Alignment Of Role Spaces Of Women To Achieve Work-Home Equilibrium? A Timeline Study In India

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ABSTRACT

With more women professionals permeating the managerial workforce, the correlation between their work and non-work realms and its impact on productivity has become a matter of intense scrutiny. Organizational studies seem to suggest that the struggle to balance work and family causes dysfunctionalities in both. Yet, as millennials continue to advance, the labour force participation rate of educated, career-oriented women are bound to rise making it imperative for organizations to take note of female talent.

Given the transforming social situation, there are changes in the challenges of work-life as well. The workload from office is infringing into home time and home demands are not abating, straining the finite physical and mental resources of women. This has become even more critical during the recent pandemic when the woman is working from home while the family is also at home demanding more of her time and attention.

Using Role Space Maps, a unique method of data collection, we mapped out the roles women play at a couple of different stages in their lives and discussed how they juggle their work-life and non-work life. Findings therefrom established an important link between multiple roles and both psychological and effectiveness outcomes. This study fosters assimilation of earlier forms of work-related stress with Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress to offer a more comprehensive image of the adaptive attributes of taxing incidences. The findings support the feasibility of applying role accumulation perspective to managerial women. Implications for organizations are also discussed.

Key Words: women professionals, role stress, role space, role accumulation, role conflict.

Introduction

As a growing number of women professionals permeate the managerial workforce, the correlation between their work and non-work realms and its impact on productivity has become a matter of intense scrutiny. Organizational studies seem to suggest that the battle to maintain equilibrium between work and family causes dysfunctionalities in both. The competence of women managers at work and in family matters is questioned based on the premise that it is not possible to do justice to both concurrently. Research articles define women managers as continually torn amongst organizational and personal roles, experiencing guilt and stress (Karatepe, O et al., 2018; Templeton, K et al., 2019; Couch DL et al., 2021; Davidson & Fielden, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Swiss & Walker, 1993). Most literature on work-life issues assumes a polarization between work and non-work (read family) roles as stated in the Role Stress Theory which is built on the conventional role theory (Kahn et.al., 1964). This theory asserts that ambiguity of role, where role functions or performance criteria are not clearly defined, will result in an undesirable state. This paradigm is helpful in identifying the stresses and conflicts women experience when they bear the responsibility of work and non-work roles. However, it prevents an appreciation of the synergy between different roles that can contribute to a woman's well-being and

improved performance. As the Social Cognitive Theory says, much of what women strive for is attainable only through socially mutually dependent efforts (Bandura, 2005).

Our research commenced with our attempt to understand better and explore reasons as to why is it is difficult for women to build sustainable careers and reach leadership positions. We then went on to consider and study the different factors that influence women's sustainability in the world of work. Through our readings and discussions, we then narrowed our focus to understanding two aspects: (a) Transitions that happen in a woman's life over time and (b) Do these changes influence and impact the engagement in diverse roles for the woman (c) And is this then intrinsically draining on the other roles that a woman is typically required or expected to perform (work and non-work roles). The findings of our study establish an important link between multiple roles and both psychological and effectiveness outcomes. Our study boosts the amalgamation of earlier models of occupational anxiety along with Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (Scott, 1966) to offer a further comprehensive illustration of the adaptive traits of stressful experiences. The findings support the feasibility of applying the role accumulation perspective to working women. We have used 'Role Space Maps' (Pareek, U, 1974). to study the transitions of different phases of life and thence the different roles that women need to take responsibility for and how they adapt to their work and non-work realms of life. The participants in the study shared not just their differing priorities and how they managed the same at different times of their lives, but we also paid attention to their performance at work and how it never seemed to falter given the multiple roles these women were responsible for.
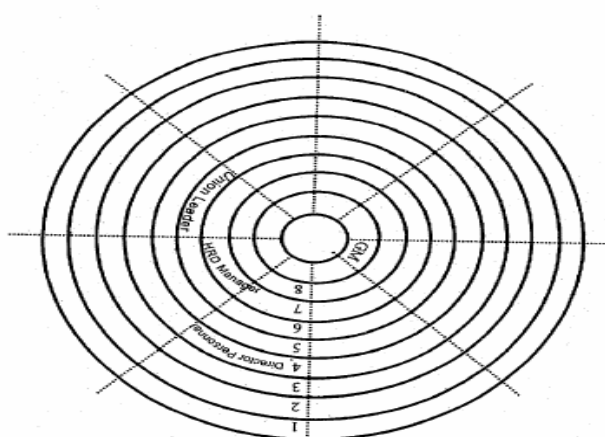
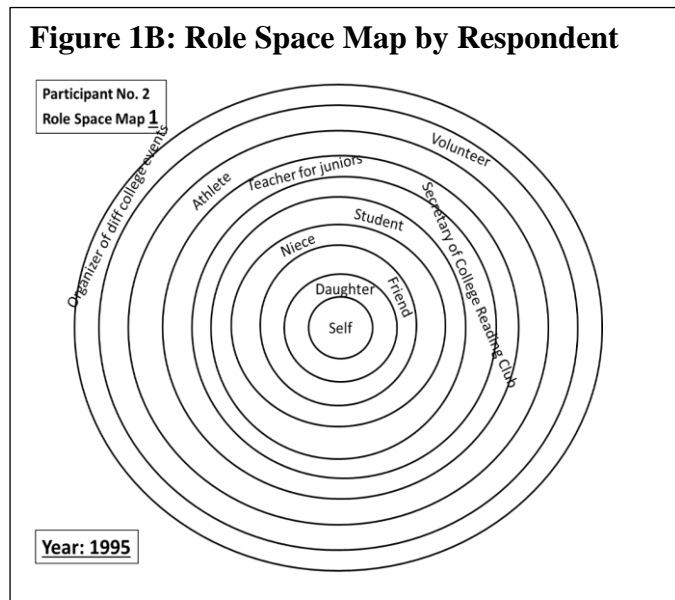This study focuses on and proposes to answer the **FIGURE I**

following queries:
  a) What are the experiences of professional women in adapting to / coping with stress both at work and in non-work (personal) life and how do those correlate to existing beliefs / assumptions made in research on the subject?
  b) What are the challenges of women professionals regarding their diverse responsibilities and how do they deal with them?
  c) What are their positions in society (family) and within organisations and how do these impact their work?
  d) What is the influence of Multiple Roles on the Performance of Female Employees?

Research conducted by (Sugito, 2021) found that multiple roles have a positive and significant effect on the performance of female employees. Research conducted by Rosita (2020) found that multiple roles have a positive and significant effect on female employee performance. Research conducted by (Lukiastuti, F., 2021) found that multiple roles have a positive and significant effect on the performance of female employees. Meanwhile, research by Ratnawati et al (2020) and Pangastuti et al (2020) found that employee performance is influenced by work motivation, be it from family, husband, and children. Multiple roles have a positive and significant effect on the performance of female employees. Based on various theoretical explanations, research findings, and the development of hypotheses regarding the effect of multiple roles on employee performance, we have proposed a framework, a model for Synergy between the non-work and work roles which was hitherto conceptualised majorly as a conflict due to polarized realms to transition to synergy shared between these realms.

