_____

A Comparative Study of the Impact of Role Stress and Work-Family Conflict As Reasons of Working Women Burnout Issue: An Empirical Study

Pushpa Devi[1], Dr. Suresh Kumar[2]

Research scholar

Department of psychology,kurukshetra University kurukshetra

Professor (RTD.)

Institute of integrated and honours studies, Kurukshetra

Abstract

This study provides an empirical understanding of the factors contributing to burnout among working women, emphasizing the interplay of role stress, work-family conflict, and the need for effective intervention strategies. The findings underscore the significance of a holistic Work-Life Integration approach, organizational policies promoting gender equality, and proactive strategies such as leadership development and skills initiatives. The paper emphasizes the crucial role of individual responsibility in self-care practices and advocates for societal policies supporting a more equitable work landscape. By recognizing the unique stressors faced by working women and implementing targeted interventions at both organizational and societal levels, this study contributes valuable insights to develop a workplace culture that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusivity while effectively mitigating burnout and enhancing the overall well-being of working women. Sample of 312 women respondents were surveyed to compare the impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue and concludes that there is significant difference between role stress and work-family conflict showing their impact on working women burnout.

Keywords: *role stress, work-family conflict, burnout, work-life integration, organizational strategies, leadership, remote work, skills development, self-care, societal policies.*

Introduction

Role stress, a pervasive issue in modern workplaces, emanates from conflicting demands and expectations placed on an individual. For working women, balancing professional roles with societal expectations and familial responsibilities can create a complex web of stressors. The pressure to excel in both domains often leads to emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction. Job burnout among female human service professionals is highly related to dissatisfaction with their work, role stress, feelings of isolation and low self-esteem (Brookings et al., 1985).

Work-family conflict arises when the demands of work and family life clash, placing individuals in a precarious position. For working women, the challenge of allocating time and energy between career pursuits and family obligations can be overwhelming. Women academicians experience burnout due to workaholism mediated by work-family life conflict, highlighting the need for support and guidance on self-confidence, time and stress management strategies (Demirel & Erdirençelebi, 2019).

_____

Addressing Role Stress requires proactive strategies that acknowledge and alleviate the pressures faced by working women. Organizations can implement role clarification processes to reduce ambiguity, ensuring that employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Additionally, developing a supportive leadership culture that values open communication and feedback can empower women to voice their concerns and seek guidance. Distributing workloads more equitably and providing professional development opportunities can also contribute to a more balanced and fulfilling work experience. By recognizing and actively mitigating Role Stress, organizations can create a workplace that enables women to thrive in their professional roles without sacrificing their well-being. A 6-session stress management program using Rational-Emotive-Behavioral Training reduced stress and burnout in female blue-collar workers, with long-term benefits (Malkinson et al., 1997).

Understanding these factors is crucial for organizations to implement targeted interventions and policies that promote a healthier work-life equilibrium. By acknowledging the unique stressors women encounter, we can develop a workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusivity, ultimately mitigating burnout and enhancing the overall well-being of working women.

Literature Review

Work-Life Integration stands as a more holistic approach to addressing burnout, encompassing both Role Stress and Work-Family Conflict. This approach involves recognizing that professional and personal lives are interconnected, and organizations play a major role in facilitating a seamless integration of the two. Offering remote work options, and family-friendly policies can empower working women to harmonize their professional and personal responsibilities. Moreover, developing a culture that values work output over mere presence cultivates an environment where employees feel trusted and empowered to manage their time effectively. Work-Life Integration not only reduces burnout but also enhances overall job satisfaction and productivity. Increased burnout in women physician runners is associated with increased household responsibilities and work hours, suggesting poor work-life balance may contribute to burnout (Uhlig-Reche et al., 2021).

