

Access to Decent Work for Transgender Individuals in Pakistan: Influencing Factors and Key Determinants

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Transgender, decent work, socio-cultural acceptance, legal awareness, economic empowerment.

This study examines transgender individuals' access to decent job in Pakistan via socio-cultural acceptability, legal understanding, economic empowerment, and workplace discrimination. In a survey of 1,267 transgender individuals, multiple regression analysis investigates these determinants and career prospects. Economic empowerment was the strongest predictor of access to decent job, although all four categories were significant. The study found that socio-cultural acceptability was associated to decent work, therefore transgender individuals must reduce societal stigma to boost their professional prospects. Knowing one's legal rights boosts one's chances of securing stable job, particularly for transgender individuals. The investigation found that employment discrimination hurts transgender workers. The study contributes to labor market inclusion studies by examining transgender employment from socio-cultural, legal, and economic perspectives. It establishes the framework for future transgender inclusion research in the workforce and illuminates how these factors interact to influence adequate employment in developing nations. The study's findings urge firms and policymakers to adopt inclusive policies and laws to improve transgender workers' job market outcomes. Research on how legislation changes affect transgender individuals' employment should concentrate on intersectional experiences.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has promoted "decent work" as a major theme in global labor discussions (Brill, 2021). Sustainable employment provides fundamental necessities including a decent income, a safe workplace, social security, and equal opportunities for professional and personal development and social integration (Seubert et al., 2021). Transgender individuals and other historically disadvantaged communities still struggle to find excellent jobs despite broad support. Transgender Pakistanis face social and cultural discrimination, legal marginalization, and economic uncertainty, which is concerning.

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Inadequate workplace transgender rights laws and long-standing cultural norms exacerbate these issues (Jadoon et al., 2024). Transgender Pakistanis often labor in informal, low-wage, and insecure jobs including sex work, begging, and performance arts. In addition to not earning a livelihood, transgender individuals in these jobs endure social stigma, bodily and psychological harm, and exploitation. The 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act of Pakistan (Redding, 2019) was approved to protect and respect transgender individuals, however many still cannot find a decent job. Legal loopholes and cultural prejudices prevent transgender individuals from finding formal jobs, thus they are overrepresented in low-paying, insecure sectors.

Understanding transgender issues in Pakistan's employment sector is important given worldwide attention to transgender rights. We must understand what prevents Pakistan's transgender individuals from gaining decent employment to design legislation that support them. Transgender individuals' ability to find work is a human rights issue since it affects respect, equality, and their whole human rights, not just economic empowerment. Pakistani transgender individuals' legal rights have increased in recent years, but employment access remains a major issue. A turning point was the 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act, which guaranteed transgender individuals' self-identification, healthcare, education, and other essential needs. Even though these rights have been largely implemented, transgender individuals still endure job discrimination. The absence of legislative protections, employment discrimination, and limited educational and career opportunities for transgender individuals hinders their economic empowerment. Due to a lack of employment laws, many transgender individuals must engage in exploitative and insecure informal labor markets (Kinitz et al., 2024).

Transgender individuals have made considerable advances toward legal recognition and workplace safety in Northern countries, where much study on their ability to obtain excellent jobs has been done. Transgender studies are few in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, where economic, social, and cultural factors affect the employment market. Several studies have examined transgender Pakistanis' work prospects, but they haven't fully examined the factors that make them struggle. Transgender individuals encounter bias in formal employment (Waqar et al., 2022; Nawaz et al., 2024), but little is known about how economic empowerment, social norms, and legal frameworks affect job results. More research is needed on how these characteristics impact transgender Pakistanis' career prospects. Scholars now understand that gender, class, and ethnicity connect to create prejudice and injustice. Thus, "intersectionality" has gained popularity in recent years (Kelly. Transgender individuals in

Pakistan have significant challenges to finding work owing to how gender identification intersects with socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and economic status. Since transgender individuals (Kelly et al., 2021) from minority ethnic groups or low-income backgrounds may suffer prejudice, their job prospects are considerably worse. This study explores Pakistani transgender individuals' access to decent jobs via gender, class, and ethnicity to fill a gap in the literature.

