

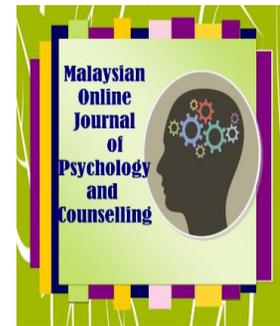
MENTAL HEALTH OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES ACROSS INDUSTRIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE FACTORS

Ao Shen^{1*} & Rafidah Aga Mohd Jaladin¹

ABSTRACT

This systematic review analyses the mental health-related challenges and resilience factors of women in employment within various industries, focusing on their psychological distress and the factors fostering positive health outcomes. The review integrates results from different studies concerned with the incidence of stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression while paying special attention to the consequences of gender bias, organizational culture, and management approaches. The data suggest that while supportive organizational environments, transformational leadership, and work-life balance policies exist, abusive environments where women are faced with gender discrimination, harassment, and limited opportunities for advancement continue to be primary sources of stress. Furthermore, some social support systems, mentorship, and career development opportunities were found to aid in alleviating psychological barriers, thereby enhancing resilience. This review emphasizes measures that organizations should take in formulating Gender-sensitive policies and leadership approaches that support mental health among women employees.

Keywords: *Employee coping mechanisms, women employees, workplace wellness, gender bias, job burnout.*



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**¹Department of
Educational Psychology
and Counseling,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.**

Corresponding Author:
ao_shen1005@163.com

INTRODUCTION

For the last few decades, there has been an increased focus on mental health at the workplace, especially the well-being of employees. Still, the psychological issues experienced by female staff personnel in a variety of fields have only started to receive serious attention over the past few years. Stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout are some documented mental health issues present among various workers. These problems, however, have not been studied in detail and have not received adequate solutions and workplace policies among women. The mental health of female employees is often influenced by complex gender norms, discrimination, and social hierarchy, which make their issues more challenging (Hennein et al., 2023).

Gender inequality in the workplace, which includes unequal pay, the glass ceiling, and sexual abuse, is well-known, and it is now being understood that these factors greatly increase psychological stress for women workers (Huang et al., 2020). Moreover, women often shoulder a domestic load alongside their professional roles, which contributes to their chronic stress, anxiety, and burnout (Delgado-Herrera et al., 2024). These stress factors are possibly more intense in certain roles or sectors, and make it more difficult for women employees to attend to mental health issues.

The gap in examining the challenges of mental health through the lens of gender is magnified by the increasing number of women employed in various professions and the duration for which they remain employed. As noted by the International Labor Organization (ILO), there has been significant growth in women's participation in the global labor force, demonstrating a remarkable change in social norms and expectations (Kühn et al., 2017). Even so, when women make progress in different sectors, in most cases, their mental health remains unattended within the wider scope of employee welfare. New research underlines the urgent need to integrate gender distinctions into the formulation of health promotion measures and policies, as well as workplace interventions (Jiménez-Mérida et al., 2020).

In terms of health, an equally important function of mental health is resilience, which diversity affects how people manage pressure and negative experiences (Bhat et al., 2024). Resilience is the ability of a person to bounce back after experiencing difficulties, adversity, or a challenging situation while still functioning properly. There is no doubt that for women employees, coping mechanisms, social networks, and work/family interface are very important resilience-enabling factors in the context of high-pressure workplaces (Wu et al., 2021). Knowing these factors is imperative in order to develop organizational policies that aim at addressing not only mental health problems but also are supportive to women employees so that the employees' psychological resilience in coping with the challenging situations is enhanced (Søvold et al., 2021).

In their latest research, the domain of organizational psychology and workplace wellness has started attending significantly to the need for gender-specific mental health strategies. Mental health differs by gender and is a well-studied area in which women tend to show more anxiety, depressive symptoms, and feelings of burnout than men do (Kuehner, 2016). In the context of this gap, the particular requirements that are associated with women in the workplace tend to worsen the situation. In particular, women employees tend to suffer from an unreasonable amount of gender discrimination, the glass ceiling, and sexual harassment, which can cause debilitating stress while reducing their job satisfaction. Moreover, the need to juggle between work and family responsibilities creates another strain on women known as work-life conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

This systematic review seeks to understand the mental health issues faced by women employed across different sectors. The review attempts to respond to the following central questions: (a) What are the various mental health problems faced by women across different sectors? This question aims to uncover the prevalent mental health problems among women in employment which include stress, anxiety, depression, burnouts, as well as the impact of organizational culture on these challenges; (b) Which resilience factors promote the mental health of women employees in various sectors This question seeks to understand the self-help mechanisms and coping strategies that women employee utilize to sustain positive mental health.

