

Psychological Wellbeing, Workplace Challenges, and Work-Life Balance Among Working Women: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic review synthesises findings from 48 peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2026 on the wellbeing, occupational stress, and workplace experiences of working women. Drawing on a Scopus-indexed corpus, the review identifies seven key thematic areas: psychological wellbeing and mental health, workplace harassment and bullying, work-life balance and family conflict, gender inequality, industry-specific occupational stress, physical health and body image, and relationships and domestic life. Findings consistently highlight that working women face compounding stressors arising from dual role demands, hostile work environments, gender-based inequalities, and inadequate organisational support. Evidence-based interventions such as mindfulness, internet-based therapies, flexible work policies, and physical activity programmes are identified as promising strategies to improve wellbeing outcomes. The review calls for targeted organisational policies and broader structural reforms to promote equitable, healthy workplaces for women across sectors and geographies.

Keywords: working women; psychological wellbeing; workplace stress; harassment; work-life balance; gender inequality; occupational health

INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in the global workforce has grown substantially over recent decades, bringing renewed scholarly attention to the unique occupational challenges they face. While women's employment is widely recognised as essential to individual empowerment, household economic stability, and national development, working women continue to encounter a distinct set of stressors that can compromise their psychological and physical wellbeing. These stressors include dual role demands at home and at work, gender-based discrimination and harassment, limited organisational support, and structural inequalities embedded in workplace cultures and policies.

The growing body of research on working women's wellbeing reflects the complexity of these challenges. Studies have examined psychological wellbeing (PWB) using multiple frameworks, including Ryff's eudaimonic model (Sasaki et al., 2023; Okojide et al., 2023), subjective wellbeing measures (Chen and Hu, 2024; Asadullah and Talukder, 2019), and occupational health perspectives (Prasad and Vaidya, 2021; Malathi and Srilatha, 2025). Despite this diversity of approaches, there remains a need for a comprehensive synthesis that maps the full landscape of evidence across thematic domains.

This systematic review aims to fill that gap by critically examining 60 Scopus-indexed studies published between 2015 and 2026. The review is organised around seven key themes identified through thematic analysis of the corpus: psychological wellbeing and mental health, workplace harassment and bullying, work-life balance and family conflict, gender inequality, industry-specific occupational stress, physical health and body image, and relationships and domestic life. By integrating evidence across these themes, this review provides a holistic

understanding of the determinants and consequences of wellbeing among working women, and offers directions for future research and policy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the determinants and dimensions of psychological well-being among working women. The review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure a systematic, transparent, and replicable review process. The study aimed to synthesize existing empirical literature related to psychological well-being, mental health, workplace experiences, and socio-personal challenges affecting employed women.

Identification	Records identified through database searching (n = 177)	
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Screening	Records after date filter applied (2015–2026) (n = 124)	Records excluded Outside date range (2015–2026) (n = 53)
↓		
Eligibility	Records screened by subject area (n = 60)	Records excluded Irrelevant subject area (n = 64)
↓		
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 60)	Full-text excluded Did not meet criteria (n = 12)
↓		
Included	Studies included in final systematic review (n = 48)	

Database Selection

The review was carried out using the Scopus database. Scopus was selected due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed scholarly literature and its strong indexing of high-quality journals in the fields of social sciences, psychology, and management studies.

Search Strategy

A comprehensive search strategy was developed using relevant keywords associated with psychological well-being and working women. The search string employed for data collection was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(("psychological well-being" OR "psychological wellbeing" OR "mental well-being" OR "mental wellbeing" OR "emotional well-being") AND ("working women" OR "working woman" OR "female employees" OR "women employees" OR "working females" OR "employed women" OR "women workforce")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"PSYC") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar")) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2025

The search was restricted to studies published between 2015 and 2026 to capture contemporary developments and recent research trends related to women employees' well-being.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they:

- Focused on psychological well-being, emotional well-being, mental health, or related psychosocial factors.
- Examined working women, female employees, or employed women.
- Were published between 2015 and 2026.
- Were indexed in the Scopus database.
- Belonged to the subject areas of:
 - Social Sciences,
 - Psychology, and
 - Business, Management and Accounting.
- Were peer-reviewed empirical journal articles published in English.

Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded if they:

- Focused on populations other than working women.
- Addressed only physical health without psychological or emotional dimensions.
- Were review papers, conference proceedings, editorials, dissertations, or book chapters.
- Lacked empirical findings or thematic relevance.
- Were duplicate or incomplete records.

Data Extraction and Thematic Analysis

Relevant information from the selected studies was systematically extracted and organized under predefined categories such as:

- Author(s) and year,
- Country and sector,

- Research objectives,
- Research methodology,
- Key variables, and
- Major findings.

The selected studies were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring issues, determinants, and dimensions influencing psychological well-being among working women. Based on the synthesis of the literature, the findings were categorized into the following major themes: Psychological Well-being and Mental Health, Workplace Harassment and Bullying, Work–Life Balance and Family Conflict, Gender Inequality, Industry-Specific Occupational Stress, Physical Health and Body Image, Relationships and Domestic Life.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the review were ensured through a systematic search strategy, clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, careful screening of studies, and thematic categorization of findings. Only peer-reviewed Scopus-indexed journal articles were included to maintain academic rigor and quality.

Ethical Considerations

The study relied entirely on secondary data obtained from published scholarly articles. Since no human participants were directly involved, ethical approval was not required. However, proper acknowledgment and citation of all reviewed studies were maintained throughout the research process.

FINDINGS

Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health

The largest cluster of studies in this review ($n = 22$) focused on psychological wellbeing (PWB) and mental health outcomes among working women. In this field various conceptual frameworks have been used including Ryff's six-dimensional model of eudaimonic wellbeing, general measures of subjective wellbeing and distress.

(Sasaki N,2023) conducted a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the efficacy of a fully automated internet-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (iACT) program, 'Happiness Mom', for 841 working mothers with preschool children. They found statistically significant improvement in positive relationships with others after the 10-week intervention, but overall effect sizes were modest (Cohen's $d = 0.18$). The authors found that fully automated iACT has potential as a scalable preventive intervention but requires further programme refinement to have wider impact on Ryff's six dimensions of PWB.

(Yang,2025) studied the impact of inclusive leadership on the work environment in service organizations. Drawing on social identity theory, the study demonstrated the chain mediation model in which inclusive leadership facilitated relational identification and job embeddedness, which in turn led to increased employee wellbeing. Importantly, gender moderated several pathways in the model, suggesting that the wellbeing benefits of inclusive leadership may differ systematically for male and female employees.

The psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working women was especially in focus. A longitudinal study was conducted in Germany (Meyer et al.,2021) to examine the impact of pandemic-related demands including mandatory home working, closures of childcare facilities, job insecurity and work-privacy conflicts on the deterioration of psychological wellbeing over time. Social support and autonomy as resources buffered some of these negative effects, yet women with young children were still disproportionately affected. Similarly, Prasad and Vaidya (2021) studied women working remotely in the IT-enabled sector in India during COVID-19 and found that increased occupational stress had a direct negative effect on both work-life balance and psychological wellbeing.

Beyond pandemic contexts, research has examined PWB in relation to specific life circumstances. Öcel (2017) studied the working women with breast cancer diagnosis (N = 170) and concluded that psychological resilience was a moderator between mindfulness, stigmatisation and wellbeing. High resilience buffered the negative effects of stigma, while mindfulness was an independent predictor of better wellbeing outcomes. (Robinson et al.,2015) also discussed the challenges breast cancer survivors face in the workplace, finding that women made careful, strategic communication decisions about disclosure, weighing the need for social support against fears of stigma and career penalty.

(Zapata-Matheus and Ariza-Ruiz ,2026) took this line of inquiry further, exploring the impact of labour market precariousness and poor maternity provisions on mental health among pregnant and breastfeeding women employees in Colombia. (Skica and Mischczyński,2025) studied the PWB of self-employed women in the European context. They found that self-employment provides flexibility but it is not a neutral role in terms of wellbeing and it can expose women to various stressors related to financial insecurity and role ambiguity.