Current literature lacks theoretical and practical research. Policymakers, corporations, and civil society organizations struggle to implement inclusive policies and programs due to a lack of transgender workforce data. The Transgender Individuals Act of 2018 was a wonderful step, but it has been excruciatingly slow to be implemented in the workplace, and many employers don't realize their legal obligations to transgender workers. If transgender individuals' specific problems in finding decent work aren't addressed, attempts and policies to boost their job chances may fail. This research examines the complex relationship between gender, class, and ethnicity, socio-cultural acceptability, legal protections, economic agency, and transgender work in Pakistan to fill this information vacuum. Closing this gender gap is based on the idea that everyone should have equal access to decent jobs. Everyone, including transgender Pakistanis, should be permitted to live their life as they see fit, work in a discrimination-free environment, and improve society. This paper explores the barriers to decent work for transgender individuals in Pakistan and offers practical recommendations to create a more inclusive and equitable labor market. Understanding the many socio-cultural, legal, and economic factors that affect transgender individuals' work outcomes is essential to creating policies that support their formal labor market inclusion.

This study addresses literature gaps to achieve several purposes. The main goal is to examine how public attitudes and media depictions discriminate against transgender Pakistanis in the workplace. Second, we want to know how policies and practices affect transgender career prospects. Finally, it wants to know how economic empowerment affects transgender people's access to safe and fair work. The study will finish by examining transgender people's career chances by gender, class, and ethnicity. These connected qualities provide unique problems for transgender subgroups. By studying the multiple factors that affect transgender Pakistani employment, this study will expand our understanding. This research's assessment of these issues within Pakistan's socio-cultural, legal, and economic environment may affect policy and practice. This research will examine gender, class, and ethnicity to understand the unique challenges transgender persons from different backgrounds face. Transgender policies and initiatives will aid the most disenfranchised transgender people. This study could help

transsexual Pakistanis acquire better employment. This research helps politicians, corporations, and civil society groups fight for transgender people's right to equitable and inclusive employment by addressing a theoretical and practice gap. Transgender persons in Pakistan will have greater chances to get decent professions, better their quality of life, and integrate into society and the economy.

Hypotheses Development

Socio-Cultural Acceptance

Global debates around transgender individuals' employment access and social acceptance (Drabish, & Theeke, 2022). Across the world, where cultural practices and gender norms exclude transgender individuals, social inclusion is crucial to their access to decent jobs (Coleman et al., 2022). Pakistani transgender individuals have historically faced discrimination, isolation, and violence due to gender identification ambiguities (Riaz, 2023). This discrimination manifests in exclusion from formal education, limited career opportunities, and public harassment. Lack of social and cultural acceptability prevents transgender individuals from fully participating in informal labour, resulting in low wages, job insecurity, and social stigma (Mahmud, 2024). In nations with similar socio-cultural settings, empirical study found that transgender individuals with more public knowledge and support of their rights had better access to formal labor (Ahuwalia et al., 2024). Pakistani society has changed its view of transgender individuals due to the rise of transgender rights groups and favorable media depictions. Sharif et al. (2022) argued that the 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act legitimized transgender individuals and encouraged their societal inclusion, notably in the workplace. This legislation reform and public awareness allow more transgender individuals to work.

Though there have been some positive advances, social and cultural acceptability, especially in isolated areas. Karachi and Lahore are more accepting of transsexual workers than rural Pakistan. Due to gender norms, transgender individuals in rural Pakistan suffer considerable job difficulties. Due to cultural norms and stigma, transgender individuals in certain locations still struggle to find work and social acceptability (Velasco et al., 2022). Transgender individuals' social and cultural tolerance has expanded significantly in urban regions, but they still have a long way to go before they have equal access to the labor in Pakistan. Institutional discrimination and long-standing cultural biases against transgender individuals make it hard for them to find decent jobs. A social change toward gender diversity is expected to boost transgender economic opportunities (Shakibaei & Vorobjovas, 2024). However, transformation varies widely throughout Pakistan, and it is ongoing.

H1: *Socio-Cultural Acceptance and Inclusion positively influences the access of Transgender Individuals to Decent Work in Pakistan.*

