
Work Life Balance among Library Staff: A PRISMA-based systematic review of Web of Science

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is the integration of a person's personal and professional obligations. It entails efficiently managing time and energy to prevent job obligations from overshadowing personal concerns, boost overall quality of life and job satisfaction, and promote well-being while lowering stress. Library staff, like staff in any other service sector organisation, work under pressure to provide quality services and fulfil user demands, which may lead to burnout, stress and exhaustion. To ensure that LIS professionals are prepared, supported, and revitalised to continue playing a crucial role in their organisation, the critical relevance of work-life balance must be acknowledged. This study, through bibliometric analysis and systematic review, aims to identify research trends, key factors, and challenges influencing work-life balance among library professionals. A systematic review following PRISMA guidelines was conducted to filter the literature on the work-life balance of library staff published between 2008 and 2025 in Web of Science. Of the 115 items, 46 were selected for the study. Analysis shows an increase in the number of publications on work-life balance from 2020, peaking at 8 (17.39%) in 2021, with the Journal of Academic Librarianship publishing the most articles (16, 34.78%) on the topic. The most significant factors influencing the work-life balance of library staff include workload, workplace inflexibility, the number of family members, and personal responsibilities. The most frequently reported challenges include a stressful work environment and a heavy workload, followed by issues such as difficulty concentrating and declining health. It is suggested that offering a flexible work schedule, skill development programs, implementing shift duties during emergencies, cancelling overtime, and establishing work-life balance policies could positively impact the work-life balance of library staff.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Flexible Working, Work Life Conflict, Library, Library Staff

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1. Introduction

The integration between a person's personal and professional obligations is known as work-life balance. Preventing job obligations from overshadowing personal concerns, including family, health, leisure, and self-development, entails efficiently managing time and energy. The idea boosts overall quality of life and job satisfaction while promoting well-being and reducing stress. Achieving work-life balance in a professional setting, such as libraries, entails creating an environment where employees can perform their duties without sacrificing their personal needs. Flexible scheduling, equitable workload distribution, supportive policies, and the availability of resources such as daycare or wellness initiatives can all be part of this.

Given the particular demands and difficulties of jobs, library staff must maintain a healthy work-life balance. Library staff usually have set hours, need to communicate constantly with patrons, and occasionally have to handle unexpected tasks or emergencies, all of which can cause stress and exhaustion if not managed appropriately. To minimise burnout, improve job performance, support both physical and mental wellness, retain qualified workers, accommodate personal commitments, respond to emergencies, and foster personal growth, library employees, in particular, need work-life balance.

The study aims to conduct a systematic review of the available literature using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines and to filter publications on work-life balance for library employees from the Web of Science database from 2008-2025. The review aims to identify key factors and challenges that influence work-life balance among library professionals, as reported in the literature. Finally, the study will extract and synthesise suggestions and recommendations from various authors to promote and support effective work-life balance practices in library environments. The findings of this review are expected to provide valuable insights for researchers, policy-makers, and library administrators seeking to improve the professional well being and productivity of library staff.

2. Review of Literature

The deliberate allocation of one's personal resources, time, effort, and dedication across all aspects of life to guarantee happy and satisfying experiences in each is known as work-life balance. To minimise the impact of job intensity or long hours on family, personal, or recreational activities, it also entails purposefully prioritising tasks and establishing clear limits. The work-life balance concept is defined by Kirchmeyer (2000) as "achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to be well distributed across domains". Three essential components of a healthy work-life balance were highlighted by Marc and MacDermid (1996), "Time balance" referring to maintaining a balance between work, play, and family obligations; "Involvement balance" referring to maintaining a comparable degree of psychological commitment across different domains and "Satisfaction balance" referring to having similar levels of satisfaction in both the personal and professional domains. When taken as a whole, these components define work life balance as the capacity to fairly and satisfactorily manage one's obligations to one's family and job.

