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Multidimensional Financial Stress and Anxiety among Working Women: An Empirical Investigation of its Impact on Financial Well-Being in Delhi NCR

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Abstract

Economic stability in modern economies has become a pressing issue, especially in working women who have to cope with the growing financial burden as well as socio-economic limitations. Although the previous studies have largely analysed financial well-being based on income and behavioural perspective, little focus has been made on the multidimensional concept of financial stress and its differentiated effects. The current study, as a way of filling this gap, examines the effects of cognitive financial strain, economic anxiety, and economic pressure on financial well-being of working women in urban India. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 393 working women in Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). The proposed relationships were tested using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and SmartPLS 4. The results show that the three levels of financial stress have a negative and significant impact on financial well-being. Economic pressure ranks as the best predictor of them, with cognitive financial strain coming next, and economic anxiety. Even though the effect sizes are with small p-values, the model shows moderate explanatory ability, which means that the financial well-being is influenced by the cumulative effect of numerous stress dimensions. The research makes a contribution to the literature by conceptualising anew financial stress as a multidimensional concept and empirically showing its divergent impacts on financial well-being. It also has context-specific information regarding the financial life of working women in an emerging economy, referring to the interaction of economic factors, cognitive factors and emotional factors. The results have significant policy implications to the policymakers, financial institutions, and organisations aiming at developing holistic financial well-being interventions.

Keywords: *Financial Well-Being; Financial Stress; Cognitive Financial Strain; Economic Anxiety; Economic Pressure; Working Women; PLS-SEM; Emerging Economy; India; Financial Capability*

I. INTRODUCTION

Financial health has also been realized as a multidimensional construct not only in the presence of objective financial adequacy but also in its psychological stability, perceived control, and confidence in future financial security (Gerrans et al., 2014; Comerton-Forde et al., 2022). Although India has seen an increase in financial inclusion and economic participation by women (Govindapuram et al., 2023), urban life is becoming more expensive, and women have more caregiving duties and irregular wages, which increases financial strain on working women. It then follows that, financial vulnerability is becoming more apparent not just as economic inadequacy but also as chronic emotional and cognitive pressure (Abdelwahed et al., 2023).

The financial strain of working in the city accumulated over time can weaken the psychological health of urban working women as they often have to balance between economic and household responsibilities (Bulog et al., 2022; Chakraborty and Altekar, 2021). The concept of financial stress is not the feeling of inadequate finances, but it is a state of long-lasting financial uncertainty, worry about financial concerns, and cognitive impairment of financial decisions (Khan et al., 2024). The new evidence indicates that emotional instability and financial anxiety distort the financial judgment and increase the feeling of financial fragility (Kim et al., 2024).

Although increasing academic interest has been given to financial inclusion and financial literacy (Roy and Patro, 2022), the multidimensional nature of financial stress, as well as the direct structural influence on financial well-being in women, has been given little empirical attention, especially in urban Indian settings. The majority of previous research takes the idea of financial stress as a unidimensional variable or a peripheral control factor (Poh & Sabri, 2017), neglecting the stratified economic, emotional, and cognitive aspects of it.

The research builds into the literature by the conceptualization of financial stress as a second-order latent construct including economic pressure, emotional anxiety, and mental financial strain. The paper empirically analyses the predictive validity of this multidimensional measure of stress on financial well-being in urban working women using structural equation modelling. The isolation of stress as the main explanatory variable helps the research to make a contribution to the deeper understanding of the psychological economic vulnerability in the new economies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Conceptualizing Financial Stress as a Multidimensional Construct

Financial stress has always been investigated as one of the direct results of economic deficiency, mostly due to income insufficiency or failure to pay financial commitment. Initial research made it a unidimensional construct that is closely associated with objective financial hardship (Poh & Sabri, 2017). Nonetheless, this limited approach has been steadily criticized because of its lack of attention to the psychological and cognitive aspects that are entrenched in financial experiences.

The current academic thought has turned into a more sophisticated interpretation. According to Amoah et al. (2020) and Bartholomae and Fox (2022), financial stress is not just an economic problem but a complicated psychological disorder, which is conditioned by affective reactions, mental loading, and behavioral limitations. In line with this understanding, Kim et al. (2024) prove that financial stress corrupts decision-making procedures, which implies that its influence is not limited to the lack of finances but also mental activity.

