


Chapter 12

Navigating Motherhood and Career in a Post- Pandemic World: A Psychosociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the issues that women are facing in reconciling their obligations to their families and professional ambitions within an atmosphere of gender equality and sustainability. The authors review the extant literature, examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's psychological health, and illuminate the significance of work-life balance in advancing gender parity and workplace contentment. By studying psychosociological aspects, we can gain insight into how the outbreak has impacted female mothers' roles and careers. It is important to keep in mind that personal encounters and prospects are molded by socio-cultural frameworks and regulations, which condition how women handle both familial life and job-related matters from a psychosociological point of view. Moreover, the pandemic has highlighted existing gender discrepancies in labor force participation as well as childcare duties.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the global landscape has been irrevocably altered by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, transcending its initial impact on healthcare to deeply affect various dimensions of society. While the pandemic's repercussions have been felt worldwide, it has been especially pronounced in developing nations, compounding pre-existing socio-economic challenges (Fernandes, 2020). Additionally, the pandemic has sparked a surge in mental health issues, linked to a constellation of factors including apprehension of the virus, quarantine measures, economic downturns, social isolation, and the overall strain imposed by the global health crisis (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Pakpour and Griffiths, 2020). Amidst these broader consequences, a growing body of research has shed light on the unique impact of the pandemic on women, specifically those who are juggling the roles of both employees and mothers. Working within the framework proposed by Robertson et al. (2020), it is evident that the repercussions of COVID-19 reverberate across diverse age groups and occupational domains, with working mothers confronting a distinct set of challenges across multiple spheres. The pandemic has significantly disrupted their delicate equilibrium between professional commitments and personal responsibilities, markedly influencing their maternal identity and mental well-being (Penna et al., 2023). The findings of the study indicate that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on working women, affecting them across multiple dimensions, including psychological, personal, and economic aspects. The majority of respondents reported experiencing adverse effects as a result of the pandemic, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by working mothers (Affouneh et al.; 2022).

Compounding the intrinsic demands of parenthood, the pandemic has introduced an intricate layer of complexity. Remote work arrangements have blurred the once-distinct boundaries between work and family life, leading to heightened employee stress, burnout, and feelings of isolation. Recent investigations into the convergence of these domains during the pandemic have illuminated the exceptional predicaments faced by working parents, with a spotlight on mothers. These studies underscore the necessity for interventions that can ameliorate the interplay between work and family roles, fostering mental well-being and a harmonious balance (Kirwin & Ettinger, 2022; Vyas, 2022; Akanji et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, the persistence of conventional gender norms and societal expectations continues to shape the division of labor within households, profoundly impacting women's participation in the labor force (Bianchi et al., 2012). The historical backdrop of wage disparities, limited access to promotions, and gender-based discrimination further impedes women's prospects in the workplace. Regrettably, the pandemic has forced many women to relinquish their jobs or reduce their work hours, as they shoulder the added responsibility of caring for their children.

This study embarks on an exploration of the multifaceted impact experienced by working mothers across dimensions such as work-life equilibrium, mental well-being, and gender dynamics. By delving into workplace interactions, a nuanced understanding can be gleaned regarding the indispensability of inclusive measures concerning the intricate interplay between familial and professional obligations. As societies navigate the complex aftermath of the pandemic, this research aims to contribute valuable insights that pave the way for a more equitable and resilient future, where the challenges faced by working mothers are acknowledged and addressed proactively.

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