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# GENDER ROLES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AMONG WORKING WOMEN

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## ABSTRACT

*Gender roles continue to shape the experiences, responsibilities, opportunities, and psychological wellbeing of working women. Although women's participation in education, employment, leadership, and professional development has increased, traditional expectations concerning household management, caregiving, motherhood, and family obligations remain influential in many societies. These expectations can create competing demands between professional and domestic responsibilities, potentially affecting women's emotional stability, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mental wellbeing. This article examines the relationship between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing among working women, with particular attention to work–family conflict, unequal domestic responsibilities, workplace discrimination, social support, and organizational flexibility. Recent research suggests that psychological wellbeing is influenced not only by women's personal coping strategies but also by the social and organizational environments in which they work. Research on work–family conflict among Chinese working women highlights the potential importance of work–life balance in explaining the relationship between competing responsibilities and psychological wellbeing (Bian & Sukor, 2024). Similarly, contemporary reviews emphasize that gender inequality in paid and unpaid work requires responses at individual, family, workplace, and policy levels. The article proposes a conceptual framework in which traditional gender-role expectations may be associated with lower psychological wellbeing, while family support, workplace flexibility, equitable domestic responsibilities, and supportive organizational cultures may function as protective factors. The article provides a foundation for future empirical research and practical interventions intended to promote gender equality and the psychological wellbeing of working women.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Gender Roles, Psychological Wellbeing, Working Women, Work–Family Conflict, Gender Equality, Social Support, Work–Life Balance, Occupational Stress.*

## INTRODUCTION

Gender roles represent the social expectations, cultural beliefs, and behavioral standards that influence how women and men are expected to behave within families, workplaces, and wider society. These expectations often shape the distribution of domestic responsibilities, professional opportunities, decision-making authority, and caregiving duties. In many communities, women are expected to demonstrate emotional sensitivity, maintain family relationships, provide care for children and older relatives, and manage household responsibilities, while simultaneously fulfilling the requirements of paid employment. Although these expectations differ across cultures and generations, they can influence women's daily experiences and perceptions of personal success. Psychological wellbeing refers to a person's overall emotional and psychological functioning, including life satisfaction, self-acceptance, autonomy, positive relationships, personal growth, and a sense of purpose. For working women, psychological wellbeing is closely connected with the ability to manage professional responsibilities without experiencing persistent emotional exhaustion or sacrificing personal needs. When social expectations become excessive or unequal, women may experience stress associated with the perceived inability to fulfill every responsibility successfully. Contemporary research on gender and work–life balance emphasizes that these challenges cannot be understood exclusively through individual behavior because family structures, workplace arrangements, and broader cultural

expectations also shape women's experiences (Sahni et al., 2025).The increasing participation of women in professional occupations has transformed family structures, economic activities, and social relationships. Women now contribute to healthcare, education, business, administration, research, technology, entrepreneurship, public services, and numerous other professional fields. Employment provides financial independence, opportunities for personal development, greater social participation, and a sense of achievement. Araki, S., & Olivos, F. (2025). Found that For many women, professional identity is an important component of self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Nevertheless, participation in paid employment does not automatically eliminate traditional gender expectations within households. A woman may be expected to meet professional deadlines, attend meetings, develop new skills, and maintain productivity while also preparing meals, organizing household activities, caring for children, and responding to family needs. When these responsibilities are not shared equitably, employment may increase the total demands placed on women rather than simply providing opportunities for advancement. The coexistence of professional aspirations and traditional domestic expectations can create a complex psychological experience in which achievement and pressure occur simultaneously.Traditional gender expectations frequently influence the way household responsibilities are allocated between women and men. Cooking, cleaning, childcare, emotional support, arranging family appointments, and caring for dependent relatives may be treated as women's natural responsibilities rather than tasks that should be negotiated and shared. These expectations can remain powerful even when women contribute substantially to household income. The unequal distribution of unpaid work can reduce women's opportunities for rest, recreation, professional training, social participation, and personal development. UNICEF's discussion of gender norms and unpaid work describes how unequal caregiving expectations begin early in life and can limit girls' time for learning, leisure, and personal growth.For working women, these patterns may continue into adulthood and contribute to the experience of a double workload: paid employment followed by unpaid domestic labor. The psychological consequences may include tiredness, frustration, guilt, reduced perceived control, and difficulty maintaining a satisfying balance between different areas of life. However, not every woman experiences traditional family involvement negatively. Shared responsibilities, supportive relationships, and personally meaningful caregiving can provide connection and purpose. Maris, S. S., Suasono, B., & Pambudianto, A. (2026). Explaineds The central concern is therefore not caregiving itself, but whether expectations are imposed unequally, whether women have meaningful choices, and whether their contributions are recognized and supported.

