ÁREA TEMÁTICA: Empreendedorismo e Startups

UNPACKING THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN THE TRIPLE WORKDAY AND BURNOUT IN BRAZILIAN FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

ABSTRACT: The triple workday faced by women entrepreneurs involves balancing multiple responsibilities—household chores, childcare, and business duties—creating significant challenges that impact their quality of life and mental health, particularly leading to burnout. Female entrepreneurs also encounter gender-related barriers, sexism, difficulties accessing credit, and limited entrepreneurial training and support networks. This study aims to analyze the relationship between the triple workday and burnout among female entrepreneurs. Using convenience sampling, 8 married women entrepreneurs with children from various sectors were selected for semi-structured interviews. Content analysis (Bardin, 2011), units of meaning analysis (Moreira et al., 2005), and Qualitative Synthesis (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010) were employed. The analysis revealed five key categories: "exhaustion," "family-work conflict," "lack of support network," "less suffering from labor conditions," and "lack of entrepreneurial training." The most cited category was exhaustion, highlighting the physical and emotional overload from balancing work, family, and entrepreneurial responsibilities, which negatively affects mental health and quality of life. These findings emphasize the significant impact of the triple workday on women entrepreneurs' mental well-being and quality of life, compounded by gender-related challenges and wage disparities. The results underscore the importance of incorporating intersectionality theory when studying these phenomena, as it helps reveal the complex and overlapping nature of the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Addressing these issues requires gendersensitive policies and structural support to promote equity and improve work conditions, particularly for vulnerable or minority women.

Keywords: Triple workday; Entrepreneurship; Burnout.

RESUMO: A tripla jornada de trabalho enfrentada pelas mulheres empresárias envolve o equilíbrio de múltiplas responsabilidades - tarefas domésticas, cuidados com os filhos e deveres empresariais – criando desafios significativos que têm impacto na sua qualidade de vida e saúde mental, levando particularmente ao esgotamento. As mulheres empresárias também enfrentam barreiras relacionadas com o género, sexismo, dificuldades no acesso ao crédito e formação empresarial limitada e redes de apoio. Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar a relação entre a tripla jornada de trabalho e o burnout entre mulheres empreendedoras. Utilizando amostragem de conveniência, foram selecionadas 8 mulheres empreendedoras casadas e com filhos de diversos setores para entrevistas semiestruturadas. Foram utilizadas análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 2011), análise de unidades de significado (Moreira et al., 2005) e Síntese Qualitativa (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). A análise revelou cinco categorias principais: "exaustão", "conflito família-trabalho", "falta de rede de apoio", "menos sofrimento com as condições de trabalho" e "falta de formação empreendedora". A categoria mais citada foi a exaustão, destacando a sobrecarga física e emocional proveniente do equilíbrio entre trabalho, família e responsabilidades empresariais, o que afeta negativamente a saúde mental e a qualidade de vida. A tripla jornada de trabalho impacta negativamente o bem-estar mental e a qualidade de vida das mulheres empresárias, exacerbada por desafios de gênero e disparidades salariais. A teoria da interseccionalidade é essencial para entender essas barreiras complexas. É necessário adotar políticas e apoio estrutural sensíveis ao gênero para melhorar as condições de trabalho, especialmente para mulheres vulneráveis ou de minorias.

Palavras-chave: Tripla Jornada; Empreendedorismo; Esgotamento.

Introduction

The integration of women into the labor market has been a topic studied for many decades, as it is a highly significant process that has revolutionized social organization. The entry of women into the workforce marked an important milestone in the transformation of socioeconomic structure and gender relations (Siqueira & Samparo, 2017). Over time, various changes have occurred in the labor context, both in terms of public policies and social and cultural transformations. One of these changes was the fight for women's rights, as they sought equality of opportunities and better working conditions. The feminist movement played a fundamental role in this process by questioning gender stereotypes and advocating for equal pay and access to positions of power (Tedesco & Souza, 2020; Astorga, 2019; Blau & Khan, 2017).

