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		TITLE OF THE RESEARCH ARTICLE	
		Work–Family Balance as a Prerequisite for Mental Health and Quality of Work Life: Working Women in Arab-Muslim Societies as a Model	
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Abstract			
This study investigates the intricate relationship between mental health and the quality of work life by focusing on the work–family balance of women in Arab-Muslim societies. The research originates from the recognition that mental health is not merely the absence of disorders but a state of psychological and social equilibrium that enables individuals to adapt positively to life's pressures. Within Arab-Muslim contexts, working women face a unique duality of roles—being active contributors to economic life while simultaneously bearing the social expectation of primary responsibility for family and home. This duality creates persistent tension and psychological strain that can undermine well-being and professional fulfillment. The study adopts a descriptive–analytical methodology, synthesizing both classical and contemporary literature in psychology, sociology, and Islamic thought, alongside comparative analysis of international models supporting women's work–family integration. It explores theoretical concepts of mental health and quality of work life, identifies key stressors in women's professional and familial experiences, and analyzes the facilitating factors that promote equilibrium between these spheres. Findings reveal that sustainable mental health and quality of work life depend largely on the degree of harmony between professional and family responsibilities. Women who achieve balanced integration between their roles display higher self-efficacy, emotional stability, and job satisfaction, while imbalance leads to stress, burnout, and diminished productivity. The research emphasizes that in Arab-Muslim societies, cultural expectations and gender norms amplify the psychological effects of imbalance, yet religious values also offer a framework of moderation and mutual support that can serve as a protective factor. The study concludes that effective work–family balance must be pursued through four complementary levels: personal self-management, family cooperation, institutional support, and societal legislation. It recommends flexible work policies, equal opportunities, family-supportive workplace environments, and awareness campaigns promoting shared domestic responsibility. Ultimately, promoting women's mental health and work–life balance is presented not only as a matter of individual well-being but as a cornerstone of social stability and sustainable development in Arab-Muslim societies			
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Introduction

Contemporary psychological and social literature has devoted increasing attention to the topic of mental health, viewing it not merely as the absence of psychological disorders or illnesses but rather as a dynamic state of inner balance and positive adaptation to life's stressors (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Studies have consistently shown that mental health in the workplace is closely linked to job satisfaction and to an individual's ability to achieve self-fulfillment within the organization. It is also deeply connected to the broader concept of *quality of work life*, commonly defined as "a set of conditions and circumstances that surround the employee and influence his or her satisfaction with work, as well as the sense of meaning and purpose derived from professional activity" (Al-Zahrani, 2021).

However, the working woman in Arab-Muslim societies faces a particularly complex situation. On one hand, she is called upon to participate effectively in the labor market and contribute to economic development; on the other, she remains burdened with the family and social roles traditionally regarded as essential to her identity. In most cultural perceptions, child-rearing, household management, and spousal support are still considered "natural" responsibilities of women, which leads to **role duality** and continuous tension between often contradictory expectations. This tension frequently manifests as emotional instability and psychological strain. In the literature, such stress has been analyzed through the concepts of **role conflict** and **role strain**, which describe the psychological pressures experienced by working women as they attempt to navigate competing demands (Frone, 2003).

It is noteworthy that Islam does not prohibit women from working; rather, it establishes ethical and social parameters that safeguard their dignity and respect their family responsibilities. This balanced perspective opens the door for constructive dialogue on the types of work most suitable for women, as well as on how labor policies can be designed to respect women's specific needs without undermining their economic or social rights.

Meanwhile, the modern world is undergoing radical transformations in work patterns and in the social and economic roles of individuals. Institutions—whether economic, educational, or social—no longer focus exclusively on material productivity but increasingly recognize the importance of human and psychological factors as fundamental to sustaining performance and ensuring long-term quality. Among these factors, *mental health* and *quality of work life* emerge as central components for achieving balance, continuity, and creativity in professional environments.