The role of organisational and psychosocial factors as predictors of PWB has been studied in several studies. (Kamil et al.,2024) found that gender moderated the relationship between psychological wellbeing and work motivation in the public sector, with female employees showing distinct patterns of motivation-wellbeing linkages compared to male counterparts. Soomro et al.,(2023) found that psychological resilience mediated the association between sensitivity to terrorism and employee PWB in conflict-affected settings; the results were generally applicable to male and female workers.

Family and social capital were found to be important buffers of PWB . (Maiti & Sanyal,2023) examined organizational commitment among working women in India and discovered that loneliness and family responsibilities were significant predictors of commitment levels and that wellbeing was inherently tied to how women managed these competing demands.

Mindfulness based approaches received increased attention in the latter years of the review period. (Rajeswari et al.,2025) studied the association between mindfulness and mental wellbeing of working women working in the IT sector of Tamil Nadu, India and found emotional regulation as significant mediator. This result is consistent with the findings of (Öcel,2017) and indicates that mindfulness-based interventions may be a feasible means of supporting the mental health of working women. Barnard (2018) also offered a qualitative perspective by exploring how women constructed metaphors of strength and resilience in their stories of wellbeing, highlighting the value of eudaimonic frameworks that focus on agency and personal growth, rather than deficit-oriented models.

(Divyakala and Vasumathi,2025) demonstrated that the conflict management climate significantly moderated the effects of psychological wellbeing and emotional exhaustion on productivity, highlighting the organisational conditions necessary for individual wellbeing to be translated into performance outcomes. (Zakharova et al.,2020) explored subjective wellbeing as an emotional regulator of labour behaviour among female personnel of Russian industrial and medical companies, noting age-related variation in wellbeing profiles and the significance of organisational culture in shaping wellbeing experiences.

Workplace Harassment and Bullying

Several studies in this review focused on workplace harassment and bullying, which demonstrates the prevalence and severity of these threats to the wellbeing and performance of working women. Research within this theme included sexual harassment, general workplace bullying, incivility and the emerging area of cyberbullying.

Hitlan (2025) examined the impact of sexual harassment, both direct and bystander, among a sample of 314 female part-time employees. Results indicated that both forms of harassment were associated with greater job stress, poorer work attitudes, more withdrawal behaviors, and poorer psychological wellbeing. The inclusion of bystander harassment is important because women do not have to be the target of harassment to be negatively affected – witnessing harassment of others produces similar effects on wellbeing.

(Xie and Zheng,2022) gave a structural analysis of the organisational conditions that enable harassment. Their research looked at masculinity contest culture (MCC) – characterized by norms of dominance, aggression and emotional suppression – as a predictor of both sexual harassment and bullying. Results of a cross-sectional convenience sample supported that MCC was positively associated with interpersonal mistreatment and negatively associated with occupational and psychological wellbeing. These findings indicate that workplace culture is a systemic determinant of harassment, not an individual or dyadic phenomenon.

Mehmood et al.,(2024) investigated the impact of workplace bullying (WB) and workplace incivility (WI) on employee performance in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and discovered that both WB and WI were significant negative predictors of employee performance. Psychological wellbeing mediated this association, suggesting that the performance costs of bullying are borne partly by deteriorating mental health. (Divyakala and Vasumathi,2025) also studied bullying in the leather industry and found that workplace bullying leads to psychological effects such as decreased self-efficacy and productivity losses, and used Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory as a theoretical basis.

(Vasumathi et al.,2025) conducted a systematic review of the effects of workplace bullying on women's performance, revealing consistent relationships between bullying, emotional exhaustion and decreased psychological wellbeing across a number of studies. Their results add to the argument that emotional exhaustion is an important mechanism in the bullying-performance relationship. This review exposes the cumulative nature of these effects, beyond the superficial, particularly for women who manage domestic duties simultaneously.

