

## The Superwoman Schema (SWS): Origin, Overview, and Psychological Effects – narrative review

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### Abstract

The Superwoman Schema (SWS) is a psychological construct in which women strive to excel across multiple roles, including professional, familial, and social responsibilities. This ongoing pursuit of perfection often results in chronic stress, leading to adverse mental and physical health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. The SWS is shaped by societal, cultural, and familial expectations, which women internalize, thereby influencing their beliefs about success, resilience, and self-worth. Recently, the concept of the "strong independent woman" has gained traction, particularly within Middle Eastern cultures, as a contemporary expression of these societal pressures. This review synthesizes the current literature on

the SWS, tracing its origins within feminist theory, while critically evaluating its psychological consequences, core characteristics, and cultural variations. Additionally, the review examines how cultural contexts shape the manifestation and impact of the SWS, with an emphasis on the importance of intersectionality in understanding its complexities. By offering a comprehensive analysis of the SWS literature, this review represents an initial exploration of the phenomenon within Middle Eastern communities. This will lay the foundation for subsequent qualitative and quantitative studies aimed at further elucidating the impact and implications of the SWS in these cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** mental health, superwoman schema, review, culture.

The Superwoman Schema (SWS) has emerged as a significant concept over the past half-century, reflecting the evolving roles of women in the labor force. As women have increasingly entered the workforce, they have continued to bear traditional responsibilities as homemakers and caretakers. This dual burden has led to elevated rates of stress and other psychological symptoms among women (Bai et al., 2024; Davies, 2016; Engebretsen, 2020).

The term "superwoman" captures the essence of the high expectations placed on women to excel in multiple, often conflicting, domains (Woods-Giscombe et al., 2016). The societal ideal of the superwoman posits that women should be able to manage a successful career while simultaneously fulfilling roles within the family and maintaining social obligations. This relentless pursuit to excel in multiple domains—career, family, and social obligations—often results in heightened stress levels and burnout (Farr et al., 2024). The SWS compels women to strive for perfection in all aspects of their lives, creating an overwhelming pressure to meet these high standards.

Researchers have scrutinized the SWS, revealing its detrimental

psychological and physiological effects on women (Knighton et al., 2022; Nelson et al., 2022; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). Studies have shown that women who adhere to the SWS are more likely to experience elevated stress levels, anxiety, and depression. The constant juggling of responsibilities without adequate support or relaxation time can lead to significant mental health issues. Additionally, the physical health of these women can also be compromised due to the chronic stress associated with trying to fulfill multiple roles.

The concept of SWS has garnered considerable attention as women strive to balance complex societal expectations with personal ambitions (Davies, 2016). Understanding the origins and impact of the SWS is essential for developing interventions aimed at alleviating its adverse effects. By recognizing the unrealistic expectations placed on women, society can begin to challenge and change these norms, promoting a healthier and more balanced approach to fulfilling various roles.

### **\* Societal and Cultural Expectations**

Societal, familial, cultural, and occasionally religious factors play a crucial role in shaping the pursuit of

multiple roles by women (Harris-Lacewell, 2001; Wood & Eagly, 2002). These expectations are often internalized from an early age, creating a perception that they are normal and desirable. From childhood, many women are taught that their worth is tied to their ability to excel in various roles, such as being a successful professional, a devoted mother, a caring partner, and an active community member. This early conditioning leads individuals to internalize unrealistic expectations, contributing to heightened stress and unhappiness throughout their lives (Byrne et al., 2019).

The internalization of these expectations begins with societal norms and cultural narratives that glorify the image of the "superwoman." Media representations, educational systems, and family teachings often reinforce the idea that women should be able to manage a career while maintaining traditional responsibilities at home (Mullings, 2005). This pervasive narrative instills a belief that achieving perfection in all areas is not only possible but also expected. As these pressures mount, they can significantly affect family relationships, often resulting in communication breakdowns,

misunderstandings, and conflicts (Dilling & Petersen, 2022).

