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Research Article

The Causes Behind The Psychological Issues That Working Muslim Women Encounter: A Case Study Of The Sammanthurai Region

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Abstract. This research paper seeks to explore the mental health issues faced by Muslim women on employment and the causal factors of such issues. Particularly, the study was carried out by taking into account the numerous psychological issues of the working Muslim women in the Sammanthurai area belonging to their family, social and professional setup. According to the existing body of literature, we have determined that religious discrimination, restrictions of the dress code, conflicts between work and family, and cultural pressures are some of the key factors that influence the mental stress and psychological well-being of women. In this research, a qualitative research method was used with a phenomenological research design in order to focus on the lived experiences. The participants were 25 working Muslim women in the region of Sammanthurai that has been selected in the purposive sampling technique. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary data and secondary data were collected in the past researches, books and journals on the same topic. A manual coding process

was used to analyze the data collected by using the thematic analysis. The proper ethical procedures and standards were adhered to to maintain reliability and validity of the research results. The results of the research suggest that the mental issues experienced by the working women who are Muslims do not have the same cause. Rather, they are products of a complex interrelationship of factors, such as work-related, family, socio-cultural and personal factors and educational/career-related problems, religious identity-related pressures, as well as safety issues. This underlines the importance of the socio-cultural context of Sammanthurai region in influencing the psychological status of women. In the end this study highlights that psychological issues among working Muslim women is a complex phenomenon that is formed as a result of several overlapping variables.

Keywords: Cultural Pressures, Work-Family Conflict, Psychological Problems, Sammanthurai, Muslim Women.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world people are built of physical, mental and spiritual levels, but they are doomed to numerous problems and issues. Thus, the confluence of work-related obligations, household duties, and issues related to personal work-life balance have an immense toll on the psychological state. People are thus often stressed mentally, depressed, and anxious. When they cannot handle these problems, people give way to mental disturbances that are expressed in the form of physical and psychological health barriers (Herrman et al., 2004; Post, 2009). As a rule, on one hand, individuals are not hesitant to take the medical help in case of physical disorders; on the other hand, one is ashamed or tries to hide emotional and psychological flaws (World Health Organization, 2004). Such behavior is mostly contributed by social stigma and the misconceptions about the field of mental health (Fernando et al., 2010). Social awareness and psychosocial support is the key to overcoming these conditions (Gearing et al., 2014).

Psychosocial Support is simply explained as a professional discipline of social formation that is based on psychology (Patel et al., 2001). It involves the support, services, and the assistance offered to improve the well being of an individual, in three major pillars, which include emotional health, mental health and social relationships (WHO, 2004). This kind of support helps in conquering stress, grief, fear, loneliness and unforeseen disasters of life and in the development of resilience of the psyche (Ager and Strang, 2008). Psychosocial support is considered one of the basic needs in all the strata of society (Patel et al., 2001; WHO, 2004). An inability of an individual to make decisions, family conflicts, work-related obstacles and economic adversity are all situations that are taken to be the first level situations in which psychosocial support is necessitated (USPHS et al., 1999).

Employed Muslim women have very specific psychological problems to cope with since they have to balance work with religion, society, and family. Main ones include stress, inferiority complexes, social exclusion and conflict between work and family. In a research based on the examination of Ampara district of Sri Lanka (Begum et al. 2025) observe that the social and religious restrictions tend to impair the professional participation of Muslim women. Also, Begum (2024) points to the fact that biases and lack of knowledge among the non-Muslim population impact women

in terms of mental well-being and the likelihood of social mobility, and institutional and religious limitations limit the development of career, raising the stress levels of Muslim women. Moreover, Mufassara et al. (2021) describe the imbalance between the schedules of nursing work and family life has very negative effects on the psychological well-being of women.

As a result, the mental issues of working Muslim women have very specific and multidimensional features. It is a hard task to strike a balance between the professional expectations and Islamic moral code, on the one hand, and social limitations, family responsibilities on the other hand. Their mental health tends to suffer because these multipronged responsibilities in most cases cause stress, exhaustion, and loss of self-esteem as a result.