Figure 1A: Sample Role Space Map

Figure 1B: Role Space Map by Respondent

Participant No. 2
Role Space Map 1

Organizer of diff college events
Volunteer
Athlete
Teacher for juniors
Student
Niece
Secretary of College Reading Club
Daughter
Self
Friend

Year: 1995

Changing Landscape

For working women, given the transforming social situation, there are changes in the challenges in their work-life as well. The workload from office is infringing into home time and home demands are not abating, straining the finite physical and mental resources of women. Consequently, burnout (Pareek, 1983) appears to have become a norm rather than an exception. This has become even more critical during the recent pandemic months when the woman is working from home while the family is also at home demanding more of her time and attention, thus adding to role-stress (Çoban S, 2022; Basak S, 2021). At another level, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) of educated, career-oriented women is bound to rise as millennials continue to advance. Alongside, LFPR of older men will see a gradual decline. This means that employing female talent will progressively grow to be a more critical concern in the coming decades for corporations. Presently in India LFPR for women is declining. As reported in strategy-business.com, 2020, notwithstanding swift economic development, under a quarter (23.6%) of women aged 15 and above took part in the workforce in 2018, with men notching up 78.6%. Rural women are quitting India's workforce at a quicker pace than metropolitan womenfolk. Though there is no organized data to bank on, it can be assumed that the above observations have a direct correlation with the stress and pressures women face at home and at work. Women remain vulnerable to a whole host of issues, both familial and institutional, which could potentially overshadow their career paths (Uddin M, 2021; Chandler et al., 2021). This is as true of women executives as it is of other working women. However, in the absence of adequate literature on the stress women executives face in meeting expectations from the organization and family, there is a need to study the issue in depth.

The Cultural Perspective

The influence of state cultural ethos on the handling and behaviour of an organization in a distinct country is inescapable (Brown et al., 2021; Jayasingam et al, 2021; Rawal, 2021; Le H et al., 2020; Francesco & Gold, 1998). Cultural dimensions facilitate and offer avenues to understand behaviours faced in business circumstances that may seem unusual, unfamiliar, unfathomable, or incomprehensible. Leadership in India is based on paternalism (practice on the part of individuals in power of constraining the freedom

and accountabilities of those lesser / inferior to or else reliant on them in their hypothetical interest), and the country is characterized as a masculine culture with high power distance. India's masculine culture values earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge. Indians prefer more of a directing and coaching leadership style (Sharma, D., 2021, Sivakumar, I., & Manimekalai, K., 2021). As presented in Women in the Workplace Report, 2021 and National Research Council Report, 1994, cultural attitudes indicate that when women work for remuneration, it is a gauge of low household status. A common belief is that a woman's principal position ought to be in the home. This stereotypical portrayal is based on the expectation that girls will ideally be married into more affluent families and hence may not require to join paid work to aid the family unit. Challenges are heightened by the dearth of woman-friendly restroom facilities, public transportation, anxieties of violent behavior and persecution, inadequate implementation of sexual harassment rules and laws and excessive mobility limitations enforced by families. When economy strengthens and family earnings increase, women are liberated from need to go to work for mediocre returns. COVID-19 is expected to aggravate women's LFPR. When jobs turn sparse, families prefer to send out men to earn, and women folk remain behind.

Given the various necessities and benefits of bringing in more women into the workforce and ensuring greater diversity at leadership levels, the basic definition of women upliftment or women empowerment seems a foregone conclusion. Walby (1990) talks about "slow liberation of womenfolk from the male-controlled mentality, system of belief, and conduct in the six dimensions of patriarchy: the state, the household, male-on-female violence, sexuality, paid employment and cultural sphere." We also considered the definition of General Mental Well-Being (GWB) (Dupuy, H, 1970) (Rawat, P. S., 2014). which evaluates self-depictions of subjective well-being and hardship. The World Health Organization defines 'positive mental health' as the 'well-being and efficient operating for both the person and the society.' It was important to consider these definitions as the complexity of the roles played by a woman and what she is expected to deliver in all the roles make it essential that some basics of well-being and empowerment are understood in context.

Study Hypothesis:

Inverted-U Relationship between Role Stressors and Performance is untrue and synergies across different roles enhances effectiveness of performance across multiple roles.

This two-part study investigated the relationships among multiple life roles, psychological well-being, and work effectiveness from the more positive perspective as suggested by the Role Accumulation Theory (Sieber, 1974). The results challenge a major contention of previous research which were based on role scarcity theory (Goode,1960), namely, the idea that multiple roles only serve to deplete effectiveness at work. Evidence from this study suggests that multiple roles can accumulate in ways that benefit women managers. Drawing on Yerkes–Dodson's law 1908 and the Activation Theory, this paper hypothesizes an inverted-U relationship between role stressors and performance. The Yerkes–Dodson law is an empirical relationship between pressure and performance, originally developed by psychologists Robert M. Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson in 1908. The law dictates that performance increases with physiological or mental arousal, but only up to a point. Moderate levels of role ambiguity (or conflict) may be associated with superior performance because they stimulate individuals to engage themselves and to excel (Singh, 1998). Moderate levels of stressors force individuals to reflect more deeply on their job demands and take remedial actions. A moderate level of ambiguity about a role sender's (e.g., boss, customer) expectation or a moderate level of contradiction in the demands of a role sender confirms the challenges inherent in boundary-spanning positions such as selling (Singh, 1998). In this paper, the focus is on perceived role ambiguity and perceived role conflict. Interestingly enough, most of the women respondents had similar themes to discuss and impress upon us, thereby challenging the Activation Theory and hence the 'Inverted-U Relationship between Role Stressors and Performance'.

Definitions

Stress

The word 'stress' comes from the Latin phrase 'stringer', implying 'to pull tight or get tense'. It is

linked with affliction, adversity or hardship. In physics, stress refers to the interaction between a force and its resistance. It was introduced into the medical lexicon by Selye, H. (1974). to refer to the "nonspecific reaction of the body to any challenge." For women, potential threats have increased manifold in recent times. They face new threats at workplaces, on account of increased globalization and liberalization and attendant socio-cultural changes. In workplaces, there is a heightened accent on performance and high-ranking expectations (Ratna et al., 2013, Spiers et al., 2003). Enhanced expectations within organizations (Spiers et al., 2003) impact individuals' perceptions of their roles in corporations, generally described as Organizational Role Stress (Rizzo et al., 1970). Organizational Role Stress (ORS) is said to have significant economic consequences (Ornelas & Kleiner 2003). For instance, 80% of the health treatment expenses are associated with stress and the cause of decreased productivity resulting in loss of billions of dollars.