The rationale for conducting this systematic review is based on the fact that the mental health of female workers is an important area of workplace research that has not been studied deeply. Most literature around mental health in the workplace focuses on its more immediate aspects, and in terms of employee populations, very few studies were done on women. Available literature indicates that female employees experience stress and discrimination of a distinctly gendered nature that results in higher levels of distress, such as “second shift” stressors (Chawla & Sharma, 2019), pay inequities, and glass ceilings. These are detrimental to overall well-being, leading to increased cases of burnout, anxiety, and depression (Marković et al., 2024)

To add further, mental health in the workplace is gaining recognition; however, few institutions have put in place gender-sensitive policies that cope with the mental health concerns of women employees. Such failure not only deepens the existing gendered mental health gaps but also poses a great risk to the well-being of women in employment. Nevertheless, some degree of understanding can be achieved through the lens of resilience to explore how female employees manage such stressors. Resilience literature claims that some of the negative impacts of organizational stress on women employees’ mental health can be mitigated by some personal, social, and organizational factors (Archer et al., 2024). Having listed these positive attributes of resilience, this review seeks to enhance the understanding of ways women employees are able to confront and overcome difficulties posed to them and how organizations can look after their mental health more actively.

Summarily, this review integrates studies that have focused on the mental health challenges confronting female workers across different sectors and explores the resilience factors that enhance their psychological well-being. This analysis seeks to improve the understanding of the relations between gender, work-related stress, and health by providing new angles within the existing literature. The conclusion of this review has the potential to formulate policies that impact the workplace environment by considering the specific needs of women and enabling them to more effectively manage their health issues, and, therefore, aiding in the formation of positive and inclusive working conditions for all women in different sectors. As an outcome of integrating findings from component studies, this review aims to increase attention aimed at the mental health of working women, so as to devise mechanisms that foster resiliency and well-being among them.

METHOD

Eligibility Criteria

This systematic review included studies that deal with the mental health issues and resilience components of female employees in various occupations. The studies that are to be included are based on the following criteria:

Study Design. Empirical, qualitative, and quantitative research work based on the mental health of female employees within the working environment. This includes observational studies, randomized controlled trials (RCTs), cohort studies, case studies, and qualitative approaches, e.g., interviews and

focus groups. Inclusion also applies to mixed-method research, which captures quantitative data (e.g., levels of stress, anxiety, burnout) and qualitative data (e.g., coping mechanisms and resilience determinants). Studies include results from psychological problems, particularly arising from work (stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout) and resilience (coping mechanisms, social support, and balance between work and life). Only studies written in English and published between 1995 and 2005 have been included in this review. The data consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and conference proceedings.

Studies that discuss mental health problems other than employees, such as students and patients, along with articles that do not provide insight about female employees, were not included in the study. Other than gender specific articles that concentrate on physical health, general occupational well-being, or do not analyze mental health or resilience were eliminated. Theoretical articles, opinion pieces, and other non-empirical articles were also deleted from the dataset, as these do not contain any proofs accompanying the theory.

Primary Sources of Information. The electronic databases were selected for searching to cover more literature:

1. PubMed - a comprehensive database for studies related to health and the life sciences, and for analyzing workplace mental health.
2. PsycINFO - a database for literature in psychology, such as analyzing case studies on coping strategies, stress resilience, and mental health in the workplace.
3. Scopus - a multi-disciplinary database for articles from social sciences, business, management, health, and other domains.
4. Google Scholar is an openly available database to check for research that is not included in premium databases.
5. JSTOR - an online repository of academic publications, books, primary sources, journals, and other comparative resources from the social sciences and humanities.

Search Strategy. Every attempt was made to formulate and implement a search strategy to isolate and locate all relevant research studies. The search combined keywords and phrases along with controlled vocabulary such as MeSH descriptors to ensure maximum search sensitivity. The search phrases are as follows:

Mental health related phrases: *“mental health”, “psychological health”, “stress”, “anxiety”, “depression”, “burnout”, “workplace well-being”.*

Women-specific phrases: *“female employees”, “women workers”, “gender”, “female workforce”, “women in leadership”*

