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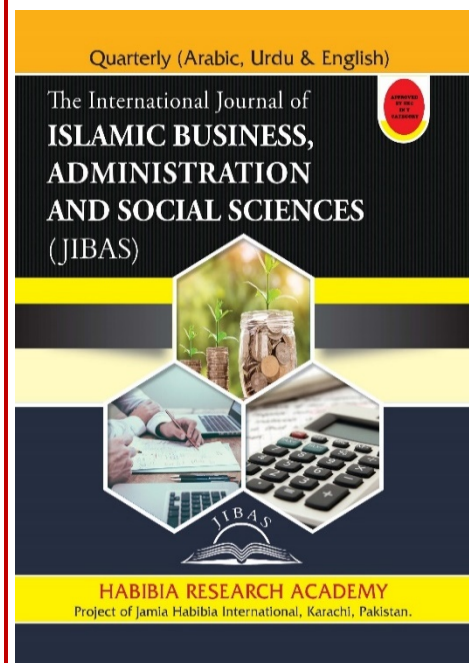
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TOPIC:

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS AND THE IMPACT OF WORK AND FAMILY SPILLOVER ON MARITAL DISTRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN PAKISTANI WORKING MARRIED WOMEN

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**PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS AND THE IMPACT OF WORK AND FAMILY
SPILLOVER ON MARITAL DISTRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN
PAKISTANI WORKING MARRIED WOMEN**

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims to examine the work-family spillover experienced by Pakistani working married women and its relationship with their problem-solving abilities, marital distress, and psychological well-being. The sample for this research consisted of 276 female working married women residing in Pakistan, selected through purposive and convenient sampling techniques. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), incorporating Pearson correlation and mediation analysis. The findings indicate a significant negative relationship between problem-solving skills and work-family spillover among Pakistani working married women. Furthermore, the study reveals a significant impact of work-family spillover on marital distress and a significant association between work-family spillover and psychological well-being in this population. The mediating role of problem-solving skills, the results partially support the hypothesis. While problem-solving skills do mediate the relationship between work-family spillover and marital distress, the mediation effect is not fully significant. These findings have important implications for understanding the challenges faced by Pakistani working married women and the impact of work-family spillover on their well-being and marital relationships. The study highlights the importance of developing problem-solving skills to mitigate the negative consequences of work-family spillover. By recognizing and addressing these issues, families can work towards creating supportive environments that promote the well-being of working married women in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: *Work-Family Spillover, Problem-Solving Skills, Marital Distress, Psychological Well-Being, Working Married Women*

INTRODUCTION: Barbara Dale (n.d.) uses a vivid metaphor to illustrate the immense challenges faced by working women, likening their lives to a decathlon where merely completing the race is considered a miracle. This highlights the arduous nature of balancing multiple responsibilities and obligations.

In the United States,¹ shed light on the shifting dynamics of the traditional family structure, particularly regarding the increasing presence of married women in the workforce. Over the past three decades, married women have not only joined the workforce in larger numbers but have also taken on higher-paying job roles and increased their working hours. This trend signifies a significant departure from the traditional role of women as mere supplementary income providers and showcases their growing contribution to their families' long-term financial stability.

Similarly,² explores the evolving roles and contributions of men and women within Japanese couples. The study investigates the factors that determine whether a couple relies solely on the husband's income or has dual incomes from both partners. It reveals that in the past, a woman's ability and education had little influence on her decision to continue

working after marriage. However, the study found that if the husband's earnings were lower, the wife was more likely to be employed. This suggests that economic considerations play a significant role in women's employment decisions within the context of Japanese couples.

While previous research has shed light on the experiences of working women in the United States and Japan, it is crucial to deepen our understanding of the challenges faced by women in developing nations like Pakistan. Building upon the work of Bradbury and Katz, which emphasizes the increasing number of married women in the American workforce, and Nakai, which explores changing roles within Japanese couples, this study aims to examine the experiences of Pakistani working married women.

The concept of work and family spillover serves as a crucial independent variable in this research. It refers to the transfer of behaviors, emotions, and stress from work to an individual's family life and vice versa.³ Understanding the nature and severity of work and family spillover is essential in comprehending its impact on psychological well-being and marital distress among Pakistani working married women.

Marital distress, a prevalent phenomenon characterized by emotional turmoil, conflicts, and challenges within a marriage, represents an important dependent variable in this study.⁴ It encompasses a range of difficulties that significantly impact the well-being of the couples involved. By exploring marital distress, the study aims to uncover the specific challenges faced by Pakistani working married women, and how these challenges affect their overall well-being and the strength of their marriages.