Legal Protections and Workplace Regulations

It is well known that workplace regulations and norms are necessary to provide transgender and other disadvantaged individuals with decent jobs. The 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act gave transgender Pakistanis the right to self-identify and protection from job discrimination. Before this law, transgender Pakistanis faced discrimination in the public and commercial sectors and a lack of gender recognition. Transgender individuals must be officially recognized to access the labor market and reduce these barriers. Legal rights and workplace law enforcement influence how well these protections promote decent employment (Valenti, 2021). Legislation may provide the framework for equality, but global research on transgender workers' rights has demonstrated that enforcement is frequently what determines workplace enforcement (O'Connor et al., 2022). Pakistan struggles to implement 2018 law. Research shows that legal protections do not prevent workplace discrimination against transgender individuals (Siddique, 2020). Company and worker insensitivity to transgender issues makes these issues worse, limiting the law's capacity to ensure appropriate employment. After the Transgender Individuals Act, transgender individuals are more formally acknowledged, however the legislation is not always implemented. Many transgender individuals are unaware of their legal rights or unwilling to exercise them for fear of retaliation or social disgrace (Jaffari, 2022). Due to the gap between legal recognition and enforcement, transgender workers need tighter employment discrimination laws. In addition to banning discrimination, employment policies should promote diversity and inclusion to provide transgender individuals equal hiring, promotion, and harassment protections. Lack of anti-discrimination rules in public and commercial organizations has made it tougher for transgender Pakistanis to get work. According to international studies, transgender individuals cannot feel safe and valued in society without anti-discrimination laws and inclusive policies. Pakistan must immediately pass anti-discrimination laws and encourage transgender workplace equality. Legal rights for transgender individuals may be lip service without these restrictions.

H2: *Legal Protections and Workplace Regulations positively influence the access of Transgender Individuals to Decent Work in Pakistan.*

Economic Empowerment of Transgender Individuals

Economic empowerment gives transgender individuals financial independence and stability, which helps them find stable jobs. Transgender Pakistanis are excluded from mainstream education and employment, therefore economic empowerment is essential for social inclusion

and equality. Stigma, racism, and a lack of education make it hard for transgender Pakistanis to find stable, well-paying professions (Majid et al., 2023). Financial literacy, vocational training, small business creation, and other economic empowerment initiatives have helped transgender individuals become more self-sufficient and get work. Global research reveals that economically empowered individuals have higher career prospects. Furthermore, Indian studies showing that vocational training programs for transgender individuals enhance formal sector employment (Zachariah & Nandini, 2023). Pakistani projects like this are quite young. Lack of educational and vocational options is one of the biggest barriers to transgender individuals' economic empowerment.

Pakistan's economic empowerment efforts should eradicate social exclusion and prejudice as entrance barriers. Therefore, it must address transgender individuals' social and economic issues to empower them economically. Economic empowerment may not eliminate prejudice and discrimination if it doesn't address its root causes. The systemic discrimination in financial institutions makes it harder for transgender individuals to secure loans and start small businesses. Thus, enabling transgender individuals economically means addressing financial inequity, promoting transgender enterprise, and providing education and training. Economic empowerment also depends on public policy. Government programs that assist transgender individuals financially, locate them employment, and encourage companies to hire them are essential for inclusive economic growth. Khan & Alam (2021) recommends government efforts to enable transgender Pakistanis assimilate economically. Economic marginalization and poverty will persist for transgender individuals unless measures are made. Transgender individuals are overrepresented in low-paying, precarious employment.

H3: *Economic Empowerment of Transgender Individuals positively influences their ability to achieve Decent Work in Pakistan.*

Intersectionality and Access to Decent Work

Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality paradigm is essential for understanding how several forms of discrimination and marginalization amplify oppressed groups' experiences (Stimatze et al., 2023). Many variables impact transgender Pakistanis' career prospects. Class, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status also affect their job market experiences (Wilson et al., 2020). Transgender individuals in poor socioeconomic backgrounds or rural areas may face double discrimination (Carpenter et al., 2020). Multiple types of persecution make it harder for transgender individuals to find and keep a job (Singh, 2022). Transgender individuals from impoverished ethnic or class backgrounds face more barriers to economic mobility and labor market integration, according to comparative socioeconomic studies. Transgender individuals

in rural Pakistan, where gender standards are stricter, sometimes face double discrimination: first from conventional society because of their gender identification, and second from economic opportunities enjoyed by more privileged groups. Transgender individuals from underprivileged origins or ethnic minorities may have less educational, vocational, and financial opportunities. Therefore, we hypothesize our last hypothesis as,

H4: *Intersectionality of Gender, Class, and Ethnicity negatively impacts the access of Transgender Individuals to Decent Work in Pakistan.*