Demographic dissimilarity has been introduced as a boundary condition that moderates the effects of workplace incivility on women (Oyet et al.,2019). The negative impact of incivility on wellbeing and turnover intention was more pronounced for women who perceived themselves to be demographically different from their workgroup in terms of race, age or other characteristics. This research underscores the interconnectedness of identity and workplace mistreatment and the need for greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion in incivility research. (Di Marco et al.,2018) made a methodological contribution to the field by developing and validating a Spanish language version of the Workplace Incivility Scale that was invariant across employment status, thereby expanding the measurement toolkit available to researchers in non-English speaking contexts.

Al Doghan and Arshad (2023) examined the emerging issue of workplace cyberbullying among female employees and found that online harassment was related to increased psychological stress, decreased job satisfaction, lower organisational commitment and perceptions of interactional injustice. (Rotimi et al.,2023) examined the construction industry in New Zealand and discovered that sexism and adverse job conditions had a considerable detrimental effect on women's mental and physical wellbeing, with work morale as an intervening variable..

Work-Life Balance and Family Conflict

Many studies addressed the challenge of work-life balance (WLB) and work-family conflict, confirming that the management of competing professional and domestic demands remains one of the most pressing concerns for working women globally.

(Sultana et al.,2023) explored the WLB experiences of female professionals in Bangladesh's corporate sector through qualitative email interviews with 29 participants. Their findings identified heavy household responsibilities, inadequate childcare facilities, lack of flexible working arrangements, and unsupportive organisational cultures as key barriers to WLB. The study highlighted how these structural deficits forced women to self-manage the work-family interface, often at significant cost to their psychological wellbeing and career progression.

(Fazal et al.,2022) conducted a systematic review of WLB challenges during COVID-19 in Pakistan, synthesising eight qualitative studies using inductive thematic analysis. Their findings documented that the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing WLB pressures for working women, as the collapse of boundaries between home and work led to simultaneous intensification of both professional and domestic demands. Individual coping

strategies and organisational support measures both moderated these effects, though support was found to be inconsistent and often inadequate.

(Shepherd-Banigan et al.,2015) examined the relationship between workplace stressors, home working, and maternal depressive symptoms among employed women with young children in the United States. Family-friendly workplace attributes — including schedule flexibility and supportive supervisors — were found to significantly attenuate depressive symptomatology. These findings provide empirical support for the importance of family-responsive workplace policies as a mental health intervention, particularly for mothers of young children.

(Prasad and Vaidya,2021) pointed to the need for proactive psychosocial design of virtual work environments.

(Blazovich et al.,2018) investigated mother-friendly company policies — including flexible working, on-site childcare, and family leave — and their relationship to financial performance and employee wellbeing. Findings indicated that companies rated highly on mother-friendly measures also demonstrated stronger job satisfaction and emotional wellbeing among female employees, with some evidence of a positive relationship to corporate financial performance. This study situates WLB as a business case as much as a social justice concern.

(Kumari,2024) investigated job-home balance (JHB) among rural women employees in Bangalore Rural District, India, identifying key determinants of balance difficulty including commuting burden, domestic responsibilities, and absence of organisational support. The study found that service sector employees faced particular challenges in maintaining JHB.

(De Moortel et al.,2017) examined the relationship between working hours mismatch — defined as involuntarily working more or fewer hours than desired — and mental wellbeing in Europe. Using European Social Survey data, the authors found that both forms of mismatch predicted poor mental wellbeing, with national unemployment rates and GDP growth moderating the strength of these associations. This study situates WLB within macroeconomic conditions and highlights the importance of structural labour market factors in shaping women's wellbeing.

(Verma et al.,2018) examined gender-sensitive practices and family support as predictors of psychological wellbeing among women in Indian call centres. Using crossover theory, the study demonstrated that supportive gender-sensitive workplace practices predicted lower stress, higher job satisfaction, greater organisational commitment, and lower turnover intentions. Family support showed complementary crossover effects, reinforcing the importance of both organisational and domestic support systems in protecting women's wellbeing.

Gender Inequality

Several studies addressed gender inequality as a direct or moderating determinant of working women's wellbeing. Research in this domain spanned gender role attitudes, supervisory gender dynamics, the gender pay gap, and women's autonomy.