Creating a supportive community within the workplace is important for combating burnout among working women. Establishing mentorship programs and affinity groups can provide a platform for women to share experiences, seek advice, and build a network of support. Peer mentoring and networking opportunities contribute to a sense of belonging and solidarity, reducing the isolation often associated with burnout. By cultivating a sense of community and prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can significantly contribute to mitigating burnout and promoting a positive and inclusive workplace culture. Group based physical activity and counselling interventions can reduce stress, burnout, and improve health-related quality of life for working women, with group interventions being more effective than individual ones (Wang et al., 2019).

Organizational policies play a major role in shaping the work environment and influencing burnout levels among working women. Policies that prioritize gender equality, diversity, and inclusion create a foundation for a more equitable workplace. Offering parental leave, childcare support, and flexible scheduling options acknowledges the unique challenges faced by women in balancing work and family responsibilities. Additionally, implementing anti-discrimination measures and promoting equal opportunities for career advancement contribute to a more supportive and inclusive work environment. An approach that combines organizational policies with cultural shifts can effectively address burnout and create a workplace where women can thrive both personally & professionally. Organizational justice, particularly procedural justice, is linked to reduced burnout, with a significantly higher impact on exhaustion and cynicism for women, but no measurable differences in efficacy (Moliner et al., 2005).

Empowering working women through skills development initiatives is a proactive step in mitigating burnout. Providing access to training and development programs not only enhances professional capabilities but also boosts confidence and resilience. Skills development can empower women to navigate challenges effectively, build leadership competencies, and advocate for their needs in the workplace. Moreover, organizations can establish mentorship programs that pair experienced professionals with emerging talent, cultivating a culture of continuous learning and support. By investing in the skills and professional growth of working women,

_____

organizations can contribute to a more resilient and empowered workforce, ultimately reducing the risk of burnout. Skill-development training shows promise in reducing burnout among hospital social workers, with personal accomplishment and depersonalization increasing after training (Cohen & Gagin, 2005).

Leadership plays a major role in shaping the organizational culture and directly influencing the well-being of employees. A proactive leadership approach involves creating a positive work environment where communication is transparent, and employees feel valued. Leaders who prioritize work-life balance, set realistic expectations, and recognize the efforts of their team contribute significantly to mitigating burnout. Leadership training programs that emphasize empathy, emotional intelligence, and effective communication can equip leaders with the skills needed to foster a supportive work culture and address burnout at its roots. Clinical leadership training might be a sustainable approach to begin addressing burnout in female physicians (Yeluru et al., 2022).

Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life is essential for preventing burnout among working women. Organizations can promote a culture that respects personal time and discourages excessive overtime. Additionally, training employees and leaders on time management and setting realistic goals can contribute to a more sustainable work pace. By cultivating a culture that values and respects personal boundaries, organizations can create a foundation for preventing burnout and promoting long-term employee well-being. Frequent boundary-spanning work demands are associated with increased feelings of guilt and distress among women (Glavin et al., 2011).

The rise of remote work has brought about a shift in the traditional work paradigm, impacting burnout dynamics for working women. While remote work offers flexibility, it also blurs the lines between professional and personal spaces. Organizations need to adapt policies and support mechanisms to address the challenges unique to remote work, such as isolation, increased workload, and difficulties in disconnecting from work. Implementing virtual team-building activities, providing resources for creating home office environments, and cultivating open communication channels are essential in mitigating burnout associated with remote work. According to Palamara et al. (2022) a remote coaching program for women surgery residents improved professional fulfilment, burnout, work exhaustion, and well-being.

Individual responsibility in mitigating burnout cannot be overstated. Working women need to prioritize self-care practices to maintain physical and mental well-being. Encouraging mindfulness, regular exercise, and adequate sleep can significantly contribute to stress reduction. Organizations can play a role by promoting wellness programs, offering mental health resources, and creating a culture that values the importance of self-care. Employees who are mindful of their own well-being are better equipped to manage stress, navigate challenges, and sustain long-term career success without succumbing to burnout. Self-care strategies are perceived as important for preventing burnout among women service providers working with female survivors of domestic violence (Alani & Stroink, 2015).