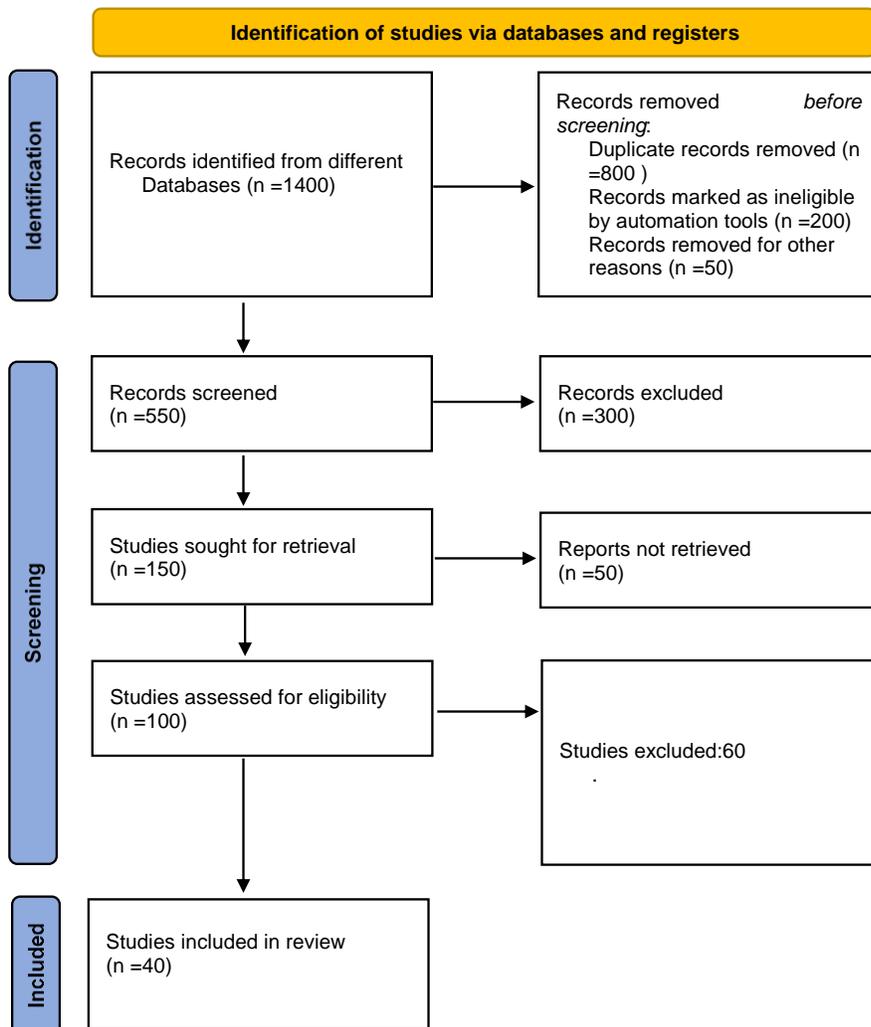
Work related phrases: *“workplace stressor”, “workplace culture”, “gender discrimination”, “workplace environment”, “work-life balance”.*

Social and psychological: *“resilience”, “coping strategies”, “social support”, “workplace coping”, “psychological resilience.”*

Selection of Studies. The selection process was completed in two steps. In the first step, titles and abstracts of all retrieved records were screened for relevance to the inclusion criteria. In the second step, eligible full-text articles will be evaluated. At this phase, all articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study.

Two separate reviewers volunteered for this work and carried out both phases of the screening process independently. Any differences between the reviewers were settled by means of discussion. If there is a stalemate, a third volunteer reviewer is called upon to adjudicate. This approach enhanced clarity and minimized bias concerning the decision. A flow chart (PRISMA diagram) was prepared to visualize the method of selection for the studies.

Figure 1.
PRISMA Diagram



Source. Page et al. (2021)

RESULTS

Workplace Stress and Burnouts Among Female Employees

It is well established in the literature that stress and burnout remain 'pressing' issues for women, especially in the healthcare, finance, and education sectors. Women experience the brunt of stress due to emotional burden and gendered expectations, which culminate in adverse psychological effects (Chaplin et al., 2008). Women in employment are more likely to experience stressors that are psychologically damaging and also adversely affect their professional productivity (Mayor, 2015).

There is a body of literature reviewed focusing on the stressors of employed women and an array of stressors that are not just unique but specific to women employees in different sectors. Some of these include tasks, undefined responsibilities, insufficient help from the management, and discrimination due to their gender. Burnout, which is an exhaustion syndrome that results from long-term stress, has also received attention and focus predominantly focused on women in high-stress occupations like healthcare, education, and finance. The theory of burnout and its components was first discussed by Maslach and Leiter (2016a). They described it as emotional exhaustion with depersonalization and lack of personal achievement. It was suggested that the majority of emotionally demanding jobs, for example, nursing and teaching, reported high burnout levels among caring professions.

Due to a high workload, traumatic experiences, and insufficient managerial support, health worker burnout is prevalent among nurses and physicians. In their study of healthcare professionals, Shanafelt et al. (2012) noted that female doctors' burnout levels surpassed those of male doctors, predominantly caused by the dual burden of work obligations alongside societal caregiving expectations. Stress was compounded due to work-family conflicts, particularly for women, as they were statistically more likely to shoulder the caregiving obligation at home.

Concerning the finance sector, Luthans et al. (2016) emphasized the issue of workplace stress stemming from high job demands, role vagueness, and organizational abuse. Their findings suggested that female respondents in finance exhibited greater degrees of emotional exhaustion due to the lack of boundaries and low representation of women in authoritative roles. Many women employed in male-dominated fields reported frustration due to stagnation in their career growth, fostering feelings of inadequacy and stress. This was supported by Ng and Burke (2005), who established that female employees in finance and engineering disciplines face myriad challenges, such as structural discrimination, which adversely affects their health and career progression.

The Maslach and Leiter (2016b) research associated heretofore noted workplace stress with that of depersonalization, where female workers, because of stress, start to disengage emotionally from their work. The emotional and mental burden of having to juggle demanding and difficult roles without adequate organizational support has caused the development of job dissatisfaction and associated low well-being. Furthermore, Kabat-Zinn (2003) observed that prolonged periods of stress and burnout with no coping strategies have the potential to culminate in severe anxiety or depression.