Despite the advances made, gender inequalities persist in the labor market. Studies show that women continue to face barriers and obstacles in achieving leadership positions and receiving salaries equivalent to those of men (World Economic Forum, 2020). Reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) and research from the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2019) further support this claim. Additionally, domestic and family responsibilities often disproportionately fall on women, resulting in an additional workload known as the "triple workday." Studies by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2020) and the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV, 2018) highlight this challenging reality that women face in their professional and personal lives.

However, despite the widespread promotion of entrepreneurship as a solution for work-life balance in the Global South, which encompasses economically disadvantaged regions outside of Europe and North America, the benefits extend beyond mere economic growth. Economically, entrepreneurship generates wealth and employment opportunities, while socially, it contributes to welfare and can foster confidence and status (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). This perception has led governments, policymakers, and international donor organizations to view entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic and social progress, portraying it as a pathway to independence and self-reliance. For women, particularly in regions with conservative social structures, entrepreneurship represents a means of achieving financial autonomy and independence from male family members (Corrêa et al., 2022; Naudé & Minniti, 2010; Neneh & Waithaka, 2019).

In these contexts, women's entrepreneurship faces unique challenges shaped by patriarchal norms and cultural barriers. Despite constitutional declarations of gender equality in many countries, women still encounter significant obstacles to their entrepreneurial endeavors. Patriarchal systems reinforce male dominance and restrict women's access to resources and opportunities, hindering their empowerment. Unlike their male counterparts who may be motivated by business opportunities, women often turn to entrepreneurship out of economic necessity, highlighting the socio-economic disparities that drive their engagement in business ventures (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020; Corrêa et al., 2022; Neneh & Waithaka, 2019; Sarmah et al., 2022).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for 2023 indicates that 67% of Brazilians are involved in entrepreneurship. Among them, 42 million people are already entrepreneurs, and 51 million people aim to start a business within the next 3 years. Thus, Brazil ranks as the 10th country in the world with the most entrepreneurs (GEM, 2023). The rate of women entrepreneurs in Brazil reached 43.5% (GEM, 2023). This means that for every 10 entrepreneurs in the country, nearly 5 are women. This represents a significant increase compared to previous years, when the rate was 34.8% in 2019 (GEM, 2020). It is worth noting that Brazil ranks seventh globally in the

number of women entrepreneurs, highlighting the vibrant ecosystem of women-led businesses in the country. However, patriarchal roots still persist in Brazilian society. Despite the changing times and women no longer being confined to traditional family roles, they continue to bear greater responsibility in balancing work and family obligations than men. Consequently, many women find themselves juggling multiple roles, serving as both the primary caregiver and breadwinner for their families (Nunes & Sanches, 2022; Corrêa et al., 2022).

In light of these challenges, many women turn to entrepreneurship as a means of advancing their inclusion and empowerment in the Brazilian labor market. This pathway offers them greater control over their financial independence, creates opportunities for themselves and others, and allows them to challenge traditional gender roles within the workforce. The workload burden faced by women, commonly referred to as the triple workday, is extensively studied in recent Brazilian scientific literature. This concept describes the additional burden of balancing paid work, household chores, and family care, reflecting the complex demands women manage daily, which can lead to an unequal distribution of work and adversely affect their health, well-being, and professional opportunities (Santos et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2021; Soares et al., 2021; Oliveira & Baeta, 2021). Paid work includes labor activities performed outside the home, characterized by fixed schedules and specific demands, while household work involves tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry, often performed without compensation. Family care refers to supporting children, elderly family members, or other relatives needing assistance. These overlapping responsibilities frequently result in overload and exhaustion. Many women perceive entrepreneurship as a viable solution for better managing work-life balance and integrating their varied responsibilities more effectively (Senicato et al., 2016: Sant'Anna et al., 2022; Wach et al., 2021). The study's findings underscore the importance of applying intersectionality theory to fully understand these dynamics, revealing the intertwined nature of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and highlighting the need for gender-sensitive policies and structural support to address these issues comprehensively.