Problem Statement

1. The current generation of working women, especially Muslim women, experience several psychological issues and emotional crisis in their personal, family and social life. In particular, Muslim women in the workplace constantly face psychological problems, like religious discrimination, being restricted in the style of dressing, the lack of balance between a lifestyle and career, conflict between work and family, etc., all of which undermine their mental health and well-being (Abdul Aziz & Ahmed, 2021). And more to the point, Nurul Naimah Rose & Mustafa (2018) mention that stress is a widespread phenomenon among working women of Muslim descent due to work load, health issues, childcare, social interactions, marriage, time management, and not taking care of oneself.
2. Combining these general aspects with the religious and cultural peculiarities of the Muslim community, they prepare a ground to the constant psychological struggle of working women in the Sammanthurai area. This often leads to more marital breakdowns and problems in taking care of the children. Although these problems prevail, the lack of in-depth research, which attempts to establish specific causes of psychological problems among working Muslim women in the Sammanthurai region, is to a large extent. This research gap brings forth a crucial issue of what the actual causes of psychological problems experienced by such women really are. Thus, the research aims at examining and determining the particular contributors of the psychological issues faced by working Muslim women in the unique socio-cultural setting of the Sammanthurai region, thus filling the gap in the local academic literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is designed such that it offers a deep insight on the reasons behind the psychological issues encountered by working Muslim women in the Sammanthurai region. In order to do so, the choice of research design, sampling methods, data collection and analytical methods was thoughtful and efficiently applied. This paper has taken a qualitative methodology based on a phenomenological research design as the study pursuits directly explored the lived life, emotions, and mental perceptions of the individuals. This design was used on

purpose because it reflected the essence of subjective experience of Muslim women in the context of their environments.

The research involved working Muslim women in Sammanthurai region with the much needed experience and knowledge to give an in-depth view of the research goals. A purposive approach was applied in the selection of the participants and the principal of data saturation applied to determine the sample size in a qualitative inquiry. On this basis 25 respondents will be selected so as to have a thorough coverage of the phenomena of interest. The research data were collected on two major sources primary data including semi-structured interviews were collected to get an in-depth understanding of the profiles, problems and cause factors identified by the participants, whereas secondary data were collected through published research paper, academic essays, books, and journals, as well as other credible electronic sources.

The data gathered was subjected to thematic analysis in a manual coding process in which patterns were spotted and organised into themes that made sense to respond to the research questions. The researcher adopted techniques like triangulation and member checking to make sure that the findings are trustworthy and reliable. Moreover, ethical guidelines were followed to the latter during the study, all participants were informed about what they were engaging in and the concepts of confidentiality, anonymity and being a volunteer were strictly observed in order to provide a secure and independent atmosphere to the whole respondents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Working Muslim Women

Working women can be characterised as employees who work in the labour force yet engage them in the role of the family and social duties in order to become economically independent and self-developed (Hakim, 2006). These people are on a lifelong struggle to strike a balance between work and family life, gender discrimination, and social problems to cause personnel development in professional life (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Voydanoff, 2005). As a result, women employment is not only a source of their income but also a crucial aspect that improves status, dignity, and self-respect of the women in the family and society at large (Coleman, 2011; Sultana, 2013). Working Muslim women are characterized by the fact that they seek professional opportunities to gain economic independence, self-development, and fulfill their social duties, without losing touch with Islamic values and socio-familial roles (Rassool, 2017). They will have to make a fine balance between work-life demands of the profession, the need to maintain the religious identity, and the demands of the community (Tlaiss, 2015). Other researchers also underline that Muslim women consider their professional activity as a kind of serving Allah and a duty they do according to the Holy Quran (Ahmad et al., 2011; Hebb, 1974). Nevertheless, the social and working environment, gender discrimination issues, the issue of religion, and the law are key aspects that directly or indirectly shape their career lives (Metcalf, 2008; Syed et al., 2006).