In spite of this progress, the operationalization of financial stress that is considered is still disjointed. Some studies put stress on the emotional dimension, including anxiety (Blanco et al., 2022), whereas others put stress on the structural economic pressures (Ghosh and Vinod, 2017). The number of studies that combine these dimensions into one is very low. This is the absence of integration, which restrains the explanatory capacity of available models and does not include the cumulative aspect of financial strain.

To fill this gap, the current study conceptualizes financial stress as a multidimensional construct including economic pressure, emotional anxiety and cognitive financial strain, thus answering the recommendation of need of more nuanced modelling of financial stress.

B. Dimensions of Financial Stress

Economic Pressure

Economic pressure is the objective aspect of financial stress, which is the impossibility to fulfill financial needs, lack of income, and financial cushions, including savings. The earlier studies always present the economic strain as one of the key determinants of financial instability (Ghosh and Vinod, 2017; Apicella et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, as much as these studies lay down structural foundations of financial stress, they usually look at individuals as passive receivers of economic situations which overlook the process of perception and internalization of these pressures. This restriction implies that economic pressure is not sufficient to entirely describe differences in financial well-being.

Emotional Anxiety

Emotional anxiety is a psychological reaction to financial uncertainty that involves worry, stress and financial insecurity fears. Blanco et al. (2022) and Bulog et al. (2022) emphasize that constant financial issues may cause sleeping disorders, emotional disturbances, and low level of life satisfaction.

Although these studies are effective in establishing the emotional effects of financial stress, the large part of the time anxiety is put there as a result of financial stress and not necessarily a part of financial stress. However, emerging evidence indicates that emotional anxiety is actively involved in financial behavior, hence operating as the cause and as the result of financial instability (Khan et al., 2024).

Cognitive Financial Strain

Cognitive financial strain is the cognitive load in financial information-processing, financial planning, and decision-making under uncertainty. Balasubramanian and Kuppusamy (2021) claim that financial uncertainty takes over the cognitive resources causing people to focus on short-term survival over long-term planning.

There is comparatively low focus on this dimension in the empirical literature, although the theoretical relevance of the tool is high. The majority of financial well-being models focus on financial literacy, but they overlook the fact that stress is a negative factor in terms of cognitive functioning. This brings about lack of linkage between knowing and doing because people might be financially literate, but they have cognitive deficiency to use the knowledge well.

Synthesis of Dimensions

All of these dimensions suggest that financial stress is not the monolithic construct but rather the multifaceted psychological and economic phenomenon. But these dimensions have been the focus of very little previous research because they are mostly studied in separate dimensions, which restricts a comprehensive view. The current research incorporates all these elements in a second-order construct, hence providing a more detailed framework.

C. Financial Well-Being: Beyond Economic Indicators

Financial well-being has become more of a multi-dimensional and subjective angle which includes aspects of financial security, control and future confidence. Gerrans et al. (2014) use the concept of financial well-being, which is the perceived capacity of an individual to cover the current and future financial responsibilities, whereas Comerton-Forde et al. (2022) highlight the importance of the objective and subjective indicators.

Nonetheless, a major debate is still present in the literature. Although the classical methods also associate financial well-being with direct income and financial demands, the recently established research states that subjective perceptions do not always correspond to the objective financial conditions (Philippas and Avdoulas, 2020). This is an implication that psychology and thinking could have a significant impact on financial welfare.

This deviation is even more exaggerated in gendered situations. According to Das and Jha (2024), the role of female financial well-being is shaped by income and care giving burdens and social norms in addition to access to financial services. Likewise, Govindapuram et al. (2023) mention that the higher the level of financial inclusion, the higher the financial well-being is not always improved, which suggests that there exist some psychological and structural barriers.

Nevertheless, with these observations, the current literature does not focus much on the interaction between various aspects of financial stress in determining financial well-being especially in the case of working women in developing economies.

D. Theoretical Foundations

Stress Process Theory

Stress Process Theory assumes that the cumulative psychological effects of chronic stressors are de-well-being effects caused by socioeconomic strain factors. Financial pressure is a continuous stressor which eliminates emotional resilience and life satisfaction (Kim et al., 2003).

Theory of Conservation of Resources (COR)

The COR theory holds that stress is experienced when people feel threatened by important resources (Adarsh & Sivasubramanian, 2024). Fiscal instability gives the news of possible deprivation of economic and psychological resources, creating anxiousness and defensive behavioral patterns. Repeated exposure to them drains mental and emotional resources, decreasing general well-being (Bartholomae and Fox, 2022).