The study conceptual model is depicted in figure 1,

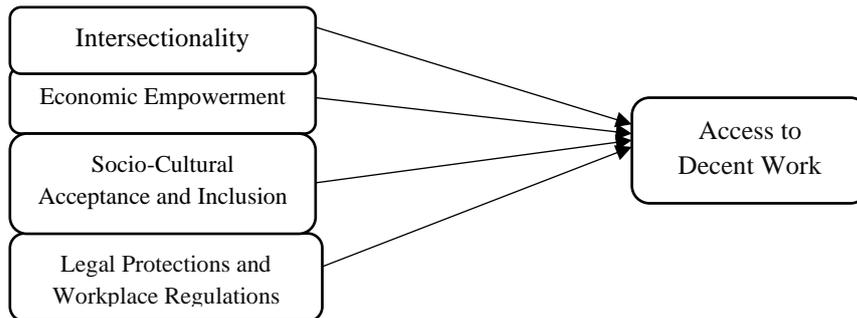


Figure 1: *Research Model*

Source: Author Developed

Methodology

The quantitative research examined Pakistani transgender individuals' career prospects. This study examined how cultural acceptance, legal frameworks, economic empowerment, and intersectionality affect transgender individuals' career chances in the country. A survey-based method was utilized to assess decent work factors and transgender workers' workplace attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. The study included 1,267 transgender Pakistanis from various regions. This sample size was intended to provide broad representation due to transgender individuals' geographic dispersion and different culture backgrounds. The study relied on sampling since transgender individuals were underrepresented in official statistics. We selected individuals using snowball and purposive sampling. Researchers used deliberate sampling to ensure their sample appropriately mirrored the target demographic by include transgender individuals or transgender advocacy network members. Snowball sampling recruited transgender individuals from underrepresented or poor groups via referrals. This strategy allowed us to attract transgender individuals from various backgrounds and throughout the nation.

Structured questionnaires were given online and in-person to collect data. Online distribution targeted urban transgender individuals, who were more likely to use digital media. Transgender individuals in rural or remote areas were targeted for in-person data collection due to their limited internet connectivity. The questionnaire seeks to assess demographics, work history,

socio-cultural experiences, legal knowledge, and intersectionality (gender, class, and ethnicity) in connection to decent employment. To test the tool, researchers made the questions Pakistan-specific and simple. The final survey was designed to take 20–30 minutes to avoid overwhelming participants.

To test the instrument's validity and reliability, 50 urban and rural transgender individuals participated in a pilot study. The pilot study ensured that survey questions were clear and relevant to the topic. The pilot research found that some questions needed clarification or explanation. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire was changed to improve accuracy and clarity. Researchers utilized the pilot study to establish how long participants took to complete the survey to ensure the final survey was efficient without sacrificing data quality. All 1,267 respondents received the amended final survey.

Ethics were vital throughout the study. The institution's research ethics committee approved data collection before it began. All participants provided their full consent after being informed what the study was for, that it was voluntary, and that they may quit at any time without consequence. Due to the sensitive topic and stigma risk, participants' privacy and confidentiality were protected. There was no risk of being identified as the survey did not collect personal information. Please know that your responses are private and used solely for scholarly purposes. We stored survey answers securely and used aggregated data for our study to protect participant confidentiality. Transgender participants were safe since the study followed these ethical requirements.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N=1267)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24 years	312	24.6%
	25-34 years	421	33.2%
	35-44 years	267	21.1%
	45-54 years	174	13.7%
	55+ years	93	7.3%
Gender Identity	Transgender Female	540	42.6%
	Transgender Male	323	25.5%
	Non-binary	158	12.5%
	Other (Gender Non-conforming)	246	19.4%
Education Level	No formal education	159	12.5%
	Primary education	214	16.9%
	Secondary education	381	30.1%
	Higher education (Undergraduate)	307	24.2%
	Graduate education	206	16.3%
Employment Status	Employed (Full-time)	435	34.3%
	Employed (Part-time)	216	17.0%
	Unemployed	424	33.4%
	Self-employed	139	10.9%
	Unwilling/Unable to work	53	4.2%

Geographic Location	Urban (Metropolitan cities)	753	59.4%
	Semi-urban (Townships)	313	24.7%
	Rural (Villages)	201	15.9%
Socioeconomic Status	Low income	589	46.5%
	Middle income	525	41.4%
	High income	153	12.1%
Legal Awareness	Aware of legal rights	723	57.0%
	Unaware of legal rights	544	43.0%
Access to Healthcare	Yes	631	49.8%
	No	636	50.2%
Marital Status	Single	862	68.0%
	Married	235	18.5%
	Divorced/Separated	170	13.4%

Table 1 depicts demographic characteristics. The sample's largest age group (33.2%) was 25–34, with 421 individuals. The next highest age group was 18–24, with 24.6% (312 individuals). Transgender individuals seeking for decent employment are often younger and just starting out or going through substantial life transitions. The elder age groups 35-44, 45-54, and 55+ had lower percentages at 21.1%, 13.7%, and 7.3%, respectively. This distribution shows that transgender individuals under 30 are more likely to work, whereas those over 50 may face more barriers due to years of prejudice and discrimination. Transgender women made up 42.6% (540 individuals) of the sample and were the most prevalent gender. The total included 323 transgender males and 158 non-binary individuals, 25.5%. In the study, 19.4% (246 individuals) classified as gender non-conforming or variable. This breakdown shows transgender individuals diverse gender identities and manifestations. These differences may affect their labor market experiences and quality job access.

