



**A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SELF-HANDICAPPING,
PROCRASTINATION, WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
DISTRESS IN WORKING WOMEN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The growing role of women in advanced education and still upholding professional responsibilities has led to new problems connected with psychological comfort and role control. This is a systematic review discussing the connection between self-handicapping, procrastination, work-life balance, and psychological distresses among working women in higher education. The research integrates already available empirical studies to comprehend the interplay between academic requirements, workload and family issues in affecting the mental health and productivity of women. Past studies have shown that working women tend to have time constraints, role conflict and expectations of the society; hence they resort to maladaptive coping mechanisms including procrastination and self-handicapping behaviors. Such actions may have adverse influence on performance at school, work effectiveness, and health, which disrupts work-life balance. The review also indicates that extended disproportion is experienced between professional, academic, and personal roles and can lead to psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Literature findings underscore the need to have supportive institutional policies, flexible working opportunities, and psychological coping mechanisms that allow women to feel at ease with the various responsibilities. An in-depth analysis of the issues encountered by working women in their education to higher levels has been given by the review through incorporation of different researches. It also demonstrates the necessity of using specific interventions, conducive conditions, and sensitizing efforts to enhance the healthier work-life balance and decrease psychological suffering in this group of people.

Keywords: Procrastination, Distress, Higher Education.

Introduction

A growing wide variety of scholarly debate has examined the complex interrelationships among self-handicapping, procrastination, work-lifestyles stability, and mental misery, particularly amongst working women pursuing higher education who face challenging dual roles and demands. Self-handicapping is a behavior wherein people create boundaries or excuses that prevent them from attempting their best at their work and personal growth. The concept of self-handicapping has been broadly studied in psychology. However, its implications inside the workplace have gotten academic attention in recent years. Self-handicapping refers to the practice of creating barriers or excuses to avoid responsibility for failure or to protect one's shallowness in anticipation of failure (Jones & Berglas, 1978). Research shows that self-handicapping can have



drastic effects on Academic fulfillment (Hirt et al., 2019) and intellectual growth (Kumar & Jagannathan, 2021).

Impacts of Self-Handicapping on Psychological Wellbeing

One latest examination found that individuals who have interacted with self-handicapping are more likely to experience tension and depression (Tangney et al., 2019). Another look confirmed that self-handicapping is related to lower academic performance, particularly among university students with high levels of check tension (Gaudreau & Braaten, 2020). However, some researchers argue that self-handicapping can seriously affect motivation and performance (Martinelli & Moors, 2021). For instance, an observation by (Elliot, 2019) specified that people who engaged in self-handicapping have been extra inspired to be successful while going through complex tasks.

Despite some capability benefits, average studies indicate that self-handicapping is usually maladaptive and can negatively affect academic and intellectual health outcomes (Hirt et al., 2019; Kumar & Jagannathan, 2021). Therefore, interventions geared toward decreasing self-handicapping behaviors can be beneficial for enhancing educational satisfaction and mental health well-being.

One current examination discovered that self-handicapping is positively linked to procrastination among university students (Grunschel et al., 2020). Another study confirmed that those who have interacted with self-handicapping behaviors are much more likely to experience higher stages of stress and decreased educational performance (Kearns et al., 2019). Self-handicapping may also be greater strongly tied to procrastination. A look at this topic via (Howell, 2020) observed that people who have experienced "behavioral" self-handicapping, like staying up overdue or now not getting ready nicely - are even greater at risk of procrastinate in comparison to people who use "verbal" self-handicapping like making excuses. However, a few argue self-handicapping will be a proactive manner to manage when watching for failure (Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2020). For instance, Zeigler-Hill et al. (2019) found human beings with excessive perceived stress were more likely to self-handicap to address ability failure. Overall, studies show self-handicapping and procrastination are related to maladaptive behaviors that may negatively affect teachers and intellectual health. So, interventions targeted on lowering these behaviors may be actually useful for enhancing achievement and properly-being in college students. Self-handicapping may be associated with work outcomes like activity pleasure and overall performance (Midgley et al., 2019; Tice & Baumeister, 2021). It may also indirectly effect work-lifestyles balance via outcomes on task performance or strain ranges. A relatively new take on the subject by (Chen and Chen, 2019) checked out how mindfulness factors into the relationship among self-handicapping and work/family conflicts. The consequences showed mindfulness can reduce the harmful impacts of self-handicapping on that work-own family struggle.

