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Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis of Marital Burnout Based on Work–Family Conflict, Emotional Exhaustion, Spousal Support, and Psychological Flexibility

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The present study aimed to examine the predictive roles of work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion in marital burnout and to determine whether spousal support and psychological flexibility moderate these associations among married employed adults.

Methods and Materials: This cross-sectional correlational study was conducted among 412 married employed adults residing in Canada. Participants completed standardized measures of marital burnout, work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, perceived spousal support, and psychological flexibility. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients and hierarchical moderated multiple regression. Demographic and occupational covariates were entered in the first step, work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion in the second step, spousal support and psychological flexibility in the third step, and four interaction terms in the final step. Significant interactions were examined using simple-slope analyses at low, mean, and high levels of the moderators.

Findings: Work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion were significant positive predictors of marital burnout, whereas spousal support and psychological flexibility were significant negative predictors. The final regression model explained 61.1% of the variance in marital burnout, $R^2 = .611$, adjusted $R^2 = .598$, $p < .001$. Emotional exhaustion showed the strongest positive association with marital burnout ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), followed by work–family conflict ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). Spousal support ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .001$) were inversely associated with marital burnout. Significant interactions were observed for work–family conflict × spousal support ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .002$), work–family conflict × psychological flexibility ($\beta = -.08$, $p = .024$), emotional exhaustion × spousal support ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .038$), and emotional exhaustion × psychological flexibility ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .001$).

Conclusion: Marital burnout was associated with both occupational-family strain and emotional depletion, while greater spousal support and psychological flexibility were associated with lower burnout and attenuated the strength of these relationships.

Keywords: *Marital burnout; Work–family conflict; Emotional exhaustion; Spousal support; Psychological flexibility; Moderated regression*

1. Introduction

Marriage is a central interpersonal context in adult life through which individuals experience intimacy, emotional security, companionship, mutual caregiving, and shared responsibility. Nevertheless, marital relationships are continuously influenced by pressures originating both within and outside the family system. Contemporary couples frequently manage simultaneous occupational, financial, parenting, caregiving, and relational demands, making the boundary between work and family increasingly permeable. When demands accumulate without sufficient recovery and interpersonal resources, emotional energy available for the marital relationship may gradually diminish, potentially creating detachment, frustration, disappointment, and marital burnout. Marital burnout refers to a progressive state of physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion within an intimate relationship that develops when recurrent demands and unmet expectations outweigh available relational resources. Recent research demonstrates that relational burnout cannot be understood exclusively as a consequence of conflict between spouses because it may develop through prolonged exposure to stressors that originate in employment, caregiving, parenting, and other social roles. For example, relational inequity and repeated sacrifice without sufficient appreciation have been associated with burnout within romantic relationships, indicating that chronic depletion may emerge when relational investments are experienced as insufficiently reciprocated (Özdemir, 2025). Similarly, internet-related behavioral disruption has been associated with couple burnout, illustrating how pressures external to the immediate dyadic interaction can erode marital connectedness over time (Bagheri et al., 2023).

Marital burnout is clinically important because it may represent an intermediate condition between persistent relational distress and more severe outcomes such as emotional disengagement, contemplation of separation, and divorce. Qualitative evidence from women approaching marital separation suggests that prolonged relational dissatisfaction is frequently characterized by cumulative emotional disconnection, unmet psychological needs, unresolved conflict, and erosion of perceived companionship (Ghanbarian et al., 2024). Intervention studies also demonstrate that marital burnout is sufficiently malleable to respond to psychologically informed treatment. Enhanced cognitive-behavioral couple therapy has produced improvements in emotional self-regulation together with reductions in couple burnout among distressed couples (Adl et al., 2024), while acceptance- and commitment-based interventions have demonstrated beneficial effects on marital burnout and related indicators of intimacy and forgiveness (Najibzadegan et al., 2024). Comparable reductions in marital boredom have been observed after acceptance and commitment, emotion-focused, and paradoxical interventions among women experiencing marital conflict (Hashemizadeh et al., 2023). These findings suggest that marital burnout involves both environmental pressures and modifiable psychological processes, making identification of its occupational, emotional, interpersonal, and flexibility-related predictors particularly important.

One of the most consequential pressures on contemporary marital relationships is work–family conflict. Work–family conflict develops when demands associated with employment and family roles become mutually incompatible, such that participation in one domain interferes with effective participation in the other. Recent bibliometric evidence indicates that work–family balance has become an increasingly prominent interdisciplinary research field as changing work structures, dual-earner households, digital connectivity, and expanding caregiving responsibilities have intensified interdependence between occupational and family functioning (Yan et al., 2025). Work–family conflict may be time-based when time allocated to employment limits family participation, strain-based when occupational stress is transferred into family interactions, or behavior-based when conduct adaptive in one role becomes ineffective in another. Studies of women employed in higher education demonstrate that simultaneous institutional responsibilities, domestic expectations, and gendered caregiving demands can generate substantial work–family strain (Mweta, 2024). Similarly, working mothers in healthcare environments describe complex consequences arising from attempts to coordinate professional obligations, motherhood, household responsibilities, and personal needs (Abdi et al., 2026). Male workers are not exempt from these dynamics; qualitative research involving firefighters has identified difficulty disengaging psychologically from occupational pressures and maintaining satisfactory participation in household and relational life (Lee & Lee, 2025).

Work–family conflict is particularly relevant to marital burnout because stress generated in employment may spill over into interactions between partners. Spillover refers to the transfer of strain from one life domain to another, whereas crossover refers to the interpersonal transmission of

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stress between individuals. Work stressors may therefore influence not only the employee experiencing them but also the emotional climate of the marital relationship. Pluut and colleagues demonstrated that social stressors encountered at work can affect marital behavior at home, supporting an interpersonal work–family spillover process in which workplace experiences influence subsequent interactions with spouses (Pluut et al., 2022). Work overload has similarly been associated with spouse-rated work-to-family conflict, highlighting that partners can detect and experience the consequences of occupational demands imposed on one member of the couple (Huang et al., 2023). Systematic evidence concerning workplace bullying further demonstrates that adverse occupational experiences may extend beyond employees themselves and impair family functioning (Yang et al., 2024). Remote work has not eliminated such processes; evidence indicates that work–family conflict among remote employees may have consequences for couple functioning and divorce intentions, showing that physical proximity to home does not necessarily prevent occupational demands from entering the marital domain (Wan et al., 2024).

