

Work-Life Balance and Mental Health: A Study on Working Women

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ABSTRACT

The topic of well being of working women have been going on very for a very long time. The role of working women is changing these days due to economic condition and social status. Working women faces many types of experience such as positive and negative. In positive experience woman can increase their self independency, self recognition and empowerment. In negative experience she faces many problem and issue related to health, stereotype, family restriction and work-life balance. Due to work pressure woman feels stressed, anxiety and worry about their work and family, this affects their physical and mental health and social well being. Working women have to maintain balance between family and work. This paper explores working women and well being with their health.

Keywords: Working women, Well being, Health and family

INTRODUCTION

As women's roles evolve, balancing careers, family commitments, and personal well-being has become increasingly challenging. Many women are now expected to juggle multiple responsibilities, which can lead to feelings of stress, burnout, and strain. This shift in roles, while empowering, also places immense pressure on them to succeed in both their professional and personal lives. Working women refers to women who are engaged in paid employment, running businesses, or participating in any form of labor outside the home. This term distinguishes them from women who primarily focus on unpaid domestic work, care giving, or other responsibilities within the household (Sinha, 2017).

Woman well-being of working women is a combination of physical health, mental peace, professional growth, and social support. Organizations, families, and society as a whole play a vital role in woman life.

Michel *et al.* (2011) emphasized that family role stressors, particularly family involvement, play a crucial role in predicting family-to-work conflict. When individuals

are heavily engaged in family responsibilities, the demands from their personal lives can interfere with their professional obligations, creating tension between the two domains. Their study further suggests that family-to-work conflict serves as a mediating factor, influencing key work-related outcomes such as job performance and withdrawal behavior. Employees experiencing high levels of family-to-work conflict may struggle to maintain productivity, leading to decreased job performance, or may disengage from their work responsibilities altogether. Additionally, existing research supports the idea that greater family involvement is positively associated with higher levels of family-to-work conflict, indicating that as individuals become more committed to family roles, the likelihood of work interference increases.

Greenhaus *et al.* (2001) found a positive relationship between family involvement and work-family conflict, with this association being more pronounced among males than females. However, women tend to experience greater family-to-work conflict due to their significant involvement in household responsibilities, such as childcare and eldercare. Traditional gender roles and

societal expectations often place a heavier burden on women to manage domestic and care giving tasks, which can interfere with their professional responsibilities. As a result, women may face increased stress and difficulty in balancing work and family obligations. The heightened demand for family involvement further exacerbates these challenges, making it more difficult for women to maintain productivity at work while fulfilling their family roles. This dynamic underscores the complex interplay between gender, family responsibilities, and work-related stress, highlighting the need for workplace policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements and family-friendly benefits.

Objectives:

This study aim is to explore how work-family conflict impacts the psychological well-being of working women and whether social support can help alleviate some of those negative effects. This is a crucial area of research, especially as work-life balance and mental health have become increasingly important in discussions about workplace dynamics and women's overall well-being.

METHODOLOGY

This paper focuses on information collected through secondary recourses. Data is obtained from many previously published sources like research paper, reports articles etc. Studies focusing on working women challenges and issue related to health, stereotype, family restriction and work-life balance.

FINDINGS

Employed women tend to experience greater life satisfaction than their nonworking counterparts, with the quality of both home and work environments playing a crucial role in shaping the psychological well-being of working women in dual-earner households.

Challenges faced by working woman:

Work-life balance is essential for overall well-being, yet managing work demands alongside family responsibilities, such as childcare, can be challenging. The constant need to fulfill both professional and personal obligations often leads to stress, fatigue, and burnout. When individuals struggle to allocate sufficient time and energy to both areas, they may experience decreased

productivity at work and strained relationships at home. Without proper support systems, such as flexible work arrangements or family-friendly policies, maintaining a healthy balance becomes even more difficult. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a sustainable and fulfilling work-life dynamic (Sorensen and Verbrugge, 1987).

Gender bias and discrimination:

Gender bias and discrimination remain significant challenges in the workplace, negatively affecting women's well-being and professional growth. Unequal pay continues to be a major issue, with women often earning less than their male counterparts for the same work, contributing to long-term financial disparities. Additionally, limited career advancement opportunities, such as exclusion from leadership roles or lack of mentorship, hinder women's professional development and reinforce systemic inequality. Workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, further exacerbates these challenges, creating a hostile and unsafe work environment that can lead to stress, anxiety, and decreased job satisfaction. Addressing these issues requires proactive measures, including pay transparency, inclusive policies, and strong organizational support systems to foster an equitable and supportive work environment for all employees.

