HYPOTHESIS: Multidisciplinary Journal Of Social Sciences

http://azramedia-indonesia.azramediaindonesia.com/index.php/hypothesis/index
DOI: https://doi.org/10.62668/hypothesis.v5i01.2446
Email : info@azramediaindonesia.com

Open Access

EMOTIONAL LABOUR OF ADDICTION COUNSELOR MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

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Info Article
Received :
21 April 2026
Revised :
06 Mei 2026
Accepted :
25 Juni 2026
Publication :
30 Juni 2026

Keywords:
Emotional Labour; Addiction Counselors; Mothers of Young Children; Long-Distance Marriage; Phenomenology.

Kata Kunci:
Emotional Labour; Konselor Adiksi; Ibu Anak Usia Dini; Pernikahan Jarak Jauh; Fenomenologi

Abstract: *Addiction counselors are required to regulate their emotions while providing rehabilitation services to clients with complex psychological conditions. These emotional demands become more challenging when counselors simultaneously fulfill the roles of mothers with young children and spouses in long-distance marriages. This study aimed to explore the emotional labour experiences of addiction counselors managing these multiple roles. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, while data were collected using semi-structured interviews and observations and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings revealed that participants experienced substantial emotional labour resulting from overlapping professional and family responsibilities, leading to emotional exhaustion, role conflict, and increased parenting burdens. To maintain professional performance, participants adopted various emotion regulation strategies, including compartmentalization, emotional self-awareness, positive self-affirmation, and religious coping. Family support, partner involvement, coworker assistance, and organizational flexibility emerged as important protective factors that strengthened resilience and enabled participants to sustain high-quality counseling services despite ongoing work–family demands.*

Abstrak: Konselor adiksi merupakan profesi yang menghadapi tuntutan pengelolaan emosi yang tinggi dalam memberikan layanan rehabilitasi kepada klien. Tuntutan tersebut menjadi semakin kompleks ketika konselor juga menjalankan peran sebagai ibu yang memiliki anak usia dini dan menjalani pernikahan jarak jauh *(long-distance marriage)*. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pengalaman emotional labour pada konselor adiksi yang menjalankan peran ganda tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologi. Informan dipilih secara *purposive*, sedangkan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peserta mengalami emotional labour yang tinggi akibat tumpang tindih tuntutan pekerjaan dan keluarga, yang memicu kelelahan emosional, konflik peran, serta beban pengasuhan yang meningkat. Untuk mempertahankan profesionalisme, peserta menerapkan berbagai strategi regulasi emosi, seperti *compartmentalization*, self-*awareness*, afirmasi positif, dan *religious coping*. Dukungan keluarga, pasangan, rekan kerja, serta fleksibilitas organisasi menjadi faktor penting dalam memperkuat resiliensi dan menjaga kualitas layanan kepada klien.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2023 concerning Narcotics, Psychotropics, and Pharmaceutical Precursors, narcotics are defined as substances or drugs derived from both plants and non-plants, whether synthetic or semi-synthetic, which can cause changes in or loss of consciousness, eliminate sensation, reduce or alleviate pain, and possess a high potential to cause dependency (Menkes RI, 2023).

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of narcotics abuse continues to exhibit an alarming upward trend. This issue is no longer confined to high socioeconomic groups but has extended to middle- and low-income populations, spreading not only across urban areas but also into rural and remote regions (BNN RI, 2023). From year to year, the number of narcotics abusers in Indonesia has experienced significant fluctuations, as presented in the following data:

Table 1. Number of Narcotics Abusers in Indonesia

Year	Number of Abusers
2021	3,66 million people
2023	3,3 million people
2025	4,15 million people

Source: Official website of BNN RI

National surveys conducted by the National Narcotics Board (BNN) in collaboration with the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) confirm that the prevalence rate of narcotics abuse in Indonesia remains at a critical level. In 2021, the prevalence of substance abuse was recorded at 1.95%, or approximately 3.66 million residents aged 15–64. This figure slightly decreased in 2023 to 1.73%, or about 3.3 million residents. Nevertheless, preliminary measurements from 2025 indicate a sharp surge in prevalence, reaching 2.11%, which equates to 4.15 million individuals within the same age cohort.