Over time, these dynamics foster the development of dysfunctional habits within the family unit, making it increasingly difficult for members to interact healthily and supportively (Glenn, 2016; Herrera & DelCampo, 1995). The SWS exemplifies these ideals, where women are conditioned to believe they can juggle multiple responsibilities successfully, which can be incredibly motivating but ultimately detrimental (Feeney, 2017). This mindset often stems from a deep-seated belief in self-sufficiency and perfectionism.

The relentless pursuit of perfection can contribute to increased levels of stress as women strive to fulfill an expanding array of roles flawlessly (Flett et al., 2016; Molnar et al., 2017). This constant pressure to excel in every area can become overwhelming, leaving little room for self-care or relaxation. If they find themselves unable to meet these high expectations, feelings of inadequacy and depression may arise, particularly when they fail to accomplish tasks according to their meticulously crafted plans. This emotional toll can create a vicious cycle, where the fear of failure fuels further stress, leading to a significant

decline in mental health and overall life satisfaction (Tadros, 2007).

Furthermore, the impact of societal and cultural expectations extends beyond individual women to influence broader social dynamics. As these expectations perpetuate, they reinforce gender stereotypes and hinder progress toward gender equality (Kossek et al., 2017; Zemore et al., 2012). By upholding the ideal of the superwoman, society places an unfair burden on women to excel in all areas without adequate support, thereby perpetuating cycles of distress and dissatisfaction.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data from 2013-2016, women (10.4%) were almost twice as likely as men (5.5%) to experience depression. Overall, 8.1% of American adults aged 20 and over had depression during any given two-week period. In all racial and Hispanic-origin groups, except for non-Hispanic Asians, men had a significantly lower prevalence of depression compared to women. Additionally, 50.2% of adults with depression reported some difficulty with work, home, or social activities due to their symptoms. The prevalence of depression among men was 5.7% in 2007-2008 and slightly decreased to 5.4% in 2015-2016.

Among women, the prevalence was 10.4% in 2007-2008 and decreased to 9.3% in 2015-2016 (Debra J. Brody, 2018).

Understanding the role of societal and cultural expectations in shaping the SWS is necessary for developing strategies to alleviate its adverse effects (Chin, 2010). Challenging these deeply ingrained norms requires a collective effort to promote healthier and more balanced approaches to fulfilling various roles. By recognizing and addressing the unrealistic expectations placed on women, society can foster environments that support well-being, reduce stress, and improve overall quality of life for women.

### **\* Defining the Superwoman Schema**

The SWS has its origins in feminist literature and the discourse surrounding the evolving roles of women (Harris-Lacewell, 2001). The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s played a pivotal role in shaping this concept. During this era, feminists challenged traditional gender roles and advocated for women's rights, including equal opportunities in education and the workforce (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Evans, 2010; Pedriana, 2006). This period saw a notable increase in the number of women pursuing

higher education and careers, resulting in a shift in societal expectations (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). Historically, women were expected to fulfill domestic responsibilities while also increasingly participating in the workforce (Cahn, 1999; Mavin, 2001; Pleck, 1977). Despite these advancements, women often continued to bear the primary responsibility for household duties and childcare (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Coombe et al., 2019; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). This intersection of professional and personal demands laid the groundwork for the SWS, wherein women feel compelled to meet high standards across multiple domains (Allen et al., 2019).

### **\* Evolution of the Concept**

The SWS is a psychological framework wherein women endeavour to excel simultaneously in various roles, including professional careers, family responsibilities, and social commitments (Erving, McKinnon, Thomas Tobin, et al., 2024; Genz & Genz, 2009; McDaniel et al., 2023; Nelson et al., 2016). Over time, the concept of SWS has evolved with the changing dynamics of women's roles in society. Initially rooted in the feminist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, the schema has

adapted to reflect the increasing complexities of modern women's lives. As societal expectations have continued to evolve, so too has the pressure on women to balance intricate societal expectations with their personal aspirations (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Byrne et al., 2019).