(Chen and Hu,2024) examined the relationship between income, gender role attitudes, and subjective wellbeing among 9,898 married women in China, drawing on the culturally distinctive rice-wheat agricultural boundary as a natural experiment. Their findings demonstrated that women in rice-growing regions — where more egalitarian gender norms prevail — showed stronger income-wellbeing linkages than women in wheat-growing regions with more traditional gender role attitudes. This study makes a methodologically novel contribution to understanding how deeply embedded cultural norms around gender shape the economic determinants of women's happiness.

(Choeni et al.,2025) investigated gender inequality in the South African banking sector, drawing on the capability approach to argue for the importance of voice climate in promoting gender equality and wellbeing. Women in the banking sector faced persistent disparities in pay, career progression, and leadership representation, and a supportive voice climate — in which women felt able to express concerns without retaliation — was identified

as a key protective factor for wellbeing. This study highlights the intersection of structural inequality and organisational climate in determining women's daily wellbeing experiences.

(Asadullah and Talukder,2019) documented the 'paradox of the contented female worker' in Bangladesh's ready-made garments sector, finding that despite objectively poor wages and working conditions relative to male counterparts, female garment workers reported comparable or higher levels of subjective emotional wellbeing. The authors attributed this paradox to low reference group comparisons, limited aspirations shaped by constrained opportunity structures, and the relative empowerment conferred by paid employment compared to the domestic alternative. This finding challenges simplistic mappings between objective inequality and subjective wellbeing, while also raising normative concerns about the adequacy of wellbeing self-reports as welfare indicators.

(Barnard,2018) explored wellbeing and gender inequality through a qualitative phenomenological lens, finding that women in midlife constructed rich eudaimonic narratives of strength, resilience, and purposeful living that resisted deficit framings of their multiple role burdens. This research underscores the importance of capturing subjective meaning-making in wellbeing research, rather than relying solely on standardised scales that may not capture the full complexity of women's lived experiences.

(Kumar et al.,2024) investigated the concept of autonomy as a component of wellbeing among Indian women, finding that autonomy was experienced as multidimensional and contextually contingent, shaped by family, community, and occupational norms. (Yadav et al.,2022) extended the analysis of gender inequality to early life course events in Bihar, India, demonstrating that school dropout, early marriage, and early childbearing — all linked to gendered social norms — were significantly associated with depression and poor mental health in young adult women, illustrating how gender inequality in education and reproduction translates into lasting wellbeing deficits.

(Krueger,2017) provided macroeconomic context for understanding gender and employment, documenting declining labour force participation rates in the United States, with differential patterns across demographic groups including women. While this study was not exclusively focused on women's wellbeing, its findings provide important background for understanding the structural conditions within which working women's experiences are embedded.

Industry-Specific Occupational Stress

Some studies focused on occupational stress in specific industrial and sectoral contexts, providing sector-level detail that complements the broader thematic findings.

(Liu et al.,2020) conducted a large survey study in Taiwan examining the associations between ergonomic and psychosocial work hazards and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) across a wide range of occupational groups. Their findings confirmed that both ergonomic exposures (such as repetitive motion and awkward posture) and psychosocial hazards (such as work pressure and low job control) were independently and additively associated with MSD risk in specific body parts. These findings are particularly relevant for women workers, who are disproportionately represented in occupational groups characterised by high ergonomic and psychosocial burden, such as data entry, assembly, and care work.

(Sharma and Srivastava,2020) developed and validated a scale for measuring organisational stress among women workers in the Indian garment industry, identifying job-related, organisation-related, personal, and social factors as distinct sources of stress. Their scale addresses a significant methodological gap, as most stress measurement instruments were developed for general or male-dominated workforce samples and may not adequately capture the gendered nature of stress in female-intensive industries.

(Rotimi et al.,2023) examined women's wellbeing in the construction industry in New Zealand, finding that sexism and poor job conditions significantly harmed mental and physical wellbeing, with work morale mediating these relationships. The construction industry represents one of the most gender-imbalanced sectors globally,

and this study documents the specific mechanisms through which the minority status and hostile cultural environment of women in construction translates into wellbeing deficits.