Beyond organizational strategies, advocating for policy change at a societal level is important for addressing the systemic issues contributing to burnout among working women. Policies that support affordable childcare, parental leave, and equal opportunities for career advancement are essential in creating a more equitable work landscape. By participating in advocacy efforts, working women, along with supportive allies, can contribute to reshaping societal norms and policies that perpetuate burnout. Engaging in conversations about work-life balance and gender equality can drive positive change and cultivate a more sustainable and supportive future for all working individuals.

Objective

To compare the impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue.

Methodology

Sample of 312 women respondents were surveyed to compare the impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue. The primary data of this study was collected through "random

_____

sampling and survey method." Comparative mean and independent t-test was applied to analyze and evaluate the data to get the end results.

Findings

Basic details of the respondent are represented by the table below in which it is found that in total 312 respondents 29.9% are below 35 yrs of age, 37.2% are from the age group 35-40 yrs and rest 33.3% are above 40 years of age. 24.5% of them are graduate and below, 30.4% are post graduate and above and rest 36.2% are having professional degree. 44.9% are married, 31.4% are unmarried and rest 23.7% are separated from their family.

Table 1 Basic Details of the Respondents

Variable	Respondent	Total Percentage
Age profile		
Below 35 yrs	92	29.9
35-40 yrs	116	37.2
Above 40 yrs	104	33.3
Total	**312**	**100**
Education		
Graduate and below	76	24.5
Post graduate and above	123	39.4
Professional	113	36.2
Total	**312**	**100**
Marital status		
Married	140	44.9
Unmarried	98	31.4
Separated	74	23.7
Total	**312**	**100**

Table 2 Impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue

Impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue	Comparative mean		t value	Mean diff.	Sig.
	Role stress	work-family conflict			
Working women face challenges understanding their responsibilities	4.23	3.71	2.39	0.52	0.02
Women gets involve in competing priorities, or contradictory expectations from supervisors and colleagues	4.20	3.63	2.63	0.57	0.01
Struggle to manage time, leading to heightened stress levels and increased vulnerability to burnout	4.26	3.70	2.51	0.56	0.01

_____

Working women starts having little control over decision-making and lack autonomy in their roles	4.27	3.64	3.18	0.63	0.00
Reduced effectiveness at work with feelings of inadequacy and burnout	4.22	3.72	2.38	0.50	0.02
Feelings of guilt, neglect, and an overall imbalance in work-life responsibilities	3.19	4.35	5.85	1.16	0.00
Women feel isolated and overwhelmed	3.79	4.01	1.00	0.22	0.32
Constant need to navigate challenging social interactions wear down working women emotionally	3.86	4.11	1.08	0.25	0.28
Dissatisfaction stem from the mismatch between expectations and reality	3.69	4.00	1.38	0.31	0.17
Physical and mental strain intensify burnout symptoms	3.80	4.11	1.95	0.31	0.05

Table 2 is showing comparative mean values for role stress and work-family conflict showing their impact on working women burnout. Higher mean values are shown for role stress for the statement like working women face challenges understanding their responsibilities with mean value 4.23 followed by women gets involve in competing priorities, or contradictory expectations from supervisors and colleagues (4.20), struggle to manage time, leading to heightened stress levels and increased vulnerability to burnout (4.26), working women starts having little control over decision-making and lack autonomy in their roles (4.27) and reduced effectiveness at work with feelings of inadequacy and burnout with mean value 4.22. It is observed that higher mean values are also shown by work-family conflict for the statements like Feelings of guilt, neglect, and an overall imbalance in work-life responsibilities with mean value 4.35 followed by women feel isolated and overwhelmed (4.01), Constant need to navigate challenging social interactions wear down working women emotionally (4.11), Dissatisfaction stem from the mismatch between expectations and reality (4.00) and Physical and mental strain intensify burnout symptoms with mean value 4.11. The results of Independent Samples Test which was applied to compare the impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue shows that there is significant difference between role stress and work-family conflict as the value under Sig. column is below 0.05.