Cultural and societal influences, including media portrayals and traditional gender roles, have played a crucial role in shaping this schema (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Jerald et al., 2017). Scholars have made significant contributions to understanding SWS, particularly regarding African American women's perspectives on stress, strength, and health (Bond et al., 2022; Erving, McKinnon, Van Dyke, et al., 2024; Kyalwazi et al., 2024; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). The relentless pursuit of excellence in multiple roles often results in elevated stress levels and burnout (Nelson et al., 2022).

Understanding the SWS is important for developing interventions and support systems that address the unique challenges faced by women attempting to balance these demanding roles (Nelson, Cardemil, et al., 2024; Simon, 2024). By comprehending the origins and evolution of SWS, researchers and policymakers can

create effective strategies to alleviate its adverse effects on women's mental and physical well-being (Woods-Giscombe et al., 2016).

### \* **Characteristics and Behavioral Traits of the SWS**

The Superwoman Schema (SWS) embodies a unique set of characteristics and behavioral traits prevalent among many women, particularly those in multiple roles or facing societal expectations of perfectionism and resilience. This schema often leads to overcommitment and neglect of self-care, resulting in significant physical and psychological consequences. Understanding the characteristics and behavioral traits of SWS is crucial for developing effective interventions to support women's mental health and well-being see figure (1).



**Figure 1. Characteristics and Behavioral Traits of the SWS**

### \* **Multiple-role woman**

Women embodying the SWS strive to excel in multiple roles simultaneously, aiming to be ideal employees, mothers, partners, and community members. These women often juggle numerous responsibilities, seamlessly transitioning between professional tasks, household chores, childcare, and community obligations. They are adept multitaskers, frequently overscheduling their days and finding it challenging to refuse additional responsibilities, even when their plates are already full. This relentless pursuit of excellence can lead to significant stress, as they push themselves to the brink in their effort to meet and exceed expectations in all areas of their lives. The constant balancing act and the pressure to perform impeccably in every role often result in physical and emotional exhaustion, as well as feelings of inadequacy when they fall short of their own high standards (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015; Erving, McKinnon, Thomas Tobin, et al., 2024; Nosrati Beigzadeh et al., 2021).

### \* **The image of strength**

Strength and independence are hallmark traits of women who embody the SWS. These women perceive themselves as resilient and self-reliant, taking immense pride in

handling a wide array of challenges without seeking help. Capable of navigating personal and professional hurdles with determination and grace, they often serve as the backbone for their families, workplaces, and communities. Their strength encompasses emotional and mental fortitude, maintaining a facade of invulnerability and seldom admitting to needing support. Believing that seeking help is a sign of weakness, they internalize stress and emotional strain. This self-imposed expectation leads to feelings of isolation and immense pressure, continuously pushing themselves to meet high standards. Often becoming role models in their social circles, they are admired for their ability to "do it all" and relied upon by others. However, this relentless pursuit can be draining, leading to burnout as they rarely allow themselves to rest and recharge (Collins, 2022; Graham, 2013).

#### **\* Emotional suppression**

Women with the SWS often suppress their emotions to maintain an image of unwavering competence and stability. This emotional suppression is driven by the belief that displaying vulnerability or emotional distress might be perceived as weakness, undermining their strength and independence. By hiding their true feelings, these women

strive to project a facade of emotional resilience, even when facing significant challenges. However, this constant suppression of emotions can lead to an accumulation of stress and emotional strain. Over time, the inability to express and process their feelings can contribute to various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. The internal conflict between their public persona of strength and their private struggles creates a significant emotional burden. Moreover, this emotional suppression can strain relationships, as they may find it difficult to seek support or share their struggles with others, further exacerbating their sense of isolation and impacting their overall well-being (Butler et al., 2010; Simpson & Stroh, 2004).

#### **\* Prioritizing others**

Many "superwomen" put the needs of others prior to their own, which can lead to increased stress, anxiety, resentment, and inefficient relationships. These people frequently exhibit common characteristics such as an eager need to help others, problems saying "no" to requests, and unrealistic expectations of oneself. Furthermore, they may feel responsible for the happiness and well-being of others, which contributes to their neglect for

their own needs. This lack of self-worth promotes a cycle of self-neglect and priority of others, affecting their mental health and personal fulfilment (Chakraborty, 2023).