Reasons behind Psychological Issues faced by Working Muslim Women.

Article 1 by Abdul Aziz and Ahmad (2021) called *Mental Health among Muslim Career Women* states that Muslim professional women experience various mental challenges, such as stress, social discrimination, crises related to religion, grief, loneliness, severe exhaustion, and conflicts over their identity. These matters are normally brought about because of failure to juggle between work and family life, being complicated by the difficulty of accessing mental health services. The results are supported by the IPSOS (2018) report, which outlines numerous key socio-economic issues, including the absence of safety, gender discrimination at work, difficulties with work-family balance, violence against women, and being marginalized in the field of education and technology.

Amin & Mokhtar (2018) emphasize current trends in the rising population of Muslim women pursuing jobs and the mental health effects associated with this population in particular, with the effects of discrimination based on religion. Aazami et al. (2015) follow this with their article, *A Model of Work-Family Conflict and Well-Being*. The study looked into 567 Malaysian women working in the public services and found out that work-family conflicts have dire psychological consequences that include stress, anxiety, emotional burnout, frustration, overwhelming feeling of responsibility, depression, physical and mental burnout, dissatisfaction in life and low self-esteem.

The interconnection between these aspects is visible when the socio-religious conclusions, presented by Abdul Aziz and Ahmad (2021) and IPSOS (2018) are applied to the work-family conflict theories, as developed by Aazami et al. (2015). Moreover, in their research article, *Relationship between Discrimination in Career Development and Stress Among Female Workers in Malaysia*, Faatin Zulaikha Amir and Norashikin Mahmud (2014) directly mention the role of gender based exclusion, injustice and absence of equal opportunity in career growth and development as the direct causes of stress, anxiety, job dissatisfaction, degradation of self-respect and

Overall, the above literature shows that psychological issues in Muslim women are not a vacuum in isolation, but more of a complex interaction of barriers to religious identity, social discrimination, work-family conflicts, and professional inequalities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the lived experiences of the 25 participants of this study explain how the psychological issues facing working Muslim women in the Sammanthurai region are not due to isolated cases. Rather, they are a multi-layered network of factors overlapping. The information forms that the main reasons lie in the depths of professional, family life, socio-cultural, and individual factors, religious identity tension and the issue of safety. The discussion of these findings is presented below.

Work-Related Factors

Work Related Stress and Psycho-emotional Strain

All of the respondents in this research claimed that they were under constant psychological pressure and had a mental weight of heavy burden in their professional lives. The influx of the expanding job demands, time management issues, the high expectations presented by their superiors and the ongoing need to demonstrate professional competency has provided these women with a lot of emotional distress. Specifically, the necessity to accomplish the tasks within tight frames of time and the fear of criticism in the aftermath of the mistakes they could make in the course of their profession have made their daily psychological conditions volatile.

To explain this, Respondent R₃ (Nurse) explained the work environment by saying:

The stress to be flawless in all actions continues to bother the mind all day; and after duty, there is always the feeling of stress, which will not pass away. Likewise, Respondent R₁₄ (Women Development Officer) said: "The daily fear of whether I am able to live up to the expectations of my bosses are highly disruptive to my mental tranquility.

Such lived experiences of psychological stresses are exactly consistent with the Strain-Based Conflict Theory put forth by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). This theory dictates that the stress and emotional burnout the profession creates yields to adverse effects in the family life and personal life. That is, the stress at work transfer to the domestic sphere in the form of the inability to feel a sense of peace, irritability, emotional burnout.

To affirm such a spillover effect, Respondent R₇ (Attorney-at-Law) observed:

The same is expressed as mental stress that exists at work because of being involved in courts on a daily basis, and that is associated with me even when I am at home still in the same state of mind.

Moreover, Cohen and Liani (2009) express the view that ongoing occupational stress progressively depletes the emotional reserves of the individual causing eventual psychological burnout and psychological health issues in the long run. This is in line with what the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2006) defines stress in occupation to be where it is acute when the demands of work are beyond the capacity of handling by the employees. The experiences of the participants, who in this study were typified by work loads of high level, strict time limits, and hard expectations by their managers are evidently above their coping levels.