Quality of work life, therefore, extends far beyond financial compensation or workplace comfort. It encompasses multiple dimensions related to psychological well-being, emotional stability, and an individual's capacity to harmonize professional responsibilities with family and social commitments. This final dimension—the balance between professional and family life—has become one of the most critical issues in contemporary research, given its direct impact on employees' mental health, productivity, and institutional engagement.

Within Arab-Muslim societies, this issue assumes particular significance. Working women have become a substantial and indispensable segment of the labor force, yet they continue to encounter multifaceted challenges arising from role duality. They are expected to perform professionally with full competence while simultaneously meeting family obligations such as childcare, household duties, and marital support, within a cultural framework that continues to prioritize the domestic role. This constant tension places working women in a state of ongoing conflict between occupational demands and domestic pressures, with profound consequences for their psychological well-being and the quality of their professional lives.

Problem Statement

From this perspective, the central research problem of this study can be formulated as follows:

How does the presence—or absence—of balance between professional and family life affect mental health and the quality of work life, taking working women in Arab-Muslim societies as a model for study and analysis?

This main question can be broken down into several sub-questions:

1. What are the theoretical concepts underlying mental health and quality of work life?
2. How have Islamic teachings and Arab society conceptualized women's participation in the workforce?
3. What family obligations and responsibilities are typically placed upon working women in Arab-Muslim societies?
4. Which types of occupations are most compatible with women's nature, and which impose the greatest psychological strain?
5. What factors facilitate achieving a healthy work-family balance for working women?
6. What strategies can be developed to enhance mental health and the quality of work life among working women?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- Clarify the relationship between mental health and quality of work life in light of the balance between familial and professional roles.
- Analyze the lived reality of working women in Arab-Muslim societies and identify the main psychological and social pressures they face.
- Highlight the types of jobs most suited to women's capacities and the areas that generate the highest levels of stress.
- Propose practical solutions and policy recommendations to help women reconcile occupational demands with family obligations.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this topic can be understood on two main levels:

1. **Scientific/Academic Significance:** The study contributes to existing literature on mental health and quality of work life by focusing on the familial and societal dimensions—an area that remains relatively underexplored in Arab academic research.
2. **Practical/Applied Significance:** It provides actionable recommendations relevant to multiple levels: at the **policy level**, regarding labor laws and women's rights; at the **institutional level**, by encouraging the creation of flexible and psychologically supportive work environments; and at the **family level**, through promoting shared domestic responsibilities and balanced gender roles.

Methodology

The research adopts a **descriptive-analytical methodology**, involving a critical review and synthesis of relevant literature and previous studies addressing mental health, work-family balance, and women's employment. The analysis is grounded in the **cultural and social specificities of Arab-Muslim societies**, while also incorporating a **comparative perspective** by examining international experiences in supporting working women and facilitating the reconciliation between work and family life. The study draws parallels and contrasts between these global practices and the Arab context in order to extract lessons and policy implications applicable to local realities.

Mental Health: Concept and Dimensions

The concept of mental health has evolved through multiple stages. In the early twentieth century, it was primarily viewed as the mere absence of mental disorders or behavioral deviations. However, contemporary perspectives have expanded to define mental health as a dynamic state of psychological and social integration, characterized by an individual's ability to adapt positively to oneself and the surrounding environment, accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and emotional stability.

The **World Health Organization (WHO, 2022)** defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.” This definition indicates that mental health is not

merely the absence of psychiatric illnesses such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia, but rather a **positive state of inner equilibrium** that enables individuals to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

The dimensions of mental health can be summarized in four interrelated domains:

1. **The subjective dimension**, which reflects the individual's sense of internal satisfaction and happiness.
2. **The social dimension**, which pertains to the ability to establish and maintain balanced interpersonal relationships.
3. **The functional dimension**, which relates to the individual's efficiency, productivity, and professional performance.
4. **The moral or ethical dimension**, in which mental health is viewed through the individual's alignment with personal values and moral convictions.

In the workplace context, the psychological factor has become a major determinant of both performance and creativity. Employees who enjoy sound mental health tend to be more productive, less prone to absenteeism or burnout, and more engaged with the organization's culture and goals (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Keyes, 2014).