Psychological well-being, which entails a state of flourishing and optimal functioning, serves as another crucial dependent variable in this research.⁵ It encompasses positive emotions, positive relationships, a sense of control, purpose, and the realization of one's skills. Investigating psychological well-being allows for a comprehensive understanding of the mental and emotional health of married women in Pakistan who are part of the workforce. By examining the impact of work and family conflicts and exploring the effects of marital distress and work and family spillover, this study aims to gain insights into the emotional strain experienced by Pakistani working married women and its consequences for their overall mental health.

this study seeks to explore the experiences of Pakistani working married women, considering the interplay of work and family spillover, marital distress, psychological well-being, and problem-solving skills. By delving into these dimensions, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by women in Pakistan's sociocultural context and the potential implications for their mental health and marital relationships.

Literature Review:

The literature review provides a comprehensive examination of the research conducted on work-family spillover and its implications for married life and the psychological well-being of working married women⁶ conducted an in-depth qualitative study in Pakistan, interviewing 50 female respondents working in various organizations. The study investigated the phenomenon of work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC), which occur when family obligations interfere with professional responsibilities

and vice versa. The findings revealed that long work hours and a lack of spousal support were significant factors contributing to work-family conflict. The study highlighted the importance of fostering a welcoming and positive work atmosphere to reduce work-family conflict. Additionally, given the impact of work-family conflict on job satisfaction and productivity, the study emphasized the need for organizational policies to effectively manage this conflict.

In today's society, women are expected to fulfill multiple roles, including that of a devoted wife, a nurturing mother, a respectful daughter-in-law, and a successful career woman. This results in conflicting expectations and places women under immense stress and pressure.⁷ At work, women are expected to be dedicated, competitive, and professional, while at home, they are expected to be pleasant, sensitive, and domestic. Balancing these contradictory expectations becomes a challenge, leading to compromised performance in one role while trying to fulfill another. This role conflict creates psychological pressure and stress, ultimately impacting women's productivity and well-being. Employers also bear the brunt of this conflict, experiencing frustration, strained relationships, and lower work performance from female employees.⁸

The concept of work-family conflict was developed by Kahn and his colleagues in 1964, who viewed it through the lens of role theory. They identified two main concerns for female employees: work interfering with family and job interfering with family. As the proportion of women in the workforce continues to rise, the challenges of juggling competing demands between work and home life have become increasingly prevalent.⁹ Modern workplaces place rational demands on women, who are expected to balance work responsibilities while adhering to traditional views associated with women's roles. The type of work and the level of responsibility attached to it also influence the extent of role stress and work-family conflict experienced by women employees. In developing nations, where delegation of responsibility often lacks sufficient authority and power, work-family conflict and stress are further exacerbated.¹⁰

Studies focusing on specific groups, such as women entrepreneurs, have shed light on the unique challenges they face.¹¹ explored work-family conflict among married Singaporean women entrepreneurs, highlighting the burden of childcare and household responsibilities that disproportionately fall on them. The study emphasized the crucial role of spouse support and flexible work hours in reducing work-family conflict and improving the well-being of female entrepreneurs.

The impact of work-family conflict on working mothers has also been examined.¹² conducted a qualitative study that identified work-life balance as a major problem for working mothers, particularly in the context of Bulacan State University. The study revealed that the academic demands of the workplace had a negative impact on the quality of home life for the respondents. Coping mechanisms were suggested to resolve conflicts between work and personal life.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the significant impact of work-family spillover on married life and the psychological well-being of working married women. The studies discussed demonstrate the detrimental effects of work-family conflict on various

aspects of women's lives, including their mental health, marital relationships, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. The findings emphasize the need for organizations to implement supportive policies and create a positive work environment that promotes work-life balance and provides adequate support for working married women. Additionally, the role of spouse support and flexible work arrangements emerges as crucial factors in mitigating work-family conflict and improving the overall well-being of women in balancing their multiple roles. Further research in this area is needed to gain a deeper understanding of work-family spillover and to develop effective strategies to alleviate its negative effects on women's lives.

Rationale:

The research aims to explore the relationship between problem-solving skills, work and family spillover, marital distress, and psychological well-being among Pakistani working married women. It addresses the gap in understanding the factors that contribute to positive outcomes in the work and family interface in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan.