The Divisional Development Officer respondent R₂₀ further elaborated:

"There is no use denying that juggling between the obligations in professional areas and those at home is very challenging, and the clash of the two often gives rise to acute psychological strain.

Therefore, the study goes to affirm that among working Muslim women in Sammanthurai, occupational stress is never a temporary phenomenon but a consistent mental issue, which affects their day to day operations, balance of emotions, and general well-being. It is quite clear that mental tension is one of the main and inevitable aspects of their working experience.

It is the official scholarly translation and synthesis of findings on the Gender Injustice and Workplace Communication Stress. The passage does not adhere to a single theoretical perspective but incorporates them in conjunction with the theoretical perspective you gave.

Gender Injustice in the Workplace

The analysis of the data indicates that gender-based injustice at the workplace is one of the main issues among employed Muslim women. In particular, some respondents shared their experiences of sub-optimality regarding their professional authority especially in cases where the participant was in an administrative or leadership position. The feelings expressed by the saying that: There are people who just cannot accept a female manager, were quite evident in the experiences of respondents R19, R24 and R25. Such testimonies suggest that the professional disrespect and ignorance of women in positions of authority is still very much entrenched.

To explain this, Respondent R19 mentioned:

Some male colleagues do not readily accept presence of women in management positions, it is their normal practice to doubt our decisions and leadership skills. In the same case, Respondents R24 and R25 have expressed that in operating as female managers, their powers are usually compromised, and their place in decision making in most cases are disparaged or marginalized.

These subjective experiences are very close to the Socio-Cultural Theory advanced by John-Steiner and Mahn (1996). Based on this theory, strongly held patriarchal attitudes within the society serve the role of reducing the leadership capacity, professional dignity and influence of women. Even in instances where women are elected into elective positions of leadership, the perspectives of traditional gender in institutional structures come in as impediment as far as the full realization of their leadership is concerned.

This is also confirmed by the Relational Theory of Gender Equality presented by Syed and Ali (2018). They describe it as not a singular issue of gender equality in the workplace is a structural problem that is greatly influenced by power relations, social norms, and culture of institutions. The experiences of the participants prove that these structural gender injustices are major determinants of their professional identity and status of authority.

Moreover, psycho-social studies point out that female leadership is subjected to consideration as in the prism of gender identity (Crawford & Unger, 2004; Unger, 2004). Therefore when the capacities of a woman and her male counterpart are on par, and experience is within the same plane, she is not given much trust and recognition. R19, R24 and R25 experiences are empirical evidence that confirms these theoretical explanations. Therefore, gender injustice in the working place in the Sammanthurai region is not a lone event but a structural problem that is engraved in social and institutional structures.

Workplace Communication and Interpersonal Stress

Interpersonal relationships and communication issues were found to be a crucial theme in the careers of working Muslim women. In particular, insufficient collaboration between employees, opposing opinions, and verbal abuse complicate the everyday work environment. Respondents R15, R16, R17, R18, R20, R21, R22, R23, R24, and R25 shared insights into these challenges. Respondent R15 remarked:

There are frequent conflicts between the employees and some people are just not ready to cooperate.

This inability to cooperate will interfere with harmony in the workplace, and can compromise the management of day-to-day workloads. When the teamwork is not cohesive, the women find themselves having to work too hard to get their duties done and therefore have to overwork and get less satisfaction in their jobs.

In addition, Respondent R18 observed:

The manner in which individuals talk is very abusive; mean words are very stressful to the mind. These verbal behaviors, which cause stress, such as indirect disrespect and harsh criticism, are similar to other types of emotional violence, which directly affect the psychological condition of women. According to Crawford and Unger (2004) and Worell and Remer (2003) such negative workplace communication may have devastating effects on a woman as it can destroy her self-confidence, emotional stability and professional identity.