2. Quality of Work Life: Concept and Components

The concept of *Quality of Work Life (QWL)* emerged in the 1970s, when Western researchers began to explore the relationship between job satisfaction and employee productivity. Over time, this concept expanded to encompass broader aspects of employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being. It is defined as "the extent to which employees experience satisfaction and fulfillment in their jobs through professional, social, and organizational conditions that provide security, participation, recognition, and a balance between work and life" (Al-Zahrani, 2021, p. 45).

QWL comprises several interrelated dimensions, the most salient of which are:

1. **Job satisfaction** - the extent to which an individual is content with their job, pay, and promotion opportunities.
2. **Job security** - the individual's sense of stability and assurance regarding their professional future.
3. **Participation in decision-making** - involving employees in decisions that affect their work environment.
4. **Organizational justice** - the perception of fairness in compensation, promotion, and workload distribution.
5. **Healthy work environment** - encompassing both physical conditions (lighting, ventilation, equipment) and psychosocial factors (interpersonal relations, managerial support).
6. **Work-life balance**, which is particularly relevant to this study, as it represents the individual's ability to harmonize professional responsibilities with personal and family life.

Organizations that promote quality of work life enjoy numerous benefits, including reduced absenteeism, enhanced organizational loyalty, higher creativity and productivity, and a stronger corporate reputation (Sirgy et al., 2001; Lau, 2000).

3. Work-Family Balance: Concept and Significance

The concept of *work-family balance* is relatively modern, gaining prominence with the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the transformation of the traditional family model. It is defined as "the ability to balance the demands of work and personal/family life in a manner that prevents one domain from overwhelming the other, thereby achieving a sense of satisfaction and harmony" (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Scholarly literature has proposed several theoretical models to explain the relationship between work and family roles:

- **The Conflict Model**, which posits that work and family roles are inherently incompatible, whereby increased demands in one area diminish performance in the other (Frone et al., 1992).

- **The Spillover Model**, suggesting that experiences—whether positive or negative—in one domain can spill over into the other.
- **The Enrichment Model**, which argues that success in one domain can enhance performance and well-being in the other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

In **Arab-Muslim societies**, work-family balance carries ethical and cultural significance. Family obligations, particularly for women, are prioritized, as women are traditionally seen as the primary caregivers for children and the household. Nevertheless, social and economic transformations have necessitated a redefinition of this relationship, allowing women to participate in the labor market without compromising their familial responsibilities (Al-Khalifa, 2018).

4. The Implications of Work-Family Imbalance on Mental Health and Quality of Work Life

Psychological and sociological studies highlight that the absence of work-family balance leads to numerous negative consequences, including:

1. **Burnout**, a state of physical and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).
2. **Low job satisfaction**, as individuals feel incapable of fulfilling both professional and family roles effectively.
3. **Family tension**, resulting from insufficient time and emotional investment in family relationships.
4. **Psychological disorders**, such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.
5. **Reduced organizational productivity**, as individual stress and fatigue translate into lower overall performance.

From this theoretical framework, it becomes evident that **mental health** and **quality of work life** are closely linked to **work-family balance**. Among all employees, **working women** in Arab-Muslim societies represent the most prominent model illustrating the effects—positive or negative—of achieving or lacking this balance.

Working Women in Arab-Muslim Societies: A Religious and Social Perspective

The issue of work-family balance cannot be examined without considering the unique position of working women in Arab-Muslim societies, where religious, social, and cultural dimensions are deeply intertwined. In these societies, the woman is not merely an economic actor or a functional employee; she is a central pillar of the family and the primary custodian of moral and cultural values. Consequently, women's employment has long been a subject of theological reflection and social debate since the early modern period.

1. The Islamic Perspective on Women's Work

A. The Principle of Permissibility

Islamic teachings are grounded in the fundamental jurisprudential principle that *"the original rule in matters is permissibility unless there is a clear text prohibiting it."* Islam affirms women's rights to ownership, economic participation, and professional engagement, provided such activities do not contradict the objectives of the Sharia (Islamic law) or undermine family cohesion.

