

**The Influence of Family Circumstances on
Professional Stability Among Working Women:
A Socio-Family Analysis**

**تأثير الظروف الأسرية على الاستقرار المهني للمرأة العاملة
(دراسة سوسيولوجية)**

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Received: 06/11/2024

Accepted: 11/11/2024

Abstract:

The family, as a social group, has unique needs that set it apart from other groups. The working woman, as a central member of the family structure, is inherently tied to the social and cultural dynamics of her household. Despite her participation in the labor market, she often continues to fulfill traditional roles in caregiving and household management, making these responsibilities a fundamental part of her social identity. These dual roles can significantly affect her professional stability, as evidenced by indicators such as absenteeism, reduced commitment, and strained workplace relationships. Family circumstances thus directly impact her performance and can lead to feelings of instability and dissatisfaction in her work environment.

Keywords: family; family circumstances; professional stability; working women.

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ملخص:

إن الأ سرّة جماعة اجتماعية لها ما يميزها عن الجماعات الأخرى في احتياجات أفرادها، ولأن المرأة العاملة ع ضو هام يقوم عليه ن سق الأ سرّة، ولذا نجد أدوارها التقليدية المعروفة عنها في الرعاية والعمل المنزلي تبقى جزء من حياتها الاجتماعية والعملية، وتعتبر عوامل متحكّمة في ا ستقرارها العملي حيث تظهر من خلال عدة مؤشرات أهمها التغيب، بتالي فظروفها الأ سرّة تؤثر وب شكل مب شر على أداءها بالعمل والتي تؤدي إلى شعورها بالاضطراب وعدم الرضا داخل محيط العمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسرة؛ الظروف الأ سرّة؛ المرأة العاملة؛ الاستقرار المهني.

1. Statement of the problem:

The responsibilities associated with the traditional roles of working women are among the primary factors shaping the concept of family circumstances. As a fundamental unit in the social structure, the family differs from other social groups, featuring relationships characterized by emotional and personal connections, especially within close kinship. For example, a husband may have needs related to emotional and intimate connection, which a working woman may strive to fulfill to maintain stability in her marriage and home. Children, particularly in their formative school years, require close care and attention to support their personal development, as neglect could hinder their social integration. Additionally, many working women assume caregiving responsibilities for elderly parents, addressing their social, health, and economic needs, along with completing household tasks that are often undervalued as part of their "natural" role within the home.

Balancing these family obligations with a professional role creates significant challenges. Workplace expectations, such as adherence to job duties, authority structures, task schedules, and organizational policies, may conflict with family needs. Frequent absences or requests for leave due to family obligations can lead to feelings of uncertainty and hinder the working woman's professional stability and comfort within her work environment. This raises the key question: *What family circumstances impact the professional stability of working women?*

2. Significance of the study:

Examining the impact of family circumstances on the professional stability of working women is as significant as any key social issue, especially as it has shifted from a niche topic to one of public interest. This is due to its complex interplay of social, cultural, economic, and

religious factors, particularly within the conservative fabric of Algerian society, which leans toward traditional family structures. For social researchers, this necessitates thorough analysis and ongoing observation to understand the factors affecting the work stability of women balancing both family and career roles.

3. Objectives of the study:

→Examining specific family circumstances that amplify certain indicators related to professional stability.

→Investigating responsibilities shouldered by working women that hinder their professional stability.

4. Defining Concepts

4.1. Concept of Family:

4.1.1. Semantic Meaning of Family

The linguistic definition of "family" refers to a protective unit or shield, often associated with a man's close kin or clan, and signifies a group bound by a shared purpose or matter (Mahmoud, 2002, p. 135).

4.1.2. Technical Meaning of Family:

Borgardus defines the family as a small social group typically composed of a father, a mother, and one or more children. Within this unit, members exchange love, share responsibilities, and work collectively to raise children, guiding and shaping them to engage in socially appropriate behaviors (Salima, 2014, p. 53).

A family is also recognized as a human grouping that may not require biological relationships among its members. Instead, it is grounded in members' shared intention to define themselves as a family unit. This definition allows for family structures without biological or blood ties, such as adoptive families, where the biological link is not deemed essential. What is crucial, however, is members' implicit recognition of each other as family, creating a stable unit that persists in the absence of kinship or blood ties (Aisha, 2011, p. 70).

In summary, the family can be understood as a social institution comprising a marital couple (husband and wife) and members who may or may not be biologically related, unified through shared living space and material resources.