A bibliometric study of the Scopus database from 2023 to 2024 by Fitriyani & Iskandar (2024) highlights the importance of work-life balance in the modern workplace and offers a robust theoretical framework and valuable insights into the interplay between professional and personal life. Another bibliometric study by Rashmi & Kataria (2021) examined 945 research publications from the Scopus database published between 1998 and 2020. According to the survey, publications have increased significantly since 2007, with over 45 papers produced annually since 2012. With 75 or more papers annually, the years 2016–2020 saw the most publishing. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, and Spain contributed to WLB research. Pratiwi's (2023) study on the topic, also available in the Scopus database from 2012 to 2022, found that management and business research in the US were the most active in work-life balance studies.

Every field needs work-life balance because it promotes productivity, overall life fulfilment, and the maintenance of healthy physical and mental health. People who successfully balance their personal and professional obligations report being less stressed, having greater focus, and having stronger bonds with others at work and with their families. Similarly, Work-life balance is important for library staff to support their well-being and job satisfaction, given the changing demands of information services, user expectations, and the emotional labour frequently involved in the library profession.

Realising this need, many studies have been conducted across various disciplines and on library staff. A variety of related factors influence the work-life balance of library staff. Reddy (2010) found that the economic and social status of library staff, as well as organisational physical facilities of libraries, such as infrastructure, washroom facilities, drinking water facilities, and canteen areas, impact the practice of work-life balance among library staff. In addition, other organisational factors also impact the same, such as the work environment, working hours, and work pressure (Rani, 2016).

Numerous studies have been carried out to ascertain the challenges with work-life balance faced by library staff due to the factors involved, including workload, financial stress, job demands (Durodolu et. al. (2023), type of employment (permanent or non-permanent) (Akakandelwa, 2013), burnout (Harwell, 2013), technology advancement (Velmurugan, 2017), technology over use in library (Zipf, 2025). Studies show that emotional pressure causes health problems among library workers (Harwell, 2013), and gender inequity also creates difficulties for library staff in managing their work-life balance (Galbraith et al., 2016).

As seen from the studies, balancing time between home and workplace poses a major challenge. Several authors have offered suggestions to help improve the work-life balance of library staff. Ibegbulam & Ejikeme (2021) recommended implementing flexible work schedules, fair work distribution, and cancelling overtime, while Kodua et al. (2021) emphasised developing a supportive work environment to overcome work-related challenges. Ashiq & Warraich (2023) recommended skill development programmes and regular salary updates to address career related challenges. They also suggested introducing work-life balance policies, providing childcare facilities, and implementing shift-based duties in emergencies to overcome family- and personal-related challenges.

Work-life balance is a must for effective management and productivity in any organisation. Bibliometric studies show a growing research trend on this topic, but most of the research has been in management and business research, as indexed

in the Scopus database. Studies on LIS professionals were relatively few. Hence, this study attempts to study the literature on work-life balance of library staff, published in Web of Science from 2008 to 2025.

3. Research Questions

The submitted literature on the Web of Science database from 2008 to 2025, related to work-life balance among library staff, has been reviewed to answer the following questions:

What is the publication and research trend in this subject area?

What are the factors affecting the work-life balance of library staff?

What are the major challenges that library staff face in maintaining work-life balance?

4. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on 46 articles published in the Web of Science database related to the work-life balance of library staff from 2008-2025, of which 45 are open access, and 1 is closed access. No gap years were found in which no literature on the subject was published.

The Web of Science database, a highly dynamic, regularly updated resource, was used in this study. Consequently, there is a chance that the results of this review paper will change by the time it is released. Because only the Web of Science database was used in this study, the results were limited to that database. Future researchers can therefore use other reliable databases for better results.

5. Methodology

A systematic review method was used to filter the literature on work-life balance of library staff using the Web of Science database. The study used the PRISMA guidelines to properly identify and select the literature. VOSviewer software was used in this study to show co-authorship patterns, term occurrence based on abstracts, keyword co-occurrence, and a clustering network of all keywords.