The Qur'an explicitly recognizes women's right to earn:

"For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned." (Qur'an 4:32)

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated:

"Women are the twin halves of men." (Abu Dawood & Al-Tirmidhi)

These texts affirm the equality of moral responsibility between men and women and validate women's right to work, particularly when necessity dictates, such as supporting a family in the absence or incapacity of a husband.

B. Ethical and Legal Boundaries of Women's Work

While Islam permits women to work, it establishes several boundaries to ensure that work remains consistent with spiritual and familial principles:

1. The woman's employment must not compromise her primary responsibilities toward her family, as the family is regarded as the cornerstone of society.
2. The work must be **lawful and ethical**, consistent with Sharia objectives.
3. The woman must observe **modesty and appropriate behavior** in the workplace.
4. Work should not involve **unlawful seclusion or inappropriate gender mixing**.

Hence, Islamic law promotes a balanced approach that respects women's right to professional contribution while safeguarding family stability and moral values (Al-Qaradawi, 2009; Kamali, 2016).

2. The Social Perspective on Women's Employment

A. Historical Transformations

Since the mid-twentieth century, Arab societies have undergone significant socio-economic transformations. Increased access to higher education and evolving economic demands have led to the growing participation of women in the labor market. Today, female employment constitutes an undeniable social and economic reality across most Arab countries.

However, this shift has not been free from tension. Traditional norms—particularly in rural or conservative contexts—have often resisted women's public participation, perceiving it as a threat to familial stability or a deviation from traditional gender roles. Over time, though, societal attitudes have gradually evolved, showing greater acceptance of women's professional engagement, albeit with notable variation between regions and social classes (Moghadam, 2004; Doumato & Posusney, 2003).

B. Cultural Representations

Working women in Arab-Muslim societies are often subject to **dual cultural perceptions**:

- On one hand, there is a **positive view** that regards women's work as a contribution to national development and a source of empowerment and self-realization.
- On the other hand, a **negative view** persists, suggesting that women's employment undermines their familial roles, particularly motherhood and spousal duties.

This duality creates a **psychological dilemma** for many working women, who experience the pressure to excel both professionally and domestically, often without adequate institutional or familial support (Elamin & Omaid, 2010).

C. Social Challenges

Working women in Arab-Muslim contexts face a range of social and structural challenges:

1. **Social stigma** in conservative communities that still regard women's primary place as the home.
2. **Unequal domestic responsibilities**, where women shoulder most household and caregiving duties despite being employed.
3. **Lack of institutional support**, such as workplace childcare services or flexible working hours.
4. **Generational disparities**, where younger generations tend to adopt more egalitarian attitudes compared to older, more traditional cohorts.

3. Professions Most Compatible with Women in Arab-Muslim Societies

Sociological research suggests that certain professions are more compatible with women's familial responsibilities and social expectations, including:

- **Teaching**, especially at the primary and intermediate levels.
- **Healthcare professions**, such as nursing and pediatrics.
- **Administrative positions** with limited working hours.
- **Flexible freelance occupations**, such as home-based or online work.

Such professions tend to facilitate better work-family balance and reduce psychological strain compared to high-intensity or male-dominated fields (Metcalf, 2011).

4. Professions with Adverse Effects on Women's Mental Health

Conversely, several professions pose greater psychological and social challenges for women in Arab-Muslim societies, including:

- **Night-shift or rotating-schedule jobs**, such as emergency medicine or security work.
- **High-stress professions**, including law, judiciary, and field journalism.
- **Jobs requiring frequent travel** or extended separation from the family.
- **Male-dominated environments**, where women may encounter gender discrimination or workplace harassment.

Such occupational contexts often contribute to chronic anxiety, family tension, reduced job satisfaction, and in some cases, clinical burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Ahmad, 2020).

Accordingly, the analysis of women's employment in Arab-Muslim societies must be **holistic**—recognizing that:

- **Islamic jurisprudence** allows women to work within ethical limits that preserve family and societal integrity.
- **Societal norms** are gradually evolving, though persistent cultural barriers remain.
- **The nature of employment itself** can act either as a source of psychological support or as a stressor, underscoring the necessity of maintaining a **healthy work-family balance** as a prerequisite for mental health and overall well-being.