As a repressive and rehabilitative measure, Law Number 35 of 2009 mandates that individuals with addiction and victims of narcotics abuse must undergo medical and social rehabilitation. Within this rehabilitation ecosystem, addiction counselors play a crucial role in accompanying clients through a series of processes, ranging from assessment and counseling to progress monitoring and the retention of therapeutic alliances. The manifestation of this role requires counselors to be intensely involved, not only cognitively but also emotionally. This is due to the fact that counselors interact directly with individuals experiencing psychological crises, internal conflicts, and complex recovery processes (Anbar et al., 2025).

In executing their duties, addiction counselors face various situations that can elicit emotional responses, such as when clients relapse, exhibit resistance, or fail to complete the rehabilitation program. Nevertheless, addiction counselors are strictly required to maintain a professional, empathetic, patient, and emotionally stable demeanor. In reality, these demands trigger genuine internal conflict, particularly when they are confronted with the feeling that their hard work is in vain due to cases that remain unresolved. This condition was experienced by S.M.O, a 33-year-old addiction counselor interviewed on December 8, 2025. S.M.O experienced frustration due to the high volume of clients handled with unresolved outcomes. She felt that her efforts thus far were futile, akin to "sweeping on sand." Although her work motivation temporarily declined due to this mental exhaustion, her sense of professional responsibility ultimately drove her to fulfill her duties.

The emotional exhaustion experienced by these addiction counselors is further exacerbated by professional demands that require them to consistently display positive emotions in front of clients, regardless of their own physical condition or personal mood. A similar situation was experienced by Y.P.S, a 35-year-old addiction counselor interviewed on August 28, 2025. Amidst poor physical health or a deteriorating mood caused by a heavy workload, she was still required to suppress her negative feelings. In the workplace, she had to exert her best efforts to serve clients with utmost patience and a cheerful disposition.

Aside from workload factors and physical conditions, emotional pressure can also stem from internal conflicts within the addiction counselors themselves. This typically arises when professional skepticism occurs regarding the veracity of the narratives shared by clients. This dilemmatic situation was profoundly experienced by Y.P.A, a 39-year-old addiction counselor interviewed on December 9, 2025. She felt that her greatest exhaustion stemmed from the internal struggle of questioning the truth of the client's information. Despite being plagued by self-doubt and internal fatigue, she still had to conceal her emotions and strive hard to maintain a professional stance throughout the counseling process.

The narratives above indicate that counselors consciously suppress or modify their emotions to align with professional expectations, even though their internal psychological state may be experiencing burnout. This condition refers to the concept of *emotional labour* initiated by Arlie Russell Hochschild (2003), which is defined as the

regulatory effort exerted by individuals to manage their felt emotions and displayed emotions to comply with organizational regulations.

The counselors' efforts to neutralize themselves or separate personal feelings from professional mandates represent tangible forms of *surface acting* and *deep acting* strategies within Hochschild's theory. *Surface acting* is manifested when counselors conceal internal discomfort to maintain a professional mask in front of clients. Meanwhile, *deep acting* operationalizes when counselors actively reconstruct their internal cognitions and perceptions to align with professional ethics. Research by Riley & Weiss (2016) reviewing the practice of *emotional labour* in human service environments confirms that managing one's own emotions is an inherent aspect of the job. This activity directly impacts workers' psychological well-being and stress levels, thereby positioning human service professions as emotionally high-risk.

The demand to manage emotions does not terminate when addiction counselors step out of the counseling room. For addiction counselors who also roleplay as mothers, the household is not always a domain free from emotional demands. Conversely, the household becomes another realm where emotional management remains deeply necessary. The maternal role entails high emotional involvement, caregiving responsibilities, and the necessity to respond to the child's physical and emotional conditions (Hafshah & Pratiwi, 2024). Under certain circumstances, the demands of being a mother can emerge concurrently with the professional expectations of an addiction counselor, thereby triggering complex emotional dynamics. The complexity of this dual role is explicitly evident when addiction counselors must instantaneously divide their emotional focus between a child's emergency at home and the responsibility of serving clients at the workplace.