Specially in countries with low standards of living, the barriers faced by women must be carefully considered, especially because much of the literature on entrepreneurship is derived from Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies. Acknowledging these inequalities is crucial for understanding the unique challenges that women encounter in entrepreneurial endeavors within diverse socio-economic contexts. In many low-income countries, women confront systemic barriers such as limited access to education, financial resources, and support networks, as well as cultural and societal norms that restrict their participation in the workforce and business ownership. These barriers not only hinder women's economic empowerment but also perpetuate cycles of poverty and gender inequality (Neneh & Waithaka, 2019).

Therefore, it is essential to adopt a culturally sensitive and contextually relevant approach to address the specific needs and aspirations of women entrepreneurs in these regions. By recognizing and dismantling the structural barriers that impede women's entrepreneurial success, policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders can foster an environment conducive to inclusive economic growth and gender equity. Empowering women to overcome these obstacles not only enhances their individual livelihoods but also contributes to broader socio-economic development and sustainable progress in low-income countries. Thus, it is imperative to prioritize gender-inclusive policies, programs, and initiatives that facilitate women's

entrepreneurship and advance their socio-economic participation and leadership in all sectors of society (Neneh & Waithaka, 2019).

In line with the previous reflections, it becomes relevant to understand the interconnections between the triple workday of women and the phenomenon of Burnout. In the scope of a correlational quantitative study, Salvaro and Mariano (2021) explored the association between the workload burden experienced by women and the manifestation of Burnout. The results obtained indicated a significant relationship between the intensity of the triple workday and levels of emotional exhaustion and physical fatigue. Furthermore, it was observed that the lack of social support and appropriate resources to deal with such workload exacerbated Burnout symptoms.

In summary, the mental health of women entrepreneurs is a critical area of concern, particularly given the undeniable impact of the triple workload on their professional and personal lives. Many women entrepreneurs grapple with stress, worklife balance issues, and isolation, which significantly affect their mental well-being. It is crucial that these entrepreneurs receive adequate support and encouragement to address their mental health needs, alongside the creation of favorable conditions at both organizational and societal levels. Ensuring the mental health of women entrepreneurs is vital not only for their personal well-being but also for the overall success and sustainability of their businesses (Fernandez-Niño et al., 2018; Grosser & McCarthy, 2018; Silva et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, this research aims to explore the intersection of gender dynamics and entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing resources, overcoming social barriers, and achieving sustainable business growth amid the demands of the triple workday. By examining the complex interplay between societal expectations, cultural norms, and economic opportunities, the study seeks to shed light on the factors influencing the entrepreneurial landscape for women. Additionally, it aims to identify strategies and interventions that can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in entrepreneurship, thereby advancing gender equality and economic empowerment.

Method

To gain a comprehensive understanding of women entrepreneurs' experiences and practices, we conducted interpretive qualitative research guided by a feminist social constructivist paradigm (Silverman, 2020). This approach allowed us to explore the nuances and intricacies of the process among women entrepreneurs, in line with previous suggestions advocating for qualitative methods to study this topic (Lans et al., 2011). Our qualitative design also responds to the call for more feminist-sensitive research (Kelly & McAdam, 2022), aiming to capture women's experiences during times of significant challenges.

Sample

The total of 8 women entrepreneurs were selected by convenience considering various criteria such as their industry sectors, level of entrepreneurial experience, geographical locations, and diversity in business models. In particular, we stipulated that women entrepreneurs must have been overseeing a business for a minimum of two years to be eligible for participation in the present study. This sample size facilitated the development of a comprehensive understanding of the process among women entrepreneurs; moreover, we posited that the inclusion of additional participants would unlikely uncover new insights pertaining to the research inquiries (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). A fictitious name was assigned to each of them, and Table 1 presents the description of each participant.

