric-level education said;

I previously worked in a medical manufacturing company, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, the company ceased its medicine sales and I was laid off. I remained unemployed for nearly a year. Later, I saw a vacancy at Punjab University. I applied and was hired. It wasn't my preferred choice; I accepted it out of necessity.

Similarly another participant Nazir, a young man also opted for this job due to few employment options and lack of income sources

After my father passed away, I found myself as the sole provider for my family. With three younger sisters to care for, the responsibility of handling everything from their education to daily expenses falls entirely on my shoulders. I couldn't afford to sit and wait for a perfect job. So this security position, even if low-paid, was my only option.

Likewise another participant Hamed (32 years old) shared his views:

I spent several months at home hoping for a better job opportunity. I applied in many companies but without references and high formal education, I was unable to get a job. My relatives started passing comments, saying I was useless which became mentally stressful. So when this job became available, I accepted it not out of desire, but to silence the gossip.

In Pakistan's patriarchal society, where men are supposed to be the only providers for their families, unemployment puts a great deal of pressure on people, who are then forced to take low-paying security jobs just to survive.

Financial Crisis and Inflation

Rising living expenses and low incomes force people to work multiple or demanding jobs, which is referred to as inflation and financial stress. Some participants pointed to the ongoing financial crisis and rising inflation as major reasons for security jobs. The increasing cost of living including food, rent, education, and medical expenses created pressure to take up any available work, even if it involved sacrificing personal well-being or long-term career goals. One of the participants Naveed a matric pass security personnel shared how the burden of being the only breadwinner pushed him into multiple jobs:

I have four kids and managing their expenses was difficult for me. I was already working as a rickshaw driver. Someone told me about the vacancy for security personnel at Punjab University, I applied and got selected. Now I am doing a 12-hour day shift here and driver the rickshaw afterward. It's exhausting but still I have to do it to support my family.

Similar views were shared by another participant, Ahmad who also faced financial crisis:

I work at a furnace during the day; it's hot, heavy, and physically exhausting. But with a joint family of nine people, one job is not enough anymore. That's why I also accepted the job of security personnel and doing night shift of 12-hour here. I barely sleep, but I can't afford to rest when everyone at home depends on me.

Participants were drawn to this position by growing living expenses, domestic duties, and unstable finances. The stress caused by inflation was demonstrated by the fact that some even took on two jobs to meet the rising needs of the economy.

Low level of Education

Low level of education and lack of skills have a strong relationship might limit job possibilities for many individuals. For several participants, their limited educational background was the major hurdle in finding a stable job. The majority of the participants had completed only their matriculation or intermediate education and lacked the degrees or technical skills required for other types of jobs. As a result, the job of security personnel seemed to be one of the limited options available for them to earn a livelihood without needing higher academic qualifications. As shared by one of the participants, Arshad coming from a low income background with limited education:

I left school after ninth grade. After that, I just kept doing work at a workshop. I don't regret much, but I know I couldn't go for anything

better. So I chose this job because it matched what I could handle with my background. But honestly, I'm not satisfied — I'm doing it only because I have to, not because I want to.

Similarly Hamed another participant also opted for security personnel job due to lack of education and other skills necessary to go for office job.

II never had much interest in studies, even though my parents always motivated me to complete my education. My father worked hard as a laborer and did all he could, but due to my own lack of focus, I couldn't go beyond FA. We also did not have enough money for any small business, so I decided to work as security personnel.

Our data indicates that lack of technical skills and a lack of formal education constrained participants from pursuing other careers. They believed that one of the few jobs that fit their qualifications was security work. On the other hand, a few of the participants viewed the job of security personnel as a reasonable, stable and valuable opportunity in their particular circumstances. For some it served as an easy pathway into urban employment after migrating from the rural regions. A few participants also highlighted the flexibility this job offers, especially those balancing their academic responsibilities alongside earning. These relatively positive motivations to choose the job of security personnel are examined under the following thematic subheadings;

Migration from Rural Areas

Due to rural poverty and lack of job opportunities a lot of people move from villages to urban areas. One of our participants had migrated from rural area to Lahore, primarily in search of employment. As in his hometown available work was minimal or restricted to farming labor. Upon arrival in the city, he faced the harsh realities of survival, and found that the job of security personnel were easier to obtain, even if the wages and working conditions were poor. A participant Zeeshan expressed his views:

I come from a small village in South Punjab, where even the basic facilities like electricity and schools are not properly available. Most of the people even move abroad or to urban areas for work. I didn't have the means to go abroad so I come to Lahore. I had some relatives living here; they told me about the vacancy of security personnel and help me in applying and getting the job. So for someone like me from such a backward area, this was a big opportunity. Now I am working as senior security personnel and living inside the university premises.