Also, the fact that the author observes that the level of envy is high at the workplace; even when you do a good job, there will be people who will not see it, is what points to the manifestation of competitiveness and the absence of social support in the workplace. In the event that professional achievement or ability is viewed with envy instead of admiration, it has a devastating effect on the mental health, generating a sense of insecurity and emotional burnout (Allen et al., 2000; Syed and Ali (2018)).

Conversely, the respondents R5, R6, and R9 had a different view. They stated:

Although we might be jealous of professional development in the family or community, just as we do in the workplace, that does not create us much mental confusion. According to them, the good will and encouragement that they get when they are serving the general population and the local community in their professional capacity gives them a feeling of happiness and psychological empowerment.

These experiences reflect that social support is a protective factor against women who are under the pressure of work. As it is described by Syed and Ali (2018), the perception of professional challenges is not only individual but through the prism of social relationship networks. The experiences of R5, R6 and R9 confirm that the effects of envy and negative interpersonal relations in the workplace can be shielded by strong social recognition and support.

In the end, this paper shows that the problem of interpersonal relationships such as the absence of cooperation, rude communication, and professional jealousy is one of the most acute psycho-social issues. But family and community positive reinforcement is a key resource in overcoming such challenges in building resilience.

This is the official scholarly translation and integration of the part of Family and Social Factors, in particular, Work-Family Conflict. It combines both theoretical frameworks of the role conflict and spillover effect with the qualitative data presented by the subjects.

Family and Social Factors

Work-Family Conflict

The theme of Work-Family Conflict stood out as a popular theme in the psychological landscape of the women involved in this study. The need to balance between their professional duties, raising children, housekeeping and meets the demands of both the spouses and the extended families coupled with social commitments and religious compulsions places so much psychological pressure on their day-to-day lives. Therefore, feelings of guilt, emotional stress, time management crisis, loss of balance and mental fatigue were identified as prevalent in most of the respondents.

The knowledge expressed by Respondent R23, who said, I cannot do anything to the end, my family is being affected, and I am not able to fully practice my religious obligations because of work, is directly related to the Work-Family Role Conflict Theory (Hall, 1975) and the Work-Family Conflict Model (Aazami et al., 2015). These theories are based on the fundamental idea that as the work and family life areas require complete dedication at the same time, the time and effort spent in one sphere are sure to lead to a shortcoming in the other one. This is an ideal demonstration of the main reasons of work-family role conflict as outlined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985).

Respondents R10 and R13 in interviews with women who work in non-Muslim schools about the psychological problems they experience mentioned:

Yes, on fasting days (Ramadan), there are obstacles to performing extensive acts of worship (Ibadah). When we are at home and can pray without any mental distractions, and when we are at school, we cannot pray without distraction, combined with the stress of having to teach students loudly, this can cause immense mental strain, which in turn makes us more irritable with our husbands and children once we are home.

This story is a clear manifestation of the Spillover Effect (Allen et al., 2000) where stress created at workplace has a direct effect and interruption to family life.

All the respondents of this research, including R1 to R25, experienced some form of work-family conflict. In particular, Respondent R25 confessed:

There is a conflict between work and home; when I spend more time on the job, I experience guilt about my family and when I spend more time with the family, I experience mental stress that I am not doing my job well. This testimony is also an indication of two forms of work-family conflict, one that is time-based conflict and the other one is strain-based conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

Moreover, women are supposed to be socially expected to offer emotional support, patience, and love in the family, whereas the workplace requires discipline, control, efficiency and an authoritative attitude as Ahmad (2008) and Noor (2002)

emphasize. This behavioral contradiction of both opposite roles adds to the psychological pressure on women. These sentiments were reflected in terms of being in between feelings and being confused about what to focus on.

This has also been highlighted by other researchers including the works of Abdelhadi (2017), Ahmed (1992), Barlas (2002), and Wadud (2013), who indicate that Muslim women are burdened with more psychological pressures because the structural environment has them operating on religious, familial and professional platforms simultaneously. The results of the current research not only coincide with these earlier studies, but also, practically reinforce the knowledge of the experiences of working Muslim women in the Sri Lankan context.