Table 1

Description of Study Participants

Name	Brief professional history	Brief business description
Eliane	44 years old, married, 2 children. Currently pursuing Biomedicine and holds a degree in Aesthetic Technician. Works as an esthetician.	Owner of an aesthetic clinic for 16 years. Chose this field due to her passion for aesthetics and beauty. Has her own space for the clinic.
Luciana	45 years old, married, 2 children. Holds a degree in Psychology and Esthetics. Works as a psychoanalyst, paramedical micropigmenter, and manages a pancake restaurant.	Manages a pancake restaurant for 15 years. The idea was initially proposed by her husband, but she significantly contributes to the management and administration.
Maria Cristina	48 years old, married, 2 daughters. Graduated in Administration. Works in the Home Decor/Bed, Bath, and Beyond industry.	Owner of a home decor shop for 7 years. Chose this field due to her affinity for decoration, with her husband's support in management.
Gabriela	39 years old, married, and the mother of 2 children. Graduated in Fashion and Interior Design. Owner of a boutique specializing in fashion and decoration.	Works in the field for 10 years bringing contemporary trends to the store.
Mariana	42 years old, married, mother of 3 children. Holds a degree in Marketing and Advertising. Entrepreneur in the events sector, promoting children's parties.	Founded her company 8 years ago, as she always enjoyed hosting events and welcoming people at home. Has her mother-inlaw's help in organizing parties.

Lúcia	45 years old, married, 2 children. Graduated in Administration and Accounting. Entrepreneur in the financial consulting sector.	Owns an accounting and financial advisory company, assisting small businesses for 12 years.			
Daniela	37 years old, married, mother of 2 daughters. Graduated in Food Engineering. Owner of a confectionery specializing in gourmet sweets.	Always enjoyed cooking, started informally selling sweets at home, and opened the company 5 years ago.			
Cristiane	45 years old, married, 3 children. Graduated in Marketing. Entrepreneur in the decoration and gifts sector.	Works in the field for 6 years, offering personalized products.			

Instruments

To conduct the interviews, a structured script with guiding questions was employed, focusing on the family-work balance and the division of household tasks. The methodological approach aimed to extract relevant information about the participants' professional backgrounds, motivation for entrepreneurship, market experiences, and challenges faced. The use of this script ensured the collection of consistent and appropriate data for a detailed analysis of these women's entrepreneurial trajectories.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Firstly, the research project was analysed by an Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human beings. Our research methodology was guided by feminist epistemologies, employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs to explore their perspectives on entrepreneurship (Kelly & McAdam, 2022). Following the approach outlined by Lans et al. (2011), participants were asked to detail their daily tasks, experiences and motivations. Due to the geographic location of most participants, interviews were conducted online, with all sessions recorded with participants' consent. Each interview, lasting between 45 to 90 minutes, adhered to ethical principles, with participants provided consent forms outlining study aims, confidentiality assurances, and their right to withdraw or decline any questions (Groenewald, 2004).

Thus, with the responses obtained for each question, the accounts were subjected to content analysis: the technique of elaboration and analysis of units of meaning by Moreira, Porto, and Simões (2005), and Qualitative Synthesis (Major & Savin-Baden 2010), which recommend a deep and comprehensive analysis, aiming to identify patterns, meanings, and relationships in the collected data. Utilizing the phases outlined by Grbich (2007) for qualitative data analysis, the data acquired from each case was scrutinized post-interview. Drawing on the suggestions of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), we formulated an initial codebook grounded in the existing literature on challenges faced by women entrepreneurs who live a triple workday. This codebook was then utilized to compare and contrast the emerging themes. We systematically organized these themes pertaining to the challenges of women entrepreneurs based on our theoretical framework (refer to Table 2).

Results

From the thorough and attentive analysis of the interviews, it was possible to perceive that many of the interviewees share similar experiences that permeate female entrepreneurship among married women with children, which are synthesized in Table 2.

The analysis of the results employed a structured approach grounded in qualitative content analysis principles. Initially, the data were transcribed and systematically organized for comprehensive review. Each interview transcript was scrutinized to uncover both manifest and latent content, which involved identifying units of meaning and consolidating them into manageable segments for detailed analysis. The data were then abstracted and categorized based on recurring themes and patterns identified across the interviews, with specific segments of text coded according to their relevance to predefined categories and themes aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework. To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, credibility was upheld through meticulous documentation of the analysis process and peer debriefing sessions to validate interpretations and conclusions. Dependability was achieved by consistently applying the analysis procedures and documenting any modifications made during the process.