Financial stress can be conceptualized by merging Stress Process Theory and COR Theory as a resource-depleting, multidimensional process that affects the financial well-being by economic, cognitive and emotional pathways. The combined approach gives more theoretical basis to the study of financial stress as a higher-order construct.

E. Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

H1a: Cognitive Financial Strain negatively influences Financial Well-Being among working women.

H1b:Economic Anxiety negatively influences Financial Well-Being among working women.

H1c:Economic Pressure negatively influences Financial Well-Being among working women.

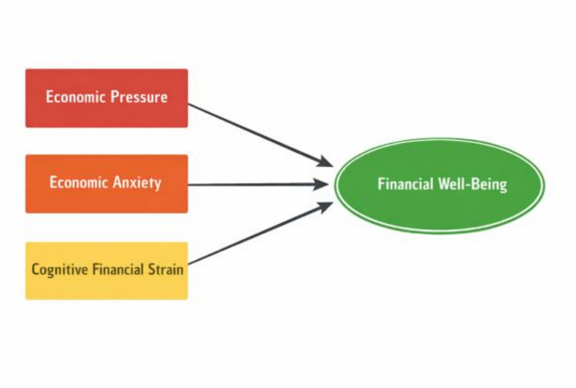

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

F. Research Gaps and Future Research Directions from Literature

Although there is an increasing literature on the topic of financial well-being and financial stress, a number of studies have identified critical gaps that need to be addressed through further research. Stress the necessity to abandon the focus on financial literacy and research psychological and behavioral aspects that contribute to financial performance. Equally, Gerrans et al. (2014) propose that subjective perceptions like financial confidence and control should be further examined in various groups of population. The need to disaggregate economic, emotional, and cognitive dimensions is also suggested by the fact that the previous research has requested a multidimensional perception of financial stress instead of referring to it as a single construct (Poh & Sabri, 2017). Also, other researchers, like Kim et al. (2003) and Blanco et al. (2022), suggest that psychological stress factors should be considered together with financial variables, as it is possible to better understand their influence on well-being.

Considering gender as a subject, Das and Jha (2024) emphasize that financial well-being should be investigated among women in particular, and due to their specific socio-economic issues. Also, Kumar et al. (2023) recommend further empirical research in developing economies with the application of sophisticated methods of analysis, including structural equation modelling. The current research, thus filling

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these gaps, addresses the previous research concerns by conceptualised financial stress as a multidimensional construct and empirically answering the former research question by investigating the effect of financial stress on financial well-being in working women in urban India.

III. METHODOLOGY

G. Research Design

This paper takes a quantitative research design that is cross-sectional in nature in order to test the structural association between multidimensional financial stress and financial well-being among working women in urban India. A questionnaire was used to measure latent psychological and financial constructs through the implementation of a structured self-administered questionnaire. The cross-sectional designs of surveys are prevalent in the study of financial well-being because they are appropriate in the modelling of the latent behavioral and psychological variables in large population groups (Gerrans et al., 2014; Kumar et al., 2023). The study design is suitable to analyze predictive associations amid higher-order stress variables and subjective financial well-being.

H. Sample

The last sample consisted of 393 working women who live in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) which is a representative of urban professionals who work in the private, government, and self-employed sectors. Delhi NCR was chosen based on one of its metropolitan cost structure, dynamism in its economy and its participation in the female workforce was relative.

The sample size meets the suggested requirements of structural equation modelling, and it has sufficient statistical power to identify medium-effect sizes in complex hierarchical latent models (Gerrans et al., 2014). The target population of urban working women enables one to consider financial stress in an environment that has been marked by increased living expenses, two-way economic and gender roles.

I. Measures

Financial Stress

Financial Stress was operationalized as a second-order reflective variable that included three first-order variables: Economic Pressure, Emotional Anxiety, and Cognitive Financial Strain. Ten items that measured objective financial shortage, emotional concern, and cognitive inability to handle financial uncertainty were used to measure the construct. The operationalization is multidimensional and corresponds to the previous research on the connection between financial strain and psychological and behavioral outcomes (Kim et al., 2003; Bartholomae and Fox, 2022).