This dilemma was experienced by S.M.O (33 years old) when she suddenly received news that her child was ill and required immediate medical attention that could not be administered at home. Concurrently, a client was already awaiting her arrival at the clinic. Amidst an anxious internal state concerning her child, S.M.O chose a professional middle ground by shifting her form of service to be more neutral. She utilized assessment tools or psychological test instruments for the client so that the service process could proceed without depleting her currently unstable cognitive and emotional resources.

In addition to medical emergencies, emotional pressure is also frequently triggered by logistical constraints in childcare during the morning prior to work. Y.P.A (39 years

old) often has to confront rushed situations during rainy weather and traffic congestion, where she must first drop off and entrust her child to someone else before heading to the office. Upon arriving at the workplace, Y.P.A was immediately faced with the client's presence while her own emotions were temporarily heightened due to the feeling of having to manage all domestic and professional matters single-handedly. To mitigate this, she typically requests a brief amount of spare time from the client to restructure her emotional regulation before commencing the session. A similar experience was felt again by Y.P.A when a child emergency occurred in the midst of rendering services. While conducting a counseling session, she received shocking news that her child had fallen. The news abruptly triggered panic, as she instinctively wanted to prioritize her child's safety. However, for the sake of maintaining professionalism, she chose to suppress the emotional turbulence, took deep breaths to compose herself, and resolved to complete the ongoing counseling session as efficiently as possible.

These statements subsequently indicate that addiction counselors do not merely experience specific emotions such as burnout or exhaustion, but also actively endeavor to regulate their felt emotions to maintain their professional roles. Addiction counselors suppress emotions, adapt forms of intervention, and control their emotional involvement with clients, even though they are internally confronting emotional pressure as mothers. Such emotional demands can further escalate when a mother must also assume the role of a sole primary caregiver due to a long-distance marriage. This condition is reflected in the informants' experiences, which illustrate the parenting and emotional responsibilities they must manage independently without the presence of a partner by their side. The physical absence of a husband figure at home creates layered mental loading regarding daily parenting decisions that should ideally be shared.

This condition was profoundly felt by S.M.O, who revealed that the long-distance marriage dynamic affects her peace of mind as a mother. If she were not in a long-distance relationship, she felt she could entrust her child to her husband while she was busy working. However, her current reality forces her to contemplate every single detail of her child's needs single-handedly, ranging from meals and the learning process to limiting screen time. The distance between them prevents her from being able to immediately confide in or instantly share caregiving roles with her partner. A similar experience was shared by Y.P.A regarding the loss of logistical support and division of domestic duties due to being separated by distance from her husband. She reflected that her husband's physical presence at home would significantly alleviate her burden,

particularly in commuting the children to school or daycare, thereby allowing her to fully focus on office work without divided thoughts. Nevertheless, Y.P.A ultimately responds to the constraints of this situation with acceptance and sincerity in navigating her entire independent parenting routine.

The experiential patterns of both informants demonstrate that a long-distance marriage status multiplies the psychological burden of a working mother. They do not only endure physical exhaustion from managing their child's mobility alone, but also mental fatigue resulting from bearing the burden of parenting decision-making without a partner present at home. This finding aligns with research by Puspitasari, Rachmawati, & Purnamasari (2021), which indicates that ideally, both parents should reside together and cooperate in educating, nurturing, and stimulating all aspects of a child's development. However, under the condition of a long-distance relationship, parents frequently confront various obstacles, such as limitations in directly supervising, guiding, and stimulating the child's development, as well as reduced communication intensity among family members. When the father figure is absent, such as due to a long-distance marriage, the mother tends to become the primary caregiver who shoulders the vast majority of parenting responsibilities (Lo, Chen, Chen, Chan, & Ip, 2023). These conditions demonstrate that the emotional labour experienced by working mothers is not only influenced by occupational demands, but also by the dynamics of personal life, specifically the role of a mother with a young child who conducts independent parenting without a partner. Both contexts interact with one another and potentially shape a unique emotional labour experience.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand the experience of emotional labour among addiction counselors who also serve as mothers of young children. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the meaning of the informants' life experiences in depth from their own perspectives (Kahija, 2021).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) women working as addiction counselors; (2) having worked for at least one year in the field of drug rehabilitation; (3) having at least one young child (ages 1–6); (4) in a long-distance marriage; (5) are involved in child-rearing; and (6) are willing to participate in in-depth interviews. The number of informants was determined based on the sufficiency