The largest group, 30.1% (381 individuals), had completed secondary school. At 24.2% (307), bachelor's degree holders were the second biggest category. 12.5% of participants had never attended school, while 16.9% had finished elementary school. Many transgender individuals have completed secondary and higher education, which improves their employment, but they may still face gender-based job prejudice. The sample included 34.3% (435) full-time workers and 17.0% (216) part-timers. The sample included 424 unemployed individuals (33.4%). This implies that even with education and experience, many transsexual Pakistanis struggle to find excellent jobs. The 10.9% (139) self-employed and 4.2% (53 individuals) reluctant or unable to work may be due to individual and societal barriers. Just over half of the sample (753 participants) lived in a metropolitan metropolis. This places them in urban areas. Twenty-four percent (313 individuals) lived in semi-urban areas, while fifteen percent (201 individuals) lived in rural areas. Metropolitan areas may have a higher transgender population due to greater work opportunities and exposure. However, rural transgender individuals face societal and cultural shame and a lack of legitimate jobs.

The sample was diverse, with 46.5%, or 589 individuals, being low-income. Forty-one percent (525 individuals) were middle-income, and twelve percent (153 individuals) were high-income. This distribution suggests that many transgender individuals are poor, making it tougher for them to get suitable work. Lack of workplace protections and stigma make it harder for transgender individuals to find stable, well-paying jobs, worsening their economic situation. The investigation also focused on legal literacy. Most, 57.0% (723 individuals), knew their legal rights. This may be due to transgender advocacy organizations and the 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act. However, 43% (544 individuals) didn't know their legal rights, which might imply they didn't know where to turn for workplace abuse or discrimination.

Transgender individuals may have trouble finding work due to a lack of workplace and employment rights knowledge. 49.8% (631 individuals) had healthcare, while 50.2% (636 individuals) did not. Due to this gap, many transgender individuals may have problems receiving healthcare, which may harm their health and ability to work. Access to healthcare is vital to decent work since one's physical and mental health may affect job performance and career length. Finally, most participants (68.0%, or 862) were single, whereas a smaller fraction were married. Many transgender individuals struggle to gain family and community acceptance, which may explain their single status. This may impact their careers and working circumstances. The sample's demographics reflect Pakistani transgender individuals' complex experiences. Despite their education and work goals, social and cultural shame, legal limits, and economic disadvantage make it hard for many individuals to attain decent jobs. The demographic split helps explain transgender employment market challenges. This information may help create workplace equality and inclusion programs and policies.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Descriptive Interpretation
Socio-Cultural Acceptance	8	3.75	1.12	0.83	High socio-cultural acceptance observed, though some variability in responses.
Legal Awareness	6	4.12	1.04	0.79	Relatively high legal awareness, but with notable differences in knowledge.
Economic Empowerment	7	3.55	1.20	0.85	Moderate economic empowerment, with significant diversity in economic stability.
Access to Decent Work	9	3.22	1.30	0.88	Access to decent work is somewhat limited, with a high degree of variability.
Discrimination at Workplace	5	2.95	1.45	0.77	Moderate levels of perceived discrimination in workplace settings.

Health and Well-being	6	3.44	1.35	0.81	Moderate access to healthcare and well-being, with some disparities based on region.
Marital Status and Family Support	4	2.82	1.25	0.76	Mixed perceptions of family support and its impact on employment.
General Job Satisfaction	8	3.67	1.10	0.84	General job satisfaction was moderate, with differences based on gender identity.
Social Support Networks	7	3.91	1.09	0.86	Strong social support networks identified, which positively influenced employment opportunities.