4.2 Concept of Family Circumstances:

Family circumstances encompass the various situations and dynamics within the family unit, influenced by factors related to both the biological nature of the woman and the social and cultural framework of the family, shaped by the broader society. These circumstances can have either a positive or negative impact on the behaviors, attitudes, and inclinations of working women.

4.3 Concept of Stability:

4.3.1 Language Meaning of Stability:

The term "stability" refers to strength, solidity, firmness, and permanence. To "settle" in a place implies residing there, while stability conveys a sense of steadfastness and continuity (Ahmed, 2008, p. 1123).

4.3.2 Technical Meaning of Stability:

Ahmed Abdel-Wasea defines stability in a work context as a state where the worker feels secure and protected in their role, assured of reasonable freedom from fear as long as their employment is stable and their performance remains satisfactory. This sense of stability is further strengthened when management makes efforts to foster security and comfort, motivating employees and providing assurances of safety, freedom, and growth opportunities (Abdel-Wahab, 1973, p. 81).

Muhammad Ali Muhammad describes work stability as the employee's steadfastness in their position and reluctance to move to another organization, especially if their current organization offers professional growth and fulfills various social and psychological needs that contribute to integration and long-term stability. He adds that stability involves the degree of connection and loyalty that employees feel toward the organization, their commitment to its goals, and their awareness of opportunities for advancement within it (Muhammad, 1975, pp. 162-210).

In summary, stability represents a harmonious alignment of psychological, social, and environmental factors, enabling individuals to pursue their goals effectively and with ease.

4.4 Concept of Professional Stability:

Habib Al-Sahaf defines professional stability as an employee's retention in their profession, which can be measured by job tenure rates. Organizations often calculate the average length of service among employees to assess professional stability and work toward fostering it (Habib, 1997, p. 6). Mr. Shatta links professional stability to an

employee's level of job satisfaction. According to him, employees who are dissatisfied or uncomfortable at work may frequently consider changing jobs or display higher absenteeism, both indicators of professional instability (Al-Sayyid, 1997, p. 344).

Henri Fayol, a foundational figure in management theory, identifies employee stability as a core management principle. Fayol suggests that limiting employee transfers between positions enhances organizational efficiency and reduces costs. Professional stability is thus also described as a secure, consistent workflow within the organization, where employees feel secure, promoting a steady operational environment and resilience against potential disruptions (Rafeeqa, 2014, p. 12).

In summary, professional stability is the ongoing sense of satisfaction and security an employee feels at work, manifested in their consistent, productive behavior, which allows room for development and innovation.

4.5. Concept of Working Women:

A working woman is an individual capable of exerting social and economic influence through her labor, from which she earns a financial return based on her physical efforts, academic qualifications, and practical experience. Her work encompasses tasks valued by society, through which she gains rights and responsibilities specific to the type of job she performs, whether in economic, political, legal, social, health, technical, military, or other fields. These responsibilities are defined by the prevailing laws and may involve employment in government or private sectors, or as an independent project owner. This work can include both manual roles—such as clerical work, management, skilled trades, and cleaning—and non-manual roles utilizing technology to fulfill economic needs and improve quality of life, which enhances her self-reliance and social status (Ahmed Zaki, 1988, p. 480).

Additionally, a working woman provides essential services within the family, from managing household tasks to childcare—activities that carry no direct economic value but are vital to family well-being. This dual role distinguishes her contributions at both economic and personal levels, blending formal employment with familial duties. In a professional context, she is defined as "a natural person who works for the employer and under their management or supervision," following the terms of employment agreements (Hashem, 2017, p. 80).

5. What is Professional Stability?

5.1. Importance of Professional Stability:

Professional stability is crucial for achieving social security in both moral and material dimensions, as it enables individuals to pursue their goals and fulfill their needs. When workers experience stability in their roles, it leads to positive outcomes both for themselves and the organizations they serve. The advantages of professional stability include opportunities for career advancement, allowing employees to climb the organizational ladder more effectively due to their expertise and familiarity with their roles. This mastery can also contribute to reduced work-related accidents, fatigue, and stress.

Furthermore, stability within a work group enhances cohesion and strengthens the connections among team members, fostering a sense of belonging to the organization and increasing overall organizational commitment. Conversely, a lack of professional stability can result in high turnover rates, leading to the potential disintegration of the workgroup (Rafeeqa, 2014, pp. 84-83).