of information in accordance with the characteristics of phenomenological research (Kahija, 2021).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-systematic observations during the interview process. All interviews were recorded with the informants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The stages of analysis included repeated reading of the transcripts, coding, the development of emergent themes, the formulation of superordinate themes, cross-informant analysis, and the compilation of a master theme table (Kahija, 2021). Interpretation was conducted by relating the emerging themes to the theory of emotional labour.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of a study on the experiences of emotional labour among addiction counselors who also serve as mothers of young children at the Jambi Provincial Office of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN). The presentation begins with a brief overview of the research informants, followed by a discussion of the findings organized according to themes that emerged from the field data. Next, the researcher elabourates on the relationship between these findings and the theory discussed in the previous chapter. The entire presentation is based on data obtained through interviews, which is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Table 2. Informant Profile Data

Description	Informant L.A.S	Informant S.M.O	Informant Y.P.A
Age	33 years old	33 years old	39 years old
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Years of Experience as an Addiction Counselor	5 years	8 years	12 years
Marital Status	Married (currently in a long-distance marriage, Jambi–Bandung)	Married (currently in a long-distance marriage, Jambi–Jakarta)	Married (currently in a long-distance marriage, Jambi–Depok)
Children's Age	1 year 9 months	6 years and 3 years	16 years and 3 years
Husband's Occupation	Geologist at a private company	Employee at BUMN	Nursing lecturer
Reason for Long-Distance Marriage	Husband works in another city	Husband works in another city	Husband is pursuing a doctoral (Ph.D.) degree in another city
Duration of Long-Distance Marriage	5 years	6 years	8 years (throughout undergraduate,

Description	Informant L.A.S	Informant S.M.O	Informant Y.P.A
			master's, and doctoral studies)
Number of Children	1	2	3
Children's Ages	1 year	6 years and 3 years	16 years (twins) and 3 years

Source: Direct interviews with informants.

The interview and data analysis results revealed various dynamics in the emotional labour experiences of addiction counselors who are also mothers of young children. The findings showed that emotional management in the workplace was closely related to personal experiences and role demands outside of work. The themes identified through the analysis are further presented and discussed based on their relevance to the informants' experiences in carrying out both professional and domestic roles.

Discussion

Emotion Management Process in the Workplace

A. Role Complexity in Personal and Professional Life

All participants described experiencing overlapping roles as mothers, wives in long-distance marriages, family members, and addiction counselors. These intersecting responsibilities blurred the boundaries between personal and professional life, as concerns about family frequently remained present while they were working.

Participant L.A.S. described motherhood as the most challenging role because her child's unpredictable health and development often occupied her thoughts, even during working hours:

> *"The most challenging role is being a mother... those thoughts inevitably stay with me, even when I'm at work."* (L.A.S., 505–520)

Similarly, S.M.O. reported that parenting challenges triggered continuous self-reflection regarding her parenting abilities, particularly because her child was growing up apart from the father due to the family's long-distance marriage:

> *"When something happens to my child, it becomes very emotional and mentally exhausting, even while I'm working." (*S.M.O., 530–535)

Participant Y.P.A. highlighted a different source of role complexity, namely concerns about maintaining a long-distance marital relationship while simultaneously managing family responsibilities during working hours:

> *"The hardest part is having to interrupt working hours to deal with family matters."* (Y.P.A., 555)

Overall, the findings indicate that participants' personal roles continuously shaped their psychological experiences at work. Family-related concerns remained cognitively and emotionally present during professional activities, illustrating the intertwined nature of work and family demands among addiction counselors who are mothers.