Social stigma:

Societal expectations regarding women's roles in the family often place immense pressure on them, leading to internal conflict and stress. Traditional gender norms frequently assign women the primary responsibility for household tasks, childcare, and eldercare, even when they are also engaged in full-time careers. This dual burden can create feelings of guilt, exhaustion, and an ongoing struggle to meet both professional and personal obligations. Additionally, women may face societal judgment if they prioritize their careers, reinforcing outdated stereotypes that limit their opportunities for personal and professional growth. Breaking these rigid expectations requires cultural shifts, workplace support, and policies that promote shared household responsibilities, ensuring a more equitable distribution of work between genders.

Limited Workplace Support on Work-Life Balance:

Insufficient access to flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and affordable childcare options can

significantly hinder employees' ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Without workplace flexibility, such as remote work or adjustable hours, individuals—especially parents and caregivers—struggle to juggle professional responsibilities with personal obligations, often leading to stress, burnout, and decreased productivity (William and Singh, 2024).

A lack of comprehensive parental leave policies can force new parents, particularly mothers, to return to work sooner than they are ready, impacting both their well-being and their ability to care for their newborns. In many cases, inadequate leave options can also contribute to career disruptions, with some individuals being forced to reduce their working hours, take unpaid leave, or even exit the workforce entirely.

Additionally, limited access to reliable and affordable childcare options further complicates work-life balance. Parents who cannot secure proper childcare often face difficult choices, such as relying on informal arrangements, reducing their work hours, or foregoing career advancement opportunities. The stress of finding suitable childcare can also impact job performance, as employees may struggle with absenteeism, frequent interruptions, or the financial burden of expensive childcare services.

To address these challenges, organizations and policymakers must prioritize supportive workplace policies, including flexible work schedules, extended parental leave, and employer-sponsored childcare programs. By implementing these measures, companies can foster a more inclusive and productive work environment, enabling employees to balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Positive impacts of working woman:

The Role of Financial Independence in Well-Being:

- For women, in particular, financial independence is a key factor in challenging traditional gender roles and breaking free from cycles of economic dependence. It enables them to support themselves and their families, make independent life choices, and advocate for their own needs. Additionally, it serves as a protective factor against financial abuse and other forms of economic control in relationships (Anonymous, 2024).
- Employment also provides a structured routine, social engagement, and professional growth, all

of which contribute to psychological well-being. Knowing that one's skills and contributions are valued in the workplace can enhance self-confidence and provide a sense of purpose. Moreover, financial stability can alleviate stress related to economic insecurity, reducing anxiety and improving overall life satisfaction.

- To maximize these benefits, organizations and policymakers must continue to promote fair wages, equal employment opportunities, and supportive work environments. Ensuring that all individuals—regardless of gender—have access to economic opportunities is not only a matter of financial well-being but also a critical factor in fostering self-esteem, mental health, and overall quality of life.

The Importance of a Sense of Accomplishment in the Workplace:

- Achieving goals and making meaningful contributions at work can provide a profound sense of fulfillment and purpose. When individuals set and accomplish professional objectives—whether completing a project, receiving recognition, or advancing in their careers—they experience a boost in self-confidence and motivation. This sense of accomplishment reinforces their belief in their abilities and encourages continuous personal and professional growth.
- Beyond personal satisfaction, workplace achievements contribute to overall well-being by fostering a sense of purpose. Engaging in meaningful work allows individuals to see the impact of their efforts, enhancing their commitment and passion for their careers. Employees who feel valued and recognized for their contributions are more likely to experience job satisfaction, which, in turn, positively influences mental health, productivity, and long-term career success.
- Additionally, the sense of accomplishment derived from work can extend beyond the professional sphere, influencing personal growth and resilience. Overcoming challenges, learning new skills, and making a difference in an organization or community can build confidence and reinforce a positive mindset.

The Role of Social Connection in the Workplace:

- Workplace interactions play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging and community, which is essential for overall well-being. Building relationships with colleagues provides emotional support, reduces feelings of isolation, and creates a positive work environment. Strong social connections at work contribute to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and even improved mental health by offering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.
- Collaboration and teamwork not only enhance productivity but also create opportunities for meaningful interactions. Engaging in discussions, problem-solving, and team projects helps employees feel valued and included, strengthening their commitment to the organization. Additionally, casual conversations and social events in the workplace allow individuals to form friendships, which can make work more enjoyable and reduce stress.
- Beyond immediate workplace benefits, strong professional networks can lead to career growth and new opportunities. Mentorship, peer support, and knowledge sharing help individuals develop new skills and gain valuable insights, enhancing both personal and professional development.

Factors contributing to well-being:***Supportive Workplace Culture:***

A positive and inclusive workplace culture plays a crucial role in fostering employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. When organizations prioritize respect, collaboration, and open communication, employees feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute their best work. A culture that promotes inclusivity and psychological safety encourages individuals to express their ideas, seek feedback, and engage in meaningful professional relationships without fear of judgment or discrimination.