The work–family interface may become especially demanding where intensive caregiving responsibilities are superimposed on employment. A scoping review of individuals simultaneously caring for children and aging relatives identified substantial difficulties in balancing family and occupational roles, emphasizing the cumulative burden experienced by so-called sandwiched caregivers (Honda, 2025). A systematic review of employed caregivers of older adults similarly identified multiple challenges to maintaining work–family balance when caregiving obligations are extensive (Medeiros et al., 2022). Such pressures may reduce opportunities for emotional recovery and couple interaction, increasing the likelihood that spouses communicate primarily about practical responsibilities rather than intimacy, companionship, and emotional needs. Communication challenges have also been documented among shift-working healthcare employees, whose irregular schedules can interfere with opportunities for meaningful spousal interaction (Gyasi, 2024). These findings imply that work–family conflict can contribute to marital burnout through chronic temporal scarcity, psychological strain, disrupted communication, and reduced availability for reciprocal emotional engagement.

A closely related mechanism is emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion represents a state of substantial depletion in emotional and psychological resources produced by sustained exposure to demanding or stressful circumstances. Although initially conceptualized primarily within occupational burnout, emotional exhaustion can extend into nonwork relationships because individuals do not possess separate emotional resource systems for professional and marital functioning. Research among hospitalists continues to identify occupational and contextual contributors to burnout in demanding healthcare environments (Chughtai et al., 2026), while work involving surgeons has increasingly emphasized the consequences of professional burnout for intimate and family relationships rather than conceptualizing burnout exclusively as an individual occupational problem (Glavin et al., 2025). Reviews concerning physicians' intimate relationships likewise indicate that demanding professional cultures, long work hours, emotional intensity, and insufficient recovery may have implications for intimacy and relationship maintenance (Peisah & Lele, 2022). When individuals return home emotionally depleted, their capacity for patience, responsiveness, empathy, constructive communication, and affectionate engagement may be compromised, thereby increasing vulnerability to cumulative marital exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion can additionally cross over from one spouse to another. Research involving spouses of physicians has shown that perceived physician burnout may contribute to family burnout through secondary emotional trauma, demonstrating that emotional depletion is not confined to the person directly exposed to occupational stress (Grimmer & Jacquin, 2023). Systematic evidence concerning spouses and children of emergency responders similarly suggests that occupationally exposed workers' experiences can have meaningful consequences for the psychological wellbeing of close family members (Sharp et al., 2022). During exceptionally demanding periods, such transmission may become even more pronounced. For instance, caring for patients with COVID-19 predicted parental burnout among nurses through compassion fatigue, illustrating how intense occupational emotional labor can become intertwined with exhaustion in the family domain (Stevenson et al., 2022). Elevated burnout was also identified among women during pandemic-related social restrictions, when occupational, household, caregiving, and psychological pressures were compressed within disrupted everyday routines (Kerman et al., 2022). Thus, emotional exhaustion may constitute a proximal pathway through which accumulated occupational and family demands become translated into marital burnout.

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Despite these risks, stress exposure does not produce equivalent relational outcomes for all individuals. The presence of interpersonal resources may substantially change how work and emotional pressures affect marital functioning. Spousal support is particularly important because the spouse is often the most immediately available source of emotional validation, instrumental assistance, companionship, and problem-focused help. Supportive partners can facilitate occupational adaptation by providing practical assistance and emotional encouragement, and supportive spousal relationships have been identified as meaningful resources for professional career success (Abadoo-Brew, 2025). Among women in dual-career families, greater spousal support has been associated with reduced work–family conflict, indicating that partners may directly reduce role interference by sharing responsibilities and facilitating coping (Rizal et al., 2023). More recent evidence among nurses further suggests that spousal support is related to burnout partly through the work–family interface, including reduced conflict and increased facilitation between roles (Li et al., 2026). These findings support the proposition that spousal support is not merely another correlate of marital wellbeing but may operate as a buffering resource.

Evidence concerning family and parental burnout provides further support for this protective interpretation. The association between work–family conflict and parental burnout has been found to differ according to the level of spousal support, with meaningful gender differences also emerging in the buffering process (Wang & Yu, 2024). Perceived spousal support has likewise been implicated in the relationship between parental burnout and interpersonal cognitive processes (Camadan, 2025). Longitudinal evidence indicates that marital satisfaction and family emotional expressiveness are interrelated with the development of parental burnout over time, illustrating the importance of positive couple and family processes when individuals encounter persistent caregiving demands (Feng et al., 2026). Similarly, parenting stress has been linked with parental burnout partly through marital satisfaction, suggesting that the quality of the marital relationship can shape the conversion of family stress into broader exhaustion (Xu & Hanafi, 2024). Collectively, these studies imply that spousal support may weaken the effect of work–family conflict and emotional depletion on marital burnout by increasing perceived partnership, distributing family demands, and providing emotional recovery within the marital relationship.

The importance of spousal support is especially apparent where one partner feels responsible for carrying a disproportionate share of both occupational and family obligations. Contemporary discussions of the “married single mother” describe situations in which partnered women nevertheless perceive themselves as functioning with inadequate practical and emotional assistance, potentially increasing psychological burden and relational dissatisfaction (Nwachuku, 2025). Conversely, when partners perceive that responsibilities and emotional investments are reciprocated, cumulative strain may be less likely to become relational burnout. Spousal support may therefore function both as a direct protective factor and as a moderator that changes the magnitude of the association between stressors and marital burnout. High support may make work–family conflict more manageable by facilitating coordination of responsibilities and may reduce the interpersonal consequences of emotional exhaustion by allowing depleted individuals to experience understanding rather than additional relational demand.

A second potential protective resource is psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility refers to the capacity to remain in contact with present experiences, including uncomfortable thoughts and emotions, while adapting behavior in ways that remain consistent with important values and situational demands. Within marital contexts, psychologically flexible individuals may be better able to tolerate frustration, disengage from rigid interpretations, respond less defensively to conflict, and continue value-consistent relational behavior even when stressed or emotionally depleted. The relevance of psychological flexibility to couple functioning is indirectly supported by the effectiveness of acceptance-based marital interventions. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy has been associated with improvements in intimacy, forgiveness, and marital burnout among women affected by relational betrayal (Najibzadegan et al., 2024), and acceptance-based treatment has also shown benefits for marital boredom among women experiencing marital conflict (Hashemizadeh et al., 2023). Couple interventions emphasizing adaptive cognition and emotion regulation similarly suggest that how spouses process distress influences whether difficult experiences culminate in chronic relational exhaustion (Adl et al., 2024).