#### **\* life-work balance**

The SWS predominantly affects working mothers and women in demanding careers who feel immense pressure to balance professional success with personal responsibilities. These women often strive to excel in their careers while simultaneously managing household duties, childcare, and personal relationships. The expectation to perform flawlessly in both arenas can lead to an overwhelming sense of responsibility, as they juggle tight schedules, deadlines, and the needs of their families. The constant effort to achieve an ideal life-work balance often results in extended work hours, reduced personal time, and insufficient rest. This relentless pursuit of perfection in multiple roles can lead to burnout, chronic fatigue, and stress-related health issues. Additionally, the pressure to meet high standards in both professional and personal life can create feelings of inadequacy and guilt when they fall short. The struggle to maintain equilibrium between work and home life not only impacts their physical

health but also takes a toll on their mental and emotional well-being, leading to strained relationships and diminished quality of life (Davies, 2016; Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018).

#### **\* High Self-Expectations**

Women embodying the SWS set exceptionally high expectations for themselves, striving to achieve perfection in every aspect of their lives. This self-imposed standard encompasses their roles as professionals, mothers, partners, and community members. The drive to meet these lofty goals can create a perpetual cycle of self-evaluation, where they constantly measure their performance against an often unattainable ideal. When they perceive themselves as falling short of these expectations, they may experience intense feelings of guilt and inadequacy. These feelings are exacerbated by the societal pressures and internalized beliefs that they should be able to "do it all" seamlessly. The weight of these expectations can lead to self-criticism and a diminished sense of self-worth. Over time, the chronic stress from striving for perfection and the emotional toll of perceived failures can negatively impact their mental health, contributing to anxiety, depression, and a persistent sense of unfulfillment. This relentless pursuit

of excellence, combined with the fear of not measuring up, can create a significant emotional burden, hindering their ability to find joy and satisfaction in their accomplishments (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Chambliss, 1989).

#### **\* Avoidance of Help**

Women embodying the SWS often avoid seeking help or delegating tasks, driven by a fear that doing so might be perceived as a sign of weakness. They believe that their strength and competence are defined by their ability to handle everything independently. This reluctance to ask for assistance stems from a desire to maintain an image of self-reliance and perfection. Consequently, they often take on more than they can manage, leading to increased stress and burnout. The refusal to seek help not only strains their mental and physical health but also reinforces a cycle of isolation and overwhelming pressure (Nelson et al., 2022; Wakefield et al., 2012; Woods-Giscombe et al., 2016).

#### **\* Resistant of Vulnerability**

Women in high-powered careers or those with significant caregiving responsibilities are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of the SWS. The demands of their professional roles often require exceptional dedication and

performance, while their caregiving duties add an additional layer of responsibility. These women strive to excel in both domains, facing intense societal and self-imposed expectations to perform flawlessly. The dual pressures can exacerbate feelings of stress, inadequacy, and guilt when they struggle to meet these high standards. The constant balancing act between career and caregiving can lead to burnout, negatively impacting their mental and physical well-being. (Lewis et al., 2023).

#### **\* Societal Representation in Media**

The concept of the SWS is prominently featured in various media forms, including films and music, which play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions. For instance, movies like *One Fine Day* (1996) and *I Don't Know How She Does It* (2011), depict women who navigate the demanding balance of career and family, illustrating the pressures to excel in multiple roles. These films showcase protagonists who struggle to maintain their professional success while managing personal responsibilities, highlighting the unrealistic expectations placed on women (Kirby et al., 2016).

More about Disney princess stories, notably *Tangled* (2010) and

Brave (2012), which include the most recent additions to the Disney Princess team, Rapunzel and Merida. Rapunzel and Merida, using type as an organizing principle, differ from previous Disney princesses such as Snow White, Ariel, Jasmine, and Cinderella in that their stories reflect new concepts about gender expectations in modern society. Both films emphasize the key conflict between the traditional, domestic, and dependent image of women and the modern, industrious, and independent image, reflecting women's changing positions in society (Saladino, 2014).