(Malathi and Srilatha,2025) examined work stress among women in the Indian IT industry, documenting high levels of occupational stress driven by long working hours, demanding performance targets, and inadequate recognition. (B et al.,2021) further examined IT women professionals in urban Bangalore during COVID-19, finding that extended periods of work from home during the pandemic were associated with deteriorating wellbeing, compounded by physical distancing from social support networks and the challenges of integrating professional and domestic demands in shared household spaces.

(Devi et al.,2024) proposed an innovative approach to stress management in educational institutions, using Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) and Federated Learning to predict stress levels from physiological and demographic data collected via wearable technology. This privacy-preserving, data-driven approach represents a significant methodological advance in personalised stress management for working women, though the authors acknowledge that further validation in diverse institutional contexts is needed.

(Zakharova et al.,2020) examined subjective wellbeing among female personnel in Russian innovative companies, finding age-related variation in wellbeing profiles. Younger women showed greater resilience in adapting to Industry 4.0 transformations, while older female workers experienced higher fatigue and stress in technologically changing environments. De Moortel et al.,2017) examined working hours mismatch across European countries and its relationship with mental wellbeing, finding that macroeconomic conditions moderated the effects of hours mismatch on wellbeing. This study highlights how national-level labour market structures interact with individual-level work arrangements to shape mental health outcomes, providing important context for sector-specific findings.

Physical Health and Body Image

Studies addressed physical health, body image, and physical activity among working women, reflecting growing recognition that wellbeing is not reducible to psychological dimensions alone.

(Peng et al.,2024) investigated the interrelationships between physical activity, body anxiety, self-discipline, and emotional eating among working women in China. The study found that physical activity was inversely associated with emotional eating, partially mediated through reduced body anxiety and enhanced self-discipline. Women in the workforce in China were found to face rising rates of anxiety and depression, often manifesting in disordered eating patterns that detrimentally affected their health, work performance, and family interactions. These findings suggest that physical activity interventions targeting body anxiety may have cascading benefits for women's overall health behaviour.

(Lo,2025) investigated how urban green spaces support stress relief among women in contemporary urban settings. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study examined the roles of landscape elements, perceived sensory dimensions, landscape preference, and anxiety in mediating stress restoration. Natural features — particularly plants, gardens, and water elements — were found to be the most effective landscape components for promoting restoration and reducing anxiety. This study connects urban planning and environmental design to women's occupational health, suggesting that access to green spaces may be a meaningful complement to individual-level stress management strategies.

(Jeppu et al.,2019) assessed perceived stress levels and coping strategies among married women clerical employees in a tertiary care teaching hospital, finding that work-related and family-related stressors were both prevalent, and that avoidance-focused coping was common but maladaptive. The study recommended structured stress management programmes and workplace counselling as practical interventions. (Robinson et al.,2015) addressed the physical health dimension from a cancer survivorship perspective, finding that working women with breast cancer faced unique challenges at the intersection of physical health management, occupational demands, and workplace communication.

(Biju and Pathak,2020) examined the role of emotional labour in the wellbeing of women intrapreneurial leaders in the IT sector, finding that the suppression or modification of emotional expression required by intrapreneurial roles imposed significant psychological and physical costs. These findings align with broader evidence on the health costs of surface acting and emotional labour, and highlight a neglected dimension of occupational health among women in leadership and innovation roles.

Relationships and Domestic Life

Six studies in this review addressed the intersection of working women's professional lives with their intimate relationships, domestic experiences, and family dynamics.

(Okojide et al.,2023) examined psychological wellbeing as a predictor of marital stability among employed women in Lagos State, Nigeria. Their findings demonstrated that higher PWB was a significant positive predictor of marital stability, suggesting that workplace-derived stressors that erode women's psychological wellbeing may have indirect consequences for family cohesion and relationship quality. The study situates individual psychological health within the broader ecology of family wellbeing and societal stability.