Psychological flexibility may be particularly important when stressors cannot be immediately eliminated. Occupational demands, caregiving responsibilities, irregular work schedules, and financial obligations frequently cannot be removed through short-term behavioral changes. Under

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such conditions, rigid attempts to avoid discomfort or control internal experiences may paradoxically intensify distress, whereas flexible coping may enable individuals to preserve constructive engagement with their spouse despite fatigue or frustration. Evidence from resilience research among individuals exposed to substantial role-related stress indicates that adaptive psychological resources are important for functioning under chronic demands (Clarke et al., 2022). Research on burnout among orthopedic surgeons similarly emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing both systemic pressures and individual capacities for coping and recovery (Pearl et al., 2023). Psychological flexibility therefore represents a plausible resilience mechanism that may attenuate the degree to which work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion are converted into marital burnout.

The potential importance of flexibility becomes still more apparent when family stress is interpreted as a dynamic process rather than an isolated event. Relational pressures may accumulate through repeated experiences of occupational intrusion, depleted affective resources, reduced communication, and perceived imbalance. If individuals respond rigidly to these experiences, negative interpretations and avoidance patterns can become self-reinforcing. In contrast, flexibility may permit spouses to recognize temporary exhaustion without globally interpreting it as relational rejection, to communicate needs despite discomfort, and to maintain valued behaviors such as affection, cooperation, and responsiveness. Rational-emotive couple interventions have produced beneficial outcomes among parents seeking divorce, demonstrating that modifying maladaptive responses to relationship stress can influence highly distressed couples (Ede & Okeke, 2022). Such findings reinforce the broader proposition that internal psychological processes can determine whether external pressures develop into enduring relationship deterioration.

An integrated model of marital burnout should therefore consider both risk and protective factors. Work–family conflict represents an inter-role stressor that reduces available time and energy for marital engagement, whereas emotional exhaustion represents a state of depleted psychological resources through which prolonged stress may directly undermine relational functioning. Spousal support constitutes an interpersonal resource embedded within the marriage itself, whereas psychological flexibility constitutes an intrapersonal regulatory resource that may allow individuals to respond adaptively to unavoidable stress. These factors are theoretically complementary: one reflects external role incompatibility, one reflects internal resource depletion, one reflects dyadic support, and one reflects adaptive psychological capacity. Studying them simultaneously may clarify why some individuals experiencing substantial work and emotional pressures develop severe marital burnout while others preserve relatively effective relationship functioning.

Previous literature has often examined work–family conflict in relation to occupational burnout, parental burnout, family functioning, or divorce-related outcomes rather than directly modeling marital burnout. Likewise, research on marital burnout has frequently focused on relationship-specific factors or treatment outcomes without simultaneously incorporating occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, spousal support, and psychological flexibility. Existing work demonstrates that occupational strain can spill over into marriage (Pluut et al., 2022), work–family conflict may threaten couple stability (Wan et al., 2024), burnout can affect spouses and families (Grimmer & Jacquin, 2023), and spousal support can buffer family-related exhaustion (Wang & Yu, 2024). Nevertheless, these findings leave an important question unresolved: whether interpersonal and psychological resources change the strength of the associations between occupational-family strain, emotional depletion, and marital burnout when all constructs are modeled together.

Hierarchical moderated regression provides an appropriate analytical framework for addressing this issue because it permits the incremental contribution of predictors, protective resources, and interaction terms to be evaluated sequentially. Such an approach can determine not only whether work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, spousal support, and psychological flexibility independently predict marital burnout, but also whether the effect of one predictor varies according to the level of another variable. The study therefore moves beyond a simple additive risk model by testing whether support and flexibility attenuate the detrimental relational consequences of competing work–family demands and emotional depletion. Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to examine marital burnout based on work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion and to determine the moderating roles of spousal support and psychological flexibility using hierarchical moderated regression analysis among married employed adults in Canada.

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2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study used a cross-sectional correlational design with hierarchical moderated regression analysis to investigate the contribution of work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion to marital burnout and to examine whether spousal support and psychological flexibility modified these relationships. The target population consisted of married employed adults residing in Canada who were simultaneously engaged in paid employment and an ongoing marital or common-law spousal relationship. Participants were recruited from Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta through workplace mailing lists, professional associations, community organizations, social-media advertisements, and online participant-recruitment networks. To be eligible, participants were required to be at least 21 years of age, currently married or living with a common-law spouse for at least one year, engaged in paid employment for at least 20 hours per week, residing with their spouse, and able to complete the questionnaires in English. Individuals who were currently separated from their spouse, undergoing active divorce proceedings, unemployed at the time of data collection, or unable to complete the questionnaires independently were excluded. A total of 463 individuals accessed the survey. Twenty-one discontinued the questionnaire before completing the principal measures, 12 did not satisfy eligibility criteria, and 18 cases were removed because of substantial missing responses or patterned responding. The final analytic sample therefore consisted of 412 participants.

Participants ranged in age from 23 to 61 years, with a mean age of 39.46 years (SD = 8.21). The sample included 222 women (53.9%) and 190 men (46.1%). The average duration of the current marriage or common-law relationship was 11.73 years (SD = 7.02). Among the participants, 286 (69.4%) had at least one dependent child living in the household, whereas 126 (30.6%) had no dependent child residing at home. Regarding educational attainment, 73 participants (17.7%) had completed secondary school or a postsecondary certificate, 219 (53.2%) held a bachelor's degree or equivalent undergraduate credential, and 120 (29.1%) held a graduate or professional degree. Participants reported working an average of 41.28 hours per week (SD = 7.84). A total of 237 participants (57.5%) reported that their spouse was also employed full time, 111 (26.9%) reported that their spouse worked part time, and 64 (15.5%) reported that their spouse was not currently in paid employment. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Before beginning the questionnaire, all participants received an electronic information sheet explaining the study purpose, confidentiality procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and right to discontinue participation without penalty. Electronic informed consent was obtained before data collection.