Work–family conflict occurs when the demands of professional employment interfere with family responsibilities or when family obligations make it difficult to fulfill occupational duties. Working women may experience this conflict when a child's illness coincides with a work deadline, when extended working hours interfere with family commitments, or when household expectations prevent sufficient time for sleep and recovery. The conflict can also arise psychologically when women feel that success in one role requires neglecting another role that is socially or personally important. Research published in Scientific Reports by Bian and Sukor (2024) examined the mediating role of work–life balance in the relationship between work–family conflict and psychological wellbeing among 258 working women in Hebei Province, China. García-Rodríguez, I., Gómez-Salgado, J., Prieto-Callejero, B., Fagundo-Rivera, J., El Khoury-Moreno, L., & García-Iglesias, J. J. (2026). Explaines Their

research provides a relevant empirical foundation for understanding how competing responsibilities and perceived balance may be connected with women's wellbeing. Work–family conflict should not be understood simply as a failure of personal organization. Inflexible work schedules, insufficient childcare, long commutes, limited household assistance, and expectations of constant availability may make balance difficult even for highly organized individuals. This perspective is important because it shifts attention from blaming women for struggling to manage multiple roles toward identifying the conditions that produce unnecessary pressure.

Workplace culture represents another important influence on the psychological wellbeing of working women. Professional environments can support wellbeing when they provide respectful communication, fair promotion procedures, equal pay practices, transparent performance expectations, and opportunities for professional development. In contrast, gender stereotypes may influence assumptions about women's competence, leadership abilities, commitment, and suitability for demanding positions. Adjei Boateng, F., & Heilman, M. E. (2024). Revealeds Women may feel pressure to demonstrate exceptional performance to receive the same recognition as colleagues, or they may encounter negative judgments when professional ambition conflicts with expectations concerning femininity or caregiving. Mothers and other women with substantial family responsibilities may be particularly affected by workplace practices that reward long hours without considering productivity, efficiency, or individual circumstances. These conditions can contribute to frustration, reduced confidence, occupational dissatisfaction, and concerns about career progression. Nevertheless, workplace experiences are not uniform, and women in different professions, income groups, and organizational settings may encounter different combinations of opportunities and barriers. A comprehensive understanding of psychological wellbeing must therefore consider both interpersonal experiences, such as respect and inclusion, and structural conditions, such as employment security, workload distribution, promotion systems, and access to flexible arrangements.Family support and social relationships can reduce the psychological burden associated with multiple responsibilities.

Partners who share household duties, relatives who provide reliable childcare, colleagues who cooperate during demanding periods, and supervisors who respond fairly to personal needs may help women maintain greater control over their daily lives. Support can be practical, emotional, or informational. Practical support involves assistance with domestic tasks and caregiving, while emotional support includes understanding, encouragement, and validation. Informational support may involve guidance about workplace policies, professional opportunities, and effective coping strategies. A systematic review of protective factors for work–family conflict identified personal resources, including self-esteem and hardiness, as well as relational resources such as family and workplace support, as potentially important protective factors (Promoting Women’s Well-Being, 2023).These factors should not be interpreted as substitutes for fair working conditions. Resilience may help women respond to pressure, but it cannot fully compensate for excessive workloads, persistent discrimination, or an unfair distribution of unpaid work. Effective support combines individual coping resources with practical changes in family and organizational environments. It also recognizes that women differ in their preferences and circumstances and should be able to choose the forms of assistance that best meet their needs.The relationship between gender roles and psychological wellbeing is especially important in societies where family honor, caregiving expectations, marriage, motherhood, and social