Emotion-related illness and role-strain in self-managing classrooms are also high among the female teacher workforce in education. Sonnentag et al. (2021) analyzed the effect of role conflict (which is personal life at variance with working life) on the stress of teachers. It was the finding of the study that a female teacher, more so a primary or secondary school teacher, greatly suffers from emotional exhaustion that is due to protracted periods of work, little remuneration, and no appreciation whatsoever. The study concludes that teachers, who are mainly women and therefore have nurturing roles, are subjected to higher stress and burnout.

Gender Discrimination and its impact on Psychological Health

Discrimination based on gender is one of the most widely spoken issues in today's society, even in workplaces. It particularly hurts women and their careers owing to unfair hiring, salary, and promotion discrimination. Female workers face more barriers and negative attitudes that limit their opportunities as compared to men (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). Such gender-based discrimination has adverse consequences for employees, including psychosocial issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021a). This other side of discrimination focuses on how women employees are discriminated against for their gender, attempting to identify why these consequences

occur. Gender discrimination remains one of the most spoken about issues of stress among women employees in virtually all sectors. Most works on this are done by Basantia and Devi (2022), who studied discrimination of women in working places like higher education, where females reported feelings of inferiority and exclusion. In their research, they claim that women in these industries have little or no access to professional advancement and are constantly faced with the negative stereotype that undermines their abilities. All this considered, the women developed low job satisfaction and motivation, which is perceived as stress and other health issues.

Previously, Rudman and Glick (2001) also studied how gender biases and stereotypes regarding women's leadership roles impose psychological barriers, provided that a woman faced bias in a managerial role. Discrimination, such as judging women for their emotions and setting unattainable expectations, was found. Women leaders faced self-doubt, anxiety, and stress because they had to work harder than men to prove their competence in a male-dominant work culture.

Further research, like Catalyst's report, demonstrated that women continue to earn less than their male counterparts for the same position and are stagnated in their careers, irrespective of whether it is a public or privately funded organization (*Gender Pay Gap | Research & Solutions | Catalyst, 2025*). Such gaps in pay and absence of growth opportunities are greater in highly anticipated fields like engineering and technology. Senior female employees have constantly reported being disillusioned with the recognition of their contributions towards these organizations because there are policies that limit acknowledging their efforts. These gaps cause a greater degree of psychological burnout for working women trying to balance their responsibilities as caregivers and those expected of them by their work.

The impact of gender-based discrimination also takes the form of its intersectionality: the coexistence of being a woman and a member of other marginalized groups, in this case, ethnic minorities. Everett et al.'s (2016) study illustrates how women belonging to ethnic minorities suffer elevated discrimination and psychological burden in professional settings. Such women undergo several layers of alienation, which culminate in higher levels of stress and anxiety when compared to white women. For marginalized groups, the effects of intersectional discrimination extend beyond job satisfaction and productivity; it also takes a huge toll on their mental health.

Along with organizational factors, social networks and support structures either help reduce or worsen the impact of gender discrimination. House et al. (2021) studied the impact of mentorship in addressing discrimination among women and concluded that women with strong mentorship networks had superior mental health outcomes. Such networks, which are often composed of senior women in the field, provide vital psychosocial support and assistance that enable women to counter gender biases in the workplace (Llorens et al., 2021). The absence of these networks can, however, trigger feelings of despair and helplessness, exacerbating the mentally harmful effects of gender discrimination.

Work-Life balance and its impact on Mental Health of Female Employees

Attaining a work-life balance poses quite a challenge for numerous female employees, especially in highly demanding industries with little flexibility. Women in the workforce are oftentimes victims of the combined obligation to work and tend to personal and familial responsibilities. These competing roles can cause an unhealthy level of stress and fatigue, which can take a toll on their mental health. This analysis aims to examine how the balance between work life and personal life impacts female employees psychologically and consequently stresses the requirement for work policies supporting integration of work and life.

There is a multitude of sources that exist that prove work-life balance is a main factor towards one's mental health. Greenhaus et al. (2011) discussed work-family conflicts in depth, contrarily suggesting these clashes happen when one's work disallows them to fulfill family obligations, and the other way around. For female professionals, the inter-role conflict (being a working woman and a mother) leaves a profound impact because people expect them to perform in both areas effectively. For women coping with serious occupational stress, these work-family clashes may result in considerable complications as well as emotional depletion.

In one of his studies, Frone (2003) studied the repercussions of work-family conflict on an individual's well-being and discovered that women who had a lot of role conflicts reported having depressive and anxious symptoms more frequently. The study pointed out that women employees, especially those with young children, have difficulty reconciling multiple responsibilities and obligations with their work commitments. This creates a greater feeling of a person's inability to fulfill the myriad demands placed upon her, which leads to more severe psychological problems.