2.2. Measures

Couple Burnout Measure. Marital burnout was assessed using the Couple Burnout Measure developed by Pines. The instrument is designed to evaluate exhaustion experienced within a committed intimate relationship and includes 21 items reflecting physical, emotional, and mental aspects of relational burnout. Respondents indicate the frequency with which they experience each state in relation to their marital relationship using a seven-point response scale ranging from 1 indicating never to 7 indicating always. Items assess experiences such as emotional depletion, hopelessness, fatigue, disappointment, and reduced enthusiasm within the relationship. After appropriate reverse scoring of positively phrased items, item scores are averaged to produce an overall marital burnout score, with higher values representing greater relational burnout. The Couple Burnout Measure has been widely applied in research on marital dissatisfaction and couple distress, and previous psychometric studies have reported satisfactory internal consistency and construct validity. In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was .92.

Work–Family Conflict Scale. Work–family conflict was measured using the Work–Family Conflict Scale developed by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams. The original instrument contains 18 items covering six dimensions: time-based work interference with family, time-based family interference with work, strain-based work interference with family, strain-based family interference with work, behavior-based work interference with family, and behavior-based family interference with work. Because the present study focused on the extent to which occupational demands interfere with family and marital functioning, the nine items assessing work-to-family conflict were used. Participants rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. Higher mean scores reflected greater interference of occupational demands with family responsibilities, emotional availability, and family participation. The scale has demonstrated strong factorial validity, convergent

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validity, and internal consistency in employed adult samples. Cronbach's alpha for the work-to-family conflict items in the current study was .90.

Emotional Exhaustion Scale. Emotional exhaustion was assessed using the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey. The subscale contains five items assessing feelings of emotional depletion and loss of psychological energy associated with work demands. Participants indicated how frequently they experienced each condition on a seven-point frequency scale ranging from 0 indicating never to 6 indicating every day. A mean score was calculated after summing item responses and dividing by the number of completed items, with higher scores indicating greater emotional exhaustion. The emotional exhaustion subscale is among the most consistently supported components of burnout measurement and has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, factorial validity, and associations with occupational stress across diverse professional groups. Cronbach's alpha in the present sample was .91.

Spousal Support Scale. Perceived spousal support was evaluated using the spouse-specific items adapted from the social support framework developed by Caplan and colleagues. Four items assessed the extent to which participants perceived their spouse as willing to listen to work-related difficulties, provide helpful advice, show concern and understanding, and provide practical assistance when needed. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 indicating very little to 5 indicating very much. Item scores were averaged, with higher values indicating a stronger perception that the spouse was emotionally and instrumentally supportive. Spouse-specific support measures derived from this framework have been widely used in occupational and work–family research and have shown satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Psy-Flex Scale. Psychological flexibility was measured using the six-item Psy-Flex scale developed by Gloster and colleagues. The measure was developed as a concise assessment of the core behavioral processes represented in psychological flexibility, including openness to difficult internal experiences, present-moment awareness, perspective taking, values orientation, and persistence in meaningful behavior despite psychological discomfort. Participants rated the extent to which each statement described their recent functioning using the scale's five-point response format. Items were coded so that higher mean scores represented greater psychological flexibility. The instrument has demonstrated satisfactory construct validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency while offering a substantially shorter assessment than multidimensional flexibility inventories. Cronbach's alpha for the current sample was .86.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 30. Initial screening included examination of missing values, response patterns, univariate distributions, standardized scores, and influential observations. Cases with substantial missing data were removed before analysis, while the remaining item-level missingness was below 1% and was addressed using person-mean substitution only when participants had completed at least 80% of the relevant scale. Descriptive statistics consisting of means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated for all primary variables. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine zero-order relationships among marital burnout, work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, spousal support, and psychological flexibility.

Before hierarchical regression analysis, assumptions of linearity, normality of residuals, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, absence of problematic multicollinearity, and absence of influential cases were evaluated. Variance inflation factor and tolerance statistics were used to assess multicollinearity, with VIF values below 5 and tolerance values above .20 considered satisfactory. Independence of residuals was examined using the Durbin–Watson statistic. Standardized residuals, Cook's distance, leverage values, and normal probability plots were inspected for influential observations and departures from regression assumptions. Continuous predictor and moderator variables were mean-centered before interaction terms were calculated to reduce nonessential multicollinearity and improve interpretation of conditional effects.

Hierarchical moderated multiple regression was conducted with marital burnout as the dependent variable. Demographic and occupational covariates consisting of age, gender, duration of marriage, presence of a dependent child in the household, and weekly working hours were entered in the first step. Mean-centered work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion were entered in the second step to estimate their incremental contribution beyond background characteristics. Mean-centered spousal support and

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psychological flexibility were entered in the third step to examine their additional direct protective contribution. Four two-way interaction terms—work–family conflict × spousal support, work–family conflict × psychological flexibility, emotional exhaustion × spousal support, and emotional exhaustion × psychological flexibility—were entered simultaneously in the fourth step. Changes in R^2 were evaluated at every step. Significant interactions were interpreted using simple-slope analyses at one standard deviation below the mean, the mean, and one standard deviation above the mean of the moderator. Unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors, standardized beta coefficients, t statistics, 95% confidence intervals, R^2, adjusted R^2, changes in R^2, and F statistics were reported. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < .05$ using two-tailed tests.

3. Findings and Results

The final sample included 412 married employed adults. Participants had a mean age of 39.46 years (SD = 8.21), and the mean duration of their current marital or common-law relationship was 11.73 years (SD = 7.02). Women constituted 53.9% of the sample (n = 222), while men constituted 46.1% (n = 190). A dependent child was living in the household for 286 participants (69.4%). Most respondents held at least a bachelor's degree, with 219 participants (53.2%) holding an undergraduate degree and 120 (29.1%) holding a graduate or professional qualification. Participants worked an average of 41.28 hours per week (SD = 7.84). Examination of the distributions indicated no severe deviations from normality, and no variable had absolute skewness greater than 0.83 or absolute kurtosis greater than 1.04.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Internal Consistency, and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2	3	4	5
1. Marital burnout	3.72	1.05	.92	—				
2. Work–family conflict	3.21	0.79	.90	.56**	—			
3. Emotional exhaustion	3.04	1.21	.91	.61**	.58**	—		
4. Spousal support	3.68	0.83	.88	−.49**	−.32**	−.34**	—	
5. Psychological flexibility	3.54	0.71	.86	−.46**	−.35**	−.42**	.36**	—