More recently, Sonnentag et al. (2021) found that self-handicapping negatively buddies with personal sources like self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience. These private factors are vital for maintaining work-life stability and stopping burnout. The literature indicates self-handicapping gives a sizeable barrier to achieving that balance. Individuals need to understand this behavior and take steps to address it, like working towards mindfulness or seeking guide from colleagues or supervisors.



Ferreira et al., 2021 had examined self-compassion's role between self-handicapping and psychological distress. The consequences showed self-compassion can moderate self-handicapping's harmful consequences on mental distress. The studies indicate that self-handicapping notably contributes to mental distress. People want to understand this conduct and take steps to deal with it, along with working towards self-compassion or searching for support from a mental health professional. One latest study observed self-handicapping behaviors are greater standard amongst ladies than men in the place of work (Li et al., 2020). Another showed working women who report better work-family struggle are much more likely to have interaction in self-handicapping (Mazerolle et al., 2021).

Research indicates factors may also affect this courting for running ladies. Lachance-Grzela et al., 2019 discovered working ladies with better perfectionism ranges are greater susceptible to self-handicapping. Another research showed that working women who use proactive coping techniques like looking for social help and trouble-fixing are less in all likelihood to self-handicap (Karakas et al., 2020). It's crucial to observe cultural and social factors may additionally influence self-handicapping amongst working ladies.

Kuo et al. (2021) observed females in collectivist cultures like Taiwan report higher self-handicapping prices than the ones in individualistic cultures just like the U.S. Overall, research indicates self-handicapping can be prevalent among working women, with terrible consequences for job performance and personal well-being. So, interventions to reduce self-handicapping and promote effective coping should enhance standard productiveness and properly-being for working ladies (Kuo, 2021).

One latest take a look at determined self-handicapping positively pertains to psychological distress amongst university college students (Grass et al., 2020). Another confirmed that individuals who self-handicap are more in all likelihood to revel in higher stress levels and decreased well-being (Kearns et al., 2019). Research also shows man or woman factors like persona trends might also have an effect on the self-handicapping and distress dating. A look at by Han's crew located people showing certain "maladaptive" tendencies like neuroticism and low extraversion are extra susceptible to self-handicapping and mental distress.

One existing observation discovered that female college students who have interaction in self-handicapping are at greater threat for underachieving academically (Wang et al., 2019). Another confirmed that woman students reporting better anxiety and strain tiers are extra at risk of self-handicapping (Cai et al., 2021). Research suggests positive factors affect this dating for female students. A observe with the aid of Cheung et al. Determined that female students with excessive self-compassion are less in all likelihood to self-handicap. Another examines also showed lady college students with a growth attitude - the notion that capabilities may be developed through effort and perseverance - are much less probable to engage in the ones self-handicapping behaviors (Tang & Chen, 2020).

It's vital to note that cultural and social elements may additionally play a function in self-handicapping for female students. (Zhou, 2021) discovered that female college students in collectivist cultures like China may also interact in unique self-handicapping behaviors compared to the ones in more individualistic cultures just like the U.S. Overall, research suggests self-handicapping may be normal amongst female college students, negatively impacting academic fulfillment and properly-being. So, interventions aimed at decreasing self-handicapping and



selling boom mindsets and self-compassion might be clearly useful for improving overall performance and average properly-being on this populace (Zhou, 2021).

Further more self-handicapping became undoubtedly related to procrastination amongst female employees in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2021). The study additionally discovered bodily interest and work-existence balance definitely related to job pleasure. A observe with the aid of (Rizwan & Mahmood, 2018) looked at the relationship among self-handicapping and academic overall performance among undergraduate students in Pakistan. The results confirmed self-handicapping behaviors negatively associated with instructional overall performance, suggesting accomplishing those behaviors may additionally negatively affect instructional fulfillment.

Malik et al., (2016) examined self-handicapping and academic motivation amongst Pakistani college students. The results showed self-handicapping behaviors negatively related to intrinsic motivation. However, they undoubtedly related to extrinsic motivation, suggesting folks who self-handicap can also prioritize external rewards over private hobby in terms of instructional fulfillment.

Khan et al., (2019) explored gender's position between self-handicapping and academic fulfillment among Pakistani post graduate students. The results confirmed self-handicapping negatively related to academic fulfillment for each adult males and ladies, but the impact became greater sizable for female students. This shows gender may also play a function in the self-handicapping and academic outcomes courting in Pakistan. Overall, while restrained research exists specifically on self-handicapping in Pakistan, the existing literature suggests this behavior can also negatively impact educational achievement and motivation amongst Pakistani college students. More research wishes to keep exploring the prevalence and effect of self-handicapping in Pakistan and identifying effective strategies to control it.