Brough et al. (2005) examined the relationship between work-life conflict and the mental well-being of female employees in the healthcare sector. As with most healthcare workers, stress among nurses stems from long working hours, emotional shifts, and the overarching requirements of the job. In addition to these stressors, home caregiving responsibilities further contribute to emotional exhaustion and burnout. In conclusion, their primary suggestion is that the healthcare industry should implement work-life policies targeting their employees' mental well-being and work-life conflicts.

For the business sector, Yucel and Fan (2023) researched the effectiveness of work flexibility on a woman's work-life balance. For those employers, the most important part is that workers with access to flexible work options reported lower levels of job-related stress and dissatisfaction. With the ability to change basic work parameters such as time and place, female employees could attend to both business and psychosocial aspects of life, thus achieving the expected improvement in well-being and satisfaction with life.

Further research by Kelly et al. (2014) highlighted the role of organizational support in balancing work and life. The study discovered that female workers with supportive managers and co-workers were more capable of dealing with work-life issues. A supportive workplace, which featured sympathetic supervisors, family-friendly policies, and even career progression opportunities despite family responsibilities, lowered the burdens experienced from work-life conflict. Women in organizations with supportive work-life blending experienced better health outcomes, including reduced anxiety and depression.

Work-life balance, having an impact on mental health, differs by industry. Bianchi et al. (2012) studied the work-family conflict phenomenon among women in the educational field and reported that female teachers experienced high stress because of the emotional work involved in teaching and the long hours of work that they had to do at home. The research showed that teaching as a profession possesses some leeway, yet the emotional and physical demands of the job resulted in considerable distress for many female teachers.

Resilience Factors and Coping Strategies Among Female Employees

Resilience plays a significant role in how women manage workplace stress, burnout, and other psychological issues. People who are resilient seem to adapt better to challenges or risks and are able to cope with difficult situations psychologically, even when the odds are against them. Resilience in female employees can be enhanced or diminished by personal characteristics, social networks, and

even organizational assets. This theme analyzes the factors that reinforce resilience in women at work and the coping mechanisms that women draw upon to deal with stress and protect their mental health.

One of the emerging areas of research is the relationship between resilience and workplace stress and mental health. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) termed resilience as the capacity to withstand adverse pressures and remain psychologically healthy. The results of the study claimed that resilient individuals manage workplace stress better and are able to bounce back easily from difficult situations. For female employees, resilience often means being able to cope with gendered stressors and various categories of workplace challenges with emotional equanimity.

Luthans et al. (2006) examined the impact of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience on the ability of female employees to cope with stress, in particular, the role of psychological capital. The authors established that women possessing high psychological capital were more flexible to dysfunctional work settings, enjoyed greater overall satisfaction with work, and preserved their psychological well-being, in spite of facing gender bias, excessive workloads, and conflicting roles. These women actively coped with challenges by reframing goals and negative situations, seeking help, and employing other coping mechanisms, thus managing stress effectively.

In a separate study, Zhang et al. (2024) studied the contribution of social support to the ability to cope with stress among women working in high-stress jobs like nursing. They proved that, especially in contexts with high emotional labor, peer support has a positive impact on resilience and mental health. Nurses who reported strong social support from colleagues and family members were more resilient to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. The support networks offered not only emotional support but also instrumental guidance on effective stress management and coping strategies.

Similarly, Gupta et al. (2024) also sought to understand coping strategies used by women in the banking and educational sectors. Findings showed that women who utilized problem-oriented coping techniques, which include time management, assertiveness, and boundary setting, were better equipped to deal with stress in the workplace. With these strategies, women were able to address the stressful issues without feeling powerless about them. On the contrary, women who used mostly emotion-oriented coping (like avoidance and denial) suffered from increased anxiety and depression because these strategies failed to deal with the stress (Kelly et al., 2007)

Organizational support is another crucial component in fostering resilience. A study conducted by Gröschke et al. (2022) underlined the importance of supportive organizational conditions for resilience in female workers. It was noted that female employees needed support from their supervisors and favorable work relations, which were flexible and included mental health care, to develop resilience. Supervisor support was associated with lower stress and higher occupational satisfaction in women. Furthermore, female employees' resilience was increased through the provision of wellness programs, which are aimed at managing stress and include counseling services and workshops.

Impact of Workplace Culture and Leadership on Mental Health of Female Employees

The culture and leadership of an organization have an impact on the mental health and well-being of its female employees. Organizational culture includes shared values, beliefs, and practices in the workplace, whereas leadership is concerned with the actions and attitudes of managers. Both elements are associated with the level of stress, burnout, and other psychological problems that women employees experience. This theme looks into the effects of workplace culture and leadership

on women's health, paying special attention to nurturing leaders, organizational environment, and gender-responsive policies.

The well-being of all employees, and especially women who deal with gender-related challenges, greatly benefits from a supportive organizational culture. Mousa et al. (2020) pointed out that more open and supportive diversity workplace cultures enhance women's opportunities. On the contrary, workplace cultures that foster gender discrimination, undue emphasis on seniority, or male domination exacerbate the stress and dissatisfaction some women employees experience. In researching women in business with a heavy male bias, Purcell et al. (2010) noticed that a lot of women were subjected to social isolation and marginalization within powerful circles, which led to job dissatisfaction and resulted in poor mental health.