approval strongly influence women's everyday decisions. In Pakistan and other South Asian contexts, women may experience different combinations of educational aspirations, professional ambitions, financial responsibilities, family expectations, and community norms. Jabbar, S. A., Barkati, M. G., & Tabish, M. (2024). Elaboreds on These experiences vary considerably according to urban or rural residence, occupation, socioeconomic position, marital status, parenthood, and access to supportive family networks. It would therefore be inappropriate to assume that all working women experience identical forms of gender pressure. Some women may receive substantial family encouragement, while others may be expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities regardless of their professional commitments. The 2025 systematic review by Sahni, Kaushal, and Gupta highlights the importance of examining gender disparities in work–life balance through interconnected individual, organizational, and broader social environments. The present study focuses on the association between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing among working women, considering work–family conflict, unequal domestic responsibilities, workplace conditions, and social support. Its central contribution is a framework for examining how gender expectations may influence wellbeing and identifying potential protective factors. Such an approach can inform future research, workplace policies, family education, and initiatives intended to create more equitable conditions for women.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine the relationship between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing among working women, with particular attention to work–family conflict, unequal domestic responsibilities, workplace support, and family support.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How are gender-role expectations associated with psychological wellbeing among working women, and to what extent may work–family conflict, family support, and workplace flexibility help explain this relationship?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender-role expectations are socially constructed beliefs about the responsibilities, characteristics, and behaviors considered appropriate for women and men. These expectations can influence women's opportunities to pursue employment, develop professional identities, participate in decision-making, and establish personal goals. Sohal, A., Sharma, D., & Sharma, S. (2025). Elaboreds on In working environments, gender expectations may affect how women's performance is evaluated and whether their professional ambitions are supported. Within families, these expectations may influence the distribution of household tasks, childcare, and emotional labor. When women are expected to meet traditional domestic standards alongside demanding professional requirements, they may experience role overload and reduced opportunities for recovery. The psychological consequences can include stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced perceived autonomy. However, gender roles do not produce identical outcomes for every individual. Their effects depend on the degree of flexibility within families, the availability of resources, and the extent to which women can make independent choices. The 2025 OECD report on gender gaps in paid and unpaid work emphasizes that differences in employment and unpaid responsibilities are connected with

gender norms, stereotypes, and broader economic and policy environments. This literature suggests that psychological wellbeing should be studied alongside the social structures that influence women's time, opportunities, and responsibilities.Work–family conflict is a major concept in understanding the psychological experiences of employed women. It occurs when competing expectations make it difficult to meet professional and family responsibilities simultaneously. Time-based conflict arises when the hours required for one role restrict participation in another, while strain-based conflict occurs when exhaustion or worry associated with one area interferes with functioning in another. Najafabadi, Z. A., Vaezi, A., Tavakolifard, N., & Amini, Z. (2024). Found that Behavior-based conflict may arise when communication or conduct expected in one environment is difficult to reconcile with expectations in another. Bian and Sukor (2024) investigated the relationship between work–family conflict, work–life balance, and psychological wellbeing among working women in China.

Their study demonstrates the relevance of examining work–life balance as a potential explanatory mechanism rather than treating professional and domestic responsibilities as unrelated factors. More recent review literature likewise identifies work–family conflict as a multifaceted issue influenced by working conditions, family demands, and cultural differences (Work–family conflict: A systematic literature review and research agenda, 2025). Collectively, this literature supports examining whether women who experience greater conflict between their professional and domestic roles also report lower psychological wellbeing.Unequal domestic labor refers to the disproportionate share of unpaid household work and caregiving undertaken by women. Even when both partners are employed, women may remain responsible for organizing meals, maintaining the home, supervising children's education, caring for older relatives, and anticipating family needs.These perspectives suggest that domestic labor should be treated as an important social determinant of wellbeing rather than an exclusively private household matter. A useful research model should examine not only the number of hours women spend on domestic tasks but also whether responsibilities are shared fairly, whether women have control over their schedules, and whether their work is recognized by family members.Work–life balance refers to the extent to which individuals can participate meaningfully in professional, family, social, and personal activities without experiencing persistent conflict among these areas. Balance does not necessarily mean dividing time equally between work and home. Instead, it involves having sufficient control over time and resources to meet important responsibilities while maintaining health and personal satisfaction. For working women, flexible schedules, manageable workloads, predictable working hours, and adequate support at home may make it easier to manage competing demands. Bian and Sukor (2024) specifically examined work–life balance as a mediator between work–family conflict and psychological wellbeing, making their research directly relevant to the present article.