As shown in Table 1, marital burnout was positively and significantly correlated with both work–family conflict ($r = .56$, $p < .001$) and emotional exhaustion ($r = .61$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants who experienced stronger interference of work with family life and greater emotional depletion also tended to report greater burnout within their marital relationship. Emotional exhaustion showed the strongest zero-order association with marital burnout. In contrast, spousal support ($r = −.49$, $p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($r = −.46$, $p < .001$) were significantly and negatively related to marital burnout. Work–family conflict was also positively associated with emotional exhaustion ($r = .58$, $p < .001$) and negatively related to both spousal support ($r = −.32$, $p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($r = −.35$, $p < .001$). Spousal support and psychological flexibility were moderately positively correlated ($r = .36$, $p < .001$), but the magnitude of this association was sufficiently low to indicate that they represented related but distinct protective resources. All internal consistency coefficients ranged from .86 to .92, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 2

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Predicting Marital Burnout

Step and predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Step 1						
Age	−0.014	0.006	−.11	−2.27	.024	[−0.026, −0.002]
Gender	0.083	0.084	.04	0.99	.323	[−0.082, 0.248]
Marriage duration	−0.008	0.007	−.06	−1.18	.238	[−0.022, 0.006]
Dependent child	0.145	0.092	.07	1.58	.115	[−0.036, 0.326]
Weekly work hours	0.018	0.006	.14	3.04	.003	[0.006, 0.030]
Step 2						
Work–family conflict	0.365	0.060	.28	6.08	<.001	[0.247, 0.483]

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Emotional exhaustion	0.326	0.040	.38	8.15	<.001	[0.247, 0.405]
Step 3						
Spousal support	−0.271	0.048	−.22	−5.65	<.001	[−0.365, −0.177]
Psychological flexibility	−0.278	0.056	−.19	−4.96	<.001	[−0.388, −0.168]
Step 4: Final model						
Work–family conflict	0.315	0.056	.24	5.63	<.001	[0.205, 0.425]
Emotional exhaustion	0.265	0.038	.31	6.97	<.001	[0.190, 0.340]
Spousal support	−0.258	0.045	−.21	−5.73	<.001	[−0.346, −0.170]
Psychological flexibility	−0.259	0.053	−.18	−4.89	<.001	[−0.363, −0.155]
WFC × Spousal support	−0.174	0.055	−.12	−3.16	.002	[−0.282, −0.066]
WFC × Psychological flexibility	−0.131	0.058	−.08	−2.26	.024	[−0.245, −0.017]
Emotional exhaustion × Spousal support	−0.081	0.039	−.07	−2.08	.038	[−0.158, −0.004]
Emotional exhaustion × Psychological flexibility	−0.138	0.036	−.14	−3.83	<.001	[−0.209, −0.067]

The hierarchical regression analysis demonstrated a substantial increase in predictive power across successive stages. Demographic and occupational covariates entered in Step 1 explained 7.1% of the variance in marital burnout, $F(5, 406) = 6.20$, $p < .001$. Greater weekly working hours and younger age were associated with greater marital burnout at this stage. Adding work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion in Step 2 produced a large increase of 39.8 percentage points in explained variance, $\Delta F(2, 404) = 151.30$, $p < .001$, increasing total R^2 to .469. Both work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion were significant positive predictors. Introduction of spousal support and psychological flexibility in Step 3 increased explained variance by a further 9.9%, $\Delta F(2, 402) = 46.10$, $p < .001$. Both resources independently predicted lower marital burnout. Finally, addition of the four interaction terms increased explained variance by another 4.3%, $\Delta F(4, 398) = 10.99$, $p < .001$, resulting in a final R^2 of .611 and an adjusted R^2 of .598. Thus, approximately 61.1% of the variance in marital burnout was explained by the complete model. In the final model, emotional exhaustion remained the strongest positive predictor ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), followed by work–family conflict ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). Spousal support ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .001$) remained significant negative predictors. All four interactions were statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between the two principal risk factors and marital burnout varied according to participants' levels of spousal support and psychological flexibility.

Table 3

Conditional Effects of Work–Family Conflict and Emotional Exhaustion on Marital Burnout at Different Levels of the Moderators

Predictor and moderator level	Conditional B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Work–family conflict by spousal support					
Low spousal support (−1 SD)	0.459	0.067	6.85	<.001	[0.327, 0.591]
Mean spousal support	0.315	0.056	5.63	<.001	[0.205, 0.425]
High spousal support (+1 SD)	0.171	0.071	2.41	.016	[0.031, 0.311]
Work–family conflict by psychological flexibility					
Low psychological flexibility (−1 SD)	0.408	0.063	6.48	<.001	[0.284, 0.532]
Mean psychological flexibility	0.315	0.056	5.63	<.001	[0.205, 0.425]
High psychological flexibility (+1 SD)	0.222	0.067	3.31	.001	[0.090, 0.354]
Emotional exhaustion by spousal support					
Low spousal support (−1 SD)	0.332	0.044	7.55	<.001	[0.246, 0.418]
Mean spousal support	0.265	0.038	6.97	<.001	[0.190, 0.340]
High spousal support (+1 SD)	0.198	0.047	4.21	<.001	[0.106, 0.290]
Emotional exhaustion by psychological flexibility					
Low psychological flexibility (−1 SD)	0.363	0.043	8.44	<.001	[0.279, 0.447]
Mean psychological flexibility	0.265	0.038	6.97	<.001	[0.190, 0.340]
High psychological flexibility (+1 SD)	0.167	0.045	3.71	<.001	[0.079, 0.255]

Simple-slope analysis clarified the direction of the four statistically significant interactions. Work–family conflict was positively associated with marital burnout at all levels of spousal support, but the magnitude of the association was substantially greater among participants reporting low spousal support ($B = 0.459$, $p < .001$) than among those reporting high support ($B = 0.171$, $p = .016$). A comparable pattern occurred for psychological flexibility: work–family

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conflict had a stronger association with marital burnout at low psychological flexibility (B = 0.408, p < .001) than at high flexibility (B = 0.222, p = .001). Emotional exhaustion was also associated with marital burnout across all moderator levels, but the slope decreased from B = 0.332 at low spousal support to B = 0.198 at high spousal support. The strongest moderation pattern involved psychological flexibility and emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion showed a conditional effect of B = 0.363 at low psychological flexibility compared with B = 0.167 at high psychological flexibility. These findings indicate buffering rather than complete protective effects: support and flexibility reduced, but did not eliminate, the association between major stress-related predictors and marital burnout.