Impacts of Procrastination on Psychological Wellbeing

Procrastination refers back to the delaying or postponing of responsibilities no matter having the ability and information to complete those (Steel, 2007). It's been related to detrimental consequences like improved strain, reduced academic overall performance, and decrease well-being (Scherer et al., 2019). One current study found procrastination correlates with decreased self-discipline, which leads to poor effects like decrease academic success and higher pressure (Corkin et al., 2020). Another take a look at showed procrastination is extra not unusual amongst individuals less assured in their capabilities and with decrease self-efficacy (Nunes & König, 2019).

Additionally, research suggests the usage of social media might also make contributions to procrastination. A study by (Rosen, 2021) found social media use negatively relates to academic achievement and undoubtedly pertains to procrastination. Similarly, another study confirmed the usage of cellular telephones can lead to higher procrastination stages (Kim et al., 2020). However, some researchers argue that positive sorts of procrastination can probably be beneficial in some circumstances. For example, a study by (George, 2021) found "practical procrastination" - intentionally suspending a venture to recognition on extra urgent subjects - can result in better selection-making and progressed consequences.

Despite capability blessings, overall research suggests procrastination is commonly maladaptive and might negatively affect educational and mental health effects (Scherer et al., 2019). So, interventions aimed at reducing these procrastination behaviors may prove beneficial



for improving academic success and well-being. Several interventions have been advanced to assist conquer procrastination. These include cognitive-behavioral methods centered on identifying and changing unhelpful concept patterns around procrastination, and behavioral interventions concerning specific strategies to reduce it (Rozenal et al., 2018). A systematic evaluation and meta-analysis by using Chen et al., (2021) found mindfulness meditation interventions had been powerful at reducing procrastination and enhancing educational overall performance, suggesting mindfulness-primarily based processes can be a promising treatment.

Similarly, (Yang & Kim, 2020) mentioned that procrastination undeniably is associated with self-handicapping and negatively related to instructional fulfillment amongst Korean college students. So, instantaneous, procrastination is the delaying or avoidance of tasks, often leading to negative effects. While occasionally purposeful, it is generally maladaptive. Interventions like cognitive-behavioral therapy, conduct trade techniques, and mindfulness may additionally assist people suffering with procrastination.

Researchers have proposed and examined numerous interventions to assist lessen procrastination and self-handicapping behaviors. For example, (Rozenal, 2018) advanced an internet-based intervention focused on procrastination in a specific person age group, and determined it effective in reducing this tendency. Other approaches include cognitive-behavioral remedy to cope with unhelpful notion styles (Sirois & Tosti, 2012) and mindfulness-based interventions to enhance emotional law (Van Eerde et al., 2019).

One recent observe by using (Chong et al., 2019) determined that procrastination negatively influences work life stability among employees throughout. Another study (Moen et al., 2020) showed that individuals reporting high work-circle of relative's struggle are more at risk of procrastinating.

Research additionally shows certain factors can also have an impact on the relationship between procrastination and work-life balance. (Brossoit & Morris, 2019) investigated this amongst graduate students in the United States, looking at academic procrastination, perfectionism, and work life stability. Their consequences indicated educational procrastination negatively associated with work-lifestyles stability, with perfectionism mediating that relationship. (Rathee & Thakur, 2020) examined organizational subculture's effect on work-lifestyles balance and procrastination amongst employees in India. Their findings suggested a supportive organizational culture related to better stages of work-life stability and lower levels of procrastination.

Stanton & Creswell in 2023 investigated the effects of a mindfulness-based strain discount intervention on procrastination and work-life balance in working adults inside the U.S. Their consequences recommended this intervention led to vast reductions in procrastination and upgrades in work-life balance. These are only some examples of recent research on procrastination and work-existence balance. Overall, studies show procrastination can negatively impact work-lifestyles stability and nicely-being. Interventions geared toward reducing procrastination may want to doubtlessly result in improved effects in those regions. (Kurland et al., 2019) discovered individuals with better workloads and greater time needs tended to revel in lower work-life stability, probable contributing to elevated procrastination. Additionally, a examine by means of (Rogers & Creed, 2019) confirmed the usage of adaptive coping strategies like time control and prioritizing tasks associated with better work-life stability and much less procrastination. However,



researchers notice the connection between procrastination and work-lifestyles balance may be bidirectional.

A study through Hill & associates in 2021 found individuals with poor work-existence stability were more likely to interact in procrastination behaviors as a manner to address stress and maintain manage over their time table. One recent observe through (Jiang et al., 2020) discovered procrastination definitely related to psychological distress among college students. Another examine by (Gagné & Fouquereau, 2019) confirmed people reporting better degrees of procrastination were much more likely to experience signs and symptoms of hysteria and depression.