Kojima, H. (2025). Explaineds The systematic review by Sahni et al. (2025) further suggests that work–life balance must be understood through interconnected individual, organizational, and societal influences. The implication is that work–life balance may help explain how gender-role expectations become associated with psychological outcomes. Nevertheless, the strength and direction of this relationship should be tested with appropriate data rather than assumed in advance.Family support can influence how working women experience gender expectations. When partners and other household members share domestic tasks, acknowledge women's professional commitments, and respect their personal goals, women

may experience greater autonomy and less role conflict. Conversely, when household support is limited or conditional, professional employment may coexist with excessive domestic demands. Bosson, J. K., Jurek, P., Vandello, J. A., Kosakowska-Berezecka, N., Olech, M., Besta, T., ... & Van Laar, C. (2024). Explaines Family support can also affect women's ability to pursue further education, accept promotions, travel for work, or engage in professional development. Research on protective factors for work–family conflict has identified relational support and personal resources as relevant factors in reducing the adverse effects of competing roles (Promoting Women's Well-Being, 2023). The implications are particularly important in settings where extended family networks play a substantial role in childcare and household management. However, the presence of family members alone does not guarantee effective support; the quality, fairness, and reliability of assistance are equally important. Future research should therefore distinguish between emotional encouragement, practical assistance, shared decision-making, and equitable division of unpaid work. These dimensions may contribute differently to women's psychological wellbeing and should not be combined into a single undifferentiated measure.

Workplace flexibility can help employees coordinate their professional and personal responsibilities, particularly when combined with fair workloads and supportive supervision. Examples include predictable schedules, flexible start and finish times, appropriate remote-work arrangements, parental leave, and access to childcare facilities. Nevertheless, flexible policies may have limited value when employees fear that using them will damage their reputation or career progression. Organizational culture determines whether such policies are genuinely accessible and whether caregiving responsibilities are treated as legitimate concerns for employees of all genders. The 2024 systematic review on teleworking and wellbeing from a gender perspective examines the relationship between remote work, work–family experiences, and wellbeing, illustrating the importance of evaluating working arrangements rather than assuming that flexibility is automatically beneficial. Shen, A., & Jaladin, R. A. M. (2025). Revelaed The OECD (2025) similarly emphasizes that unequal paid and unpaid work is shaped by interacting gender norms, stereotypes, and institutional conditions. This literature indicates that workplace flexibility should be evaluated alongside workload, career opportunities, managerial support, and organizational fairness. A supportive workplace may reduce some of the pressures associated with traditional gender roles, whereas a discriminatory or inflexible environment may intensify them.The existing literature establishes the relevance of work–family conflict, unpaid domestic responsibilities, work–life balance, and social support to women's experiences of work and wellbeing. However, these factors are often examined separately, making it difficult to understand how gender-role expectations connect them within a single explanatory framework. A further challenge is that findings from one country or occupation cannot automatically be generalized to women working in other cultural and economic contexts.The present article addresses this conceptual gap by bringing gender-role expectations, work–family conflict, domestic labor, workplace flexibility, and family support into one research framework.

## METHODOLOGY

The proposed study will use a structured quantitative research methodology to investigate the relationship between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing among working women. Data will be collected from women employed in different occupational sectors, such as education, healthcare, banking, administration, business, and other professional services.

Participants should be recruited through an appropriate sampling strategy, with eligibility criteria established before data collection. A structured questionnaire will measure perceived gender-role expectations, work–family conflict, psychological wellbeing, family support, and workplace flexibility. Standardized instruments with established validity and reliability should be selected where appropriate, and any adapted questions should be pilot-tested before the main survey. Participation must be voluntary, informed consent must be obtained, and identifying information should be protected. The proposed methodology will enable the researcher to examine patterns and associations between variables. Because a cross-sectional survey captures responses at one point in time, it cannot independently establish that gender-role expectations cause changes in psychological wellbeing. Findings should therefore be interpreted as associations unless stronger causal evidence is obtained through longitudinal or experimental research.The study will follow a deductive research approach, beginning with existing theories and research concerning gender roles, work–family conflict, and psychological wellbeing.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