5.2. Determinants of Professional Stability:

Determinants of professional stability encompass a range of factors that can positively or negatively influence a worker's stability in the workplace. Fromm identified several key determinants, including:

- Supervision
- Work group dynamics
- Nature of the work content
- Wages received by the worker
- Opportunities for promotion
- Working hours

These factors interact to shape an individual's performance within the work environment. For working women, the level of leadership provided by managers and the management approach significantly affect their professional stability. This includes recognition of their capabilities, appreciation for their contributions, adequate compensation, and support for advancement into positions that enhance their social status (Ziad, 2001, p. 332).

6. Family Circumstances:

6.1 Home Time:

Work has historically been recognized as a fundamental factor for communication, continuity, and survival within society. Durkheim

(1858-1917) emphasized in his work that the division of labor serves as a cornerstone for social solidarity and cooperation, rendering it a social and moral obligation. Housework, often viewed as unpaid labor, encompasses a series of essential tasks directed toward the home environment, aiming to fulfill and organize the family's needs. This work, typically performed by women, is characterized by the absence of expected compensation; its value is largely moral, tied to familial satisfaction and well-being.

These household tasks are continuous and repetitive, ingrained in daily routines, which can lead to feelings of frustration for those responsible for them, especially given that they lack economic value. Lahassan (2010) notes that the lack of financial compensation often diminishes the perceived worth of this labor (pp. 87-88). Despite the advancements that have allowed working women greater access to the labor market, full equality remains elusive, as the domestic role continues to be closely associated with female identity. Men, on the other hand, often maintain a traditional view that women should manage family responsibilities independently, while they focus on work outside the home.

Reorganizing these roles within the family structure can be particularly challenging, especially in Arab societies where patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched. Nevertheless, changes are emerging in domestic roles, propelled by women's financial contributions, which enable them to hire cleaning services and acquire technological conveniences that ease household tasks. With work providing a means to enhance their social status, women are less bound by the constraints of traditional domestic responsibilities, allowing them to pursue opportunities for advancement without the weight of their domestic roles.

As noted by Wilensky Klein, industrialization has introduced consumer goods and services—such as ready-made meals and time-saving household appliances—that have transformed the landscape of domestic labor (Jihad, 2011, p. 84). However, the principle of functional interpretation concerning a working woman's engagement in the workforce highlights the significance of managing time effectively across her various responsibilities.

Failure to adequately manage her time and prioritize work tasks can lead to negative consequences, such as salary deductions, reprimands from superiors, or conflicts with colleagues due to delays in completing assignments. This state of imbalance can foster job dissatisfaction and

impact the quality of the work environment, ultimately contributing to professional instability. The home, therefore, is not merely a physical space; it represents a moral environment where familial bonds are nurtured, and individual roles and perceptions of social status are shaped. Women cannot entirely disengage from the demands of household responsibilities, such as cleaning, cooking, and caregiving, as these tasks remain integral to their daily lives and identities.

6.2 Family Time:

6.2.1 Caring for Children:

Working women often face significant challenges in securing adequate childcare and supervision for their children during their absences. In many cases, husbands are unable or unwilling to assist with child-rearing responsibilities due to psychological, social, and cultural factors. The traditional roles within the family dictate that men work outside the home while women are expected to take on the primary responsibility for child care. As a result, many husbands resist engaging in activities such as cleaning, playing, or caring for the children, viewing these tasks as inherently feminine duties (Najia, 2007, p. 164).

The struggle to balance domestic responsibilities with professional aspirations is a constant challenge for working women. Limited access to nurseries and the discrepancies in school schedules compel mothers to juggle multiple roles, navigating the demands of both their ambition to succeed professionally and their responsibilities as mothers. Raghda Ali Nafisa notes that the conflict of roles tends to be more pronounced among full-time workers compared to those in part-time positions (Safaa, 2016, pp. 236-237).

The dual role of working mothers becomes a fundamental aspect of this role conflict, affecting their socio-economic engagement while keeping them tethered to the responsibilities of motherhood. This duality often leads to confusion regarding work tasks, as they must balance legally defined duties and specialization in their professional settings. The psychological and physical toll of managing both roles can be overwhelming, as each serves a distinct function in society.