Domestic and Family Obligations of Working Women: The Double Burden

While women's employment in Arab-Muslim societies has become a socio-economic reality, it simultaneously exposes them to a **dual burden**: professional responsibilities on one hand and domestic obligations on the other. Culturally, women continue to be perceived as the main caregivers and household managers, even when they contribute substantially to the family income—or, in some cases, serve as the primary breadwinners.

This situation often leads to **continuous psychological strain** and **social fatigue**, commonly described in Western literature as the *"double burden"* or even *"triple burden"* when social or community engagement is added (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

1. Childcare and Upbringing Responsibilities

A. Parenting as a Religious and Social Priority

In Arab-Islamic culture, parenting is not merely a social function but a **religious duty**. The Qur'an emphasizes parental responsibility:

“O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.” (Qur’an 66:6)

Islamic scholars highlight the mother’s predominant role in child-rearing due to her emotional and physical proximity to her children (Al-Ghazali, 2011).

B. The Challenge of Balancing Work and Childcare

Working mothers face numerous challenges in child upbringing:

1. Limited time with children due to long working hours.
2. Dependence on nannies or childcare centers, reducing direct maternal involvement.
3. Children’s feelings of neglect or jealousy due to reduced maternal presence.
4. Insufficient academic supervision, which may affect children’s school performance.

C. Psychological Implications

When mothers fail to maintain adequate parental engagement, they often experience **maternal guilt**, a psychological state that exacerbates stress and emotional exhaustion. Family and institutional support are therefore essential to enable women to fulfill their parenting roles without sacrificing their professional aspirations (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

2. Domestic Chores and Household Responsibilities

A. Housework as Invisible Labor

Housework remains one of the most physically and emotionally draining aspects of women’s responsibilities, particularly because it is **socially undervalued and economically invisible**. Studies show that Arab women spend substantially more hours on household chores than men, even when both partners are employed (UN Women, 2021).

B. The Challenge of Dual Workload

1. Extended domestic workload following long professional hours.
2. Limited spousal contribution due to prevailing patriarchal attitudes.
3. Restricted access to modern domestic support services among middle-income families.
4. Psychological stress resulting from accumulated responsibilities.

C. Psychological and Social Consequences

- Chronic physical fatigue and emotional depletion.
- Lack of rest and leisure time.
- Marital conflicts arising from unequal role distribution.
- Deterioration in marital satisfaction and overall quality of life (Horne, 2018).

3. Spousal Expectations and the Cultural Dimension

A. Cultural Conceptions of Marital Roles

In Arab-Islamic culture, the wife is traditionally perceived as responsible for caring for her husband and managing household affairs—a notion rooted in both religious texts and social customs. The challenge arises when such expectations persist despite women’s full participation in the labor force.

B. Pressures Associated with Spousal Duties

Working wives are often expected to perform all domestic and marital duties flawlessly, even after demanding workdays. Some husbands maintain that employment should not affect women's domestic roles, creating **marital tension** and **role conflict** (Mahmoud, 2019).

C. Psychological Effects

These pressures frequently result in emotional exhaustion, marital discord, and, in severe cases, emotional detachment, threatening the overall stability of the family unit (Voydanoff, 2005).

Analytical Reading: Implications of Family Obligations on Women's Mental Health

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that domestic and familial responsibilities constitute major sources of **psychological stress** and **social pressure** for working women in Arab-Muslim societies. The key contributing factors include:

1. **Role duality** – juggling multiple identities as employee, mother, and wife.
2. **Lack of familial support** – where household duties remain unequally distributed.
3. **Limited institutional assistance** – absence of childcare facilities or flexible schedules.
4. **Persistent cultural expectations** – which continue to assign domestic responsibilities primarily to women.

Nevertheless, not all women experience these challenges equally. Many have successfully achieved a satisfactory work-family balance through time management, supportive spouses, and conducive work environments. For such women, employment can enhance both **psychological well-being** and **family functioning** (Kossek & Lambert, 2005).