Table 2
Categories Identified from Interview Analysis

Category	Definition	Lines	F	AF	References
Exhaustion	Feeling of extreme fatigue and overload due to the demands of the business.	"I get home and there are days when I don't want to talk to anyone because people are on my mind all the time, I just want to go into the room and sleep." - Cristiane "I haven't had many hobbies lately, when I have free time I just want to sleep." - Lúcia	8	11	Campos, et al. (2020); Pedezzi & Rodrigues (2020); Silva et al., (2020); Vieira (2022); Sotti et al. (2023); Araújo (2022); De Clercq et al., (2022); Neneh (2022); Soenen et al., (2019)

Family-work conflict	Challenges and strategies to balance business demands with family responsibilitie s.	"There have been some tough moments, with work invading family moments, like when we were traveling and I was responding to customer messages, but then I realized I needed to ask for help. Sharing tasks with my husband and accepting a helping hand from my mother helped me balance things and enjoy family time more." - Maria Cristina "It was very difficult at the beginning because I dedicated myself 200%, I missed out on a lot of things I enjoyed with my family because I was dealing with store issues." - Eliane	7	9	da Costa (2018); Bandeira et al. (2021); Barbosa et al. (2021); Silva et al., (2020); Fernandes et al. (2020); Vieira (2022); Sotti et al. (2023); Poggesi et al., (2019); De Clercq et al., (2022)
Lack of support network	Absence of support and encourageme nt from the social circle, especially friends.	"My family still helps me, stays at the counter when needed, he (husband) helps me with financial matters, but I can't expect that from my friends, for example." - Mariana "I expected that because it's a niche that many of my friends frequent, they would help me, like in promotion or even buying from me, but that was very rare at the beginning." - Maria Cristina	5	8	Alperstedt (2014); Bandeira et al. (2021); Ferreira et al. (2022); Silva et al. (2020); Vieira (2022); Franzke et al., (2022); Fenech et al. (2019)

Less suffering from labor conditions	Comparison between entrepreneuri al experience and conventional employment, highlighting significant differences.	"So, when I worked a regular job, I was much less fulfilled than I am today [] I couldn't see my kids' school presentations and I received much less than I do now." - Eliane "Even though it's the same field I worked in as an employee, having your own business is very different because you only sell what you like, you don't have to lie to the customer and say 'look how beautiful' when in fact you think it's awful." - Gabriela	4	4	Senicato, et al. (2016). Bandeira et al. (2021)
Lack of entrepreneuri al training.	Identification of the area or aspect of the business that requires more rigorous and strategic planning.	"What I found most difficult at the beginning was the financial aspect because when you work as an employee, you have a retirement plan and a bunch of other things. When you have your own business, you have to opt for a private retirement plan, for example, so understanding that profit isn't always profit, that it will be reinvested in your improvement or retirement, for example." - Daniela; " I think controlling expenses was a very difficult part. Understanding the amount of inventory and the price I would put on things, how much I could lower the price of the product." - Cristiane	3	4	Alperstedt, et al. (2014); Bandeira et al. (2021); Ferreira et al. (2022); Machado et al. (2017); Naguib (2024); Meyer & Hamilton (2020); Corrêa et al., (2022); Gavigan et al., (2020);

Subtitles: F = Frequency; AF: Absolute Frequency

Discussion

The analysis of the interview corpus led to the creation of six categories: Lack of support network, Lesser suffering from labor conditions, Exhaustion, Lack of entrepreneurial training, Family-work conflict, and Personal motivations. The most frequent category is exhaustion, addressing statements about the lack of free time among these women, as well as the absence of hobbies. According to the literature, despite exhaustion being very common on women entrepreneurs, it often leads to burnout among women entrepreneurs due to the demanding and extensive nature of their workday, which includes administrative tasks like inventory management, budgeting, and financial transactions, and so others (Senthilnathan & Chandrasekhar, 2023; Torrès et al., 2022).