To navigate these challenges, working mothers must adapt their family life to align with their professional obligations, particularly as many institutions have begun to implement family-friendly policies. In Algerian society, for instance, state institutions offer paid leave and breastfeeding hours, which can alleviate some of the pressures of time management and help reduce absenteeism. These measures assist

working mothers in addressing their childcare responsibilities while minimizing conflicts with colleagues over task completion or the need to take sick leave to transfer duties to other employees. However, these sensitivities can contribute to a tense work environment, creating barriers that hinder their full participation in the workplace and impede their ability to work collaboratively and professionally.

6.2.2. Marital relationship:

The disturbance of the husband's role and the ambiguity surrounding it is a significant contributor to marital discord in general. In many Arab societies, even though men are no longer the sole breadwinners following women's entry into the workforce, they often cling to their traditional authority within the household. This dynamic is typically accepted by many women, including those who are employed. However, some women resist this unilateral authority and assert their opinions on various family matters, such as child-rearing and household budgeting. This tension can lead to a noticeable increase in marital issues (Iman, Salima, 2013, p. 10).

Research findings on the impact of women's employment on marital satisfaction are varied. The study conducted by Briggs and Cottrell in 1939 (Cottrell & Burgess) identified a positive correlation between women's work and marital compatibility. Conversely, Applebaum's research in 1952 concluded that women's employment did not significantly influence the success of marital relationships, while Alexson's 1963 study found that couples with working wives were less compatible than those whose wives did not work. Whether women's work becomes a point of contention often depends on the perspectives of both spouses. In marriages where the husband values the traditional role of women, and the wife aligns with this view, women's employment is less problematic. However, when the wife sees herself as capable of fulfilling both domestic and professional roles, while the husband views her solely as a homemaker, conflicts, frustrations, and disagreements are likely to arise (Raouf, 2017, p. 60).

Moreover, advancements in technology, rising living standards, and external economic pressures necessitate an increase in family income, often through women's wage-earning roles. This shift towards dual-income households can sometimes lead to a decline in the quality of the marital relationship, as emotional, sentimental, and sexual needs may go unaddressed. The husband may feel a lack of communication and emotional connection with his wife, leading to a sense of neglect. Conflicts can emerge as the wife grapples with balancing her

relationship with her professional obligations, particularly if she has set specific standards and goals to achieve in her career.

The workplace becomes a realm of social interaction for the working woman, yet her focus on positive engagement can wane due to preoccupations with personal issues. This distraction may manifest in negative behaviors, such as verbal disputes, emotional outbursts, or insubordination towards supervisors, ultimately affecting her job performance and the stability of her social relationships.

6.2.3 Home Care for the Elderly

Traditionally, the responsibility for elderly care lies within the family and home where individuals were raised and developed their lives. Family members—whether children, siblings, or other relatives—are expected to provide optimal care for the elderly, who increasingly require assistance due to frailty and disability. Research indicates that many elderly individuals struggle with personal tasks such as dressing, bathing, using the toilet, preparing simple meals, and performing light housework because of their weakened state and the fear of falling or experiencing physical difficulties (Saliha, 2020, p. 621).

Elderly individuals are among the most vulnerable groups in society, often facing social deprivation due to limited financial resources and declining physical strength. Their feelings of loneliness and isolation from societal life can be exacerbated by the loss of family connections, which previously formed a significant part of their daily interactions and interests. This estrangement can severely restrict their mobility and personal relationships (Hesham, 2017, p. 146).

For working women, maintaining the elderly within the family unit requires considerable effort, as it entails addressing their psychological, social, health, emotional, and economic needs. In Arab societies, caring for aging parents is viewed as a religious and familial duty, creating an obligation to ensure their well-being. The extent and nature of this care often depend on the working woman's available time and energy. Balancing this responsibility with her professional role becomes a critical issue, particularly when societal norms dictate that her identity and social standing depend on her employment.

As elderly individuals experience a decline in their abilities, they require ongoing care, particularly when faced with health issues. This necessity can force working women to take frequent sick leave or leave work without prior notice. The work environment, like many social settings, is characterized by fluctuating power dynamics, which may put her job at risk, especially if her absence affects service delivery or

productivity. Consequently, any delays in fulfilling her work responsibilities can diminish her sense of job stability and security.

6.3. Discourse of Traditions in the Family

This discourse emphasizes the notion of privacy and underscores the principle of gender difference as a cultural construct, positioning women within the confines of social structures that impose constraints and obstacles. According to this perspective, cultural frameworks delineate specific roles for men and women based on perceived biological differences, thereby perpetuating a cycle of inequality that reinforces gender distinctions. This dynamic effectively hinders the possibility of role exchange between the sexes, solidifying men's status as leaders who assert authority over subordinates. In this hierarchical model, men occupy a dominant position at the top of the social pyramid, while women are relegated to a submissive role at the bottom, expected to comply with male authority.