Consequently, ensuring women's mental health and quality of work life requires:

- **A fair redistribution of household responsibilities** between spouses.
- **Strengthening the culture of family support** and shared domestic participation.
- **Reforming institutional policies** to accommodate women's needs (e.g., flexible hours, family leave, workplace childcare).

Achieving this balance is crucial for safeguarding women's **mental health**, **professional fulfillment**, and **overall family well-being** in contemporary Arab-Muslim societies.

6. Factors Facilitating Work-Family Balance for Working Women

As discussed in the previous sections, working women in Arab-Muslim societies face complex challenges due to the duality of their roles, balancing professional responsibilities outside the home with family obligations within it. Nevertheless, these challenges do not render work-family balance impossible; rather, they underscore the need to identify enabling mechanisms and supportive factors that allow women to achieve psychological, social, and professional equilibrium.

These factors emerge from multiple, interconnected levels: the **individual level**, related to personal skills and time management; the **family level**, reflecting spousal and children's cooperation; the **institutional level**, representing organizational policies that support families; and the **societal and legislative level**, linked to public policies and state interventions.

1. Individual Factors: Self-Management and Time Organization

a. Time Management Skills

Effective time management is one of the most crucial tools helping working women balance their multiple roles. These skills include:

- Setting priorities based on the “important versus urgent” principle.
- Distributing daily tasks realistically according to time and energy.
- Using technology such as digital calendars and task management applications to organize activities efficiently (Claessens et al., 2007).

b. Stress Reduction Techniques

It is essential for women to develop strategies to cope with stress and psychological overload, such as:

- Engaging in physical exercise or relaxation activities.
- Allocating personal time for rest and recreation.
- Participating in spiritual or religious activities (prayer, Qur'an recitation, remembrance), which strengthen inner peace and resilience (Koenig, 2018).

c. Enhancing Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura's **Self-Efficacy Theory (1997)**, individuals' belief in their own capabilities enhances their effectiveness in facing challenges. Consequently, a woman's confidence in her ability to manage dual roles constitutes a decisive factor in achieving balance and psychological well-being.

2. Family Factors: Support and Participation

a. The Role of the Husband

The husband plays a pivotal role in supporting working women. The more he shares family responsibilities, the higher the likelihood of achieving balance. This includes:

- Participating in child care and parenting tasks.
- Contributing to domestic chores.
- Providing emotional support and encouragement instead of criticism.

Empirical studies indicate that **marital support** significantly predicts women's job satisfaction, lower burnout rates, and improved mental health (Voydanoff, 2005).

b. The Role of Children

Children can also be a source of support by:

- Assisting with simple household chores according to their age.
- Showing understanding of their mother's workload.
- Offering emotional appreciation that mitigates maternal guilt and stress.

c. The Extended Family

In Arab societies, the extended family—grandparents, uncles, aunts—still plays a vital role in alleviating the woman's burdens by offering child care, moral guidance, or financial assistance. This social network often functions as a protective factor against psychological strain and family-work conflict.

3. Institutional Factors: A Family-Friendly Work Environment

a. Flexible Work Policies

International evidence demonstrates that implementing **flexible work arrangements** significantly contributes to work-family balance. Such arrangements include:

- Flexible working hours.
- Remote or hybrid work options for certain tasks.
- Paid or partially paid family leave policies.

Studies by the **International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023)** confirm that flexible scheduling and parental leave improve employee well-being, retention, and gender equality in the workplace.

b. Family Care Services

Family-friendly practices also involve providing:

- On-site childcare centers or partnerships with local nurseries.
- Financial support for childcare expenses.
- Special facilities and breaks for nursing mothers.

These services enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism, and increase organizational loyalty (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Allen et al., 2020).

c. Supportive Organizational Culture

A positive work environment that values empathy, respect, and recognition of women's dual roles fosters job satisfaction and mental health. Conversely, negative cultures characterized by discrimination, bias, or harassment weaken women's ability to maintain balance. Promoting an inclusive and equitable organizational culture is thus a cornerstone of sustainable work-family harmony.