Table 4

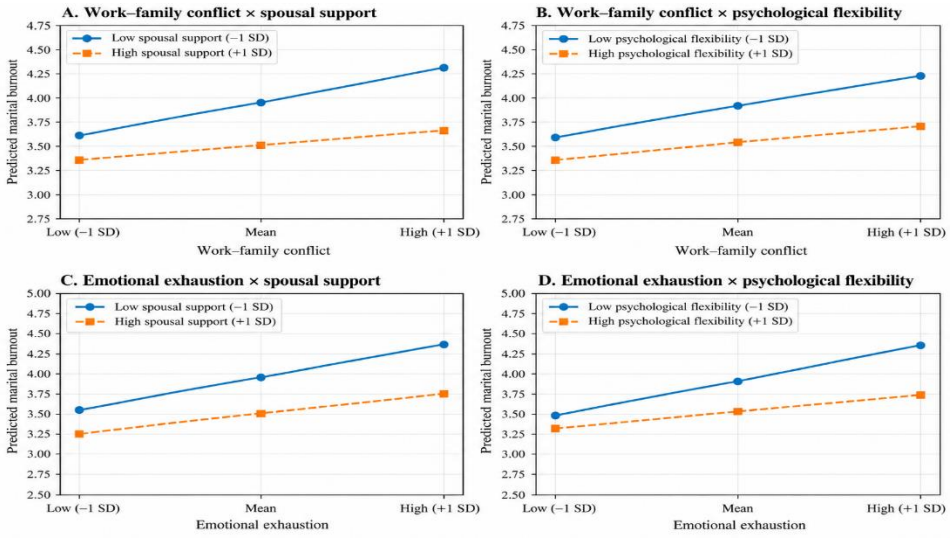
Regression Assumption and Diagnostic Statistics

Diagnostic indicator	Observed value/range	Interpretation
Durbin–Watson statistic	1.96	Residual independence supported
Tolerance	.41–.79	No problematic multicollinearity
Variance inflation factor	1.27–2.44	No problematic multicollinearity
Maximum Cook's distance	0.083	No influential case
Maximum standardized residual	2.87	Within acceptable range
Minimum standardized residual	−2.74	Within acceptable range
Maximum leverage	0.071	No excessive leverage
Residual skewness	0.19	Approximate normality
Residual kurtosis	−0.32	Approximate normality
Breusch–Pagan test	$\chi^2 = 12.48$, p = .254	Homoscedasticity supported

Diagnostic analyses supported the appropriateness of the moderated regression model. The Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.96, indicating satisfactory independence of residuals. Tolerance statistics ranged from .41 to .79 and VIF values ranged from 1.27 to 2.44, demonstrating that neither the main-effect predictors nor the interaction terms produced problematic multicollinearity after mean centering. Cook's distance did not exceed 0.083, and leverage values remained within acceptable limits, suggesting that the results were not driven by a small number of influential observations. Standardized residuals ranged from −2.74 to 2.87, and residual skewness and kurtosis were close to zero. The Breusch–Pagan test was nonsignificant, $\chi^2 = 12.48$, p = .254, providing additional support for homoscedasticity. Visual inspection of the normal probability plot and standardized residual scatterplot was also consistent with approximate residual normality, linearity, and constant variance.

Figure 1

Moderating Effects



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The interaction patterns represented in Figure 1 indicated that predicted marital burnout increased as work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion increased; however, the rate of increase differed according to the levels of the protective moderators. Participants characterized by low spousal support exhibited the steepest increase in predicted marital burnout as work–family conflict increased, whereas those reporting high spousal support exhibited a considerably flatter slope. Psychological flexibility showed a similar protective pattern, with high-flexibility participants showing a weaker relationship between work–family conflict and burnout than low-flexibility participants. The separation between low- and high-flexibility slopes was particularly evident at elevated levels of emotional exhaustion. Thus, the figure demonstrates that the highest predicted marital burnout occurred when high occupational-family strain or emotional exhaustion coexisted with low relational or psychological resources.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated marital burnout among married employed adults by examining work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, spousal support, and psychological flexibility within a hierarchical moderated regression framework. The findings supported an integrated risk-resource model of marital burnout. Work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion were positively associated with marital burnout, whereas spousal support and psychological flexibility were negatively associated with it. Importantly, both protective resources also moderated the detrimental associations of work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion with marital burnout. The complete model explained 61.1% of the variance in marital burnout, indicating that the combination of inter-role demands, emotional depletion, interpersonal support, and adaptive psychological functioning provided substantial explanatory power. Emotional exhaustion emerged as the strongest positive predictor in the final model, followed by work–family conflict, while spousal support and psychological flexibility showed independent protective associations. The interactions further demonstrated that the consequences of stress were conditional rather than uniform across participants.

The positive association between work–family conflict and marital burnout is consistent with theoretical accounts of spillover between occupational and family systems. When employment demands consume time, cognitive attention, and emotional energy, fewer resources remain available for marital interaction. The present finding aligns with evidence showing that social stressors encountered at work influence marital behavior at home through interpersonal work–family spillover (Pluut et al., 2022). It is also compatible with evidence that work overload predicts spouse-observed work-to-family conflict, demonstrating that occupational strain is visible and consequential within the couple relationship rather than existing solely as a private experience of the employee (Huang et al., 2023). The current results extend this literature by indicating that persistent work–family interference is associated not merely with episodic tension but with the more generalized state of marital burnout.

The finding is also consistent with research linking work–family conflict to serious relational consequences. Wan and colleagues demonstrated that work–family conflict among remote employees can have implications for divorce intentions among couples (Wan et al., 2024). This association is theoretically compatible with the present findings because marital burnout may constitute one mechanism through which persistent occupational-family interference contributes to emotional disengagement and consideration of relationship dissolution. Individuals who repeatedly experience work demands intruding upon family time may have fewer opportunities for intimacy, leisure, constructive communication, and shared experiences. Over time, these deficits may produce perceptions that the relationship itself has become tiring or unrewarding. Such processes are particularly plausible in dual-earner households, caregiving families, and occupations characterized by inflexible scheduling or high psychological demand.