Roles and Organizations

A role is an individual's defined place in any societal order such as family, religious community, work organization, or club. People have responsibilities with regard to the system. This structure of reciprocal / shared responsibilities is called a role just as the individual's place in a position or an organization. Role can be said to be the expectation of significant others and self, while role performance is meeting those expectations. A system of roles is how an organization can be defined, with each role in it acting as a system unto itself. Roles within the organization represent the basic human resource (HR) structure on which the accomplishment of systems and processes depend (Blakely, Srivastava & Moorman, 2005) The members of an organization and the concept of an organizational role (Udai, P., 2004). have built-in susceptibility for stress.

Organizational Role Stress (ORS)

Comprehending the subtleties involved in blending different life roles is important for both women managers and organizations. Research papers confirmed that employed women still primarily carry the onus of home and extended family challenges (Mckinley et al., 2021) (Cooper & Davidson, 1982). Understanding ORS requires taking a closer look at employees' roles in the organization. The term 'role' (Pareek, 1983) implies to the place one inhabits in a social system or corporation, as described by the expectations of significant others. The person who fills a specific role performs a variety of functions to meet the expectations created by the important people in the company or on the personal front, with whom she needs to work together to attain success in the role. The level of ORS is contingent on a person's view about constraints, situations, opportunities, or hazards confronted whilst accomplishing her duties.

Stressors executive women face

Organisational Role Stress typically has been defined as corresponding to two variables: Role conflict and Role ambiguity. Role conflict suggests the magnitude of differing expectations related with a role. It happens when facing demands incompatible with one another. Role conflict can be intra-role when the pressures are contained in a single realm of life or inter-role when more than one domain place demands on limited resources. Role ambiguity describes the degree of seeming ambiguity involved in achieving role conditions or the paucity of certainty about the outcome of role conduct (Kahn , 1965; Katz & Kahn, 1966). Previous research indicates that high role stress is a consequence of insufficient decision making sanction, inadequate management backing, a dearth of formal policies, or heightened information misrepresentation (House & Rizzo, 1972; Senatra, 1980).

The current study will pay particular attention: on professed role ambiguity and perceived role conflict. For a woman - uncertainty about what different significant others expect of her (e.g., boss, peer, family members). How does the woman continue to play diverse roles and still perform well across, how is she able to synergize her energies across and how can organizations facilitate the same better?

Role space and related stressors

An individual plays a variety of roles which are aligned around the self. These 'positions' exist at differing gaps from the self (and from one another). These relations describe the 'role space'. Role space is a vibrant interrelatedness amongst the self and the numerous roles an individual plays and among these various roles integrated with the self. 'Self-role distance' is when we do not appreciate a certain role

or do not get engaged in it - there is a gap between the role and the self. 'Inter-role distance' happens when there may be separateness between two roles that an individual occupies. For instance, the role of a club member could be detached from the role of a spouse. The stress that results from role sets in the organizations / personal life, can be further subdivided as Inter-role distance; Role stagnation; Role expectations conflict; Role erosion; Role overload; Role isolation; Personal inadequacy; Resource inadequacy.

Every role stressor stems from a specific kind of problem encountered by the role occupant while performing her role. Role related to work stressors (role ambiguity & role conflict) are highly studied concepts in organizational behaviour (Zheng, G et al., 2022; Maden-Eyiusta, C., 2021; Boles & Babin, 1994; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992). Most of the role stressor narrative takes on Kahn et al.'s (1964) 'role-episode' model. In this paper, the spotlight remains on professed 'role ambiguity' and perceived 'role conflict'. Role conflict arises when, as an instance, a woman considers that the expectations and pressures of her boss and significant others are mismatched.
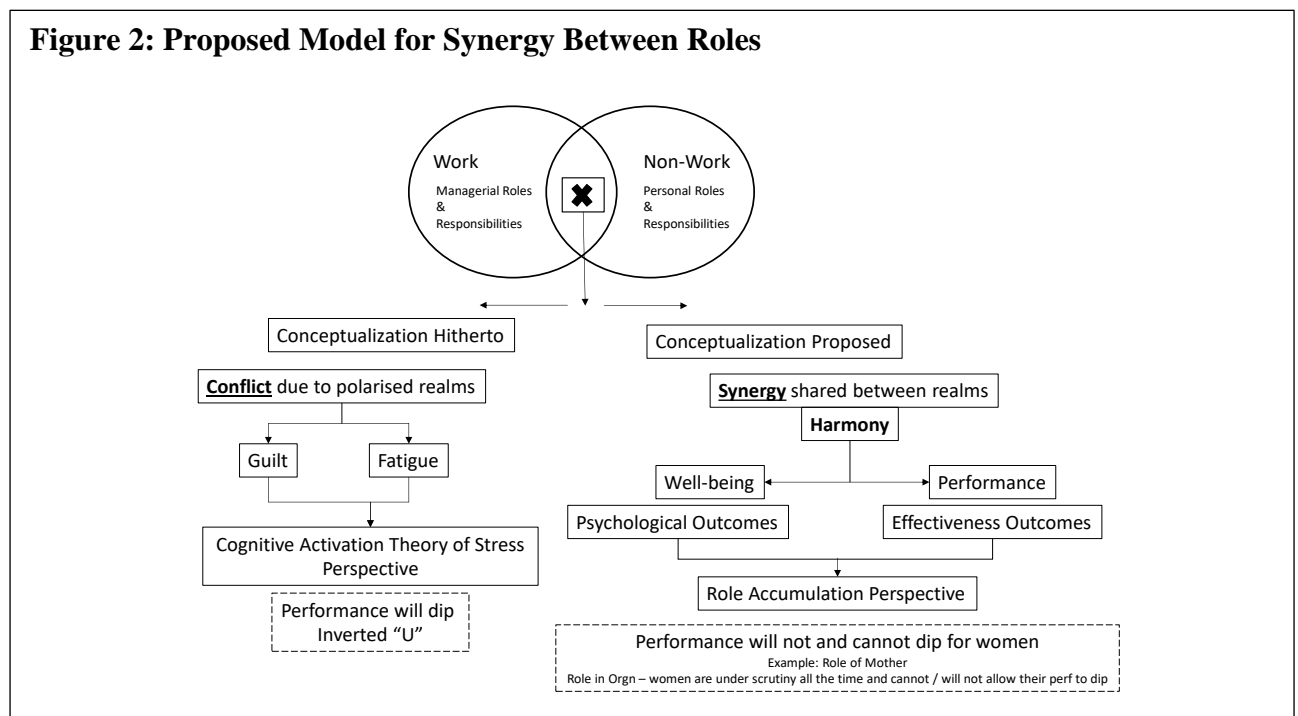
Role space map

'Focal person': person who occupies a role, and 'role senders', for those contained by the role set of the specific person (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

FIGURE 2

Role Space Maps

Figure 2: Proposed Model for Synergy Between Roles

numerous roles a person occupies and her 'self'. It has three key variables which are, the self, the role under question, and other roles that she plays. Any discord amongst these roles, are described as 'role space conflict' or 'stress'.