4. Societal and Legislative Factors

a. Supportive Legislation

A solid legal framework is among the strongest guarantees for achieving balance. Such frameworks include:

- Labor laws granting **maternity and paternity leave**.
- Legal provisions prohibiting gender discrimination in hiring and promotion.
- Policies ensuring humane working hours compatible with family responsibilities.

Many Arab countries have begun to revise labor codes to align with the **ILO Convention No. 183** on maternity protection and to encourage parental involvement (ILO, 2022).

b. Societal Culture

However, laws alone are insufficient without a **supportive social culture**. It is therefore vital to:

- Promote awareness about the importance of shared family roles.
- Challenge the stereotypical view that confines women to domestic roles only.
- Encourage moderate religious discourse that endorses women's participation in work within ethical and cultural boundaries.

c. Civil Society Organizations

Civil society, including women's associations and charitable organizations, can offer training and counseling programs to support working women in areas such as:

- Time management and stress control.
- Psychological support and empowerment.

- Harmonizing work and family commitments.

These initiatives complement state policies and foster a community-based approach to gender equality and family stability.

5. International Models and Best Practices

Reports from the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** highlight successful global models of achieving work-family balance.

- **Sweden and Norway** provide both parents with extended paid parental leave, promoting male involvement in childcare and shared domestic responsibilities.
- **Malaysia**, as an Islamic model, integrates religious values with modern family policies by offering public childcare programs and government-supported services for working mothers.

These examples demonstrate that political will, supportive legislation, and social awareness can create an environment that empowers women to balance work and family without compromising their cultural or religious identity.

6. Integrative Perspective

In light of the above, achieving a sustainable balance between women's professional and family obligations requires the **integration of four key levels**:

1. **Individual level** – through effective time management and self-efficacy development.
2. **Family level** – through spousal and children's participation in shared responsibilities.
3. **Institutional level** – through flexible work policies and family-supportive services.
4. **Societal and legislative level** – through equitable laws and an open, supportive social culture.

The absence of any of these dimensions renders balance fragile and difficult to sustain, whereas their integration enhances the working woman's **mental health, quality of work life, and overall well-being**.

Conclusion

The issue of work-family balance among working women in Arab-Muslim societies is not merely an individual concern but rather a **societal, institutional, and legislative issue** reflecting the structure of cultural and social norms. It directly influences women's mental health and their quality of work life.

This study has demonstrated that mental health represents not simply the absence of disorders but a **positive state of psychological harmony and resilience**, while quality of work life encompasses overlapping dimensions—satisfaction, security, justice, and balance between work and family. The analysis has shown that working women in Arab-Islamic contexts bear compounded burdens due to deep-rooted familial and cultural expectations, which expose them to heightened psychological and social pressures.

However, these challenges can be mitigated through multiple supportive factors—ranging from **self-management** and **family support** to **institutional flexibility** and **progressive legislation**.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and theoretical insights, several **practical recommendations** can be proposed:

At the Individual Level

- Provide women with **training programs** in time management and stress reduction.

- Foster **self-awareness and empowerment**, emphasizing balance rather than guilt in fulfilling dual roles.

At the Family Level

- Promote a **shared domestic culture** between spouses.
- Encourage children to contribute to household tasks according to their age.

At the Institutional Level

- Adopt **flexible work arrangements** (part-time work, remote work, flexible schedules).
- Establish **on-site childcare facilities** and provide family support services.
- Cultivate a **supportive organizational culture** that respects women's specific needs.

At the Societal and Legislative Level

- Enact laws supporting **maternity and paternity leave** to alleviate women's workload.
- Combat all forms of **workplace discrimination** against women.
- Promote **balanced religious discourse** that reconciles women's right to work with their family responsibilities.

Ultimately, achieving genuine work-family balance is not merely a private matter but a **collective responsibility** involving the individual, the family, the organization, and the state. Only through their synergy can societies ensure women's psychological well-being and enhance the overall quality of work life.

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Conflict of Interest

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