Our research shows that the participants, who came from rural areas, see this work as a gateway to the urban economy. For many, having a job at a university was an improvement over having few or no job alternatives in their hometown

Opportunity to work while studying

Students also take security jobs to finance their education while studying. A participant mentioned that working in security provided a practical means to support his education. Since night shifts were common in security jobs, they could attend their course classes during the day and earn at night. Although the participant recognized the physical and emotional demands of security personnel job but still he appreciated the job for its flexibility and the potential to earn money

while studying. Our participant Bilal, who was a student and did a night shift in the university said:

I am currently doing my Bachelor's degree during the day and working a night shift as security personnel. Honestly! I don't have any major financial issues or responsibility of family. But I still chose to do this job for my personal growth. I wanted to learn responsibility, manage my time better, and not waste these years doing nothing. Yes, the job is low-paying and can be quite stressful at times but I believe this experience will make me become stronger and more independent.

The findings show that a few participants saw the security job as a workable solution that would enable them to work night shifts and study during the day. These people viewed the work as a short-term but practical arrangement to support their educational aspirations while retaining financial independence, in contrast to others who felt trapped.

Workplace challenges face by security personnel

Security personnel at Punjab University deal with a variety of challenges that have an impact on their effectiveness of work and personal well-being. Despite playing a key role in maintaining campus discipline and safety, they often operate under conditions that are physically and emotionally demanding. Their narratives show how institutional frameworks disregard their fundamental needs, making them feel invisible, worn out and frustrated. There challenges shared by the participants are as follow:

Long Duty Hours

The most common workplace challenge shared by the participants was the long and stressful duty hours. Most of the security personnel complained about 12-hour long shifts, often without rest or rotation, severely affect their physical and mental health. The lack of structured breaks and irregular sleep patterns led to fatigue and emotional exhaustion. As one the participant Ramzan shared:ha bear it.”

In addition to working a 12-hour night shift as security personnel, I also work part-time during the day at an Ichra workshop. Because of this arrangement, I spend almost the whole day away from home. I'm too exhausted to play or converse with my kids when I get home.They feel the distance, and it hurts me too. However what can I do? It's my job, and I have to bear it.

Likewise another participant Qadir also shared his views as security personnel in university

I am 55 years old and have been working here for the past 17 years. In the early days, it was not this difficult. I could manage the workload. But now, age is catching up. The 12-hour daytime shift, checking students and outsiders cards all day, has become physically exhausting. Right now, there are only two security personnel assigned to our department. If just one more guard is added, the work can be divided and we won't have to stand for such long shifts anymore.

As shown by our research long duty hours without rest have resulted in both emotional and physical exhaustion among security personnel. Such circumstances reflect poor shifting planning and lack of fundamental work ethics in institutional duty schedules.

Low wages and Job Insecurity

The second most common challenge was the issue of low and delayed wages. All the security personnel were from a low socio-economic class and most of them were supporting their families. They expressed that it becomes very difficult to manage the expenses of their families in such a low income. 8 out of 12 participants were married and all had kids whereas the other 4 were unmarried and were living in this city without families, they shared with us that they often couldn't send money back home as they were daily wagers and had to cover their own expenses, including room rent and food. Our participant Naveed shared:

I have four children all of them go to school and my wife is a house wife. I am the sole breadwinner and my income does not even meet the fundamental necessities. Each month seems to be a battle, school fees, rent, utility expenses, groceries it's always more than what I earn. At times I feel helpless, even though I work full time.

Similarly another participant Umer from Okara shared:

I am not married and reside alone in a rented room near the university. Many people assume that I have fewer expenses but living independently in this city is quite costly. I am responsible for my own food, medical expenses, rent and transportation. My salary is insufficient, and as a daily wage worker, I have no job security. Sometimes I even skip meals to save money.

The narratives of participants highlight that low and irregular wages have a profound impact on their daily lives, compelling many to take on additional jobs merely to sustain themselves. Regardless of their marital status, security personnel expressed consistently expressed financial strain and a persistent sense of insecurity.