Additionally, songs such as Meghan Trainor's "Superwoman" and Alicia Keys' "Superwoman" celebrate the strength and resilience of women, while also highlighting the expectations placed upon them. These songs, through their empowering lyrics and themes, reflect the characteristics of the SWS and reinforce the societal notion that women must be perfect in all aspects of their lives. By celebrating the perseverance and capabilities of women, these cultural artifacts can inspire but also contribute to the internalization of the SWS, making women feel that they must live up to these high standards.

While the SWS can impact women across various demographics (Chakraborty, 2023; Chin, 2010; Delap, 2004), certain groups may be more vulnerable due to cultural, societal, or economic factors. African American women, for example, often face unique stressors related to racial discrimination and cultural expectations of strength and resilience (Parks & Hayman, 2024; Williams et al., 2007; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). Additionally, women in high-position careers or those with significant caregiving responsibilities may also be more susceptible to the consequences of the SWS (Lewis et al., 2023).

For African American women, various terms are associated with this schema, including Superwoman Syndrome, Strong Black Woman, Mammy, Sapphire, Babymama, Jezebel, Chickenhead, Welfare Queen, and Matriarch (Harris-Lacewell, 2001). Media representations play a dual role: they reflect the societal pressures women face and shape how women perceive their roles and responsibilities. By depicting and celebrating the superwoman ideal, films and music can perpetuate the unrealistic expectations that women strive to meet, reinforcing the pressures associated with the (SWS). This

continuous cycle of portrayal and internalization highlights the importance of addressing and challenging these media representations to foster healthier and more realistic standards for women.

### **\* Effects of the Superwoman Schema**

#### **\* Psychological Effects**

Women adhering to the SWS are at a higher risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues (Knighton et al., 2022; Leath et al., 2022; McDaniel et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2007). The relentless pursuit of perfection and the inability to delegate tasks can lead to significant mental health challenges (Nazari, 2022). Symptoms such as emotional eating (Volpe et al., 2024), substance abuse (McDaniel et al., 2023), anxiety, and depression are common due to the constant pressure to perform and meet high expectations (Giscombé & Lobel, 2005).

The expectation for Black women to consistently display strength, suppress their emotions, and prioritize caregiving over their own self-care significantly impacts their mental health (Erving, McKinnon, Thomas Tobin, et al., 2024). This relentless drive often results in elevated levels of stress and burnout, which further exacerbates mental

health issues (Abrams et al., 2014). Addressing these challenges is crucial for promoting mental well-being among women affected by the SWS.

#### **\* Physical Health Effects or Consequences**

Chronic stress associated with the SWS can lead to significant physical health issues, including cardiovascular disease (Abrams, 2015; Liddell et al., 2016) and hypertension (Ahmad & Oparil, 2017). Prolonged stress is linked to a higher incidence of these conditions, contributing to long-term health problems and shorter life expectancy (Statistics, 2005). The physical toll of maintaining the Superwoman persona can be substantial, leading to these serious health consequences.

The SWS can also increase the risk of developing diabetes (Mokdad et al., 2003) and eating disorders (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Kumanyika, 1989), further exacerbating physical health issues. The relentless drive to excel in various roles puts immense pressure on women, leading to chronic health conditions that affect their overall well-being (Erving, McKinnon, Van Dyke, et al., 2024; Woods-Giscombe et al., 2019). Studies have shown that women with SWS are more likely to experience higher incidences of

cardiovascular issues and hypertension due to the chronic stress they endure (Martin et al., 2022; Perez et al., 2023).