B. Emotional Responses to Role Demands

Participants described experiencing a range of emotional responses as they navigated multiple personal and professional roles. The continuous transition between work and family responsibilities often resulted in emotional exhaustion, feelings of being overwhelmed, worry, and sadness, particularly when adequate opportunities for recovery were unavailable.

L.A.S. described feeling emotionally overwhelmed because work responsibilities were immediately followed by childcare demands, leaving little time for rest:

> *"Emotionally, I definitely feel overwhelmed... the exhaustion is not only physical but also emotional, especially when my child is sick."* (L.A.S., 140–170)

Similarly, S.M.O. explained that although raising her child was a source of happiness, parenting responsibilities also generated feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and fatigue. She further noted that these emotional demands were intensified by her long-distance marriage:

> *"Being with my child is enjoyable... but what consumes most of my thoughts and emotions is everything related to my child."* (S.M.O., 505)

Participant Y.P.A. reported sadness and persistent fatigue stemming from concerns about her long-distance marital relationship. She described these worries as emotionally draining and reflected that the prolonged stress even made her feel as though she was aging more quickly:

> *"I felt sad... Sometimes I feel exhausted because of the constant worries, but this is simply part of the role I have to fulfill."* (Y.P.A., 680)

Overall, participants' emotional experiences reflected the cumulative impact of managing intersecting work and family demands. Although positive emotions emerged through parenting, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, sadness, and persistent worry were more frequently reported as consequences of balancing multiple roles.

C. The Impact of Emotions on Professional Role Execution

Participants reported that personal concerns frequently carried over into the workplace, reducing concentration and influencing task performance. Family-related

thoughts often remained present during working hours, leading to delayed task completion, reduced productivity, or greater caution when performing work-related responsibilities.

L.A.S. explained that concerns about her child often occupied her mind while working, affecting both her mood and motivation to complete administrative tasks:

> *"No matter what I'm doing, I often think about my child... it affects my mood at work."* (L.A.S., 525–530)

Similarly, S.M.O. described becoming distracted by thoughts about her child and long-distance marriage, resulting in reduced work engagement and postponement of job-related tasks:

> *"Because I keep thinking about those things, I sometimes don't work... the tasks that should have been completed are delayed."* (S.M.O., 460–465)

In contrast, Y.P.A. adopted a more cautious strategy by temporarily postponing tasks requiring high accuracy until she felt emotionally stable:

> *"I usually hold off when I'm preoccupied because I'm afraid of making mistakes while typing or reviewing documents."* (Y.P.A., 730)

Overall, participants demonstrated that unresolved personal emotions affected their professional performance in different ways. While some experienced reduced motivation and procrastination, others responded by deliberately delaying tasks to minimize the risk of work-related errors.

D. Professionalism as a Manifestation of Organizational Feeling Rules

Despite experiencing emotional strain in their personal lives, all participants emphasized the importance of maintaining professionalism while interacting with clients. They recognized implicit organizational *feeling rules* that required them to remain calm, patient, objective, and focused on clients' needs regardless of their personal emotional state.

L.A.S. demonstrated this commitment by carefully planning counseling sessions, respecting clients' pace, and ensuring that postponed tasks were completed as part of her professional responsibility:

> *"Clients cannot be rushed."* (L.A.S., 300–310)

S.M.O. described adopting adaptive strategies when she felt emotionally overwhelmed, such as using assessment instruments or referring clients to another counselor to ensure service quality was maintained:

> *"If I really can't manage, I'll ask another counselor to help."* (S.M.O., 850)

Similarly, Y.P.A. emphasized that her responsibility as a public servant and addiction counselor required her to resolve personal issues before meeting clients and to remain available whenever clients needed assistance:

> *"No matter what happens, I have to give my best. I have to deal with my own problems first."* (Y.P.A., 640)

Overall, participants' accounts demonstrate that organizational feeling rules shaped how they regulated emotional expression in the workplace. Professionalism was reflected not in the absence of personal emotions but in their efforts to manage those emotions so that the quality of client care could be maintained.