The role space maps and the discussions that followed threw up a variety of such issues. Some of these conflicts could potentially take different forms. However, they also projected synergies between roles.

Literature Review and Theoretical Bases

Multiple factors affect career sustainability and account has to be taken of how changes that take place over time affect career sustainability of women (Cardador, 2017; Foley et al., 2021). Role Congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders has been highlighted in an earlier research study by Eagly & Krau, 2002. The 'system' seems as always less favourable upon women leaders or be recognized as effective (Koenig et al, 2011) (Eagly & Karau, 2002) (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). Women managers seems to be continually torn between managerial and personal roles, regularly

feeling both guilty and stressed (Catalyst, 1996; Davidson & Fielden, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Swiss & Walker, 1993). In the current times, aspirations of young women are definitely symbolic of the social benefits of liberalization (Krishnan, D.,2020). Young Indian Women embrace autonomy & worldliness while holding on to family values of domesticity. The paradox of high economic growth & better education for women with low LFPR (Labor Force Participation Rate) persists (Vijayakumar, 2013). 'Feminine flexibility' or readiness to adjust to the patriarchal life while working in the knowledge economy is prevalent (Vijayakumar, G., 2013). The aspiration to attain a 'global Indian' class identity that anchors these desires & is specific to India's new urban transnational elites (Kang, L. S., & Kaur, G., 2020). Research articles define women managers as continually torn between managerial and personal roles, regularly feeling both guilty and stressed (Catalyst, 1996; Davidson & Fielden, 1999;

Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Swiss & Walker, 1993, Padmanabhan, M., & Padmanabhan et al., 2016).

Using Role Space Maps, we believe our findings are likely to establish an important link between multiple roles and both psychological and effectiveness outcomes. As stated in the Social Cognitive Theory, much of what women seek is achievable only through socially interdependent efforts (Bandura, 2005). We have examined the integration of previous models of occupational stress with Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (Scott, 1966) to provide a picture of the adaptive characteristics of stressful experiences. The members of an organization and the concept of an organizational role (Pareek, 2004) do have built-in potential for stress.

The theories we examined in this context are the following:

Role Stress Theory	Kahn, 1964	**Role Stress** - Pressure that individuals face when they are unable to learn or understand the relevant rights and obligations related to their work and to perform their **roles** well
Self-Efficacy & Social Cognitive Theory	Bandura, 2005	**Self-efficacy**: One's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges
Activation theory	Scott, 1966	Anticipates numerous behavioural outcomes in tasks which require the constant repetition of a limited number of responses to stimuli which are simple to configure and do not change with time Relationship between activation level and performance is generally described by an **"Inverted U"**
Role Accumulation Theory	Lazarus and Folkman (1984)	Managerial resources enhanced through commitment to multiple roles can be grouped into 2 categories, psychological & social support Resources are then available to meet the demands of different roles Role accumulation perspective, developed in response to role scarcity theory, says role conflict need not inevitably result in the favouring of one role at the expense of others Role accumulation suggests there are positive or beneficial effects of commitment to multiple roles

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an interpretive qualitative approach to explore Indian women's lived experiences with their life transitions and the related

effect on their life and careers. Our interpretive epistemology facilitated analysing how the social context affected our participant's lives and careers (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Participants individually firstly drew and then reflected upon

their role space maps at two different phases of their life and thereafter shared their lived experiences through a guided reflection on researcher's questions. This approach enabled participants to assign meaning to their past experiences, which upon analysis revealed a pattern of lived experiences among all participants.

Respondent Profile

We employed purposeful criterion sampling to select participants (Miles and Huberman 1994). Purposive sampling helps select 'information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study' (Patton 1990, 169). Criteria for participant selection were: (a) has a college degree; (b) is currently employed; and (c) is at a mid to senior level in the organization. Using these criteria and professional networks, one researcher identified 25 potential participants. The participants' sample helped identify theoretically provocative ideas leading to detailed and broad-ranged exploration of participant experiences (Patton 2002). The sample size comprised initially of 25 women of which 15 were finally chosen for our study. The women who participated in the study ranged in age from 43 to 57 years. They represented various levels of management. Around 49.2% participants were in middle management, 33.9% were in upper-middle management, and 16.9% represented executive level. They were all well-educated, with 80% of the respondents having a master's degree or a Ph.D. In terms of their roles outside of work, 50% had children under the age of 18, all 15 respondents were married, and one did not have any children. Their average salary was INR 45 lakhs per annum (USD = $60,000). They came from a variety of organizations from across India. About 70% worked for large multi-national corporations and the remaining were entrepreneurs, teachers, and doctors.

Process of Data Collection: Two-part Study

The study was conducted to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between commitment to multiple roles and outcomes for managerial women. It was done in two parts.

Role space maps and Timelines was introduced to participants through a brief description of both - the timeline as a tool is to assist researchers in better understanding the important life experiences of participants. Sample role space maps with timelines were created by researchers. These samples were intended to help stimulate creative engagement by participants, and to provide them with a sense of the flexibility with which they could engage in creating their own maps over their life timelines. Instructions were intentionally broad because this study is exploratory, aiming to identify stress factors, resilience processes and resources among marginalized groups that could not be captured by pre-structured resilience / stress scales that fail to recognize the context-specific struggles and successes of marginalized groups (Kolar, 2011; Kolar, Erickson, & Stewart, 2012). Participants then created their own maps / timelines. The participants were first asked to identify the critical roles that they were responsible for at two different times in their lives. They were not given a list of roles to choose from, rather they were asked to make a random list of at least ten roles they played at two stages of their life. They were given sample maps to be completed within two weeks and returned by email. Role Space maps were to be drawn for the time when the respondents were about 20 years of age and for the present time (typically a 15-year time frame). After making a list of the ten roles, they were then asked to prioritise these roles. The prioritisation depended upon several criteria the choice of which were left to the respondents. In most cases they were found to be a combination of time spent on each role and importance given to each role. This was done for roles at both the stages in their lives. These roles were then mapped onto the Role Space Maps given to them. There was a separate Role Space map for each stage (Appendix I), one for the early 20s and one for the present phase.