Conclusively, this study indicates that work-family conflict is not an individual time management problem, but rather a structural psychological problem that is established by social, cultural, religious and organizational systems. One of the analytical results of this research is that it is not only personal psychological strength but also organizational support, family collaboration, and strategies that encourage a religious-psychological balance to manage this conflict (Achour et al., 2016; Syed and Ali, 2018).

This is the official academic translation of the part about Socio-Cultural Constraints. It combines the qualitative results with the social surveillance concepts and cultural psychological theories that are introduced in your text. Socio-Cultural Constraints

Individual and Psychosomatic Factors

The participants reported that there were a number of personal psychological issues such as lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, overthinking, loneliness, emotional exhaustion, physical-mental fatigue, financial pressure, anxiety about the future, and low self-esteem. These challenges were described in great detail by respondents R10, R11, R12, R13, R20, R21, R22 and R23 on the basis of their professional and personal life experiences.

Self-Efficacy and Pro Anxiety.

As to the absence of self-confidence and fear of failure, Respondent R10 reported:

The assumption of being able to do something and that it is usually fluctuating. When a task is given, I always have the fear of making a mistake and doing it right. This is indicative of the role of a deficit of self-efficacy as a psychological hindrance towards professional performance. Moreover, R12 provided information about overthinking and stress: "In some cases, I continue to think about the same problem and this causes insomnia and leaves my mind completely tired. This means that rumination is a major determinant of mental health of such women. On the issue of the overload of various tasks, Respondent R21 wrote: "When I have to put in at work, at home, and with children all at their peak at the same time, my mind and body are so tired. This highlights the strong psychological burden that arises when work and home life collide.

Skill Disparity and work-related fear.

Another significant psychological barrier was found to be professional skill deficiencies. R13 highlighted:

Since I have poor command of the English language, I get an inferiority complex when addressing people. I am scared to talk in meetings. Likewise, R22 said: "Being less computer literate leaves me with a permanent hesitation when working. Such skill deficiencies augment insecurity and will of inadequacy in the workplace. These experiences are consistent with the results of Abdul Aziz et al. (2021), Amin et al. (2018), and IPSOS (2018), specifically in terms of the anxiety, which Muslim women experience in relation to their professional competencies. This professional anxiety was summarized by respondent R11: "As soon as I believe that my skills are not enough, I become frightened, and Respondent R23 said: The fear of making a mistake is always in me. These feelings are similar to the emotional exhaustion and anxiety process outlined by Faatin Zulaikha Amir et al. (2014).

The participants identified a range of individual psychological challenges, including diminished self-confidence, fear of failure, overthinking, loneliness, emotional exhaustion, physical-mental fatigue, financial pressure, future-related anxiety, and low self-esteem. Respondents R10, R11, R12, R13, R20, R21, R22, and R23 provided detailed accounts of these challenges based on their professional and personal life experiences.

Lack of Recognition and Emotional Burnout

One of the sentiments that were shared by most of the participants was that their efforts were not appreciated. R15 remarked:

It is very painful, it is painful because, no matter how much you work, there are people who would not even give it the due credit it deserves. Respondent R18 echoed this: "No-one notices your effort and then your self-confidence starts to erode entirely. This self-doubt and emotional frustration is caused by this lack of appreciation. Respondent R20 also commented that this may also be in the form of performance anxiety: "I sometimes become terrified as I work, and panic because of the idea of making an error. Also, the workload, and the absence of social support can cause unexpected emotional instability, as Respondent R17 mentions: "Sometimes, there is no reason to be angry at all, I turn into a very petulant person. This proves that stress at the work place causes sudden emotional changes and psychological exhaustion (Marecek and Gavey, 2013; Morin, 2006).

Psychological Stress Somatic Manifestations.