The literature on work-life balance of library staff between 2008 and 2025 from Web of Science was retrieved by using the following steps:

- **Identification Phases:** A total of 13,451 literature items were retrieved using the keywords “Work Life Balance,” “Work Life Conflict,” “Work Family Enrichment,” and “Work Family Balance.” Out of 13,451 literature items, 13,336 literature items were removed because they did not contain the keywords “Library” or “Library staff” and were from different disciplines.

Thus, 115 records were found related to (“Work Life Balance” OR “Work Life Conflict” OR “Work family Enrichment” OR “Work family Balance”) AND (“Library” OR “Library Staff”) keywords.

- **Screening Phase:** After screening the 115 literature items, 69 were removed due to irrelevant content, and 46 were found to be relevant.

- **Literature Included in the Review:** Only 46 documents fulfilled the criteria of searched keywords on the Web of Science database and were included in the review. Out of 46 studies on work-life balance of library staff, 45 were open access, and 01 study was closed access.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the Web of Science database on the work-life balance of library staff have been tabulated and analysed in relation to the research questions. The analysis has accordingly been divided into three sections.

6.1 Publication and Research Trends

To analyse the growth pattern of published literature on the work-life balance of library staff, the publications on the subject were distributed by year from 2008-2025.

S.No.	Year	No. of Publications	Percentage (%) of Publications
1	2025	3	6.52
2	2024	2	4.34
3	2023	4	8.69
4	2022	1	2.17
5	2021	8	17.39
6	2020	5	10.86
7	2019	2	4.34
8	2018	3	6.52
9	2017	1	2.17
10	2016	2	4.34
11	2015	3	6.52
12	2014	2	4.34
13	2013	1	2.17
14	2012	2	4.34
15	2011	1	2.17
16	2010	3	6.52
17	2009	2	4.34
18	2008	1	2.17
	TOTAL	46	100

Table 1. Year-Wise Distribution of Published Literature on Web of Science Database

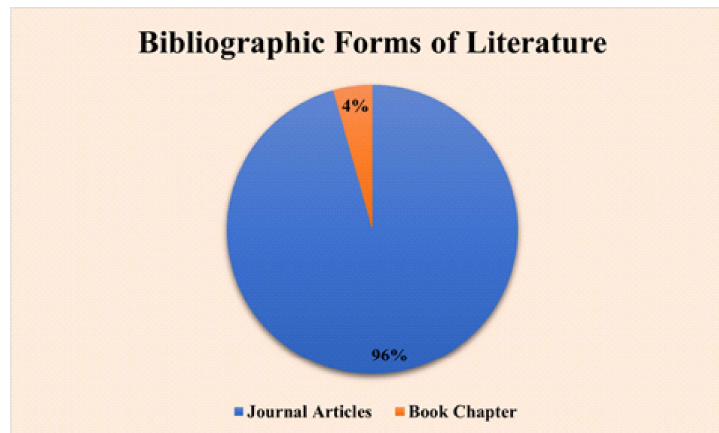
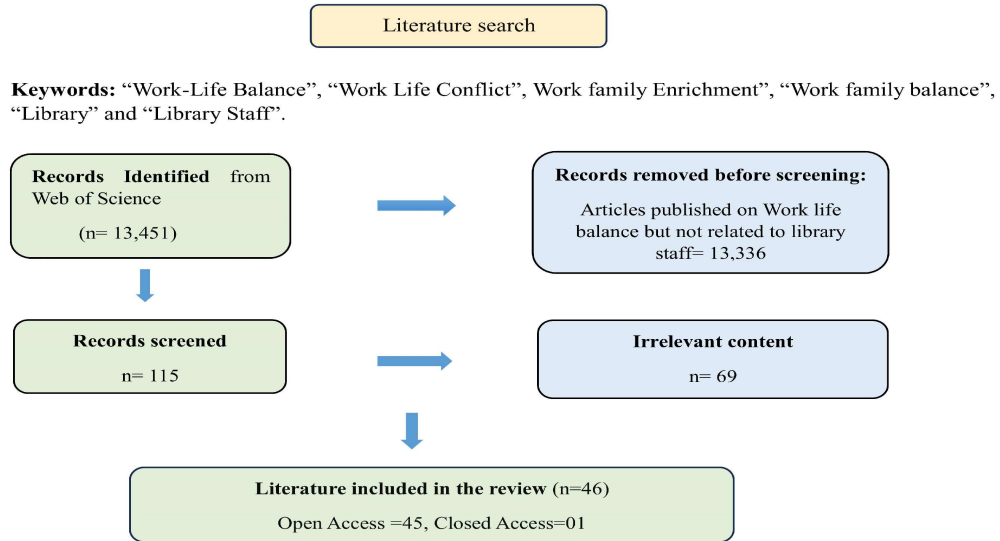