Emotional Labour and Masculinity Pressure

Cultural expectations of masculinity find it difficult for men to show fear, grief or any signs of vulnerability. This forced emotional suppression often leads to internal stress and feelings of isolation. A few of the participants disclosed that as male security personnel they expected to appear emotionally detached and tough all the times. A participant expressed his standpoint as:

I have been doing night shifts at this university for the past three years. Sometimes I am posted at a side gate where it gets really quiet and dark and honestly I do feel scared. But I cannot share this with anyone because I am a man and people expect us to be strong. If I show fear or grief, they will say I am not fit for this job.

This shows that security personnel are forced to appear emotionally strong due to dominant masculinity norms. Their inability to express fear or emotional exhaustion leads to internal stress and potential mental health issues, which remain untreated due to institutional negligence and societal expectations.

Student Behavior

Security personnel who had duty on entrance gates expressed that a lot of students were getting angry very often these days because of the high security check. Every day, they had to deal with students who did not display their ID cards, created issues and argued with security personnel. The security personnel shared that they felt nervous sometimes because it was not their fault, they just

have to follow the orders they get. As revealed by our participant Nawaz who had been working in the university for the past eight years:

I have been working here for over eight years and I have seen students lose their temper in ways you would not expect inside a university. Once during a hostel dispute, three students started fighting violently and when I tried to stop them they pushed me and shouted this none of your business! That day I realized we are not considered as respected authority figures but treated like invisible staff.

Similarly there was another participant, Umer who was young and he shared his views:

I am 27 years old and have been working here for the past four years. Since I am almost the same age as most of the students are so they don't take me seriously. Sometimes when I ask them to show their identity they ignore me or act like I am bothering them .A few of them even misbehave and I to bear that calmly. It does not happen daily and not all the students are the same. But still these moments hurt me.

On the other hand one of the participants Qadir who was the oldest security personnel in my research said that few students also show kindness and respect while interacting with us:

Not all students are rude. There are few students who always greet me with love and respect and even ask how I am doing. I remember once during Ramzan a student brought me an Iftar meal and said, you must be tired, uncle. That small act of kindness remained with me for weeks.

The narratives reveal that most of the security personnel face disrespect from students which weakens their authority and affects their sense of self-worth. While not all students behave in the same way, there are some students who give respect to the security personnel like their teachers.

Lack of support from administration

One participant reported feeling neglected and excluded out of 12 participants despite the fact that the majority did not report any direct disagreements with the university administration. He believed that when problems developed, the management offered no institutional support and ignored the difficulties security personnel encountered. As shared by the participant Qadir :

I once fell seriously ill while on duty. I couldn't afford to leave work because I come from a low-income household, but I had no choice. Only two days of leave were given to me, and even then, I had to bear all the medical expenses as well. The fact that no one from the administration called or messaged to check on me was more painful than the disease itself. It made me feel like we don't matter at all.

Despite the fact that only one participant specifically reported dissatisfaction with administrative assistance; his experience reveals a feeling of emotional and physical desertion. The lack of institutional support during personal or medical emergencies shows a wider gap between frontline employees and the systems that make decisions for them.

Impact of challenges

The challenges faced by university security personnel, such as long duty hours, financial crisis, lack of recognition, and emotional repression, have a significant impact on their mental and emotional equilibrium in addition to their physical stamina. The human burden of these problems was made evident by participant narratives, even though much of their distress remains invisible in institutional discourse. This section explores how their roles as frontline workers take a psychological and emotional toll on their lives. These impacts were directly shared by the participants through their lived experiences:

Emotional Well-Being

Security personnel are always expected to appear tough and composed at all times. But because of their ongoing emotional masking, they are unable to show their sensitivity, which leads to feelings of emotional loneliness, inner exhaustion, and being ignored. A participant Imran shared his perspective:

I have been doing night shifts at this university for the past three years. Sometimes I am posted at a side gate where it gets really quiet and dark and honestly I do feel scared. However, since I am a man and performing the duty of security personnel, I am unable to express this with anyone. Because people will claim that I am unfit for this position if I display grief or fear.

Guards are compelled to repress their emotions in order to fit in with the expectations of masculinity. This gradually diminishes their emotional well-being and leads to the sensations of interior fatigue and detachment.

Mental Health

One participant shared that his mental health had significantly declined due to continuous stress, financial pressure, and lack of rest. He described experiencing anxiety, overthinking, and difficulty sleeping with no institutional support available. As shared by Arshad, our participant:

I get anxious over little things sometimes, like a late payment. I feel pressure in my chest and get irritated quickly. Particularly when you have no savings, this work never lets you relax.