Conclusion

This empirical study explored the relationship between role stress, work-family conflict, and burnout among working women, aiming to provide insights into effective strategies for organizational and societal intervention. The paper analyzed the challenges faced by working women in balancing professional roles, societal expectations, and familial responsibilities, leading to emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction. The literature review emphasizes the significance of adopting a holistic Work-Life Integration approach, incorporating flexible work hours, remote work options, and family-friendly policies to empower women in harmonizing their professional and personal lives. The analysis further advocates for proactive organisational strategies, including role clarification processes, equitable workload distribution, and leadership development programs. It underscores the importance of creating a supportive community through mentorship programs, affinity groups, and wellness initiatives to combat burnout. Organizational policies promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are identified as important in cultivating a healthier work environment. Skills development initiatives, leadership training, and the establishment of clear boundaries between work and personal life emerge as crucial components in preventing burnout. The paper concludes by highlighting the role of individual responsibility in self-care practices and stresses the need for societal policies supporting affordable childcare, parental leave, and equal career opportunities. The analysis contributes to the development of targeted

_____

interventions and policies that prioritize the well-being of working women, ultimately cultivating a workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusivity while mitigating burnout.

The study was conducted to compare the impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue and found that working women face challenges understanding their responsibilities, women gets involve in competing priorities, or contradictory expectations from supervisors and colleagues, Feelings of guilt, neglect, and an overall imbalance in work-life responsibilities, women feel isolated and overwhelmed and constant need to navigate challenging social interactions wear down working women emotionallyare some of the major impact of role stress and work-family conflict as reasons of working women burnout issue. The study concludes that there is significant difference between role stress and work-family conflict showing their impact on working women burnout.

References

[1]   Alani, T., & Stroink, M. (2015). Self-Care Strategies and Barriers among Female Service Providers Working with Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *49*.

[2]   Brookings, J. B., Bolton, B., Brown, C. E., & McEvoy, A. (1985). Self-reported job burnout among female human service professionals. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *6*(2), 143–150.

[3]   Cohen, M., & Gagin, R. (2005). Can Skill-Development Training Alleviate Burnout in Hospital Social Workers? *Social Work in Health Care*, *40*(4), 83–97.

[4]   Ercan Demirel, E., & Erdirençelebi, M. (2019). The relationship of burnout with workaholism mediated by work-family life conflict: A study on female academicians. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *15*(4), 1300–1316.

[5]   Glavin, P., Schieman, S., & Reid, S. (2011). Boundary-Spanning Work Demands and Their Consequences for Guilt and Psychological Distress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *52*(1), 43–57.

[6]   Malkinson, R., Kushnir, T., & Weisberg, E. (1997). Stress management and burnout prevention in female blue-collar workers: Theoretical and practical implications. *International Journal of Stress Management*, *4*(3), 183–195.

[7]   Moliner, C., Martínez-Tur, V., Peiró, J. M., & Ramos, J. (2005). Linking Organizational Justice to Burnout: Are Men and Women Different? *Psychological Reports*, *96*(3), 805–816.

[8]   Palamara, K., McKinley, S. K., Chu, J. T., Merrill, A., Yu, L., Parangi, S., Makowski, M. S., Park, Y. S., Donelan, K., & Stein, S. L. (2022). Impact of a Virtual Professional Development Coaching Program on the Professional Fulfillment and Well-Being of Women Surgery Residents: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Annals of Surgery*, *Publish Ahead of Print*.

[9]   Uhlig-Reche, H., Larson, A. R., Silver, J. K., Tenforde, A., McQueen, A., & Verduzco-Gutierrez, M. (2021). Investigation of work–life integration on burnout symptoms in women physician runners: a cross-sectional survey study. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, *7*(1), e001028.

[10]   Wang, H., Xiao, Y., Ren, X., Zhang, P., & Zhang, T. (2019). Effects of Physical Activity and Counselling Interventions on Health Outcomes among Working Women in Shanghai. *Research Square (Research Square)*.

[11]   Yeluru, H., Newton, H. L., & Kapoor, R. (2022). Physician Burnout Through the Female Lens: A Silent Crisis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *10*.