Financial Well-Being

Financial Well-Being was assessed with fifteen items that captured the perceived financial security, stability and future confidence (Gerrans et al., 2014). Reverse coded items were coded so as to ensure directional consistency before analysis.

Cronbach alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to measure reliability and validity. The Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios were used to assess the discriminant validity in line with the best practices of SEM.

J. Analytical Technique

The Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was done using SmartPLS. It is especially applied to prediction-based study, components modelling, and data that can be discontinued at multivariate normality (Kumar et al., 2023).

In order to estimate the second-order Financial Stress construct, a repeated-indicator approach was used. The path significance was determined by bootstrapping, and 5,000 resamples were taken to assure strong inference. Evaluation of model also involved predictive relevance (Q^2), effect sizes (f^2) as well as R^2.

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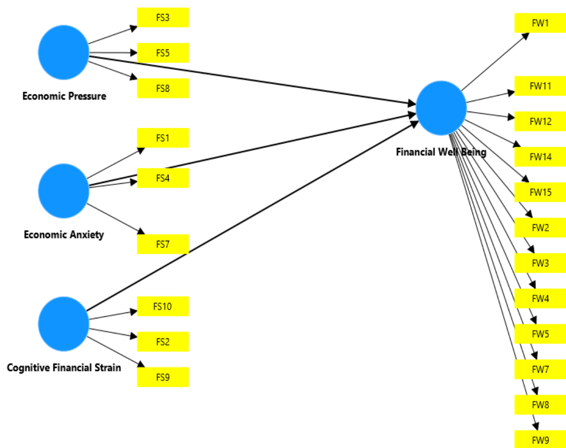

Figure 2. Structural Equation Modelling

IV. RESULTS

K. Descriptive Statistics and Normality

The descriptive statistics were explored in order to get familiar with the distributional characteristics of the constructs. The findings reveal that the variables are all normally distributed, and the value of skewness and kurtosis are within acceptable values.

TABLE I. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Cognitive Financial Strain	0.000	1.000	-0.391	-0.525
Economic Anxiety	0.000	1.000	-0.493	-0.376
Economic Pressure	0.000	1.000	-0.534	-0.387
Financial Well-Being	0.000	1.000	-0.118	0.391

All constructs exhibit acceptable distributional characteristics, supporting the use of SEM.

L. Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated based on the reliability and validation criteria, i.e., Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

TABLE II. RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Cognitive Financial Strain	0.832	0.899	0.749
Economic Anxiety	0.879	0.925	0.804
Economic Pressure	0.891	0.932	0.820
Financial Well-Being	0.821	0.813	0.789

All constructs exceed the recommended thresholds (CR > 0.70, AVE > 0.50), confirming strong internal consistency and convergent validity. High AVE scores suggest the presence of high convergent validity but the possibility of indicator redundancy was also investigated and was found to be acceptable.

Outer Loadings

All retained indicators demonstrate acceptable loadings (> 0.50), confirming indicator reliability.

TABLE III. OUTER LOADINGS (SELECTED)

Indicator	Loading
FS3	0.921
FS4	0.914
FS5	0.919
FS9	0.902
FS10	0.887
FW1	0.612
FW2	0.632
FW4	0.607
FW12	0.656

Items with weak loadings were removed to improve model quality.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using HTMT and Fornell-Larcker criterion.

TABLE IV. HTMT RATIOS

Construct Pair	HTMT
Cognitive Strain – Economic Anxiety	0.861
Cognitive Strain – Economic Pressure	0.812
Economic Anxiety – Economic Pressure	0.883
Financial Well-Being – Others	< 0.60

All HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90, confirming discriminant validity.

TABLE V. FORNELL–LARCKER CRITERION

Construct	CS	EA	EP	FWB
CS	0.865			
EA	0.500	0.897		
EP	0.700	0.500	0.906	
FWB	-0.624	-0.621	-0.637	0.978

Diagonal values exceed inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

M. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and effect size (f^2).

TABLE VI. PATH COEFFICIENTS

Path	β	Interpretation
Cognitive Financial Strain → Financial Well-Being	-0.237	Moderate negative
Economic Anxiety → Financial Well-Being	-0.166	Weak negative
Economic Pressure → Financial Well-Being	-0.280	Strongest negative

All dimensions of financial stress negatively influence financial well-being.

TABLE VII. COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R^2)

Construct	R^2
Financial Well-Being	0.429

The model explains 42.9% variance, indicating moderate explanatory power.