Research additionally indicates certain elements can also impact the connection among procrastination and psychological misery. A have a look at via (Sirois et al., 2019) observed folks that interact in "maladaptive" coping strategies like avoidance and self-blame generally tend to report higher stages of both procrastination and psychological misery. Additionally, a study by (Gaudreau et al., 2019) showed that folks who use adaptive techniques including hassle-fixing and looking for social guide record less procrastination and higher mental health consequences. However, it is critical to word the connection among procrastination and mental distress may be bidirectional. (Shu, 2021) located individuals reporting excessive levels of mental misery are much more likely to procrastinate as a manner to address bad emotions.

One latest study with the aid of (Kumar et al., 2019) found working females file better procrastination tiers compared to their male opposite numbers. Another have a look at through (Senecal et al., 2020) showed working females who document extra work-circle of relative's conflict are extra at risk of procrastination behaviors. Furthermore, (Ferrari et al., 2019) observed procrastination was a full-size predictor of psychological misery, with feelings of guilt and disgrace mediating this courting. They also counseled interventions to reduce procrastination could probably improve mental fitness mental distress, such as symptoms like pressure, anxiety and melancholy. These findings highlight the importance of growing effective procrastination control strategies, which can also positively affect mental health.

Research shows certain factors that the impact of procrastination found in working females. A study conducted in 2021 by McCown found that working women with better emotional intelligence and self-efficacy ranges are less possibly to procrastinate. Additionally, (García-Muñoz et al., 2019) confirmed working females who hassle-solve and set sensible dreams document much less procrastination. However, cultural and social elements may additionally play a position. A scholarly work by (Nguyen, 2020) discovered working ladies in collectivist cultures like Vietnam record decrease procrastination degrees than in individualistic cultures. Overall, current studies suggest working women can be at more danger for procrastination that may negatively impact activity performance and well-being. Interventions geared toward lowering procrastination and promoting time control abilities may want to enhance productivity and nicely-being for this group.

One recent account of research (Jiang et al., 2019) determined woman students reporting better educational pressure degrees are much more likely to procrastinate. Another by (Sirois et al., 2020) confirmed woman students perceiving their workload as overwhelming are at more procrastination chance. Research additionally shows elements influencing this relationship for female students. Firat, (2019) found female students with high self-efficacy - belief of their



potential to finish duties - are much less inclined to procrastination. Additionally, (Fernandez et al., 2021) confirmed woman college students receiving family and pal support are much less probable to procrastinate. It's essential to word that cultural and social factors may also have an effect on the relationship among procrastination and female college students.

Research likewise shows work-life stability can affect procrastination and psychological misery. Ali et al., (2019) reviewed how social media use can contribute to procrastination, suggesting individuals prone to procrastinating may be especially vulnerable to the capability distractions and rewards provided with the aid of social media systems.

Impacts of Work-Life Imbalance on Psychological Wellbeing

Work-lifestyles balance (WLB) refers to a person's ability to efficiently prioritize and manage each their work and private obligations, resulting in advanced nicely-being and productivity (Kalliath & Brough, 2019). Research has proven WLB is stimulated by using elements like organizational policies and personal characteristics (Carlson et al., 2019; Grzywacz & Bass, 2020). So, workplaces enforcement of supportive procedures and practices, such as flexibility in working patterns and employee help packages, to assist reducing pressures to avoid poor outcomes and enhance basic employee properly-being.

One study also discovered that personnel who have greater control over their schedule and have supportive supervisors record higher WLB levels (Moen et al., 2020). Similarly, any other by using (Hill et al., 2021) showed bendy preparations like telecommuting and compressed workweeks positively relate to WLB. Research also indicates WLB friends with higher mental health results. (Tavares et al., 2020) observed people reporting better WLB experienced lower pressure and better process pleasure tiers. Additionally, (Anger et al., 2019) confirmed WLB interventions can reduce burnout and improve usual well-being among healthcare employees. However, a few argue the WLB concept may be specific across one-of-a-kind cultures and contexts. For instance, a study examined by (Lee, 2020) confirmed WLB became regarded in another way amongst Korean as opposed to Western employees, with the previous emphasizing place of work concord over individual amusement time.

Research also suggests that certain factors may influence the relationship between work-life balance and psychological distress. A study by Carlson & colleagues in 2019 found that work-family enrichment is positively related to psychological well-being and negatively related to stress and burnout. Additionally, another study showed that social support from family and colleagues can buffer the harmful effects of work-family conflict on psychological distress (Gao et al., 2021). However, it is essential to note that the relationship between work-life balance and psychological distress may be bidirectional. A study by (Grzywacz & Bass, 2020) found that individuals who experience high levels of psychological distress are more likely to report poor work-life balance.

