



A five-decade analysis of work-life balance among women through systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis

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Abstract

Over the past five decades, the concept of work-life balance has undergone a significant transformation, particularly in the context of women who continue to navigate the complex interplay between professional responsibilities and personal commitments. This study offers a comprehensive overview of the research landscape on women's work-life balance by integrating a systematic literature review with a bibliometric analysis. It aims to identify the prevailing themes and sub-themes that have shaped the discourse over time, while also highlighting the notable trends and shifts that characterize current research in the field. By analyzing the intellectual structure, publication patterns, and scholarly contributions, this study provides valuable insights into how the field has evolved and where future research might be directed. The findings not only deepen the understanding of the challenges women face in achieving work-life balance but also suggest potential areas for the development of more robust and targeted models and policy interventions to address these enduring issues.

Keywords Work-life balance, Gender roles, Quality of life, Gender equality, Societal changes, Gender disparities

Introduction

Work-life balance is not a new concept; rather, it has evolved over time. The world has been discussing work-life balance since 1960s. This concept is universal and applies to all individuals on the planet, regardless of gender, education, or other factors. Both men and women, educated and non-educated, literate and illiterate individuals face challenges in effectively balancing the two dimensions of life: work and personal life. "Work" does not solely refer to office or organized sector employment; it encompasses an individual's engagement for a specific period to complete tasks. Conversely, "life"

encompasses a broad-spectrum involving family, society, and self. The term "work-life balance" was coined in 1986, aiming to strike equilibrium between the diverse role's women assume in life [18]. This phenomenon pertains to individuals striving for harmony between personal and professional lives. Full-time working women often grapple with reconciling employment with familial duties, including caregiving for families, children, and elders. "Work-life balance" does not imply a strict equal division of time between work and personal life. Instead, it involves skillful harmony across an individual's interests, which span family, work, leisure, social responsibilities, health, career, and spirituality [31]. The concept of balance does not suggest reduced work hours, rather, it emphasizes intelligent time management to maintain energy for both personal and professional commitments. The pivotal determinant of a successful balance between the two aspects of life—work, and family—is the individuals' capacity to control and manage both domains without compromising their responsibilities [33].

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