#### **\* Social and Relational Effects**

The relentless demands of excelling in multiple roles often lead to strained personal relationships (Corbin et al., 2018). Women who adopt the SWS struggle to allocate sufficient time and energy for meaningful social interactions and necessary self-care. This imbalance can create barriers to building and maintaining supportive connections with friends and family, resulting in feelings of being overwhelmed and underappreciated (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

Emotional detachment can further exacerbate the psychological effects associated with the schema, contributing to increased stress and anxiety (Thomas et al., 2008). Over time, these dynamics can foster a cycle where the pressure to perform perfectly inhibits authentic relationships and support networks, ultimately diminishing women's overall mental health and quality of life. Addressing these issues is vital for promoting healthier relational patterns and enhancing emotional well-being among women navigating the complexities of the Superwoman role.

#### **\* Impact on Personal Relationships**

The SWS has a substantial impact on personal relationships, frequently causing tension with family and friends. Women who follow this paradigm stress excelling in various roles—such as being excellent employers, mothers, and community members—over maintaining strong personal relationships (Hart & Kenny, 1997). This obsessive quest of perfection gives individuals little time and energy for meaningful social relationships, leading to feelings of loneliness and alienation. The constant juggling of obligations can cause emotional distance, making it difficult for these women to maintain supportive and loving relationships (Watson-Singleton, 2017). Over time, a lack of balance and genuine connection can degrade the quality of their connections, leading to feelings of loneliness and a weakened support network (Porter, 2006).

#### **\* Barriers to Seeking Help**

One of the critical barriers faced by women embodying the SWS is the reluctance to seek help (Levy & O'Hara, 2010; Nelson, Gebretensay, et al., 2024). This hesitation stems from a fear of appearing weak or incapable, which conflicts with the internalized need to be seen as strong and self-reliant. The societal and

cultural expectations that drive the SWS compel women to manage all aspects of their lives independently, often at the expense of their mental and physical health. This reluctance to ask for assistance not only exacerbates their stress levels but also prevents them from accessing the support that could alleviate some of their burdens. The fear of judgment and the stigma associated with needing help reinforce their isolation and can lead to further deterioration in their overall well-being (Fulton, 2018).

#### **\* Cultural and Population Differences in SWS Manifestation**

The manifestation of the SWS can vary significantly across different cultures, with unique challenges faced by marginalized groups like African American women (Parks & Hayman, 2024). The intersection of race, gender, and cultural expectations profoundly influences how women experience and embody the SWS. For African American women, cultural expectations of strength and resilience impose additional burdens as they strive to meet societal ideals (Knighton et al., 2022). These expectations often compel them to project an image of unwavering capability, sometimes at the expense of their emotional well-being. Understanding these cultural

variations is imperative for developing targeted interventions that address the specific needs and challenges faced by women from different cultural backgrounds (Erving, McKinnon, Van Dyke, et al., 2024).

#### **\* Socioeconomic Influences**

The SWS also manifests differently among women from various socioeconomic backgrounds, significantly influencing their responses to its demands and expectations. Women in lower socioeconomic brackets may face a range of additional stressors, including financial instability, limited access to healthcare, and insufficient support systems. These factors can exacerbate the pressures associated with the Superwoman role, leading to heightened stress and feelings of inadequacy (Erving, McKinnon, Thomas Tobin, et al., 2024; Levy & O'Hara, 2010). Conversely, women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have more resources to manage these pressures but still struggle with the relentless pursuit of perfection in multiple roles. Examining these socioeconomic influences is needed for understanding the full scope of the SWS and for developing effective support mechanisms tailored to the diverse experiences of women from

different socioeconomic backgrounds.

### **\* Developing Interventions for Mitigating SWS**

Addressing the psychological impacts of the SWS can be effectively achieved through various therapeutic approaches.

### **\* Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)**

Enhancing psychological well-being during periods of high stress or burnout involves fostering healthier thinking patterns and behaviors, which can significantly contribute to achieving a more balanced life (Bagheri et al., 2019). When individuals experience intense stress or reach the point of burnout, their mental and emotional resilience is often compromised, making it difficult to maintain a positive outlook and effective coping mechanisms. By promoting constructive thought processes and encouraging adaptive behaviors, individuals can better manage stressors and reduce the negative impact on their mental health. This approach not only aids in immediate stress relief but also builds long-term resilience, enabling individuals to handle future challenges more effectively. Consequently, adopting healthier cognitive and behavioral strategies can lead to improved

overall well-being, greater life satisfaction, and a more harmonious balance between personal and professional responsibilities (Grensman et al., 2018).