Objectives:

This study's main goal is to determine how Pakistani working married women suffer from work and family spillover. The study also seeks to determine how problem-solving abilities and work and family spillover are related in Pakistani working married women. It also investigates the spillover effects of job and family on marital distress among Pakistani working married women. Additionally, it investigates the link between Pakistani working married women's psychological well-being and work and family spillover. Additionally, it reveals how problem-solving abilities influence the relationship between work and family spillover and marital distress among Pakistani working married women. Finally, to suggest interventions and methods for improving problem-solving abilities and controlling work and family spillover in Pakistani working married couples to increase marital happiness and psychological well-being. The precise topics to be evaluated, examined, and analyzed are outlined in these objectives, which give the research study defined and quantifiable directions.

Hypotheses:

1. There is a significant negative relationship between problem-solving skills and work and family spillover in Pakistani working married women.
2. There is a significant impact of work and family spillover on marital distress among Pakistani working married women.
3. There is a significant association between work and family spillover and psychological well-being in Pakistani working married women.
4. Problem-solving skills mediate the relationship between work and family spillover and marital distress among Pakistani working married women.

Research Questions:

1. What is the relationship between problem-solving skills and work and family spillover in Pakistani working married women?
2. How does work and family spillover impact marital distress among Pakistani working married women?

3. What is the association between work and family spillover and psychological well-being in Pakistani working married women?

4. To what extent do problem-solving skills mediate the relationship between work and family spillover and marital distress among Pakistani working married women?

Method:

Study Design:

The design that was used for this study is a cross-sectional survey study design. Cross-sectional studies involve a single survey or period of subject observation in one or more groups. If more than one group is employed, they are often chosen so that they differ on key traits. In a sense, it's like taking a "snapshot" of these subjects at a specific moment in time. That is why to quickly examine the intricate interactions between the key variables - work and family spillover, problem-solving skills, marital distress, and psychological well-being - among Pakistani working married women, a cross-sectional correlational approach was used. The goals of the research were best served by this design. In the first place, it made it possible to examine all variables in one go and gave important information about how closely connected they were. Second, it made it possible to investigate correlations between the chosen variables without altering them, which is important when analyzing complex real-world events like how family and work life interact. Thirdly, it has proved to be an efficient approach to getting data from a varied and geographically dispersed sample, which is necessary given the nature of the study problem. By using this approach, it was possible to acquire a deeper knowledge of how these variables coexist in the lives of the participants, opening the door to a more in-depth examination of the variables impacting marital distress and psychological well-being among Pakistani working married women.

Sample:

The sample for this research study consisted of 276 female working married women residing in Pakistan. The study involved a non-probability purposive and convenient sampling technique, targeting working married women in Pakistan.

Inclusion Criteria:

Female participants who were willing to voluntarily participate in the study and those who were currently married and working in various professional sectors, including both public and private organizations aged between 20 and 55 years.

Exclusion Criteria:

Participants who were unable or unwilling to provide informed consent. Those who were unmarried or divorced and not currently employed. Also, the participants who have a history of severe mental health disorders or diagnosed psychological conditions.

Research Instruments:

The text discusses four different research instruments: the Work and Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS), the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT), and the Problem-Solving Style Questionnaire (PSSQ).

The Work and Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) is a self-report scale that measures the conflict between work and family responsibilities. It consists of two subscales, the Work-to-family subscale and the Family-to-work subscale. Respondents rate their level of

agreement with each item on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of conflict.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) assesses an individual's mental well-being and positive mental health. It consists of 14 positively worded items that capture different aspects of mental well-being. Participants rate their responses on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. Higher scores indicate higher levels of mental well-being.

The Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) is used to evaluate marital adjustment in married couples. It consists of 15 items that measure agreement or disagreement on various topics related to marriage. Different response scales are used for each item. The total score is the sum of the individual responses, with higher scores indicating higher levels of marital adjustment.

The Problem-Solving Style Questionnaire (PSSQ) measures problem-solving approaches. It consists of 20 items that participants rate on a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Higher scores indicate good problem-solving methods.

Procedure:

The procedure followed in a quantitative research study that aimed to examine the relationship between problem-solving skills, work and family spillover, marital distress, and psychological well-being in Pakistani working married women. The study used a structured questionnaire (proforma) to collect data and measure the variables of interest. The independent variable, problem-solving skills, was assessed using Parker's Problem-Solving Style Questionnaire (PSSQ). Work and family spillover were measured using the Work and Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) developed by Haslam et al. (2015). Marital distress was assessed using the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) by Locke and Wallace (1959). Psychological well-being was measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) developed by.¹³

Results:

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of job professionals (N=276)

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Women	276	100
Age		
24-34	162	57.7
35-44	75	27.1
45-54	39	15.2
Education		
Intermediate	1	0.4
Bachelors	121	43.8
Masters	134	48.6
Ph.D.	8	2.9
MBBS	11	4.0