Mental health is directly impacted by ongoing stress and concerns about one's career. Security personnel endure mental stress in silence because there is no coping support available which may have long-term effects.

Discussion

The research looked at the motivations behind people's decision to work as security personnel at Punjab University, the challenges they encounter on the job, and how these challenges affect their mental and emotional health. The discussion section highlights parallels, divergences, and fresh perspectives by contrasting the study's results with relevant theories and literature. Following a summary of the key findings, the chapter offers helpful recommendations for enhancing the working environment and emotional support networks for university security personnel. Tayali and Sakyi's (2020) study on security personnel in Southern Africa identified a number of structural and psychological issues that people in the field confront. Due to a lack of employment opportunities and low educational attainment, the study found that a significant percentage of young individuals choose security professions. These individuals deal with low pay, unstable and unfavourable working conditions, persistent psychological stress, and emotional overload. These observations are highly supported by our findings. According to the research participants,

unemployment, lack of education, financial need was the main reasons for choosing the job of security personnel. The majority of them spoke of their employment as emotionally and physically exhausting with long 12-hour shifts, inconsistent and poor compensation, and no institutional recognition. Because of the pressure to look "strong" and the lack of supportive systems at work, a number of security personnel reported experiencing mental exhaustion and emotional suppression.

Theories of emotional labor and hegemonic masculinity provide strong insight into how male security personnel manage their roles. According to Hochschild (1983), workers in emotionally demanding jobs often suppress their feelings to appear composed, using surface or deep acting. Connell's (1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity explains how men are expected to appear tough and unemotional, discouraging any display of vulnerability. Studies show that such emotional regulation contributes to long-term stress, mental fatigue, and isolation (Street & Dardis, 2018; Wharton, 2011). Similar experiences were shared by our few participants. They experienced ongoing pressure to seem emotionally detached and "strong" while on job. "People think security personnel have no feelings," said one participant, "so even if I'm terrified or mentally exhausted, I can't show it. Another explained that displaying emotion or speaking quietly was viewed as weak or unprofessional. Overthinking, stress, and a lack of emotional expressiveness at home were also caused by this internal emotional repression. These narratives confirm that emotional labor which is influenced by masculine norms is a silent but important problem for security personnel all over the world. They are compelled to perform emotionally taxing parts without having the freedom to show signs of fatigue or anxiety. This emphasizes how urgently security institutions need to implement workplace reforms that include peer support, emotional training, and mental health care systems.

However, one participant also reported that he was well-treated by students, which is another component of our findings that these authors did not address. He recalled a day during Ramadan when he was honored and felt emotionally acknowledged when a student gave him Iftar. This constructive exchange shows that even in the face of widespread neglect, empathetic moments can create a more welcoming and compassionate workplace. International research indicates that security personnel suffer from student disrespect and a lack of administrative support. Similar issues were discovered at Punjab University, where a number of participants stated that students were acting rudely. However, a few participants reported that they were treated with respect, and only one guard reported feeling neglected by the administration. This demonstrates that although these issues indeed exist, they differ for different people.

Conclusion

This study examined the socioeconomic factors, occupational challenges, and psychological effects that Punjab University security personnel face. The findings revealed that, the majority of security personnel chose this job as a result of unemployment, low educational attainment, and financial crisis. They face long duty hours, low wages, psychological stress, and a lack of institutional acceptance. The atmosphere is still difficult and unappreciated overall, even with a few pleasant encounters. In addition to mental health care, the study highlights the importance of structural improvements and a respectful campus culture that recognizes the vital function of security personnel.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are made in light of the research's findings in order to enhance security personnel's working conditions and recognize the importance of their job:

For Policymakers and Higher Education Authorities:

- Basic benefits like health insurance and pension plans should be offered, along with fair wages.

- Proper rest breaks and shift rotation should be provided, and long shifts should be reduced.
- To provide job stability, permanent employment should be prioritized over contracts for daily wages or temporary work.

For Punjab University Administration:

- Counseling sessions and other mental health support programs should be introduced
- Training in emotional labor, conflict resolution, and student engagement should be provided to security staff.
- Awards, certificates of appreciation, or public recognition should be given for their contributions.

For the University Student Community:

- Orientations and awareness campaigns should be used to teach and raise awareness among students about the importance of treating security personnel with dignity and respect.

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