APPENDIX I

Sample Role Space Map of Respondent

Table 1: Sample of Role Priorities of Respondent	
At 20 years of age	**At 45 years of age**

1. Management Student	1. Mother
2. Daughter	2. Wife
3. Sister	3. Daughter
4. Friend	4. Daughter in Law
5. Aunt	5. Sister
6. National Level Cricketer	6. Sister-in-Law
7. Badminton Player	7. Friend
	8. HR Manager

Role Space Maps of Respondents

TABLE R1: RESPONDENT 1		
	At 22 years	**At 47 years**
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Friend	Daughter
3	Niece	Wife
4	Student	Manager – Finance and Accounts
5	Secretary of College Reading Club	Homemaker
6	Teacher for Juniors	Teacher to my kids
7	Athlete	Colleague / Friend
8	Volunteer	Volunteer – Charity Events
9	Organizer of College Cultural Events	Treasurer – Housing Complex Committee

TABLE R2: RESPONDENT 2		
	At 20 years	**At 47 years**
1	Daughter	A Good Human Being
2	Student - Fresher	Wife
3	IT Professional	Daughter
4	CSR Activist	Sister
5	Sister	Aunt
6	Teacher – taught computers	Daughter-in-law
7	Friend	Sister-in-law
8	Granddaughter	Friend
9	Niece	IT Project Manager

TABLE R3: RESPONDENT 3

	At 20 years	At 45 years
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Student	Wife
3	Sister	Business Development Senior Manager
4	Friend	Daughter
5	Niece	Sister
6	Tutor	Daughter-in-law
7	Neighbour	Sister-in-law
8	Learning new skills	Friend
9	Reader - novels	Reading – Professional Articles
10	Music	Music

TABLE R4: RESPONDENT 4		
	At 20 years	At 45 years
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Student	Daughter
3	Sister	General Manager - HR
4	Friend	Coach
5	Basketball Player	Research Student
6	College Placement Committee Member	Friend
7	Granddaughter	Sister
8	Niece	Badminton Player

TABLE R5: RESPONDENT 5		
	At 20 years	At 45 years
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Sister	Daughter
3	Student	Wife
4	Friend	Corporate Trainer – L&D
5	School Leader	Sister
6	Languages Learner	Counsellor
7	Granddaughter	Friend

TABLE R6: RESPONDENT 6		
	At 20 years	At 45 years
1	Management Student	Mother
2	Daughter	Wife
3	Sister	Daughter
4	Friend	Daughter-in-law
5	Aunt	Sister
6	National Level Cricketer	Sister-in-law
7	Badminton Player	Friend
8		HR Manager

TABLE R7: RESPONDENT 7		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Sister	Wife
3	Student	Aunt
4	Granddaughter	Daughter
5	Niece	VP- Marketing
6	Cousin	Daughter-in-law
7	Friend	Sister
8	Sports enthusiast	Homemaker
9	Head girl	Friend
10		Spiritual Seeker
11		Trekker

TABLE R8: RESPONDENT 8		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Daughter	Daughter
2	Sister	Sister
3	Friend	Wife
4	Granddaughter	Friend
5	Aunt	Senior GM – HR&CSR
6	Niece	Aunt
7	Student	Niece
8	Secretary College Debate Committee	Mother
9		Grandmother
10		Daughter-in-law
11		Sister-in-law

TABLE R9: RESPONDENT 9		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Daughter	Daughter
2	Sister	Wife
3	Student	Mother
4	Granddaughter	Mother to 2 Australian Budgies
5	Friend	To-be Mom-in-law
6	Cook	Friend
7	Member of College Press Committee	HR Manager
8		Homemaker

TABLE R10: RESPONDENT 10		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Student	Mother
2	Daughter	Daughter
3	Cousin	Wife
4	Niece	Technologist
5	Sister	Homemaker

6	Granddaughter	Sister
7	Aunt	Cousin
8	Friend	Friend
9	Badminton Player	Hiker
10	Sports enthusiast	Sister-in-law
11		Daughter-in-law
12		Mentor
13		Philanthropist
14		Author

TABLE R11: RESPONDENT 11		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Student	Mother
2	Double Degree Student	Wife
3	Friend	Homemaker
4	Niece	Daughter-in-law
5	Wife	Sister
6	Daughter-in-law	Friend
7	Homemaker	Sister-in-law
8	Aunt	Mentor to Students
9	Teacher	
10	Placement Co-ordinator at College	

TABLE R12: RESPONDENT 12		
	At 20 years	**At 45 years**
1	Daughter	Wife
2	Student	Mother
3	Friend	Daughter
4	Sister	Aunt
5	Believer	Sister
6	Granddaughter	Dentist
7	Traveller	Teacher
8	Socialiser	Learner
9	Adventurer	Daughter-in-law
10		God Fearer

TABLE R13: RESPONDENT 13		
	At 22 years	**At 49 years**
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Student	Wife
3	Sister	Entrepreneur
4	Friend	Daughter
5	Niece	Sister
6	Tutor	Daughter-in-law
7	Neighbour	Sister-in-law
8	Learning New Skills - IT	Friend

9	Reader - Novels	Reading – Professional Articles
10	Music	Music

TABLE R14: RESPONDENT 14		
	At 22 years	**At 45 years**
1	Daughter	A Good Human Being
2	Fresher	Wife
3	IT Professional	Daughter
4	CSR Activist	Sister
5	Sister	Aunt
6	Teacher – taught computers	Daughter-in-law
7	Hard Worker – slogged for promotions	Sister-in-law
8	Working was only goal	Friend
9		Working Professional
10		Social Person

TABLE R15: RESPONDENT 15		
	At 22 years	**At 51 years**
1	Daughter	Mother
2	Sister	Wife
3	Student	Daughter-in-law
4	Friend	Artist – Painter – Owner of Art Studio
5	Artist - Painter	Sister-in-law
6	Home Science Enthusiast	Sister
7	Granddaughter	
8	Niece	Aunt
9	Aunt	Friend

The timeline method of study gave the researchers an opening for tying up the storylines of the life of the respondents with the wider environmental, social context during the interactions. The actual 'drawing' of the role-space maps and the visualisation required thereof for the interactions by the usage of a timeline proved to be helpful for both the research scholar and the respondents as it triggered a lot of memories and hence, discussions, to generate overviews and think of novel perspectives and scenarios as regards the roles they had played. This methodology permitted the respondents to participate completely in the interaction which helped in ownership and sharing of the analytical power in the data collection situation. It also enabled space on the paper to depict that respondents have many experiences which cannot be intellectualised and expressed during a verbal interview (Prieur, 2002).

The second part of the study was where the respondents were contacted to discuss a list of points shared with them earlier through a one-on-one discussion (Table 1). A variety of probes were used, particularly after the women discussed a specific life role. Our interview protocol focused on their experiences around continuing their life and career choices at the different phases of their lives. They were asked about the learning from a role, elaborate on their answers with phrases such as, "tell me more about…" or "what do you mean by…" Additionally, they were asked a contrasting question about

conflicts they had experienced. With the respondent's permission, each interview was taped and then transcribed. It enabled us to jointly explore the dynamics of multiple life roles for managerial women. We tried to understand how the effort to perform one role may hamper or even enhance the quality of performance in another concurrent role.