Kim et al. (2024) investigated the impact of organizational climate on employees' psychological well-being with special emphasis on gender diversity. According to the researchers, organizations with a positive climate defined by openness, collaboration, and inclusivity experienced less stress and greater job satisfaction among their female employees. On the other hand, workplaces that were gender neutral or adhered to traditional gender roles experienced a greater incidence of burnout and anxiety among women who felt that their contributions were not adequately recognized and that they were victims of institutional gender discrimination (Artz et al., 2021).

Another important factor in the mental health of women employees is the impact of the leadership style adopted by the organization. Employees with a transformational leadership style are more supportive, empowering, and inspirational, and this style carries with it favorable mental health implications for employees (Susilo, 2018). Lin et al. (2020) argued that transformational leaders ensure that positive work conditions, employee involvement, and responsive environments where employees receive emotional aid to offset the workplace's stressful experience, which employees undergo. Female employees often receive assistance in counteracting women's discrimination as well as in career development, leading to an enhanced sense of belonging and psychological well-being (Tabassum and Nayak, 2021b).

Same as the previous research, active leadership focuses more on control and supervision, and is linked with elevated levels of job stress and dissatisfaction. Galsanjigmed and Sekiguchi (2023) found that such leadership all too often lacks emotional and psychological components and leads to alienation and stress, particularly among women who are already marginalized at the workplace. Furthermore, these types of leaders can unintentionally fuel upper-levels' mental health issues by ignoring gender equity and work-life balance policies for women: an experience that many working women feel, but do not express.

Lipińska-Grobelny and Wasiak (2010) argue that women in organizations with female bosses or those that practice gender sensitive management claimed better job satisfaction and higher levels of psychological well-being. The impact of women leaders is that they are more likely to practice flexible work hours, family-friendly and mentoring policies, which lessen the stress women employees undergo.

In addition, promoting diversity and inclusivity through leadership practices has been shown to improve the psychological well-being of women employees. Dreachslin et al. (2007) studied diversity management in healthcare institutions and discovered that inclusionary practices following "soft" approaches in leadership, such as advocating for flexible work arrangements and showing women in power positions, greatly enhanced employee well-being and morale. Such women reported higher

levels of feeling trusted, respected, and nourished, leading to enhanced mental health and job satisfaction.

Gender Discrimination and its Impact on Mental Health of Female Employees

Discrimination of any form, particularly gender discrimination, remains one of the most important issues globally and continues to be one of the primary driving forces behind the mental health struggles for women employees. Inequities based on the gender of an individual in an organization include pay, professional growth, recruitment for the position, advancement opportunities, or even the need to work within a negative atmosphere (Helman et al., 2020). Psychological suffering is accompanied by several medical conditions, such as anxiety, depression, burnout, and an inferior self-image. This theme elaborates on the implications of discrimination against women employees on their psychological status and the future repercussions of such an approach on their health and wellness.

The consequences of gender discrimination on the mental health of women working in an organization are a subject that needs a lot of description and attention. Ragins et al. (1998) pioneered research on gender bias discrimination in an organizational setup and noted that women deal with discrimination and hindrances towards growth because of their gender. Women in Banking, regarded as a masculine domain, are informed that they cope with a higher level of stress, poorer satisfaction with their job, and even depression because of the exclusion from decision-making processes and suppression in value (Sinha et al., 2023)

Gale et al. (2019), in a more recent study, looked at the impact of workplace harassment and discrimination on mental health. The study found that women who were recipients of sexual harassment, microaggressions, or gendered bias reported a higher level of anxiety and depression than other respondents. These impacts not only influenced the present health of women but also caused mental wounds for a longer duration in the form of PTSD and chronic stress. The study argued that discrimination of this nature fuels a toxic workplace culture, which can further result in burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Like this, Cohen et al. (2006) studied discrimination and stress in a sample of women from different industries. They found out that gender discrimination was a strong predictor of workplace stress, mostly contributing to feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem. Women attempting to cope with discrimination were more likely to report job dissatisfaction, low work engagement, and psychological distress. In addition, the organizational climate and the degree of support provided by the management were found to be critical in moderating the negative influence of discrimination on the mental health of the female employees (Kim et al., 2022).

In their research, Rudman and Phelan (2008) studied the analysis of social identity and gender discrimination and highlighted the specific case of women facing gender stereotyping and role expectation, where they noted approximately “greater” suffering for women in terms of psychological anguish as compared to men. Such discriminatory stereotyping is often defined in terms of inadequate evaluation, such as being viewed as less useful or being anticipated to fulfill a “caretaker” role, which resulted in ex-employees being angry, depressed, and powerless. It was these “discriminations” that women employees felt so much undermined, and often were shut out of developmental career opportunities.