E. Efforts to Align Emotions with Professional Role Demands

To maintain professional functioning despite personal challenges, participants actively employed various emotion regulation strategies before and during client interactions. These strategies involved increasing emotional awareness, temporarily setting aside personal concerns, and restoring emotional stability to meet professional expectations.

L.A.S. emphasized the importance of preparing herself emotionally before each counseling session. She practiced deep breathing, consciously set aside family-related concerns, focused exclusively on the client during the session, and minimized distractions by avoiding her phone:

> *"For those 45 minutes, I tell myself to focus only on the client."* (L.A.S., 445–470)

Similarly, S.M.O. described beginning the regulation process by recognizing her emotional state and then using self-affirmation to reduce emotional tension:

> *"It starts with recognizing the emotions that arise... I also try to calm myself through self-affirmation."* (S.M.O., 970–990)

Participant Y.P.A. managed emotional distress by expressing her feelings rather than suppressing them and by relying on religious coping to regain emotional balance:

> *"I just let it out first, and afterward I feel relieved... I entrust everything to Allah."* (Y.P.A., 800)

Overall, participants adopted different but complementary emotion regulation strategies to prevent personal emotions from interfering with their professional

responsibilities. These strategies enabled them to regain emotional stability while maintaining the quality of care provided to clients.

Factors Influencing the Emotional Labour of Addiction Counselors Roles as Mothers with Early Childhood Children

A. Inhibiting Factors of Emotional Labour

1. *Dynamics of the Maternal Role*

All participants described being actively involved in their children's daily care, encompassing not only physical needs but also emotional support, conflict resolution, and caregiving during illness. Because their husbands lived in different cities, many parenting responsibilities were managed independently, increasing the demands of their maternal role.

L.A.S. explained that childcare routines, such as accompanying her child to sleep and caring for the child during illness, required substantial time and energy:

> *"When my child is sick, I have to handle everything on my own, including taking them to the doctor."* (L.A.S., 135)

Similarly, S.M.O. described managing conflicts between her children without her husband's presence, requiring her to assume full responsibility for resolving family situations:

> *"If their father were here, we could handle them together. But now, I have to stop them by myself."* (S.M.O., 210–230)

Y.P.A. emphasized the cumulative fatigue associated with repetitive parenting routines, such as taking her children to school and meeting their daily needs:

> *"*I'm *already exhausted just taking care of the children... that's the biggest challenge."* (Y.P.A., 205)

Overall, the findings indicate that motherhood involved continuous physical, emotional, and caregiving responsibilities, with the absence of spouses due to long-distance marriages intensifying participants' parenting burden.

2. *Role Conflict*

Beyond their responsibilities as mothers, participants also worked as addiction counselors, requiring them to simultaneously fulfill demanding domestic and professional roles. These responsibilities frequently overlapped, creating challenges in managing time, energy, and emotional resources.

L.A.S. described carrying the primary responsibility for household management, childcare, financial concerns, and employment with minimal support:

> *"It's difficult because I can't rely on anyone. Problems with my child, the house, finances, and work all come back to me."* (L.A.S., 755)

Similarly, S.M.O. explained that balancing motherhood, household responsibilities, and professional duties became particularly challenging when family-related concerns affected her emotional state and work effectiveness:

> *"When something happens to my child, I become more emotional... and it definitely affects my work performance."* (S.M.O., 560)

Y.P.A. further illustrated the accumulation of multiple responsibilities by describing her simultaneous roles as a mother, wife, employee, daughter, and primary caregiver for her parents:

> *"Besides being a mother, a wife, and working, I'm also the youngest child... my parents rely on me."* (Y.P.A., 560)

Overall, participants experienced multiple, overlapping role demands that extended beyond the dual responsibilities of work and motherhood. The accumulation of family and professional obligations required continuous adjustment to balance competing responsibilities.