### **\* Mindfulness practices**

Including Meditation and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can significantly reduce stress and enhance emotional regulation by encouraging present-moment awareness and acceptance (Marchand, 2012). These practices involve focusing attention on the present experience without judgment, which helps individuals recognize and disengage from negative thought patterns that contribute to stress and emotional distress. By cultivating a non-reactive awareness of thoughts and feelings, meditation and MBSR promote a sense of calm and clarity, allowing individuals to respond to stressors more effectively. This heightened awareness and acceptance can also play a crucial role in alleviating symptoms of depression and other psychological symptoms. By fostering a mindful approach to daily life, individuals can develop a greater sense of emotional balance and resilience, ultimately leading to improved mental health and well-being (Schuwer & Lewis, 2016).

Additionally, stress management techniques, such as

relaxation exercises, group therapy, time management skills, empowerment, and self-care routines, are important in mitigating the mental health challenges associated with SWS (Rose & Mustafa, 2018; Ulman, 2000).

### **\* Community and Organizational Support**

Community and organizational support play a crucial role in alleviating the pressures of the SWS. Community-based support groups provide a platform for women to share experiences, gain emotional support, and develop coping strategies. Organizational changes, such as flexible work policies, access to childcare, and promoting a culture that values work-life balance, can significantly reduce the stressors associated with SWS. Encouraging open dialogues about mental health and establishing mentorship programs can also help women navigate the demands of multiple roles without feeling isolated or overwhelmed (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999; Payne et al., 2018).

### **\* Promoting Balanced Lifestyles**

Promoting balanced lifestyles is vital in helping women manage the expectations of the SWS without compromising their well-being. Strategies include advocating for the delegation of tasks, encouraging self-

compassion, and setting realistic goals. Women should be encouraged to prioritize their physical and mental health by integrating regular exercise, adequate sleep, and healthy eating into their routines (Chinn et al., 2023). Educational initiatives can raise awareness about the importance of balance and self-care, helping women understand that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. By fostering an environment that supports balanced living, women can better manage the demands of their roles while maintaining their overall health and happiness (Matuska & Christiansen, 2008; Min et al., 2013).

### **\* Conclusion**

The Superwoman Schema (SWS) is a psychological framework in which women strive to excel across multiple roles, including career, family, and social obligations. This relentless pursuit often leads to chronic stress, resulting in adverse mental and physical health outcomes. Women adhering to the SWS are at an increased risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues due to the relentless pressure to meet high expectations. Physically, the chronic stress associated with SWS can lead to significant health issues such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes. Socially, the demands

of excelling in multiple roles often lead to strained personal relationships, emotional detachment, and a diminished support network, contributing negative consequences.

Understanding the SWS is crucial for informing policies, mental health support, and societal change. Recognizing the unrealistic expectations placed on women allows policymakers and mental health professionals to develop targeted interventions to alleviate the adverse effects of SWS. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness practices, and stress management techniques can be effective in helping women manage the mental health challenges associated with SWS. Community-based support groups and organizational changes, such as flexible work policies and access to childcare, can significantly reduce the stressors associated with this schema. Additionally, promoting a culture that values work-life balance and open dialogues about mental health can help women navigate the demands of multiple roles without feeling isolated or overwhelmed.

Despite the limited research on the origins of the Superwoman Schema (SWS) in Middle Eastern countries and the cultural differences between these regions and others, it is crucial to address these gaps in order

to promote healthier relational dynamics and improve emotional well-being among women managing the demands of the Superwoman role. Further research is necessary to examine the psychological consequences of the SWS in various cultural contexts and to assess women's willingness to engage in psychotherapy or counseling as a means to alleviate psychological symptoms and enhance overall well-being.

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