The researchers conclude that unbreakable workload and persistent stress are internal determinants of adversely affecting physical health. The events of the respondents vividly indicate that psychological strains assume psychosomatic symptoms, like headaches, body pains, and exhaustion. The psychological studies affirm that the mental stress has psycho-physiological effects (Allen et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2008).

Every participant had physical issues connected with his/her mental stress:

"I get headaches to the point where my head feels like it's spinning." (R7)

"My joints become painful when I stand long hours (R12)

"Often, I have back pain and this makes work hard to do. (R16)

Such reports depict that the mental tension is converted to the physical pain and fatigue. Allen et al. (2000) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) elaborate on them as somatic outcomes of the long-term psychological stress due to work-family conflict and role overload. Besides, the extended periods of technology usage add to the burden; the respondents R15, R20 and R24 said that the long hours on the computer strain the eyes. According to Hill et al. (2004), prolonged use of computers contributes to visual fatigue, physical lethargy, and pains in the joints, which are additional impairments to professional performance.

Within the Islamic work setting, research like that by Achour et al. (2016) suggests that physical fatigue and emotional burnout are subsequent to occupational stress when there is a rise in the stressor, unless someone has strong coping strategies.

To sum up, this study finds that these physical health problems are direct outcomes of personal internal factors and chronic stress. Unaddressed, these issues will have long-term effects on the quality of life, self-care capabilities, work performance, and family management by these women. Hence, safeguarding the psycho-somatic well-being of the working women is a paramount need, both at the individual and social level.

It is the official scholarly translation and compilation of the part on Educational and Professional Skill-Related Factors. It combines the qualitative results with Vygotsky theory of learning and the behavioral conflict theories of Greenhaus and Beutell.

Educational and Professional Skill-Related Factors

The personal experience provided by the participants shows that the lack of education and professional competencies is one of the major factors that lead to the psychological problems experienced by working women. The professional skill gaps were noted as a cause of constant psychological load by respondents R10, R11, R12, R13, R20, R21, R22, and R23.

Anxiety of Technology and Language.

A fear of not being able to keep up with modern professional demands became a significant stressor. Respondent R20 noted:

When there is the introduction of new professional procedures there is a fear of learning them; there is always a fear in my mind that I might commit errors in performing such duties. Moreover, communication and self-esteem are also affected by language barriers. Respondent R13 commented: It is a struggle because my level of English is not very strong; the very fact that I have to speak English provokes mental anguish. These insights clearly demonstrate how a lack of professional skills and linguistic anxiety foster stress and a deficit in self-confidence. Experiences like these are in direct correlation with the factors found by Amin et al. (2018) and Ahmad (2008), specifically thinking about the gap in skills, language anxiety, and doubt about

performance at work. In such settings, women have to deal with self-doubt, anxiety about their performance, and job security fears simultaneously.

Skill Gaps and Professional Insecurity

Respondents emphasized that the lack of professional and leadership growth leads to the feeling of inadequacy. Respondent R20 further explained:

There is inadequate development in professional and leadership; my computer literacy is low, so whenever new changes in technology are brought about, it creates fear. Such absence of access to required modern skills increases a feeling of inferiority and professional instability. As per the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory by Vygotsky (1978), a situation where individuals are forced to acquire new skills without proper guidance or training has dire consequences on the self-confidence of the individuals involved. This contributes to the decreased efficiency of learning and an explosion of psychological anxiety. This theoretical view is in line with Mufassara et al. (2021) and Amin et al. (2018) findings on the stress and fear caused by skill deficiencies.

Evaluation Apprehension and Role Conflict

The lack of professional skills not only contributes to impeding career growth but also contributes to chronic stress in everyday life. Respondent R23 shared:

There is a constant feeling of doubt in my head whether I am able to get the tasks that are given to me right; the idea that I would be judged by other people would often make me feel scared. These feelings represent individual psychological difficulties of low self-efficacy, performance anxiety, and an evaluation apprehension. According to Noor (2002), the professional demand of women being bold and efficient in the work environment is in most cases conflicting with the domestic demand of women being submissive and cooperative. This personal conflict of roles is quite consistent with the Behavior-Based Work-Family Conflict Theory suggested by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Therefore, women tend to give in to self-doubt, emotional turmoil, and excessive rumination.