Figure 2. Bibliographic forms of literature published on the Web of Science database



The diagram depicting the Literature Search using PRISMA

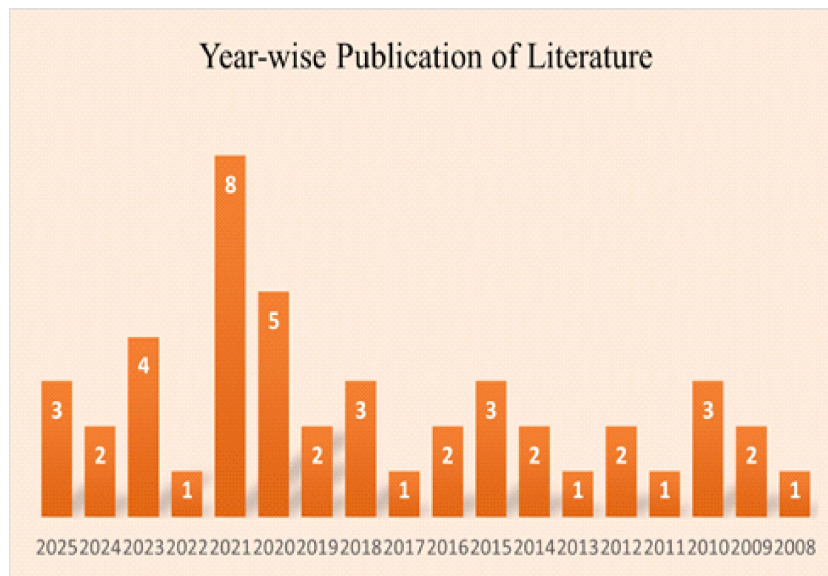


Figure 1. Year-wise publication of published literature on the Web of Science database

Table 1 shows that the maximum number of publications was in the year 2021 (08), followed by 2020(5), and 4 in 2023.

S.No	Forms of Document	No. of Publications	Percentage (%) of Publications
1	Journal Articles	44	95.65
2	Book Chapter	2	4.34
	TOTAL	46	100

Table 2. Bibliographic Forms of Literature Published on the Web of Science Database

Table 2 shows the various bibliographic forms of cited literature in the Web of Science database related to work-life balance of library staff from 2008-2025. Out of 46 publications, the majority were journal articles (44).

The 46 literature items under study were published in 18 different journals by 13 different publishers. The journals and publishers are ranked by the number of publications in Tables 3 and 4 below.

S. No.	Journal Name	No. of Publication	Percentage (%) of Publication
1	Journal of Academic Librarianship	16	34.78
2	College & Research Libraries	6	13.04
3	Journal of Librarianship and Information Science	4	8.69
4	Library & Information Science Research	3	6.52
5	Library Trends	2	4.34
6	Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science	2	4.34
7	Information Development	2	4.34
8	Notes	1	2.17
9	Library Resources & Technical Services	1	2.17
10	Library Hi Tech	1	2.17
11	Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association	1	2.17
12	Journal of the Medical Library Association	1	2.17
13	Journal of Computer Information Systems	1	2.17
14	Investigacion Bibliotecologica	1	2.17
15	Libri-International Journal of Libraries and Information Studies	1	2.17
16	Electronic Library	1	2.17
17	Australian Library Journal	1	2.17
18	Aslib Proceedings	1	2.17
	TOTAL	46	100

Table 3. Ranking of Journals

Table 3 shows that the Journal of Academic Librarianship ranked first with 16 published articles, followed by College & Research Libraries with 6. Of the 18 journals, 11 had only 1 publication.