To establish whether the women respondents were also able to draw upon the synergies from the various roles they played and the effect of this on their work performance, we requested them to share with us their performance ratings over the past few years. (Appendix II) and we also requested the respective HR from their organizations to authenticate the same.

Appendix - II

Table 2: Ranking of Work and Performance Appraisal

Respondent Nos.	Role No. Given to Work Profession	Performance Appraisal Ratings (Recd. From Organization / Bosses) 1=Exceeds Expectations; 5=Poor Performance		
		FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
1.	4	3	1	2
2.	9	1	2	2
3.	3	2	3	1
4.	3	2	2	2
5.	4	1	2	2
6.	8	1	2	3
7.	5	2	1	2
8.	5	3	2	1
9.	7	2	2	2
10.	4	3	4	2
11.	8	1	1	2
12.	6	2	2	1
13.	3	3	1	2
14.	9	2	1	2
15.	4	3	2	1

Data Analysis

To identify and ascertain themes in the data, we based our analysis on the Grounded Theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Using inductive reasoning the data brings to surface some of the apparent, oft repeated patterns or ideas or concepts found in social studies. These themes / concepts were grouped to form categories which helped explain social and psychological processes and explain human behaviour. After each interview, the interviewing researchers participated in peer-debriefing using individual notes. We were able to identify preliminary themes based on this discussion. Through thematic analysis, we identified patterns across similar context-based experiences

(Braun and Clarke 2006). When we analysed transcripts thematically, if a participant's response did not fall under any pre-defined themes, we created new themes or sub-themes. We then went back to the transcripts to identify if any reflections fit into a new theme. This iterative data analysis process allowed us to present our findings.

DISCUSSION
Synergies across Roles

We interpreted participant's life and career experiences within social, professional, and personal contexts. We also uncovered some coping strategies practiced by participants to balance their work life-personal life. The detailed discussions with the

respondents provided the following insights into how non-work or family roles equip an individual for the workspace. We have the respondent's role-space maps and the discussion summary (Appendix I) appended herewith in the research paper. It is interesting to also note that women do manage to juggle the various roles adeptly and draw upon learnings from personal life roles and utilise these learnings to enhance effectiveness at the workplace.

Table – 1

Discussion Points

1.	What were your thoughts and feelings when you looked at your role space maps earlier and now?
2.	Overall, do you believe that your work and other activities are balanced? What do you think has changed and how have you adapted over the years?
3.	Do you feel concerned about the different expectations of different peoples? Is it different now than it was earlier?
4.	Are you concerned that you have a lot of work and fear that very little time to do it? What has been your experience over the changing responsibilities and different roles – now and then?
5.	Based on the different roles and responsibilities you have handled at different phases of your life, what were your key learnings from any specific role(s)?
6.	Are you able to satisfy the different demands of various peoples around you? How was it when you were younger and how do you think it is now?
7.	Do you think you are able to balance between time at work and time at other activities. Was it different when you were younger?
8.	Is it burdensome that even a day without work seems bad or makes you feel guilty? How would you feel about a free day when you were younger compared to now?
9.	Does your playing multiple roles in different environments cause any type of conflicting situations?
10.	Are you able to satisfy the conflicting demands of my seniors, colleagues and juniors at work? What other demands do you have on your time and energy – at home and in office? How different are they? What are the challenges you face now / faced as a youngster?
11.	Does your job make you nervous? Is the effect of your job on you high?
12.	Do you feel bad when you take leave?

13.	How has your support system been and worked for you?
	    The people working with you, do they give any information or advice to you?
	    Do your colleagues understand you? Has anyone given you assistance in your work?
	    What about your immediate and extended family support system? How does that work for you?
	    Is there a different experience that you have had when you were younger and then now?

14.	As a senior woman executive, what would you wish to see change in organization's practices and policies to aid women as they progress in their careers? At different stages of their lives?
15.	What according to you could ensure that more women not only join the workforce but also sustain their careers and rise up in the hierarchy? How would you like to see support systems both at home and at work evolve to support women's careers?

Table 2: Summary of Discussions

Dimension	Inter Role Distance
Definition	Tensions may occur between two roles a person struggles to play; for example, between family role and executive role (Udai, P., 2004).
Examples of Discussion	Almost all the women executives in the study discussed their struggle between organizational role and familial role. The pressures on their time by their husbands and children in most cases were mismatched with organizational demands. Such inter-role conflicts are quite common in contemporary society, where an individual is progressively occupying multiple roles.
Dimension	**Role Stagnation**
Definition	When people have inhabited a role for a long period of time and grown to be comfortable in it, they may be unwilling to take on new challenges and their role stagnates.
Examples of Discussion	As a person grows in age, she also progresses in the role that she has in an organization. With the individual's growth the role also shifts as the requirement for taking on new tasks becomes vital. This conundrum of role growth becomes intense especially when a person who has filled a role for a long time joins an added role in which she feels less assured. The new role mandates that an individual outgrows the prior one and takes command of the new role efficiently. This is sure to create some stress. In businesses that are growing rapidly and do not have many methodical strategies for human resource development, executives are likely to suffer this stress of role stagnation when they are promoted. Majority of the women participants faced this on the personal front, as they progressed in life and had to move from the role of daughter and sister to wife and becoming a mother. Taking charge of the new roles was unnerving and stressful and also conflicted with the way they had to re-organize and re-prioritize their goals, both personal and professional.
Dimension	**Role Expectation Conflict**
Definition	People build anticipations as a consequence of their socialization and identification with significant others. However, there is generally some mismatch between an individual's expectation of themselves from the role and the expectations of others (Kahn , 1965).
Examples of Discussion	The differing expectations may be from the boss, subordinates, peers, or clients on the organizational front and from several significant others on the home front. Several women discussed 'unreasonable expectations' from their significant others including their children and aged parents and in-laws which in some cases made the entire role complex and was a cause of high stress for these women. The drawing of the role space map, however, helped them look at the 'self' and comprehend their role and the related causes of stress.
Dimension	**Role Erosion**
Definition	This is expected to be felt in an organization which is reframing and re-evaluating roles and forming different or new roles.
Examples of Discussion	A role tenant may feel that the tasks she should be performing are being done by someone else in a different role. Role erosion is expected to be experienced in a company that is redefining roles and establishing new ones. Within the group of respondents, one senior woman specifically interpreted this in her role as a mother which diminished in responsibilities when her daughter went away to