DPT	1	0.4
Marriage Duration		
1-9 years	178	64.4
10-18 years	64	23.2
19-27 years	34	12.4
Family System		
Nuclear System	79	28.6
Joint System	197	71.4
No. of Children		
0-3	234	84.7
4-7	42	15.3
Husband's Job Status		
Employed	193	69.9
Unemployed	2	0.7
Self-employed	76	27.5
Other	5	1.8
Current Monthly Salary		
0-25k	54	19.6
26k-50k	124	44.9
51k-1lac	88	31.9
1lac more	10	3.6
Total Working Experience		
Less than 1 year	17	6.2
1-3 years	95	34.4
4-7 years	115	41.7
8-10 years	41	14.9
More than 10 years	7	2.5

Note: n= Number of Participants

Table 2

Correlations between WFC, FWC, Problem-Solving Skills, Marital Adjustment, and Psychological Well-Being (N=276)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
WFC	-							
FWC	0.450* **	-						
MAT	- 0.334* **	- 0.421* **	-					
WEMWBS	- 0.314* **	- 0.491* **	0.708* **	-				
Sensing	0.023	- 0.191* *	0.059	0.080	-			
Intuition	- 0.320* **	-0.131*	0.267* **	0.227* **	- 0.166* *	-		
Feeling	0.239* **	0.086	0.088	0.060	0.428* **	-0.028	-	
Thinking	- 0.446* **	- 0.323* **	0.338* **	0.340* **	0.056	0.668* **	- 0.170* *	-

Note: WEMWBS= Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, MAT= Marital Adjustment Test, FWC= Family-Work Conflict, WFC= Work-Family Conflict. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.1, ***p < .001.

(Publication of American Psychological Association, 2020)

Table 3

Results of the Mediation Analysis (N= 267)

Effect	Path	β	SE	95% CI		z	p
				LL	UL		
Total	WFS → WEMWBS	-0.040	0.020	-0.078	-6.623	-1.993	0.046
	FWS → WEMWBS	-0.102	0.013	-0.128	-0.075	-7.531	<.001
	WFS → MD	-0.062	0.020	-0.102	-0.022	-3.014	0.003
	FWS → MD	-0.079	0.014	-0.106	-0.051	-5.641	<.001
Total Indirec	WFS → WEMWBS	-0.015	0.010	-0.035	0.005	-1.474	0.140
		-0.003	0.005	-0.013	0.007	-0.606	0.544
		-0.014	0.011	-0.035	0.007	-1.313	0.189

t Effects	FWS → WEMWBS WFS → MD FWS → MD	-0.002	0.006	-0.013	0.009	-0.318	0.751
Indirect	WFS → thinking → WEMWBS	-0.026	0.011	-0.047	-0.005	-2.464	0.014
	WFS → Intuition → WEMWBS	-1.390e-4	0.008	-0.016	0.016	-0.017	0.986
	WFS → Sensing → WEMWBS	-0.004	0.004	-0.011	0.003	-1.208	0.227
	WFS → Feeling → WEMWBS	0.016	0.007	0.003	0.029	2.414	0.016
	FWS → Thinking → WEMWBS	-0.007	0.004	-0.015	4.100e-4	-1.856	0.063
	FWS → Intuition → WEMWBS	4.691e-6	2.754e-4	-5.351e-4	5.44e-4	0.017	0.986
	FWS → Sensing → WEMWBS	0.005	0.004	-0.002	0.013	1.384	0.166
	WFS → Feeling → WEMWBS	-0.001	0.003	-0.007	0.004	-0.414	0.679
	WFS → Thinking → MD	-0.023	0.011	-0.044	-0.002	-2.133	0.333
	WFS → Intuition → MD	-0.006	0.008	-0.022	0.011	-0.661	0.509
	WFS → Sensing → MD	-0.005	0.004	-0.012	0.003	-1.254	0.210
	WFS → Feeling → MD	0.019	0.007	0.005	0.033	2.634	0.008
	FWS → Thinking → MD	-0.006	0.004	-0.014	9.640e-4	-1.702	0.089
	FWS → Intuition → MD	1.872e-4	7.895e-4	-0.001	0.002	0.237	0.813
	FWS → Sensing → MD	0.006	0.004	-0.002	0.014	1.454	0.146
	FWS → Feeling → MD	-0.001	0.003	-0.008	0.005	-0.415	0.678
Direct		-0.025	0.021	-0.066	0.016	-1.181	0.238

	WFS → WEMWBS	-0.098	0.014	-0.125	-0.072	-7.267	<.001
	FWS → WEMWBS	-0.048	0.021	-0.090	-0.006	-2.230	0.026
	WFS → MD	-0.077	0.014	-0.104	-0.050	-5.540	<.001
	FWS → MD						

Note: N=276, CI= confidence interval, LL= lower limit, UL= upper limit, SE= standard error, WFS= Work-Family Spillover, FWS= Family-Work Spillover, MD= Marital Distress, PWS= Psychological Well-Being.