Religious Identity and Psychological Stress

The results of the researches show that religious identity is one of the important sources of psychological pressure. Abdelhadi (2017) reports that in the workplace, women who wear the headscarf (hijab) are often faced with unfavorable attitudes and institutional injustices. Respondents, nurses and lawyers, indicated negative attitudes toward interviews, discrimination of hiring due to religious dress. Experiences foster a deep feeling of insecurity, loss of sense of professional identity and the psychological weight of job instability perceived.

The testimonies of healthcare workers (R1, R2, R3, and R4) focus on a long-lasting psychological burden that is associated with religious identity. An example is R1, who stated that not being able to wear the hijab in some clinical areas causes them to feel like they have been excluded in professional development programs like blood collection training or nursing festivals to avoid being seen as conflicting. This leads

to chronic anxiety, distress and a feeling of shame in dealing with the male superiors or patients. Moreover, these frustrations are aggravated by social pressures and prejudices in the marriage market, where men might be reluctant to get married to nurses because of night shifts or the lack of the hijab. These factors, as mentioned by Abdul Aziz et al. (2021), coincide with the notion of the so-called Religious Identity Stress, in which professional withdrawal and attrition occur due to the absence of religious accommodation.

Research findings indicate that religious identity serves as a significant source of psychological pressure. According to Abdelhadi (2017), women who wear the headscarf (hijab) frequently encounter negative perceptions and systemic injustices in professional environments. Respondents, including nurses and legal professionals, reported "negative approaches during interviews" and "hiring discrimination" attributed directly to their religious attire. These experiences cultivate a profound sense of insecurity, a diminished sense of professional identity, and the psychological burden of perceived job instability.

Testimonies from healthcare professionals (R₁, R₂, R₃, and R₄) emphasize a "permanent psychological weight" linked to religious identity. For instance, respondent R₁ noted that the inability to wear the hijab in certain clinical settings leads to self-exclusion from professional development opportunities, such as blood collection training or nursing festivals, to avoid perceived conflict. This results in chronic anxiety, distress, and a sense of shame when interacting with male superiors or patients. Furthermore, social pressures and "marriage market" biases—where men may hesitate to marry nurses due to night shifts or the absence of the hijab—exacerbate these frustrations. As noted by Abdul Aziz et al. (2021), these factors align with the concept of "Religious Identity Stress," where the lack of religious accommodation leads to professional withdrawal and attrition.

Safety Concerns and Psychological Impact

In addition to identity, the overall anxieties about physical and social security have significant implications to the psychological health of professional women. Respondents (R₇, R₈, R₁₄-R₁₈, R₂₄) identified night-time travel, roadside safety, and insidious harassment by the community and colleagues as the main sources of anxiety. The need to stay vigilant at all times causes a condition of regular hyper-awareness, which Mufassara et al. (2021) mention as a key contributor to long-term psychological burnout.

The harshness of this load is exemplified by particular cases, including that of R₂₄. Being harassed on the way to the place and rude behaviour of the male service seekers, such as threatening phone calls and suggestive gestures, cause severe fear, depression, and mental exhaustion. This feeling of insecurity is not only degrading work performance and freedom of movement, but also reduces life satisfaction, a fact that is confirmed by the works of Ahmad (2008) and Noor (2002).

CONCLUSION

The research finds that psychological problems experienced by working Muslim women are not one-time events but are a result of a complex, intertwining system of stressors. They are family pressures, social-cultural pressures, work pressures, religious identity pressures, and safety pressures. These aspects sustain each other, forming a stratified psychological model that is highly dependent on the particular socio-cultural context of such areas as Sammanthurai. With the focus on lived experiences of these women, this study emphasizes that their problems are distinct but a reflection of a systemic struggle to achieve dignity and security in the workplace.

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