Studies examining workers with intensive family responsibilities further support this interpretation. Work–family conflict among women employed in higher education has been linked to simultaneous professional and domestic pressures (Mweta, 2024), while working mothers in healthcare settings describe substantial difficulty coordinating employment and family responsibilities (Abdi et al., 2026). Similar challenges have been identified among male firefighters, whose occupational demands can complicate participation in family life (Lee & Lee, 2025). Caregivers responsible for both children and older relatives may experience particularly severe challenges in achieving work–family balance (Honda, 2025), and systematic evidence suggests that employed caregivers of older adults frequently struggle to maintain equilibrium between occupational and family roles (Medeiros et al., 2022). The

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association observed in the present study is therefore understandable as a cumulative resource problem: repeated conflict between roles reduces the temporal and psychological resources required to sustain an emotionally satisfying marriage.

The positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and marital burnout was even stronger than that of work–family conflict and marital burnout. This result suggests that emotional depletion may constitute a more proximal mechanism of relational burnout than exposure to competing demands itself. Work and family conflict represent sources of stress, whereas emotional exhaustion represents the depleted state that may develop after sustained efforts to meet these demands. Individuals who are emotionally exhausted may have difficulty responding empathically to their spouse, regulating irritation, tolerating disagreements, engaging in affectionate behavior, or initiating restorative couple activities. Burnout research among healthcare professionals supports this interpretation. Occupational burnout among hospitalists continues to be associated with multiple work-related pressures (Chughtai et al., 2026), and scholars studying surgeons have argued that the relational consequences of professional burnout deserve greater attention (Glavin et al., 2025). Intimate relationships among physicians may be particularly vulnerable when professional cultures normalize sustained workload and limited emotional recovery (Peisah & Lele, 2022).

The present findings are also compatible with the concept of crossover, in which the consequences of exhaustion experienced by one partner affect the other partner and eventually the relational system. Grimmer and Jacquin found that perceived physician burnout could contribute to family burnout through secondary emotional trauma among physician spouses (Grimmer & Jacquin, 2023). Similarly, systematic evidence concerning the families of emergency responders demonstrates that occupational exposure may affect spouses, partners, and children (Sharp et al., 2022). Emotional exhaustion may therefore increase marital burnout through both intrapersonal and interpersonal pathways. At the intrapersonal level, a depleted individual has fewer resources for maintaining constructive relational behavior. At the interpersonal level, emotional withdrawal, irritability, and reduced responsiveness may create stress in the partner, producing reciprocal distancing. These processes can gradually transform individual occupational exhaustion into shared marital exhaustion.

The negative direct association between spousal support and marital burnout supports the interpretation of support as a relational resource. Individuals who perceived their spouses as emotionally understanding and practically helpful reported lower marital burnout even after work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, demographic factors, and psychological flexibility were statistically controlled. This finding is consistent with evidence that supportive spouses can contribute meaningfully to occupational adaptation and career functioning (Abadoo-Brew, 2025). It also aligns with research showing that spousal support is associated with lower work–family conflict among women in dual-career families (Rizal et al., 2023). Spousal support may protect against marital burnout because it transforms stressful demands from individual burdens into shared couple problems. Emotional support communicates responsiveness and concern, whereas instrumental support reduces practical overload. Both processes may preserve perceptions of reciprocity and partnership.

More importantly, spousal support moderated the associations of both work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion with marital burnout. Work–family conflict predicted marital burnout at all levels of support, but the association was almost three times stronger at low than at high support. This finding provides evidence for a stress-buffering process. When work interferes with family functioning, supportive spouses may compensate by adjusting responsibilities, showing understanding regarding temporary occupational pressures, facilitating recovery, and avoiding interpretations of reduced availability as personal rejection. The result aligns closely with findings that spousal support moderates associations involving work–family conflict and parental burnout (Wang & Yu, 2024). It is also consistent with evidence suggesting that support from a spouse may influence the pathway from work–family dynamics to occupational burnout among nurses (Li et al., 2026). Thus, the protective role of support appears to extend across occupational, parental, and marital forms of exhaustion.

The moderation of emotional exhaustion by spousal support was smaller but remained significant. Emotionally exhausted individuals who reported high spousal support still exhibited increasing marital burnout as exhaustion increased, but the association was substantially weaker than among individuals receiving low support. This distinction is important because it indicates that support buffers rather than eliminates the effects of emotional depletion. A supportive spouse cannot fully restore resources lost through chronic occupational demands, but supportive interaction may prevent exhaustion from being interpreted as relational

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indifference. Perceived support may also increase opportunities for psychological recovery by allowing individuals to discuss stress, reduce household responsibilities temporarily, or receive reassurance. Research linking parental burnout with perceived spousal support and interpersonal cognitive processes similarly supports the role of the spouse in modifying the relational consequences of exhaustion (Camadan, 2025).

The present findings also demonstrated an independent protective association between psychological flexibility and marital burnout. Participants reporting greater psychological flexibility experienced less marital burnout after controlling for the other predictors. This finding is consistent with acceptance-based models suggesting that relationship distress is affected not only by exposure to difficult experiences but by the manner in which individuals respond to internal discomfort. Psychological flexibility may allow spouses to experience fatigue, frustration, disappointment, or work-related anxiety without automatically translating these experiences into avoidance, blame, or rigid negative conclusions about the relationship. The finding is compatible with evidence demonstrating that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy can improve intimacy and reduce marital burnout among women experiencing severe relationship difficulties (Najibzadegan et al., 2024). Acceptance-based interventions have likewise produced improvements in marital boredom among individuals experiencing marital conflict (Hashemizadeh et al., 2023).

Psychological flexibility moderated both work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion, with the strongest interaction observed between emotional exhaustion and flexibility. Emotional exhaustion was strongly associated with marital burnout among participants low in psychological flexibility but substantially less strongly associated with burnout among highly flexible individuals. This pattern suggests that flexibility is especially relevant when individuals must function while already experiencing emotional depletion. A psychologically flexible person may be more capable of acknowledging exhaustion, communicating it appropriately, seeking recovery, and continuing selected value-consistent relational behaviors despite discomfort. In contrast, low flexibility may encourage experiential avoidance, rigid withdrawal, irritability, or fusion with thoughts such as “I cannot deal with my spouse now” or “this relationship is another burden,” thereby accelerating marital burnout.