Table 2 depicts the reliability analysis results. In addition to mean and standard deviation values for each variable, the reliability table shows survey scale internal consistency. The scales' Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores are all above acceptable. This shows that socio-cultural acceptability, legal knowledge, economic empowerment, decent employment, workplace discrimination, and health and well-being scores are internally consistent. On average, participants felt moderate socio-cultural acceptance, although replies varied. The 8-item Socio-Cultural Acceptance measure has a 1.12 SD and 3.75 mean. This scale's 0.83 Cronbach's Alpha indicates decent internal consistency. Thus, this scale measured the same construct. The Legal Awareness measure has 6 items and averaged 4.12 (SD = 1.04). Despite the wide range of replies, participants seemed to comprehend their legal rights. Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79 indicated that the scale assessed legal knowledge internally. Individuals' economic status varied substantially on the 7-item Economic Empowerment test, with a mean score of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.20 reflecting limited economic empowerment. A 0.85 Cronbach's Alpha indicated the scale's decent reliability in measuring economic empowerment.

Participants' experiences with the 9-item Access to quality Work measure varied, but they generally had trouble finding quality work. The mean was 3.22, and the SD was 1.30. Due to its strong internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.88), the scale accurately scored various job access parameters. The 5-item Discrimination at Workplace test showed moderate levels of perceived discrimination, with a mean of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 1.45. Cronbach's Alpha of 0.77 showed that the scale's components captured workplace discrimination well. Finally, the 6-item Health and Well-being measure showed moderate healthcare access and overall well-being (mean = 3.44, standard deviation = 1.35), although individuals' replies varied. The scale's internal consistency (0.81) according to Cronbach's Alpha indicated reliability in assessing health and well-being.

All scales' reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) suggest that the study instruments were consistent and reliable, supporting the results. While workplace discrimination and healthcare access are issues, the moderate to high mean values across most scales show that participants

generally have a positive but varied outlook on socio-cultural acceptance, legal awareness, economic empowerment, and decent work.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Socio-Cultural Acceptance	Legal Awareness	Economic Empowerment	Access to Decent Work	Discrimination at Workplace	Health and Well-being
Socio-Cultural Acceptance	1					
Legal Awareness	0.52**	1				
Economic Empowerment	0.47**	0.51**	1			
Access to Decent Work	0.63**	0.58**	0.67**	1		
Discrimination at Workplace	-0.38**	-0.35**	-0.28**	-0.55**	1	
Health and Well-being	0.41**	0.39**	0.44**	0.49**	-0.44**	1

Table 3 depicts the correlation analysis. Transgender individuals have better work opportunities ($r = 0.63$) when socio-cultural acceptance is high. This supports the idea that social acceptability helps transsexual individuals find secure, legal work. Same for socio-cultural acceptability and its slight positive connection with legal knowledge ($r = 0.52$) and economic empowerment ($r = 0.47$). This shows that transgender individuals' legal rights and economic possibilities increase with societal acceptance. Transgender individuals' health improves with social acceptance. Socio-Cultural Acceptance positively correlates with Health and Well-being ($r = 0.41$).

Legal Awareness and Economic Empowerment ($r = 0.51$) and Access to Decent Work ($r = 0.58$), respectively, are strongly correlated with improved economic outcomes and job prospects for well-informed legal rights holders. The moderate link between legal knowledge and health and wellbeing ($r = 0.39$), indicating that studying transgender rights may improve physical and mental health. As expected, Economic Empowerment showed the strongest correlation with Access to Decent Work ($r = 0.67$). As expected, economic empowerment increases the likelihood of secure, excellent job. Economic empowerment and health and wellbeing have small positive relationships ($r = 0.44$), suggesting that transgender individuals may benefit from improved economic conditions. Conversely, Workplace Discrimination was adversely connected with many key traits. It correlated negatively with Socio-Cultural Acceptance, Legal Awareness, Economic Empowerment, and Access to Decent Work at -0.38 , -0.35 , -0.28 , and -0.55 . Workplace discrimination is adversely connected with economic empowerment, social acceptability, legal knowledge, and quality employment. Workplace

discrimination prevents transgender individuals from finding decent jobs, as shown by the strongest negative correlation.

According to the biggest relationships, socio-cultural acceptance ($r = 0.41$) and economic empowerment ($r = 0.44$), transgender individuals' health outcomes increase with acceptance and stability. Health and wellbeing associated favorably with all characteristics. Legal knowledge is favorably connected with transgender individuals' health and happiness ($r = 0.39$), indicating that legal rights are vital to their well-being. The linkages show that transgender individuals need economic strength, legal knowledge, and social acceptance to find acceptable work. Acceptance, legal knowledge, and economic empowerment improve health and well-being, yet workplace prejudice still hinders equal job opportunities. These findings demonstrate how these challenges complicate and interact with transgender Pakistani employment and social outcomes.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE	Beta	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.927	0.213		4.356	<0.001
Socio-Cultural Acceptance	0.368	0.053	0.321	6.938	<0.001
Legal Awareness	0.249	0.061	0.183	4.072	<0.001
Economic Empowerment	0.426	0.055	0.397	7.745	<0.001
Discrimination at Workplace	-0.289	0.067	-0.248	-4.314	<0.001