The discourse further delineates two distinct spaces: the public sphere for men and the domestic sphere for women. This separation serves a deliberate purpose—promoting integration between the sexes within prescribed boundaries (Saud, Muhammad, 2017, p. 71). Women's work, therefore, becomes intertwined with biological reproduction and the socio-cultural expectations that emphasize traits such as submission, obedience, duty, and emotionality. This ingrained structure shapes their relationships with men, who often resist women's participation in the workforce, perceiving such endeavors as transgressions against traditional femininity. Even in cases where men permit women to pursue certain professions, they may still expect them to prioritize household responsibilities, reflecting a desire to reaffirm their perceived roles.

Moreover, the influence of the mother-in-law often plays a critical role in perpetuating these traditional norms. Mothers-in-law, having established their authority through motherhood and bearing male offspring, can exert pressure on their sons' wives regarding domestic duties and outward appearances when leaving for work. This dynamic can occur within both extended and nuclear families, manifesting through direct communication or social expectations.

The tension between traditional values and women's professional aspirations creates a challenging landscape where women are expected to fulfill conflicting roles. This dual burden can diminish their motivation to excel professionally, adversely affecting their opportunities for promotions and participation in training or internship

programs that are crucial for gaining experience, particularly in fields like medicine, nursing, or education. Without adequate social support, women often find themselves navigating these competing demands, which can hinder their career progression and personal fulfillment.

7. General discussion:

The sociological analysis of the working woman's circumstances reveals that employment outside the home does not inherently signify liberation from traditional roles or submission to male authority. Instead, it often represents an increased entanglement in male-dominated societal structures, where patriarchal norms, values, and customs continue to exert significant influence. These societal frameworks pose challenges for working women, making it difficult to navigate their professional responsibilities while also adhering to the expectations placed upon them by family and culture.

The interaction between family circumstances, housework, and broader societal norms has substantial effects on professional stability. While some redistribution of domestic tasks may have occurred, allowing men to take on supportive roles, these changes are often subtle and influenced by considerations of male prestige and upbringing. As a result, a considerable portion of household responsibilities continues to fall disproportionately on the working woman, reinforcing socially accepted inequalities. This imbalance serves to perpetuate traditional gender roles, where the woman's ongoing engagement in housework is often a strategy to maintain familial harmony and avoid conflict with her husband or family members.

The pressures of managing both professional and domestic responsibilities create a delicate balance for working women. By fulfilling household duties, they may secure their position within the family, allowing them to focus on work tasks and fostering conditions conducive to professional stability. Such stability is characterized by psychological comfort, punctuality, and a lack of complaints about family-related stressors. However, these demands can also impede their career advancement and lead to long-term consequences for their professional trajectories.

The complexity of this situation means that the obstacles stemming from family circumstances often render stability at work relative and, at times, unattainable. If a working woman prioritizes her job, her family may suffer from neglect, leading to deteriorating relationships with her husband and inadequate care for children and elderly relatives. This situation may culminate in family disintegration, whether through

divorce or estrangement. Conversely, if she opts to prioritize family life over work, she risks job loss or disciplinary action for failing to adhere to workplace standards.

Even if she attempts to implement support strategies—such as family planning, utilizing technology for time management, or enlisting help from family members or domestic workers—she still faces the challenge of balancing her multiple roles. This juggling act often leads to feelings of fragmentation and undermines her professional stability. Thus, the interplay between family obligations and professional responsibilities highlights the inherent difficulties many working women encounter, illustrating the need for systemic changes that support gender equality in both the domestic and professional spheres.

8. Recommendations:

1. Adoption of Family-Friendly Programs: Institutions should implement special family-friendly programs to support working women, who are a crucial group in society, helping them reconcile their natural roles with their professional roles.

2. Establishment of Alternative Childcare Facilities: The state should establish nurseries with qualified specifications to care for young individuals, thereby reducing the burdens of caregiving for working mothers and alleviating some of the psychological pressures that hinder stability within the work environment.

3. Financial Assistance for Elder Care: The Ministry of Family and Solidarity should provide financial assistance to working mothers by employing social workers to care for elderly parents in their homes. This approach preserves the religious values of filial duty while supporting working women and allowing them to invest in their capabilities without being overwhelmed by family responsibilities.

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