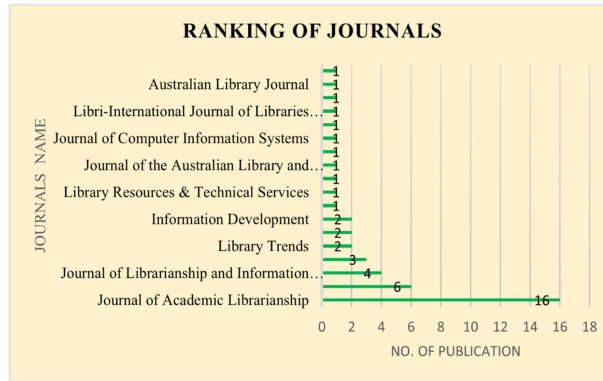


Figure 3. Ranking of Journals

S.No	Publisher	No. of Publication	Percentage (%) of Publications
1	Elsevier	19	41.3
2	Association College Research Libraries	6	13.04
3	Sage Publications INC	6	13.04
4	Emerald Group Publishing LTD	3	6.52
5	Johns Hopkins University Press	2	4.34
6	University of Malaya, Fac Computer Science & Information Tech	2	4.34
7	Routledge Journals, Taylor & Francis LTD	2	4.34
8	Australian Library & Information Assoc Ltd	1	2.17
9	Music Library Association	1	2.17
10	American Library Association	1	2.17
11	University of Nacional Autonoma Mexico	1	2.17
12	Walter De Gruyter Gmbh	1	2.17
13	Medical Library Association	1	2.17
	TOTAL	46	100

Table 4. Ranking of Publishers Based on the Number of Publications

Table 4 shows that Elsevier have the maximum number of publications (19), followed by the Association of College Research Libraries with 6. Out of 13, 6 publishers have only one publication.

The table below shows the country-wise distribution of published literature on work-life balance of library staff on the Web of Science database.

S.No	Name of Countries	No. of Publications	Percentage of Publications
1	United States	31	67.39
2	United Kingdom	10	21.73
3	Malaysia	2	4.34
4	Mexico	1	2.17
5	Germany	1	2.17
6	Australia	1	2.17
	Total	46	100

Table 5. Country-Wise Distribution of Published Literature

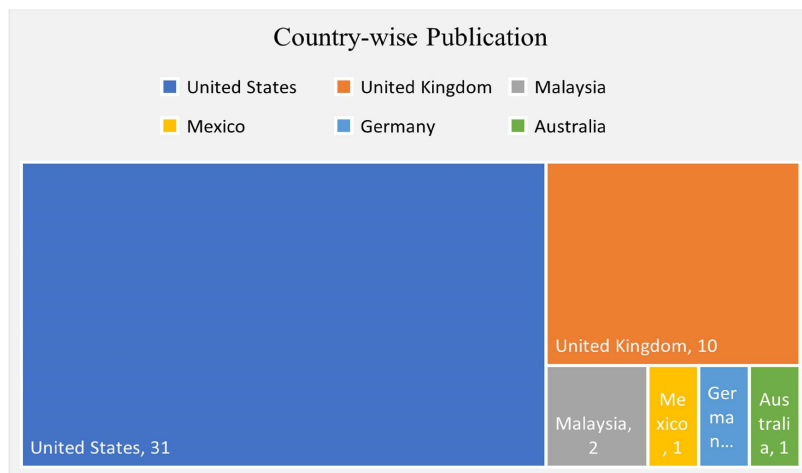


Figure 5. Country-Wise Distribution of Published Literature

Table 5 shows the country-wise distribution of published literature on work-life balance on the Web of Science database. The table shows that the United States had the highest number of publications, with 31 (67.39%), followed by the United Kingdom with 10 (21.73%). The minimum was from Mexico, Australia, and Germany, with 1 each.