	university in another city. She experienced a lot of anxiety and stress almost constantly as she did not have immediate information about her daughter's whereabouts, schedules, diet, and other such matters which she had been earlier able to monitor.
Dimension	**Role Overload**
Definition	Contrary to role erosion, role overload leads to stress when the role occupants feel that a considerable lot is anticipated of them.
Examples of Discussion	'Role overload' is assessed by raising questions about people's emotions on whether they can complete work given to them during a revised workday and whether the quantity of work they do might impede with how well it is performed. Most managerial role occupants encounter role overload. Role overload is more probable to happen where role occupants lack power, where there are significant discrepancies in the anticipated output, and when delegation or support cannot obtain more time to fulfill the tasks or responsibilities of the role. One of the younger women executives shared several instances of role overload which she experienced. She had just got married into a large traditional family and was facing challenges meeting expectations of the large family which were very demanding besides the responsibilities at work. The two-fold expectations were subjecting her to role overload.
Dimension	**Role Isolation**
Definition	Mistrust of those with whom one works is certainly related to high role vagueness and to minimal job contentment.
Examples of Discussion	It was interesting when one of the women participants drew and described her role space map. She was a successful marketing manager, with a two-and-half year-old daughter. During the discussion she described the feeling of 'role isolation' she always felt. The role closest to her heart was that of being a 'mother'. However, she ended up spending almost 14 hours away from home which left her with little time for her daughter. Her feeling of 'mother role isolation' was so strong that within a week post this exercise, she applied successfully for a change in role from marketing to a support role. She also informed her supervisor and HR that she would be opting for a minimum of 75% work from home and ensured her key result areas were modified accordingly. She explained the changes to the significant others at home and work and clarified their expectations from her.
Dimension	**Personal Inadequacy**
Definition	This is a feeling of demotion or outmodedness that can occur in people who have hit a career maximum and are stressed by an erosion in their status before they retire.
Examples of Discussion	Individuals who are given new roles devoid of adequate training, orientation or instruction are likely to encounter thoughts of 'personal inadequacy'. It is extremely important to ensure that women feel that they are at least 80% ready for any new role to avoid this. In a way this seems to be a kind of constant with women and almost always causes a great deal of anxiety and stress.
Dimension	**Self-Role Distance**
Examples of Discussion	If the role is conflicting with the person's self-concept, she feels stressed. For example, one of the participants, an introvert, was fond of learning and writing. She developed a self-role distance as she had the role of business development and realized that the role included constantly conferencing with people, making presentations, networking and being very social. She wished that the

	organization would understand and give her a role in the backend of the business development function. Such a role conflict is commonplace although it may not be so severe.
Dimension	**Role Ambiguity**
Examples of Discussion	When a person is unclear about the various expectations that folks have from her role, she faces role ambiguity. Role ambiguity can be owing to lack of knowledge or lack of awareness of the cues presented to the role occupant. Role ambiguity can be with respect to activities, duties, priorities, rules, or general expectations. Mostly, role ambiguity is suffered by persons inhabiting roles that are freshly formed in organizations, roles that are undergoing transformation, or process roles with a lesser amount of clarity and less tangible actions and definitions / explanations.
Dimension	**Resource Inadequacy**
Definition	This indicates people believing that they do not have sufficient resources to execute their roles efficiently, either due to a dearth of resources, people, information, or historic records in the system, or for the reason of their personal want of knowledge, education, or experience.
Examples of Discussion	Resource inadequacy stress is suffered when the means necessary for doing the role successfully are not available. Interestingly with most of the women participants it was quite common to feel inadequate in their roles both on the personal and professional front. It seemed especially prominent at those moments that were life defining or changing, e.g., beginning in a new senior position, entering a new role (as a daughter-in-law or mother).

Social conditioning: Social conditioning of gender roles is a primary reason for our participants' experiences with their life and career choices. Participants elaborated on how societal pressure, patrilocal (joint family structure with their husband and in-laws) family, spouse and gender role perceptions influenced participant's choices at different stages in their lives. About 9 participants in this study restarted their lives after a change in location and residence because of marriage. In a new environment and among new people, participants felt intimidated to make any demands to sustain their careers and used various mechanisms to sustain their careers. Some of these women were still answerable to their patrilocal family due to a pre-dominant collectivist culture in India, which situates decision-making power among elders of the household. This influenced positively how they could navigate through the workplace challenges as well and looking back these women looked upon the same as learnings from the early phase of their lives.

Occasions to augment interpersonal skills: Understanding, inspiring, respecting, and nurturing others can lead to new learnings and greater self-esteem. Raising children and actively participating in other relationships teaches respect for individual differences, and how to develop, motivate, understand, and manage employees. Personal relationships, especially motherhood, teach managers interpersonal skills.

Psychological paybacks: Taking risks and succeeding in personal arenas, overcoming obstacles, bolster self-assurance, endurance, esteem. It is the same in the professional world. Individual experiences certainly help to develop perspective on her work life. As one of the respondents said: "In my personal life as well as my career life, I've taken a lot of risks. Made several decisions. Having got the strength of having taken a risk in one area, gives you strength to say I can do this in other areas also."

Emotional Support and Guidance: Most often friends and family act as motivators, offer advice and learnings from their experiences, and act as sounding boards for her to bounce ideas or to vent emotions. This helps in tempering reactions to stressful work situations. "Similar to me and my situation, I have a lot of friends who are at the senior levels in their companies. We discuss a lot of the work issues we face. We kind of help one another with work-related matters and this helps us become more effective," said one respondent. Another respondent went on to explain that while getting guidance on how to effectively deal with work related concerns, colleagues also provide emotional

support needed to continuously handle managerial challenges. They were able to motivate and encourage one another with ideas on how to handle problems which possibly had no easy solution. The respondents said that relationships with others outside work helped them to deal with tough work-related situations. This is in line with the literature that advocates that multiple role provide resources for social support. One of the women shared, "My supervisor has mentored me through many tough times in my life".

Managing multiple tasks: Setting family goals, juggling personal tasks, planning for the day all through the day, have helped women to learn to plan and prioritize and develop administrative skills. "I had to get up at 4 am to appease my family and career earlier in my life. My family expected me to cook for the entire household of 7 members. I also stayed up late at night to keep up with my client files", share one respondent.

Personal interests and background: Interests, upbringing, influences or background (previous experience, nationality, gender, tasks in other roles), cross-cultural experiences, if any, help grow skills and perspectives valuable and helpful on both work and home fronts. Handling and managing family issues (for example, caring for elders and child-care) helped women make plans proactively at work, as was noted in the following statements: "My planning skills have improved ten-fold since becoming a parent;" "I can anticipate things and I ensure I have planned for the same;" "As a parent you have to sense. I have to be able to judge by a cold if my child is going to be sick;" "It is like you are able to anticipate and be prepared almost all the time;" "All of these instincts and planning just flows much easier in work;" "I definitely kind of read the signs better because of parenting;" "Managing all the roles such as mother, homemaker, managing the household help, a spouse, a colleague, a friend, all facets improve organization in one's life and makes one more efficient at work."