(Publication of American Psychological Association, 2020)

Table 4

Summary of Hypothesis Table:

Sr. #	Hypothesis	Status
H1	There is a significant negative relationship between problem-solving skills and work and family spillover in Pakistani working married women.	Supported
H2	There is a significant impact of work and family spillover on marital distress among Pakistani working married women.	Supported
H3	There is a significant association between work and family spillover and psychological well-being in Pakistani working married women.	Supported
H4	Problem-solving skills mediate the relationship between work and family spillover and marital distress among Pakistani working married women.	Partially Supported

Discussion:

The study under discussion aimed to explore the association between work and family spillover, marital distress, and psychological well-being among employed married women in Pakistan.¹⁴ The researchers investigated the role of problem-solving skills as potential buffers against the negative effects of spillover. They also examined the mediating effect of different cognitive functions, namely thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuition, in the relationship between spillover, marital distress, and well-being.

The findings of the study indicated a significant relationship between problem-solving skills and work-family spillover. Specifically, higher levels of problem-solving skills were associated with lower levels of spillover, suggesting that effective problem-solving can

mitigate the negative impact of work-family conflict.¹⁵ This finding aligns with previous research that has emphasized the importance of problem-solving abilities in managing work and family responsibilities.¹⁶

Moreover, the study revealed that higher levels of work-family spillover were linked to increased marital distress and lower psychological well-being among employed married women in Pakistan (Smith et al., 2023). This finding underscores the detrimental effects of work-family conflict on marital relationships and individual well-being, which has been consistently documented in previous studies.¹⁷

Furthermore, the researchers examined the mediating effect of different cognitive functions in the relationship between spillover, marital distress, and psychological well-being. They found that thinking and feeling acted as significant mediators, suggesting that these cognitive processes play a role in translating work-family spillover into marital distress and psychological well-being.¹⁸ However, no significant mediating effects were observed for sensing and intuition. It is worth noting that these findings are context-specific and may be influenced by cultural preferences for decision-making styles and potential methodological limitations of the study.

To enhance problem-solving skills and alleviate the negative impact of work-family spillover, several interventions can be implemented. Firstly, promoting sensing-based and intuition-based problem-solving approaches can cater to the diverse decision-making preferences of individuals.¹⁹ Additionally, improving communication and time management skills can help individuals effectively balance their work and family responsibilities.²⁰

Implications:

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the relationship between problem-solving skills, work-family spillover, marital distress, and psychological well-being specifically among working married women in Gujranwala, Pakistan. It expands our understanding of the challenges faced by women in balancing work and family responsibilities in this cultural context. Further research is needed to explore the role of problem-solving skills, including sensing and intuition, in mediating the relationship between work-family spillover and marital distress. Future studies should consider larger and more diverse samples from different regions of Pakistan to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. The findings have practical implications for interventions and support systems to assist working married women in Pakistan. Enhancing problem-solving skills, communication skills, time management, and decision-making abilities among women can effectively manage work-family spillover and reduce marital distress. Creating supportive work environments that promote work-family balance and clear boundaries between work and family life is crucial. Employers can implement flexible work arrangements to accommodate the needs of working married women.

Development of workshops, counseling sessions, or support groups that address stress management techniques and provide social support can improve the psychological well-being of working married women. These interventions should be culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific needs and context of Pakistan.

Limitations & Recommendations:

The cross-sectional design of the study hinders the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial to examine the dynamics over time. Self-report measures used in the study are subject to biases and social desirability effects. Incorporating multiple data sources would provide a more robust understanding of the variables. The study's short duration and data collected exclusively from Gujranwala limit the generalizability of the findings. Further research should consider longer study durations and include participants from multiple cities or regions in Pakistan. Supplementing quantitative data with qualitative research methods would provide deeper insights into contextual factors influencing problem-solving skills, work-family dynamics, and marital distress. Comparing the experiences of working married women across different cultural contexts would inform culturally appropriate interventions. Collaborating to develop culturally sensitive and context-specific interventions would enhance problem-solving skills and work-family balance among working married women. Replicating the study with larger and more diverse samples from various regions would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a broader understanding of the experiences of working married women.

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