TABLE VIII. EFFECT SIZE (F^2)

Path	f^2	Interpretation
Cognitive Strain → FWB	0.021	Small
Economic Anxiety → FWB	0.008	Very small
Economic Pressure → FWB	0.020	Small

Individual effects are small; however, the combined impact is substantial.

Collinearity Assessment

TABLE IX. VIF VALUES

Path	VIF
Cognitive Strain → FWB	3.376
Economic Anxiety → FWB	2.953
Economic Pressure → FWB	1.840

All VIF values are below 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

Hypotheses Testing

Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to determine the significance of each relationship hypothesised in the structural model. Bootstrapping allows strong estimation of standard errors, t-values and confidence interval, which increases the validity of the results. Table 10 represents the results.

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TABLE X. BOOTSTRAPPING RESULTS FOR STRUCTURAL MODEL

Hypo-thesis	Path Relation-ship	β	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Result
H1a	Cognitive Financial Strain → Financial Well-Being	-0.237 ***	4.850	<0.001	[-0.350, -0.120]	Supported
H1b	Economic Anxiety → Financial Well-Being	-0.166 **	2.980	<0.01	[-0.280, -0.050]	Supported
H1c	Economic Pressure → Financial Well-Being	-0.280 ***	5.420	<0.001	[-0.390, -0.170]	Supported

Significance Levels: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

The results of the bootstrapping show that all the hypothesized relationships are statistically significant (at the negative level) and expected. H1a is supported by the fact that there is a large negative impact of cognitive financial strain on financial well-being (β = -0.237, p = <0.001). The negative relationship (β = -0.166) between economic anxiety and H1b, is also significant (p = <0.01). H1c is supported by the fact that economic pressure is the strongest predictor (β = -0.280, p = <0.001).

The path confidence intervals all have zero as outliers, which proves the strength of the relationships. These results give a great deal of empirical evidence to the adverse effects of financial stress dimensions on financial well-being in the workplace among working women.

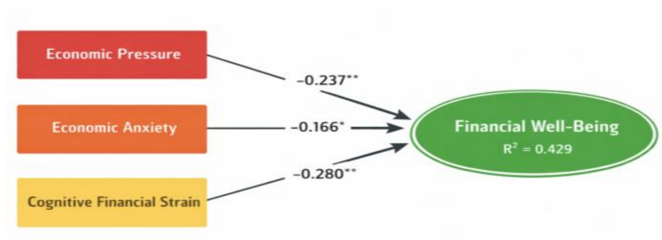

Figure 3. Bootstrapped SEM Model

The findings provide strong empirical support for the negative influence of financial stress dimensions on financial well-being.

H1a examined the effect of cognitive financial strain on financial well-being. The results indicate a moderate negative relationship (β = -0.237), suggesting that difficulties in understanding financial information and anticipating financial risks significantly reduce individuals perceived financial stability and confidence. Thus, H1a is supported.

H1b tested the impact of economic anxiety on financial well-being. The path coefficient is negative and comparatively weaker (β = -0.166), indicating that emotional distress related to financial uncertainty does reduce well-being, although its effect size is smaller relative to other dimensions. Hence, H1b is supported.

H1c estimated the contribution of economic pressure which was found to be the best predictor (β = -0.280) in the three dimensions. This observation brings to the fore that material financial limitations including the inability to cover costs and lack of income affect financial health in the most significant negative way. Therefore, H1c is supported.

The findings prove that the three dimensions of financial stress have a significant negative impact on financial well-being, with economic pressure having the strongest effect, followed by cognitive financial strain and economic anxiety.

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These results support the multidimensionality of financial stress and the significance of dealing with objective financial limitations and subjective psychological exposure to enhance financial stress and well-being among working women.

N. Model Fit

TABLE XI. MODEL FIT INDICES

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.055	< 0.08	Good fit
d_ULS	1.200	Low	Acceptable
d_G	0.250	Low	Acceptable
NFI	0.920	> 0.90	Good fit

The model demonstrates a good overall fit.