This interpretation is also consistent with intervention research demonstrating that changes in emotional self-regulation can accompany reductions in couple burnout (Adl et al., 2024). Although psychological flexibility and emotional regulation are not identical constructs, both emphasize adaptive responding rather than automatic or rigid reactions under distress. Rational-emotive couple intervention has similarly shown benefits among parents seeking divorce (Ede & Okeke, 2022), suggesting that modifying maladaptive psychological responses to relationship stress may be consequential even in severely distressed couples. The current findings extend this reasoning by showing that adaptive psychological functioning may be most protective when external stress or emotional exhaustion is high rather than operating solely as a general correlate of marital wellbeing.

The results additionally highlight the importance of distinguishing between interpersonal and intrapersonal protective resources. Spousal support and psychological flexibility were moderately related but remained independent predictors in the final model, indicating that each contributed unique information. A person may have a highly supportive spouse but possess relatively limited psychological flexibility, or may demonstrate substantial flexibility despite receiving limited relational support. The strongest marital resilience may occur when both resources are present. Spousal support can reduce external and interpersonal burdens, while psychological flexibility can improve how unavoidable internal discomfort is processed. This complementary interpretation is consistent with broader resilience research showing that adaptation under chronic role stress depends on both personal and contextual resources (Clarke et al., 2022).

The findings are also consistent with relational perspectives on burnout emphasizing reciprocity and perceived fairness. Repeated sacrifice may contribute to burnout when individuals experience insufficient appreciation or relational equity (Özdemir, 2025). Low spousal support may intensify exactly this perception, particularly when one partner experiences strong occupational-family conflict while also carrying a disproportionate share of household demands. Contemporary descriptions of the “married single mother” illustrate the psychological consequences that may arise when individuals perceive that partnership does not translate into sufficient emotional or practical support (Nwachuku, 2025). In such circumstances, work–family conflict may be interpreted not simply as excessive workload but as evidence of relational imbalance, increasing vulnerability to marital burnout.

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The broader family-burnout literature further reinforces the systemic interpretation of the present model. Marital satisfaction and family emotional expressiveness are associated with the development of parental burnout over time (Feng et al., 2026), while marital satisfaction can also help explain the association between parenting stress and parental burnout (Xu & Hanafi, 2024). These findings suggest reciprocal influences between couple functioning and exhaustion in other family roles. Marital burnout may therefore be both an outcome of external stress and a potential contributor to further family difficulty. Once marital burnout develops, spouses may provide less support to each other, potentially increasing work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion. Although the present cross-sectional design cannot establish these reciprocal effects, the pattern suggests the value of conceptualizing marital burnout within a dynamic family system rather than as a static individual characteristic.

5. Conclusion

The present study demonstrated that marital burnout among married employed adults was strongly associated with the interaction between occupational-family pressures, emotional resource depletion, interpersonal support, and psychological flexibility. Work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion independently predicted greater marital burnout, while spousal support and psychological flexibility independently predicted lower burnout. More importantly, spousal support and psychological flexibility weakened the associations of both work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion with marital burnout, demonstrating that the impact of stressful demands depends partly on the relational and psychological resources available to the individual. Emotional exhaustion emerged as the strongest risk predictor, whereas the interaction between emotional exhaustion and psychological flexibility represented the strongest buffering effect. Overall, the findings support a multidimensional model in which marital burnout is not solely a consequence of relationship-specific difficulties but is shaped by the transfer of occupational stress into family life and by the resources through which couples respond to that stress.

6. Limitations & Suggestions

The study has several limitations. First, its cross-sectional design prevents conclusions regarding temporal ordering or causality. Although work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion were modeled as predictors of marital burnout, marital burnout could itself reduce perceived spousal support or increase the subjective experience of role conflict. Second, all constructs were assessed through self-report measures, creating the possibility of shared-method variance and response bias. Third, data were collected from one member of each couple rather than from both partners, limiting direct examination of crossover and dyadic processes. Fourth, although the sample included adults from several Canadian provinces and multiple occupational backgrounds, participation was voluntary and online recruitment may have produced selection effects. Fifth, the study did not assess potentially relevant variables such as occupational category, relationship conflict frequency, financial strain, childcare intensity, attachment patterns, remote-work status, or preexisting mental-health difficulties. Finally, moderation effects were statistically significant but represented buffering rather than complete elimination of risk, and they should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that individual or spousal resources can fully compensate for chronically harmful occupational conditions.

Future research should employ longitudinal and dyadic designs to determine whether changes in work–family conflict and emotional exhaustion prospectively predict changes in marital burnout and whether effects cross over between partners. Actor–partner interdependence models would be particularly useful for distinguishing the effects of one spouse's work stress, exhaustion, support behavior, and psychological flexibility on both partners' marital outcomes. Daily diary and ecological momentary assessment designs could clarify shorter-term pathways through which daily work demands influence evening marital interactions. Future studies should also test mediated moderation models in which recovery experiences, communication quality, perceived relational equity, or emotion regulation explain buffering effects. Greater attention should be given to occupational differences, remote and hybrid work arrangements, caregiving intensity, gender-role expectations, socioeconomic conditions, and culturally diverse couples. Randomized intervention studies could additionally examine whether increasing psychological flexibility, improving dyadic support, or modifying work–family boundaries produces subsequent reductions in marital burnout.

From a practical perspective, marital burnout prevention should address both the couple relationship and the broader work–family environment. Couple therapists and family counselors should routinely assess occupational-family

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interference and emotional exhaustion when evaluating clients who report relational disengagement, because apparent relationship dissatisfaction may partly reflect chronic resource depletion outside the relationship. Interventions may incorporate explicit strategies for discussing work-related stress, negotiating household responsibilities, improving supportive responding, protecting shared couple time, and distinguishing temporary exhaustion from relational rejection. Psychological flexibility skills, including acceptance of difficult internal experiences, present-focused awareness, cognitive distancing, clarification of relationship values, and commitment to value-consistent behavior, may be particularly useful for partners facing unavoidable work demands. Employers can also contribute through predictable scheduling, reasonable workload expectations, flexible working arrangements, adequate leave, and organizational norms that respect boundaries between work and family. A combined approach involving occupational conditions, couple-level support, and individual psychological flexibility is likely to be more effective than attempting to address marital burnout through any single level of intervention.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

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