Table 4 depicts the multiple regression analysis, Socio-cultural acceptability, legal knowledge, economic empowerment, and workplace discrimination strongly influenced transgender individuals' access to decent job in Pakistan. All of these parameters affected the model, as evidenced by the p-values below 0.001, a significant statistical discovery. Social-Cultural Acceptance was the baseline, with an unstandardized B-value of 0.368 and a standardized beta-value of 0.321. For every unit increase in socio-cultural acceptability, decent job access increased by 0.368 units. Socio-cultural acceptability did improve career prospects. This supports the idea that transgender individuals have greater work prospects when society accepts them. Transgender individuals' chances of getting decent work increase with societal acceptance. Legal Awareness had a smaller but significant impact ($B=0.249$, $\beta=0.183$). For every unit increase in legal knowledge, decent employment increased by 0.249 units. Though less relevant than social and cultural acceptability, it was substantial. Transgender individuals' understanding of their legal rights affects their ability to secure decent jobs, supporting the premise that legal empowerment is crucial to their career prospects.

Economic Empowerment was the model's best predictor with a beta of 0.397 and B value of 0.426. Economic empowerment increased decent employment access by 0.426 units per unit. The strongest positive association between economic empowerment and decent jobs is observed. Greater financial liberty or affluence increased transsexual career prospects. Our

research supports the idea that transgender individuals need economic empowerment to get decent jobs. Finally, Discrimination at Workplace adversely correlates with quality job access with a beta of -0.248 and a B of -0.289. Access to decent jobs dropped 0.289 units for every 1-unit increase in felt discrimination. This negative link suggests that workplace bias makes it harder for transgender individuals to secure decent employment. Workplace discrimination reduces their prospects of safe and fair employment. Overall, the regression analysis supports the statements that transgender individuals in Pakistan confront workplace discrimination, economic empowerment, legal understanding, and social acceptance. These results show the complexity of transgender job seekers' obstacles, which are impacted by social, economic, and legal factors.

Discussion

This study illuminates Pakistani transgender individuals' career prospects. Social and cultural acceptability, legal understanding, economic empowerment, and workplace discrimination impact transgender individuals' employment. In multiple regression analysis, economic empowerment was the biggest predictor of quality job access, but all four components showed statistically significant associations. This reveals that transgender individuals' financial autonomy and resources impact their ability to find consistent job. The favorable and statistically significant association between socio-cultural acceptability and decent employment was apparent. According to the study, social acceptability and high job opportunities were strongly correlated. These findings are consistent with earlier research on how transgender and other disadvantaged populations face discrimination while seeking employment. Furthermore, gender identity beliefs affected employment stability. Societal and cultural acceptability may boost career options for transgender Pakistanis, who face societal stigma and are frequently compelled to work in low-status, low-paying jobs. This research suggests that reducing stigma and promoting employment participation may enable transgender individuals to boost the economy. The research found a favorable association between Legal Awareness and access to decent jobs, supporting the importance of understanding one's rights and being well-informed about the law in improving career chances. Researchers found that transgender individuals who know their rights had more consistent jobs. In Pakistan, a nation with historically weak transgender rights, understanding and using one's legal rights may be crucial to finding a decent employment. Since Pakistan's 2018 Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act has strengthened transgender rights, this study suggests that transgender individuals may have a better chance of getting decent jobs if they were more aware of the laws that protect them.

Legal knowledge had a smaller effect on employment outcomes than socio-cultural acceptability and economic empowerment, but it was still significant. This research emphasizes the need of educating disadvantaged communities about their rights and how to achieve them and giving legal protections. Legal knowledge is essential for transgender individuals to avoid workplace discrimination, have legal counsel, and work lawfully. Raising legal knowledge isn't enough; social acceptability and economic empowerment are also needed, particularly because this influence is lower than the other two. *Decent* jobs were also linked to economic empowerment, according to studies. This shows how financial autonomy affects transgender workers' access to the workforce. Each unit of economic empowerment increased access to quality jobs considerably. This shows the significance of financial independence in helping transgender individuals find decent jobs. Research from many countries shows that transgender and other minority groups struggle to find jobs due to financial constraints. Thus, economic empowerment through education, entrepreneurship, or financial resources can boost transgender individuals' career prospects.