Relatively recent scholarly work also positively relates unstable work-life balance with psychological distress among working individuals in various industries (Wang et al., 2019). Moreover, the conflicts at work among employees and within family lives of the working individuals also are a considerable indicator of the poor mental health among working parents (Oshio et al., 2020). Similarly, research observed the effect of vacations on psychological distress. The results indicated that vacations from work and parental leave were associated with decreased amount of psychological distress, while sick leaves were not considerably related to psychological distress (De Cuyper et al. 2021).



Furthermore, working women who reported significant amount of work-family conflict were more likely to experience negative effects on their work-life balance (Van Steenbergen et al., 2019). However, working women who apply better strategies related to their time management and are realistic towards setting their work and personal life agendas are better equipped to maintain better work-life balance (García-Muñoz et al., 2019). Research also suggests that there are multiple factors that have a potential to influence the better and positive relationship between work-life balance among working women. (Wyrwich, 2020) found that social support from family and colleagues can prove to be beneficial in mitigating the negative effects of work and family related stress. Moreover, another factor suggested in a study deals with women's involvement in physical activities. It suggests that working women who are involved in regular physical activity reveal better work-life balance and considerable minimization of stress (Hussain et al., 2021).

Balance between work and personal life is one of the critical aspects of individual life. Such balance renders a positive impact on job output and employee satisfaction. Scholarly work taking case studies within Pakistan have also tried to explore the nature of such relationships. The study by (Fatima, 2021) expresses that work-life balance was negatively associated with psychological distress amongst working women in Pakistan. Another study by (Rashid et al., 2019) observed the relationship between work-life balance and job performance amongst sales executives in Pakistan. The results manifested that better work-life balance had a profound affect on work output in terms of targets achievements, suggesting that sales executive with relatively better balance between work and personal lives, tend to perform better at work. Similar study (Haq et al., 2015) has explored the impact of work-life imbalance on job satisfaction and inclination to quit among nurses in Pakistan. The results suggested that balance between work and personal life is positively related to work satisfaction and negatively linked to intention to quit from work, suggesting that promoting a balanced work and personal life, it may help retain nurses and improve their satisfaction at work places. An important study done by (Ahmad & Ghulam, 2017) studied the association of work/family conflict and job stress among female workers in Pakistan. The outcomes show that work-family conflict was positively connected to job stress, suggesting that dealing with family obligations along with managing work can be challenging and has the potential to lead towards unsatisfactory job outcomes.

Impacts of Psychological Distress on Working Women

Psychological distress denotes to a range of negative emotions and symptoms related to mental health, including anxiety, hopelessness, and strain (Lovibond & Lovibond, 2019). Some studies find that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to augmented levels of psychological distress among individual's world over (Xiong et al., 2020). Frontline healthcare professionals also faced bigger levels of psychological distress as compared to regular workers during the pandemic (Chew et al., 2020).

Research also suggests that psychological distress is prevalent among university students. However, a study by Tavakolizadeh (2019) explored that female university students tend to experience higher levels of psychological distress as compared to male students. Research also focuses on the psychological distress not solely being caused by individual factors but also by social aspects such as discrimination and inequality. Similarly, another study showed that income inequality positively affects psychological distress (Boen et al., 2019).



Chun et al., in 2019 also stressed that there is a positive relationship between conflicts at work and home and psychological distress among working/married women in South Korea. The outcomes showed that work-family conflict was positively associated with psychological distress, suggesting that balancing work and family responsibilities can be challenging for married working women. Similar scholarly work found that working women who experience greater work-family conflict are more likely to report higher levels of psychological distress (Van Steenbergen et al., 2019). Another study showed that working women who experience discrimination and prejudice at work are also at greater risk for psychological distress (Duncan et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This systematic review indicates that employed women who are pursuing further education have serious problems balancing between academic, professional, and personal life. As an outcome of overwhelming workload and role conflict, procrastination and self-handicapping behaviors tend to be developed as a coping strategy that can eventually lead to disruption of work-life balance and one of the causes of psychological distress. Supported by the findings, are the necessity of supportive institutional structures, flexible learning and work environments, and good time-management as well as psychological coping strategies. Stress may also be minimized by creating awareness and providing systematic support systems to enhance well-being. The need to enhance these measures is to enable women to effectively handle various roles as they strive to achieve educational and professional development.

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