A cross-sectional correlational research design is proposed because it enables the researcher to collect information from working women during a defined period and assess relationships between the study variables. Participants will complete a questionnaire containing demographic questions and measures of gender-role expectations, work–family conflict, psychological wellbeing, family support, and workplace flexibility. Relevant demographic characteristics may include age group, occupational sector, working hours, marital status, parental responsibilities, and years of professional experience. These variables may help identify differences between groups and account for potential confounding factors, where justified by the research model. A suitable sample size should be determined through an a priori statistical power analysis based on the expected effect size, significance level, statistical power, and planned analyses. The survey should use consistent response scales and clear wording to reduce measurement errors. Where possible, validated measures should be used in their established form, and translation into local languages should follow appropriate translation and validation procedures. The design is relatively practical for research conducted within a limited time and budget. However, because variables are measured at the same time, the design cannot establish temporal order or prove causation. Longitudinal studies would be useful for examining whether changes in gender-role expectations and support predict subsequent changes in psychological wellbeing.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to examine the relationship between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing among working women. First, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and responses to the questionnaire. The reliability of the measurement scales will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha or another appropriate reliability coefficient. Correlation analysis will then be conducted to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between gender-role expectations, work–family conflict, family support, workplace flexibility, and psychological wellbeing. Multiple regression analysis may be used to examine whether gender-role expectations significantly predict psychological wellbeing after accounting for relevant

demographic and occupational factors. Where the sample size and measurement quality permit, mediation analysis may be conducted to investigate whether work–family conflict helps explain the relationship between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing. Moderation analysis may also be used to examine whether family support or workplace flexibility changes the strength of this relationship. Statistical significance will be assessed using a predetermined significance level, such as \(p < .05\), alongside effect sizes and confidence intervals. The findings will be interpreted carefully, recognizing that a cross-sectional correlational design can identify associations but cannot establish causation. No statistical results will be reported until actual participant data have been collected and analyzed.

## FINDINGS

The literature reviewed for this article suggests that traditional gender-role expectations are an important factor to investigate when studying the psychological wellbeing of working women. Women who are expected to fulfill extensive domestic responsibilities while maintaining professional performance may face competing demands on their time, energy, and attention. These expectations may be associated with increased stress, reduced leisure time, and lower satisfaction with the balance between work and personal life. Research on gender stereotypes and workplace discrimination also highlights how social expectations can influence women's professional experiences and access to opportunities (Heilman et al., 2024). However, these relationships should not be interpreted as universal. Some women find personal meaning and satisfaction in family responsibilities, while others experience pressure when those responsibilities are imposed unequally. The relevant distinction is between freely chosen roles and expectations that restrict autonomy or create persistent conflict. A future empirical study should measure perceived gender-role pressure directly and examine its relationship with standardized measures of psychological wellbeing. This would help establish whether the association remains significant after accounting for working hours, occupational conditions, family responsibilities, and available support.A second major finding from the reviewed literature is the importance of work–family conflict as a potential link between gender-role expectations and psychological wellbeing.

## CONCLUSION

Gender roles and psychological wellbeing among working women represent an important area of contemporary social and psychological research. Women's participation in paid employment provides opportunities for financial independence, professional development, personal achievement, and greater involvement in society. However, professional participation does not necessarily remove traditional expectations concerning domestic responsibilities, caregiving, and family relationships. When women face pressure to fulfill multiple roles without sufficient support, they may experience work–family conflict, reduced personal time, and emotional strain. The literature reviewed in this article suggests that gender-role expectations, workplace experiences, and family responsibilities should be examined together to understand their potential association with psychological wellbeing. Research by Bian and Sukor (2024) highlights the relevance of work–life balance in the relationship between work–family conflict and wellbeing, while more recent reviews emphasize the importance of organizational flexibility and broader social conditions. These findings provide a theoretical foundation for investigating how gender expectations relate to

women's psychological experiences. Nevertheless, the strength and direction of these relationships may differ across occupations, cultures, family structures, and socioeconomic circumstances. The proposed study offers a framework for examining these differences through systematic data collection and appropriate statistical analysis.The implications of this research extend to families, employers, educational institutions, policymakers, and women's support organizations. Families can contribute to psychological wellbeing by distributing household responsibilities more fairly, respecting women's professional ambitions, and recognizing caregiving as a shared responsibility.

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