Leadership: Opportunities in community service, volunteering or even in family settings provide immense leadership lessons (budgets, organizing, planning, implementing, objectives, working along with others) and makes one confident in taking on authoritative roles. The following statements from some of the respondents bear this out: "Before my current profession, I was a homemaker, mother and volunteer in school. This taught me a lot about leadership;" "I was the president of a women's organization, and I am sure that lessons from there helped me in my career;" "I once managed 300 women for a charity event in college, had to recruit people for the committees, oversee all those committees, and plan the entire program".

Diverse management styles: Managing family members who differ in age, maturity and understanding and have unique requirements equips a woman to deal with a diverse workforce, especially in multi-cultural settings. "As women, we do not have a choice. On the personal level, I must ensure that I am a good mother, great and innovative cook, a sincere daughter, daughter-in-law, etc. On the work front, if I do not perform well, there is always the opportunity given to my bosses and peers (male and female) to immediately tell me that 'I need to re-think my role as a leader', 'slow down and don't aspire for more', 'we know it is difficult to manage work and home', 'your performance is not up-to the standard as we know you have taken on too much and are unable to balance home and work'…" Another participant said, "I ensure that I am able to do better at every task, every day. Whether at home or work, I like to surprise myself and my significant others, as that's the only way to be in the game." Yet another senior woman shared, "I was able to relax only after my children became independent and I gave myself permission to slack down a little. On the work front, you have to excel as otherwise, there are people all round ready to pounce."

Socio-cultural norms: Even though research shows that traditional gender roles and expectations have changed with an increase in women's educational attainment in general, our study indicates that that is not always the case. Our findings show that prevalent attitudes about gender roles continue to persist and drive the expectation that women prioritize family over career and stigmatize those who choose to do otherwise. We observed that such prevalent social perceptions, expectations, and attitudes conditioned educated women in this study to accept caring children and attending to domestic chores as their primary priority and better manage different aspects of their life even at times when it was overall very stressful for them.

Organizational culture: Organizational culture, policies, and support play an important role in enabling women to balance family and work-life (Cahusac and Kanji 2014). The spousal support theory (Tharenou 1999) identifies a difference between how married women experience career development compared to married men and single

women. The professional experiences narrated by our participants clearly align with this theory. Women had to sometimes contend with superior's insensitivity and the stereotypical gender norms and management expectations and this was coupled with lack of women-friendly policies. Most respondents did submit that possibly it is easier for women to conform to masculine organizational norms and accept the status quo rather than fight against gender discrimination (Tlaiss 2014). Lack of supportive organizational policies and culture made it challenging for women in the study to maintain and be enthused about career aspirations. However, this taught them adaptability and acceptance while most did mention that more flexible approaches and policies will certainly help. At least 5 of the respondents considered quitting their jobs at different phases in their life and 3 had quit for brief periods and then re-joined the work force.

Agency of career decision: Patriarchy, higher economic and social status, and the joint family system often deny educated Indian women the agency to determine their life or career paths (Sorsa et al. 2015). Social norms and family expectations heavily conditioned the participant's sense of agency. Contrary to prevalent research claims that education gives more agency and autonomy to women to challenge the status quo, our study found that socio-cultural factors discussed above negated other seeming advantages. Some of the participants with grown-up children seemed to assert their agency of career decision only after their children have left the nest. These coping strategies help women overcome their professional insecurity, guilt, and overcome life circumstances that led to their choices in their personal life and careers (Schilling 2012).

Gender role internalization: As Ladge and Greenberg (2015) observed, after childbirth, women strongly identify with their gender role as mothers. Our participants, too, internalized their gender roles, which is evident in three areas: personal attitudes towards career, perceived gender roles, and individual identity. First, participants echoed the prevalent notion that economic necessity determines women's career continuity. They did not perceive the division of labour on gender roles as problematic.

Identity transformation: Post marriage, our participant's professional identities were replaced by their gendered identities as a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother (Coltrane 2000; Ladge et al. 2017;

Ladge and Greenberg 2015). Even though social norms and family expectations impel women to embrace motherhood at the expense of their careers, women in the study expressed that it was also their personal choice. 3 women had taken a break at this time in the careers, while about 8 of the others gave up attractive opportunities at around this time. However, the sense of agency they demonstrated in this context indicates a sense of internalization of the social norms and gender roles. Thus, Ladge and Greenberg (2015) observed, in awarding primary place to motherhood, they perpetuate the prevalent gender stereotype that childcare is women's responsibility. Most participants were aware that marriage and childbirth had forced them to lower their career aspirations as they could not negotiate motherhood with a career and some chose to opt-out, as identified by Zimmerman and Clark (2016), even if for a period in their lives.

Interestingly, we were able to present several macro, meso, and micro-level factors specific to India's unique socio-cultural environment that influence women's life and career-related role choices and decisions. At a macro-level, women adhere to norms specific to society at large. At a meso level, women's patrilocal family's culture imposes some restrictions on women. India's socio-cultural environment permeates the organizational culture, further impeding married women's workforce growth and sustainability. At the micro-level, women's social conditioning from a young age leads them to choose their family over careers. As a result, women internalize their gender roles unquestioningly and transform their identity from a professional woman to wife and mother, as can be seen from the role space maps of our respondents and the roles that received priority. While doing this and adhering to societal norms, women continue to draw upon synergies across roles constantly and manage to ensure their performance does not dip (Appendix II).

CONCLUSION

The list of roles from the participants show the transition that they go through in the time between the periods studied. The roles that appear towards the top of the list in majority of cases are those which are from the home-space. In the list of roles from earlier time period the roles of daughter, sister, student, and friend seem to be in the top half of the list. In the list from present the roles of wife, mother, sister, and daughter are still present in most of the lists in the top half, however, some lists also have

work-space roles in the middle ranks. Yet, this does not seem to impact performance at work with most of the respondents meeting organizational requirements as seen in the table below.

Summing up these discussions, almost all respondents unanimously said that there was no question in almost 90% of the situations of letting the performance dip or go the inverted U route. To sum it up in the words of a respondent: "If you allowed that to happen, then to recover would be a hundred times more challenging than to continually stretch and give your best and constantly meet and exceed expectations of the significant others."

Practical Implications

Organizations should sincerely promote role models and teach boundary-setting around work. It is also important to prioritize employee engagement and development over volume of work. Evaluating what your employees want when they request flexibility. It is to be noted that to ensure equity, organizations also have to analyze whether there will be differences in career advancement outcomes between groups who choose more flexibility vs less. It is further recommended that organizations should stop offering programs that aim to fix women's "faults" and begin offering real promotion-ready opportunities. Training the present leaders to be better mentors and coaches to emerging leaders is another aspect in this regard which should be started by organizations. It is not necessary to wait till the yearly review in order to guage the need to offer coaching or mentoring or to course correct, as may be needed. Continuous leadership development coaching is another practice which is recommended. It is also helpful to periodically conduct a workplace assessment of gender diversity and equity practices.

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