3. Dynamics of Long-Distance Marriage (LDM)

Participants reported that their long-distance marriages intensified the challenges of balancing motherhood and professional responsibilities. The physical absence of their husbands required them to assume additional domestic, parenting, and household management responsibilities that would otherwise have been shared with their partners.

L.A.S. explained that her husband's infrequent visits required her to perform both maternal and paternal responsibilities while independently managing household issues:

> *"I have to take on both roles—as a mother and a father."* (L.A.S., 130)

Similarly, S.M.O. described having to manage parenting responsibilities largely on her own while also coping with increased financial demands associated with maintaining two households. She further expressed feeling solely responsible for her children's development and well-being:

> *"When my husband is away, responsibility for the children feels completely mine."* (S.M.O., 585–615)

Y.P.A. also reported that her husband's absence required her to handle technical household matters independently, often forcing her to adjust her work schedule to complete domestic responsibilities:

> *"If my husband isn't here, I'm the one who has to manage everything."* (Y.P.A., 285)

Overall, participants perceived long-distance marriage as a contextual factor that amplified their role demands. Beyond increasing practical responsibilities, the absence of their spouses reduced opportunities for shared parenting and household management, thereby intensifying both domestic and professional pressures.

B. Supporting Factors of Emotional Labour

1. Family and Caregiver Support

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of support from extended family members and caregivers in helping them balance parenting responsibilities with professional duties. This support reduced the immediate burden of childcare and household responsibilities, enabling participants to maintain their work commitments despite their husbands' absence.

L.A.S. described how her parents and a caregiver assisted with childcare, allowing her to remain focused at work even when her child was ill:

> *"Fortunately, my parents and the caregiver can take over, so I don't always have to leave work."* (L.A.S., 265)

Similarly, S.M.O. relied on her parents, siblings, and a caregiver to share childcare responsibilities, particularly for school drop-offs and pick-ups during busy work periods:

> *"Parenting eventually involves several family members."* (S.M.O., 145–155)

Y.P.A. also depended on family support, explaining that her youngest child was cared for by her older sister because her parents were no longer able to provide daily childcare:

> *"My youngest child stays with my older sister because my parents are too old to take care of a young child."* (Y.P.A., 30)

Overall, family members and caregivers served as an essential support system that enabled participants to delegate childcare responsibilities, reduce work–family conflicts, and sustain their professional roles while navigating the demands of long-distance marriage.

2. Partner Support

Although participants lived in long-distance marriages, they described their partner as an important source of emotional, practical, and financial support. While daily caregiving responsibilities remained largely their own, their husbands' involvement during home visits and continued support from a distance helped reduce the burden of managing multiple roles.

L.A.S. explained that when her husband returned home, parenting and household responsibilities became shared, allowing her to experience temporary relief from her caregiving burden. She also appreciated that her husband respected her professional responsibilities without pressuring her to prioritize home over work:

> *"When my husband comes home, parenting responsibilities are shared."* (L.A.S., 825)

Similarly, Y.P.A. described her husband's presence as providing emotional reassurance because responsibilities could be shared more equally. She also reported receiving financial support for major household expenses despite the challenges of coordinating these needs from a distance:

> *"When my husband is here, I feel more at peace because everything can be shared."* (Y.P.A., 195)

Overall, participants viewed partner support as an important protective factor. Although limited by physical distance, emotional reassurance, shared responsibilities during home visits, and financial assistance helped alleviate some of the pressures associated with balancing motherhood and professional work.

3. Coworker Support

Participants identified coworkers as an important source of instrumental, emotional, and professional support in managing work demands. Flexible task sharing, emotional encouragement, and opportunities to seek advice from colleagues helped participants cope with the challenges of balancing professional and family responsibilities.