This study's strong findings on economic empowerment support earlier studies linking disadvantaged populations' financial stability to employment chances. This study confirms earlier data that transgender Pakistanis with higher financial advantages had better career results. Economic empowerment for transgender individuals includes financial literacy, business support, and employment training. These actions may hinder transgender individuals' job prospects. The statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables shows that workplace discrimination hinders employment. Transgender individuals who reported more workplace prejudice had trouble finding decent jobs. This supports considerable studies on transgender workers' job struggles due to gender identity discrimination (McFadden, 2020). Transgender Pakistanis, who are harassed and isolated from society, struggle to find satisfactory work due to workplace discrimination. This result emphasizes the need for stronger workplace protections and anti-discrimination laws to ensure transgender workers have equal job chances. Transgender individuals need a friendly, safe, and prejudice-free workplace to find decent job.

This research investigates the specific socio-cultural, legal, and economic factors that affect transgender individuals' ability to find decent work in Pakistan, a country with a long history of social and legal discrimination. The findings reveal how social, cultural, legal, and economic factors affect transgender workers' jobs. Pakistani and similar socio-cultural studies on transgender job challenges are few compared to Western ones (Williamson, 2024). This study examines transgender employment factors in a non-Western developing countries to fill that

information gap. The research also shows the need for comprehensive policies that address transgender individuals' societal perspectives, economic opportunities, and legal rights. Pakistan's Transgender Individuals (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018 is a decent start, but the research found that transgender individuals still experience discrimination and stigma. Prioritize workplace inclusivity and change society's image of transgender individuals. Transgender individuals' employment prospects also need economic empowerment programs that give money, job training, and business opportunities.

This study expands our understanding of the factors affecting transgender Pakistanis' career prospects. The study emphasizes social and cultural acceptability, legal understanding, economic independence, and workplace discrimination to illuminate transgender individuals' labor market challenges and opportunities. Results contribute to understanding of transgender individuals' exclusion from work and illuminate Pakistan's unique cultural, social, and economic variables. The research found that transgender individuals need far-reaching legislative reforms, societal acceptance, and economic empowerment to have equal access to economic opportunities and social involvement.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This work has significant theoretical implications for social inclusion and labor economics. This research contributes to decent work literature by describing transgender individuals' social and cultural acceptance, legal understanding, and economic agency. It fits with intersectionality theory, which examines how economic position, social stigma, and gender identity impact work prospects. This study shows that social and cultural issues must be included when reasoning about excluded groups' employment market access. The study's theory is that social acceptability and financial resources enable decent work. Research shows how public attitudes of transgender individuals affect their ability to get job, contributing to social capital and inclusion discussions. The study shows how legal empowerment may increase decent job prospects and contribute to the discussion on how legal frameworks fight social injustice. The findings suggest studying how social, legal, and economic factors interact in labor market inclusion strategies for disadvantaged populations.

According to the research, managers should do more to promote inclusive, diverse, and bias-free workplaces. Companies must ensure transgender individuals have equitable employment opportunities, diversified recruiting processes, and robust anti-discrimination policies. Raising workplace gender identity awareness and fighting discrimination are needed to attain this aim. Managers should learn to detect and resolve unconscious bias that may hinder transgender job advancement. The findings also has practical consequences for managers seeking to

economically empower workers via labor. Businesses may empower transgender individuals by supporting career progress, linking them to mentors, and sponsoring skill development programs. Businesses may make workplaces more inclusive for transgender individuals by financing personal and professional development initiatives. These programs promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, which boosts performance and social justice.

Limitation and Future Recommendations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, it focused exclusively on transgender individuals in Pakistan, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or geographical contexts. Secondly, the data was cross-sectional, meaning that causality cannot be definitively established. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to better understand the long-term effects of socio-cultural acceptance, legal awareness, and economic empowerment on employment outcomes for transgender individuals. Additionally, this study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccuracies in participants' recollections. Future research could triangulate data sources, incorporating qualitative interviews or observational methods to validate and deepen the findings.

In terms of future recommendations, further research should explore the role of **organizational culture** and **workplace policies** in supporting transgender inclusion. Understanding how different types of organizations (public vs. private, for example) approach transgender employment could offer valuable insights into best practices. Additionally, future studies could investigate the intersectional experiences of transgender individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, or geographic regions, as these factors may further influence access to decent work. Lastly, there is a need for **policy-oriented research** that examines how legal reforms, such as anti-discrimination laws and labor protections, impact transgender individuals' ability to find and retain decent employment.

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