Supportive workplace environments also offer essential resources such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and employee wellness initiatives. These initiatives help individuals navigate workplace challenges, build confidence, and grow in their careers. Furthermore, organizations that recognize and celebrate employees' achievements create a sense of belonging and purpose, strengthening

commitment and reducing stress (Bhattacharya and Kalai Lakshmi, 2021).

Mentorship and Sponsorship: Keys to Career Growth:

Access to supportive mentors and sponsors plays a crucial role in career advancement by providing guidance, encouragement, and opportunities for professional growth. Mentorship helps individuals navigate workplace challenges, develop essential skills, and gain valuable insights from experienced professionals. A good mentor can offer advice on career decisions, share knowledge, and provide constructive feedback, helping mentees build confidence and expand their professional networks.

To maximize the benefits of mentorship and sponsorship, individuals should seek relationships with professionals who align with their career goals, actively engage in learning and development, and leverage the support and advocacy provided by these connections. In turn, workplaces should foster a culture that encourages knowledge-sharing, leadership development, and equal access to career advancement opportunities.

The Importance of Self-Care Practices

- **Prioritizing self-care** is essential for maintaining overall well-being, productivity, and resilience in both personal and professional life. Engaging in healthy habits such as regular physical activity, nutritious eating, adequate sleep, and effective stress management techniques helps individuals maintain physical and mental health, reducing the risk of burnout and illness.
- **Incorporating self-care** into daily routines enhances emotional resilience, improves work-life balance, and fosters a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle. Employers can also support employee well-being by promoting wellness initiatives, offering mental health resources, and encouraging a culture that values self-care and personal time.

The Power of Open Communication in the Workplace:

- Open communication is essential for building trust, fostering collaboration, and creating a positive work environment. When employees feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, concerns, and ideas with managers and colleagues, they can navigate workplace challenges more

effectively and contribute to a culture of transparency and mutual respect.

- Addressing concerns with managers allows employees to seek guidance, clarify expectations, and find solutions to work-related issues. Constructive discussions about workload, career growth, and workplace challenges can lead to improved job satisfaction and productivity. Managers who encourage open dialogue create an environment where employees feel valued and supported, reducing stress and misunderstandings.
- Effective communication with colleagues enhances teamwork, strengthens professional relationships, and minimizes workplace conflicts. By fostering active listening, clear articulation of ideas, and respectful feedback, employees can collaborate more efficiently and create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

Absolutely, the need for equality and well-being for working women is critical. Women should have the same opportunities as men to succeed in their careers, but it goes beyond just having equal access to jobs. It's also about ensuring a workplace culture that values their contributions, provides fair pay, and allows for work-life balance.

Efforts for well –being of working woman:

A working woman's well-being is such an important topic, as balancing work, personal life, and self-care can be really challenging. It involves both physical and mental health, time management, emotional resilience, and having supportive work environments (Garg, 2023).

Here are a few aspects of well-being to consider:

- 1. Physical Health:** Getting enough sleep, eating nutritious meals, staying active, and taking regular breaks throughout the day are essential. A sedentary workday can be taxing, so incorporating movement—whether through walking, stretching, or even quick workouts—can make a difference.
- 2. Mental Health:** Stress management is key. Techniques like mindfulness, deep breathing, journaling, and seeking therapy or counseling when needed can help. Having a work-life balance and knowing when to ask for help or

delegate tasks can also ease mental strain.

- 3. Boundaries and Time Management:** Setting clear boundaries between work and personal life is essential, especially with the rise of remote working. Allocating time for yourself, your family, and hobbies can prevent burnout. Saying “no” when necessary, without guilt, is a superpower.
- 4. Supportive Environment:** A workplace culture that promotes flexibility, inclusion, and respect can have a huge impact on a woman's well-being. Having a support network—whether it's a mentor, colleagues, or loved ones—can help with both career development and emotional support.
- 5. Personal Fulfillment:** Finding meaning in your work and having time for personal interests, hobbies, or goals outside of your career can contribute to a sense of well-being.

Conclusion:

Mental and physical health are deeply interconnected, both requiring consistent care and intentional effort to maintain overall well-being. For working women, balancing career demands with personal responsibilities can be overwhelming, making it essential to adopt strategies that support both their emotional and physical health. Prioritizing self-care through regular exercise, nutritious eating, and sufficient rest not only strengthens the body but also enhances mental clarity and emotional resilience. Equally important is setting firm boundaries to prevent burnout, managing stress through mindfulness or relaxation techniques, and seeking support from loved ones or professionals when needed. By actively listening to their own needs, practicing self-compassion, and making conscious choices to nurture both mind and body, women can create a sustainable and fulfilling lifestyle that supports their long-term success and happiness.

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