L.A.S. explained that non-urgent tasks could be temporarily handled by colleagues, reducing work pressure during difficult situations. She also described her workplace as having a supportive team environment:

> *"There are many support systems at work; my coworkers are very supportive."* (L.A.S., 760)

Similarly, S.M.O. emphasized the value of sharing experiences with coworkers who were also mothers, as well as receiving personal care and concern during challenging times:

> *"We share experiences with coworkers who also have young children."* (S.M.O., 250)

Y.P.A. described relying on trusted colleagues for emotional support through informal conversations and valued having psychologist coworkers who could provide professional advice when needed:

> *"After talking and crying, I felt relieved."* (Y.P.A., 445)

Overall, coworker support functioned as an important workplace resource by facilitating task sharing, emotional expression, and access to professional guidance, thereby helping participants maintain their professional roles despite competing family demands.

4. Institutional Support

In addition to support from family, spouses, and coworkers, participants described organizational support as an important resource in balancing work and family responsibilities. Institutional flexibility enabled them to address urgent family needs without completely interrupting their professional roles.

L.A.S. reported receiving permission to leave work temporarily during the day for breastfeeding before returning to complete her duties:

> *"The office allows me to go home for about two hours to breastfeed and then come back to work."* (L.A.S., 595)

Similarly, S.M.O. explained that the organization was supportive when employees needed leave to take a sick child to the doctor:

> *"The office is cooperative when my child is sick and needs medical attention during working hours."* (S.M.O., 295)

Y.P.A. likewise described her workplace as flexible in granting leave for urgent family matters:

> *"BNN is still flexible when I need leave for family matters."* (Y.P.A., 600)

Overall, participants perceived organizational flexibility as an important structural resource that reduced work–family conflict by allowing them to respond to family responsibilities while maintaining their professional commitments.

5. Cognitive Reappraisal of Multiple Roles

Participants described constructing positive meaning from their experiences as an important internal resource for coping with multiple role demands. Rather than viewing these challenges solely as burdens, they reframed them as opportunities for personal growth, emotional maturity, and adaptation.

L.A.S. viewed each stage of life as presenting its own challenges and emphasized the importance of self-compassion rather than self-blame:

> *"Every stage of life has its own challenges."* (L.A.S., 875)

Similarly, S.M.O. described adjusting her expectations to her current circumstances and intentionally focusing on the lessons gained from her experiences, including becoming more resilient and improving her time-management skills:

> *"I just try to find the positive side... it has made me stronger and better at managing my time."* (S.M.O., 1040)

Y.P.A. interpreted her multiple roles through a religious perspective, viewing her responsibilities as acts of worship and cultivating gratitude for everyday experiences:

> *"I do everything sincerely for Allah, as an act of worship."* (Y.P.A., 500)

Overall, positive meaning-making functioned as a form of cognitive reappraisal that enabled participants to reinterpret role-related challenges in a constructive way, supporting emotional resilience and helping them sustain their professional responsibilities despite ongoing work–family demands.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the qualitative analysis, it can be concluded that addiction counselors who concurrently navigate the roles of a mother to young children and a partner in a long-distance marriage (LDM) experience a high and complex volume of emotional labour. The constant intersection and blurred boundaries between intense domestic responsibilities and demanding professional duties trigger chronic emotional spillover, psychological exhaustion, and states of being overwhelmed. To meet the strict feeling rules of their profession and maintain organizational performance, these counselors utilize specific emotion regulation techniques, including

compartmentalization, emotional self-awareness, positive self-affirmation, and religious coping.

The execution of emotional labour in this population is concurrently shaped by an interplay of inhibiting and supporting factors. The primary inhibiting dynamics stem from the exhausting physical and mental demands of early childhood parenting, severe role conflict, and the structural pressures of LDM, which create a dual-parenting burden and subject mothers to heightened social judgment. Conversely, their capacity to sustain professional performance and psychological resilience is significantly bolstered by strong instrumental and emotional support systems, encompassing family assistance, partner validation, peer-driven catharsis, and institutional policy flexibility from BNN. Ultimately, the internal practice of cognitive reappraisal—transforming multifaceted demands into opportunities for character growth and spiritual devotion—serves as the definitive psychological anchor for these counselors.

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