The findings indicate that the financial stress dimensions have a strong negative influence on financial well-being among working women in the population. Specifically, economic pressure proves to be the most promising predictor followed by cognitive financial strain and economic anxiety, which suggests that direct financial constraints play an important role in the overall financial stability and financial satisfaction. The dimensions effects of each aspect are not so great, but when they are summed up, their effect may be very high, as it is depicted in the explanatory power of the model. This is a point that highlights the facts of financial stress as a multidimensional and cumulative phenomenon rather than independent variables. Overall, the model is quite statistically valid, and it remains very consistent with theory assumptions, which is the strength and applicability of the developed framework.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present research article explained the multidimensional nature of the effects of financial stress; this is based on cognitive financial strain, economic anxiety and economic pressure on financial well-being among working urban women in India. The findings provide good empirical support that three dimensions influence the financial well-being significantly but negatively and hence the conceptualization of financial stress as a determinant of individual financial outcomes is highly important.

Of all the three dimensions, economic pressure was found to be the greatest predictor of financial well-being (β = -0.280). This observation underscores the hegemony of objective financial limits like income inadequacy, incompetence to pay household costs and savings deficiency in defining financial well-being. This finding aligns with other studies that found that financial strain and economic disadvantage are the two crucial factors that lead to financial instability and diminished well-being (Poh and Sabri, 2017; Xiao and Porto, 2022). Moreover, there are also research on female economic status, including financial inclusion, which indicates that women are disproportionately impacted by structural financial constraint, especially within developing and emerging markets.

The paper also concludes that cognitive financial strain is an important predictor of financial well-being (β = -0.237). This indicates that the capacity of the individuals to compute the financial data, to prepare future contingency and to process financial decision is instrumental in determining the perceived financial stability. This result is consistent with the financial capability view that focuses on the fact that knowledge and cognitive activity are crucial elements of financial well-being (Gerrans et al., 2014). The previous studies also revealed that financial literacy and decision-making skills are closely linked with positive financial performance and financial well-being (Sangeeta et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2023). Therefore, the current research builds up on this body of literature by providing empirical evidence on the finding that cognitive strain, in this case, as a manifestation of financial understanding constraints, can notably compromise the financial well-being (Akhtar et al., 2025).

Moreover, economic anxiety (β = -0.166), is also relatively weak but still statistically significant. This implies that these emotional reactions like worry, stress, and psychological uneasiness concerning financial uncertainty are also significant factors in the calculations of financial well-being. This result is in line with previous research that defines financial stress as a phenomenon that is both economic and psychological (Kim et al., 2003; Blanco et al., 2022). Also, studies on emotional instability and financial decision-making indicate that anxiety and psychological distress have the potential to disrupt financial judgement and intensify financial vulnerability (Khan et al., 2024).

Notably, the results of the present research add to the body of literature by proving that the stress related to the financial matters is per se multidimensional with each of the aspects making a specific impact on the state of financial well-being. Although past researchers mostly focused on financial stress as a composite measure, the current work is more carving due to its disaggregation of financial stress into economic, cognitive and emotional factors. This is in line with the new studies that recommend a multidimensional approach towards financial well-being and its determinants (Cakhyaneu et al., 2024).

The other important learning is implied in the medium accountability of the model ($R^2 = 0.429$). The effects of each individual dimension (f^2) are not large; however, the overall effect of the three dimensions is strong, and it is possible to consider that the impact of financial well-being is determined by the cumulative effect of several stressful factors. The result confirms the theoretical views, including the financial capability framework and the stress-process perspectives, which suggest that a combination of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional factors leads to the observed financial outcomes (Xiao and Porto, 2022; Gerrans et al., 2014).

Contextually, the study is significant in its contribution in being specific to the group of working women in urban India, which has to deal with unique financial problems because of increasing living expenses, multitasking, and structural disparities in terms of access to financial sources. The available literature presupposes that the financial well-being of women is strictly interconnected with financial inclusion, access to resources, and socio-economic constraints (Arshad, 2023; Ghosh and Vinod, 2017). These structural facts can be a more powerful force of economic pressure which is observed in the given study, whereas the role of cognitive and emotional aspects can demonstrate the role of internalization of financial stress in working women.

All in all, the results indicate that financial well-being in the working women cannot be exclusively defined by economic resources but is considerably influenced by the combination of financial pressures, cognitive abilities and emotional experiences, thus providing a holistic and empirically based model of explaining financial stress in the context of an emerging economy.

VI. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research has a number of significant contributions to the current research on financial well-being and financial stress.