In addition, Tinsley and Weiss (2000) studied the overall effects of discrimination, over a long period of time, on the mental health of women. They stress the provision of inadequate treatment and naively or superficially dealing with gender-based issues as the most aggravating form of

discrimination within the institution. Indeed, these negative effects were clearly aggravated by the absence of at least a minimum institutional care, which sought to alleviate the gender assigned problems. Female workers with sustained discrimination had a greater propensity to report lower psychological endurance and satisfaction with their job.

DISCUSSION

This study's systematic review on the mental health of women employees in different industries presented several key results concerning the psychological issues and resilience factors influencing women's workplace activities. The review further develops the aforementioned literature by showing that stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression are indeed the most common mental health problems for women employees. All these problems are greatly impacted by a mixture of organizational culture, leadership styles, gender bias, and the degree of flexibility in the workplace. The literature suggests that the adverse mental health consequences of women employees can be mitigated by a supportive and inclusive organizational culture, transformational leadership, and implementation of gender sensitive policies. On the contrary, some social discrimination and harassment of women do not foster positive mental health, which contributes to a chronic state of stress and dissatisfaction with the job, which is already too low. Moreover, organizational sociological variables such as balance between work and private life, opportunities for professional progression, and informal assistance emerged as critical resilience factors that are associated with lower levels of burnout and better psychological health.

The study indicates that some organizations are working towards fostering more inclusive and supportive environments. However, problems like discrimination and harassment are still mental health challenges, specifically for employees who are women. The stress on leadership, the organizational culture, and self-advocacy reveals the compounding problem of mental health within a work environment. Generally, the analysis provided by the studies reveals some positive developments as well as many shortcomings in caring for the mental well-being of women in employment.

The identified patterns in the results correspond with some theoretical models and highlight the complexity of the interaction between organizational variables, personal characteristics, and certain sociocultural factors with respect to the mental health of women employees. From an organizational behavior approach, the findings can be interpreted from job strain theory (Karasek, 1979), which states that having high demands accompanied by low control creates stress in the workplace (Kain & Jex, 2010). Women, in particular, have added complications of having to comply with typical role assumptions and biases, which create additional stress and dissatisfaction with work. Research stresses that women suffer greater adverse impacts when they are the victims of discriminatory practices, such as being denied participation in decision-making or receiving lower salaries (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). Over time, such factors contribute to the psychological distress of women.

With regard to the findings, it supports the particular leadership theory that suggests transformational leadership nurtures a more supportive and inclusive environment, which can mitigate the impact of stress in the workplace. Employees' well-being can be significantly improved by a leader who shows concern, provides empowering and supportive services towards personal and professional growth, as postulated in Bass's (1990) transformational leadership model (Bakker et al., 2022). This is crucial for most women workers who are likely to encounter both institutional and cultural challenges in their career paths. The literature additionally notes that women employees who are actively encouraged by inclusive leaders who value diversity and address gender

inequalities are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and be psychologically resilient with these issues (Meng & Neill, 2021).

Moreover, the workplace results relate to aspects of social support theory, which underlines the mitigating effects of social ties in relation to stress experienced in the workplace. Mentorship, peer support, and family-friendly policies proved to increase resilience and reduce stress, especially in more challenging contexts. This agrees with earlier research, which stresses the need for organizational policies that focus on balance between work and other life activities, together with flexible employment conditions as major contributors to mental healthcare (Maharani et al., 2020).

The results are mostly consistent with the wider literature on the mental health of women employees, yet there are some differences. Earlier systematic reviews, like those of Goh et al. (2015), have also noted that workplace stressors like high workload, harassment, and absence of support are significant causes of adverse health outcomes for women. However, this review contributes to scholarship through an analysis of organizational culture, leadership style, and the existence of gendered policies that relieve these negative impacts. In particular, the focus on the intersection of gender bias and mental health discrimination provides a more complex explanation of how institutional discrimination continues to damage the psychological well-being of women employees.

This approach highlights the difference of this study from some previous research by paying attention to the protective resilience factors that prevent decline in mental health. Many of the previous reviews emphasized stressors too much and did not invest in the protective factors that aid in psychological resilience. This review gives special attention to some of the more advanced protective factors, such as flexibility in the workplace, higher positions in the company, and teaching or mentoring, which help mitigate stress in the work environment. Such focus on resiliency is indeed important as it seeks to contribute to the literature by shifting the narrative from risk identification to factor identification, where positive outcomes can be derived for employees' well-being.

While much of the literature suggests the correlation tends to be positive between gender-sensitive leadership and mental health issues of female employees, there are gaps in the variance of definition and implementation of leadership across the studies. Some researchers argued that female leaders are more sympathetic and nurturing toward gender issues, and some tend to support the need for non-biased leadership. The mixed results indicate the multidimensional aspects of the impact of leadership and point out the need for more investigations concerning the nature of women employees' mental health and the attributes of suitable leadership.

The strengths of this systematic review include a broad search strategy that captured studies from multiple sectors and regions, presenting a holistic view of the issues with mental health for the women workforce. The quality assessment carried out on the included studies ensured that only well-designed research was included, which enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings. Also, the review applied objective as well as transparent inclusion/exclusion criteria for merging the evidence, which made it more precise and reliable.