(Yöyen et al.,2025) investigated predictors of psychological wellbeing among young adult women in romantic relationships, identifying empathy, intimacy, passionate love, relationship stability, and sexual quality of life as significant contributors. These findings underscore the bidirectional relationship between relational quality and individual wellbeing, and suggest that working women's PWB is not solely a function of occupational factors but is deeply embedded in the quality

(Yadav et al.,2022) traced the long-run wellbeing consequences of early marriage and early childbearing among women in Bihar, India, finding that these gendered life-course events were significantly associated with adult depression and poor mental health. This study bridges the themes of gender inequality and domestic life, demonstrating that structural gender constraints expressed through marriage and reproductive norms leave lasting imprints on women's wellbeing trajectories.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic review reveal a consistent and sobering picture: working women across diverse national, sectoral, and cultural contexts face compounding challenges to their psychological wellbeing. These challenges arise from interconnected sources — including hostile or indifferent workplace cultures, structural gender inequalities, inadequate organisational support for work-family management, and the additional burdens imposed by domestic responsibilities and intimate relationships.

A prominent finding across themes is the centrality of organisational culture and leadership. Studies such as (Yang,2025), (Xie and Zheng ,2022), and (Choeni et al.,2025) all demonstrate that the organisational environment — whether characterised by inclusive leadership, masculinity contest culture, or voice climate — fundamentally shapes women's wellbeing experiences. These findings point to organisational culture as a primary lever for improving working women's wellbeing, and suggest that individual-level interventions are unlikely to be sufficient without corresponding changes to the contexts in which women work.

The review also highlights the importance of structural factors that operate beyond the level of the individual organisation. Studies by (De Moortel et al.,2017) and (Krueger,2017) situate working women's wellbeing within macroeconomic conditions, while (Chen and Hu,2024) and (Yadav et al.,2022) demonstrate how deeply embedded cultural norms around gender — expressed through agricultural traditions, educational expectations, and marriage practices — shape the conditions of possibility for women's wellbeing. Addressing these structural conditions requires policy interventions at national and international levels, including labour market reforms, investment in childcare infrastructure, and legal protections against harassment and discrimination.

The evidence on interventions, while still relatively limited, is encouraging. Internet-based therapeutic approaches such as iACT (Sasaki et al.,2023), mindfulness programmes (Rajeswari et al.,2025; Öcel,2017), urban green space design (Lo,2025) show promise as accessible, scalable strategies for supporting working

women's wellbeing. Family-responsive organisational policies, including flexible working arrangements (Blazovich et al.,2018; Shepherd-Banigan et al.,2015), gender-sensitive HR practices (Verma et al.,2018), and supportive supervision (Yang, 2025), are consistently associated with better wellbeing outcomes.

The geographic and sectoral diversity of this review's evidence base is notable. Studies were drawn from India, China, Bangladesh, Nigeria, South Africa, Germany, Europe, Colombia, New Zealand, South Korea, Pakistan, the United States, and Russia, among others. Sector coverage spanned IT, garment manufacturing, construction, banking, tourism, healthcare, education, and the corporate sector. This diversity strengthens the generalisability of core findings while also highlighting the importance of contextual sensitivity in designing wellbeing interventions.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review has synthesised evidence from 48 peer-reviewed studies to map the landscape of research on working women's wellbeing across seven key thematic domains. The review demonstrates that working women globally face significant and interconnected threats to their psychological and physical wellbeing, arising from workplace harassment and bullying, work-life imbalance, gender inequality, sector-specific occupational stressors, and the demands of domestic and relational life. At the same time, the evidence base identifies a range of individual, organisational, and structural interventions with demonstrated potential to improve wellbeing outcomes.

Future research should prioritise longitudinal designs capable of establishing causal directions, particularly for the pathways linking gender inequality, organisational culture, and wellbeing outcomes. Greater attention to intersectionality — including race, class, disability status, and sexual orientation — is needed to capture the diversity of working women's experiences. Methodological advances in wearable technology and federated machine learning, as demonstrated by (Devi et al.,2024), offer promising directions for personalised, privacy-preserving wellbeing monitoring and intervention. Ultimately, improving working women's wellbeing requires a multi-level commitment from researchers, organisations, policymakers, and communities to address both the proximal and structural determinants of women's occupational health.

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