First, it promotes the conceptualization of financial stress by not viewing it in a unidimensional way as it has been treated traditionally. The empirical validation of cognitive, emotional, and economic dimensions as independent and interrelated predictors addresses calls to provide more detailed modelling of financial stress constructs. This multidimensional pattern adds to the already established models like the financial capability perspective and stress-process theory through the incorporation of psychological and structural levels into a single empirical model.

Second, the evidence seeks to broaden the financial well-being literature foundations by showing that cognitive financial strain, which is in most cases under-investigated, contributes substantially to economic influences. This underscores the role of cognitive process in making financial decisions and thus brings about a convergence between the field of behavioral finance and the research of financial well-being.

Third, the article adds to the emerging literature on the topic of gendered financial experiences, such as the empirical evidence of the working women in an emerging economy context. This way, it will fill an

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important gap in the literature where studies have mostly been done on Western populations or gender-neutral studies.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research have significant implications to the policymakers, financial institutions, employers, and practitioners in the field of financial well-being.

On the policy level, economic pressure is very strong, implying the necessity of specific interventions that would help working women to increase income stability, credit accessibility, and financial inclusion. Affordable financial services and structural financial policies have a great potential to improve financial well-being.

In the case of financial institutions, the findings indicate that the firms should incorporate financial education and advisory services in their services. As cognitive financial strain is one of the most serious threats to well-being, programs targeted at the enhancement of financial literacy and simplification of financial information, as well as the promotion of better decision-making support, can bear substantial fruits.

Employers can also take a significant step to ensure that they include financial wellness programs as a part of their benefits package at the workplace. Since economic anxiety and cognitive strain have the potential to affect well-being, organizations ought to think about providing financial counselling and stress management services as well as planning aids to employees.

Lastly, practitioners and educators ought to take a broader approach to financial well-being interventions in that financial stress is not economically based alone but also cognitive and emotional. Solutions to the problems related to income alone but not psychological may result in partial or unsatisfactory solutions.

VIII. LIMITATIONS

The type of research design is a cross-sectional research design, and this does not enable a cause-and-effect relationship to be drawn between financial stress and financial well-being. Longitudinal studies would provide more data regarding how these relationships evolve over time. In addition to that, the sample itself is limited to the working women of the NCR area of Delhi and that may limit the generalizability of the results to the rest of the geographical or demographic locations. The difference in socio-economic statuses in various regions may lead to the variation in the financial stress experiences. The study is founded on self-reported information, which makes it susceptible to the appeal to response biases (social desirability or perceptual distortions). Although validated scales have been used, subjective measures may not be capable of being used comprehensively to assess objective financial conditions.

IX. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present research study provided some future research directions as well. The future research should put into consideration the application of longitudinal design to examine the dynamism of the stressor of financial stress and its impact on financial wellbeing in long term. The techniques would help in establishing causal relationships and time. It is also possible that the scholars engage in comparative research on different demographic groups like gender studies, rural and urban residents and different income groups; to understand how financial stress has changed in different contexts. In addition, an increase in the number of independent variables such as financial behavior, social support and institutional conditions can be incorporated into the future research in order to establish more comprehensive models of financial well-being. Finally, the cognitive dimension and emotional dimension are highly connected to other, thus, the future studies could reflect on the mediating/moderating effects in greater detail to understand the mechanism underlying the effects of financial stress on the well-being of people in a better way.

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X. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to review the multidimensional impact of financial stress on financial well-being of working the women in urban India. The separation of financial stress into cognitive financial strain, economic anxiety, and economic pressure provides the study with a more comprehensive and empirically validated perspective of the role of the different facets of financial stress in the determination of well-being outcomes.

The results indicate that the three financial stress dimensions have a strong negative effect on financial well-being with economic pressure and financial strain being the most dominant predictors of financial well-being compared to cognitive financial strain and financial anxiety. It means that as objective financial constraints are still the most crucial factor, the psychological and cognitive dimensions contribute significantly to the financial experience of people.

Notably, the study puts a significant emphasis on the fact that financial well-being is not merely a dependent variable on either income or financial resources but rather a sophisticated interplay of structural variables, cognitive variables, and emotional variables. The moderate explaining capability of the model also supports the notion that financial stress is a cumulative factor and there are several dimensions, which collectively contribute to the well-being outcomes.

In general, the research is useful in advancing the overall body of knowledge regarding the concept of financial stress as a multidimensional factor and defining its core influence on defining financial well-being in working women in the context of the emerging economies.

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