Considering exhaustion related to the triple workday, the focus of this study, many interviewees reported having assistance not only from their husbands but also from their children and/or a housekeeper for household tasks (Sotti et al., 2023). Bandeira et al. (2021), however, observe the opposite: much of the exhaustion experienced by women entrepreneurs also stems from their household responsibilities. This counterpoint may arise because the interviewed women already have older children who bring a greater level of independence regarding transportation and even household chores compared to younger children of school age. Another important point to consider is that a significant portion of the interviewees have an income of R\$15,000 or more per month, which facilitates hiring someone to take care of household tasks. This may not be the reality for women entrepreneurs with lower incomes.

According to Neneh (2018), Family-work conflict (FWC) has a detrimental impact on the performance of women-owned businesses. The research findings suggest that both bonding social capital and bridging social capital can mitigate the negative effects of FWC on the performance of women-owned businesses. Specifically, women-owned businesses characterized by high levels of bonding/bridging social capital experience less impact from FWC compared to those with low levels of bonding/bridging social capital. The study concludes with a discussion on the implications and policy measures that can be implemented to leverage the potential and capabilities of women entrepreneurs in developing countries, thereby fostering economic growth and development.

Another finding is the lack of entrepreneurial training, as noted by Sotti et al. (2023), which includes management and organizational skills. This gap reflects insufficient government investment in women's entrepreneurial education. For instance, although the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae) offers numerous resources, it provides only one course specifically for female entrepreneurs, which is more motivational than practical. Additionally, newcomers face challenges such as inexperience, financial concerns, absence of role models, and limited support. Entering male-dominated sectors is also a cited obstacle. The literature further highlights difficulties in accessing resources, leading many women to depend on their husbands' financial support, which may deter them from exploring alternative ways to sustain their businesses (Bandeira et al., 2021).

The least frequent category was "lack of entrepreneurial training". It is worth noting that the participants have a college degree or are pursuing one, and their businesses are related to their previous professional experiences. It is imperative to emphasize that the debate about the need for specific entrepreneurial education for women would be much more frequent, especially for those in situations of vulnerability and inserted in contexts of social inequality (Senthilnathan & Chandrasekhar, 2023).

Final Considerations

The present study successfully achieved its objective by comprehensively and systematically investigating the various facets of female entrepreneurship, revealing significant insights into the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. The detailed analysis of the interviews provided a deeper understanding of these women's experiences, highlighting issues such as the lack of social support, workload burden, and financial obstacles.

The findings align with existing literature, indicating that the experiences reported by women entrepreneurs in this research are consistent with the challenges and trends identified in previous studies. The results corroborate previous findings that point to the lack of social support, and workload burden as recurrent issues in the context of female entrepreneurship.

Issues such as the lack of entrepreneurship training specifically tailored to women, documented in the literature, were not identified in this study, indicating a potential vulnerability related to the socioeconomic status of the participants, or indicating that, when it comes to entrepreneurial competences, gender does not influence. Together, the results highlight that the experiences of the researched women entrepreneurs may vary significantly regarding the challenges and opportunities encountered. This suggests the need for a more individualized and sensitive approach to the particularities of each context, reinforcing the importance of policies and programs aimed at the inclusion and support of entrepreneurs in different socioeconomic situations. Among the limitations of this study are the specific sample, characterized by a high level of education, and the predominance of white women with above-average purchasing power compared to the average female population in Brazil. Moreover, issues related to race or social class were not considered, limiting the understanding of the results to a more diversified context. Caution is recommended in interpreting the findings, considering the need for future research that encompasses a broader and more diversified sampling, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of women entrepreneurs in different sociodemographic contexts.

In conclusion, it is imperative to recognize that the persistence of gender inequalities in entrepreneurship perpetuates barriers to full economic and social development. As a society, we must commit to creating inclusive and equitable environments that empower all women to achieve their full potential as entrepreneurs and leaders.

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