This review, however, is bound by several limitations. Publication bias is one of the possible gaps since positive or significant results are more likely to get published. Also, the diversity within the studies, especially concerning sample size, specific industry, and methodology used, makes it challenging to merge the results. The variations in definitions of mental health and leadership across studies make it impossible to provide unambiguous answers about how workplace conditions affect the mental health of women employees. Additionally, the review used self-reported accounts of mental health, which are susceptible to biases such as socially desirable responses and forgetting.

The results from this systematic review suggest numerous clinical accounts pertaining to the employees' mental health interventions and practices in the workplace. Employers should focus on the development of inclusivity and gender-sensitive spaces that work towards eliminating gender bias. This encapsulates equal remuneration, career advancement opportunities, and working policies that allow for a healthy work and family life. In particular, organizations should adopt transformational leadership techniques that focus on understanding, employee support, and workforce empowerment. These measures implement a reduction of the psychologically induced stress towards female employees and overall improved mental health.

Moreover, the findings speak to the necessity of providing support for mental health in the workplace. Organizations should guarantee that assistance such as employee counseling services (EAPs), stress relief workshops, and general counseling services are accessible to everyone. It is evident that these services contribute greatly to alleviating workplace discrimination and stress overload.

In spite of the important conclusions drawn from this review, some critical knowledge gaps remain. Future studies should emphasize the need for longitudinal studies focused on the long-term psychological impacts of discrimination and harassment in the workplace on women employees. The majority of studies corresponding to this review were cross-sectional, which diminishes the understanding of the relationships between the workplace variables and the mental health outcomes. Furthermore, other studies should investigate the particular ways in which transformational leadership and inclusive organizational cultures enhance mental health outcomes for women.

An additional gap for future research is the consideration of femininity and its intersectional component as a contributory factor to the mental health outcomes of female workers. Research needs to analyze how race, sexuality, and class interact with gender and determine the social and psychological problems women deal with in the workplace. Looking into these facts will help construct a complete picture of the mental health issues of different groups of women.

Finally, there are new questions regarding the effects of teleworking and flexible work facilities on the mental health of women employees that need to be addressed, particularly during the COVID-19 period, which redefined how most women experience the work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

This review has collated the psychological barriers and resilience elements that impact the mental health of females in the workplace. It has illustrated that the women workforce's mental health and wellness are adversely impacted by the surrounding work environment, organizational culture, leadership style, and other sociocultural contextual issues. The review has clearly identified the alarming rates of stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression experienced by female employees as a pertinent issue in need of urgent attention, which is further compounded by discriminatory practices and harassment, along with minimal opportunities for professional growth and development. Moreover, there was little concern for the illness, while some support, such as workplace flexibility, gender-sensitive leadership, and social support systems, emerged as protective factors enhancing resilience against these mental health problems.

The review reiterates "organizational culture" and "leadership" as crucial determinants for the mental health outcomes of women employees. Along with empathy and active support, transformational leadership characterized by empowerment was found to be one of the key drivers for a positive work setting. This is important for some sectors where there are fewer women or

considerable gender discrimination is practiced. The analysis demonstrates that discrimination not only needs recognition but also requires focused interventions to create workplaces that promote mental well-being. There is a pressing need for organizational change in stressed sectors that employ women to tackle gender biases and stereotypes in order to improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

Moreover, the review adds to existing knowledge on female employees' psychological resilience protective factors. Along with career development, other factors identified include mentoring and favorable work-life policies. These were found to positively influence the women's mental health, implying that organizations are able to build the psychological resilience of their female employees by providing adequate support. By focusing on these factors, the organizations not only help mitigate the mental health challenges but also foster the productivity of the employees.

The results have uncovered some knowledge gaps in the literature as well. Most studies attempting to examine the psychological problems of female workers have dedicated less effort to specific processes by which leadership styles, organizational culture, and gender sensitive policies mitigate potential harm to mental health. Also, how gender intersects with other social identities like ethnicity, social class, or sexuality is not sufficiently addressed. These gaps should be covered by research to better capture the lives of female employees in organizations.

The methodological limitations of the studies included in this review also warrant consideration. A number of studies utilized cross-sectional designs, making it impossible to draw cause-and-effect inferences. More longitudinal research is needed to properly examine the impact of time on workplace discrimination and stress, and the mental health of women employees. Additionally, differences between studies, including sample sizes, industry sectors, and cultural contexts, were great enough to make it difficult to apply the results to all female employees. In sum, this review provides useful information about the mental health issues of women employees in various industries and stresses the need for gender-aware policies and diversity-friendly management in safeguarding their psychological health. Corporations can greatly enhance the mental health of female staff members by addressing workplace stressors and discrimination while also providing more supportive workplace environments. The information within this review serves as a base for further studies as well as active measures to improve the mental health of women in the working world and to design more caring, supportive, and fair workplace environments.

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