To analyse the collaborative research trend in the study area, the authorship pattern has been tabulated below.

Table 6 shows the year-wise authorship patterns of literature available on the Web of Science database related to work life balance of library staff. Among 46 literatures, 16 literatures were written by two and three authors, 10 literatures were written by single authors, 3 by four and 1 by five authors. Maximum number of two or more than two authors' collaborations was observed from the year 2020.

It was also observed that out of 46 literature items, 39 were empirical research articles where data were collected using a questionnaire as a tool in 31 studies, with interviews in 5 studies and three studies used both a questionnaire and interview method. The remaining 7 studies were based on a literature review.

6.2 Keywords Co-Occurrence and Clustering Network of All Keywords

Using all keywords and the titles of all publications on the work-life balance of library staff from 2008 to 2025, a map of co-occurring phrases was produced. The network cluster findings are displayed in Figure 6. The size of the circles in Fig. 6's interpretation shows how frequently the concepts are used, and the colours show how terms relate to one another to form clusters, which in turn show relationships with other clusters.

S. No	Year	No. of Authors				
		I	II	III	IV	V
1	2008	1	-	-	-	-
2	2009	1	-	1	-	-
3	2010	3	-	-	-	-
4	2011	-	1	-	-	-
5	2012	-	2	-	-	-
6	2013	-	1	-	-	-
7	2014	1	1	-	-	-
8	2015	1	1	1	-	-
9	2016	-	-	2	-	-
10	2017	-	-	1	-	-
11	2018	1	-	2	-	-
12	2019	1	1	-	-	-
13	2020	-	2	3	2	-
14	2021	-	2	4	-	-
15	2022	-	1	-	-	-
16	2023	-	3	-	-	1
17	2024	-	-	2	-	-
18	2025	1	1	-	1	-
	Total	10	16	16	3	1

Table 6. Year-Wise Authorship Pattern of the Published Literature on Web of Science

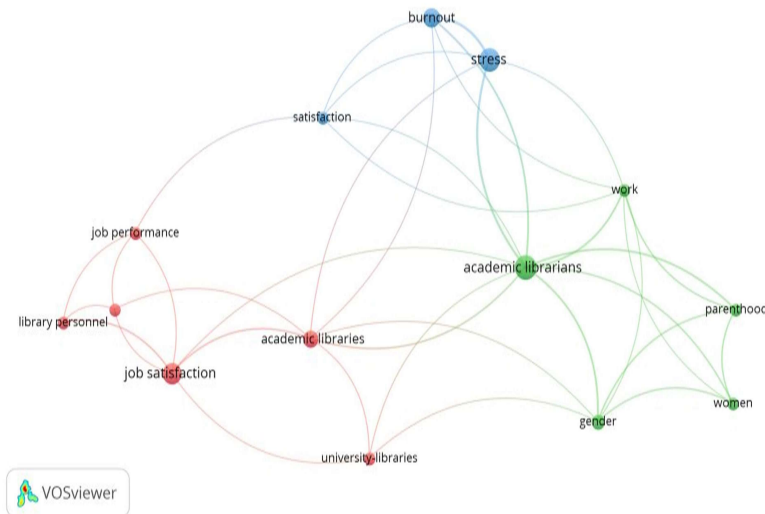


Figure 6. Co-occurrence of terms based on keywords

Note: Counting method: full counting.

Minimum number of occurrences of a keyword: 03. Of the 202 keywords, 14 meet the threshold.

For each of the 14 keywords, the total strength of the co-occurrence links with others was calculated.

Method: association strength.

Weights: Occurrences.

The Fig. 6 shows 3 clusters. The first one (blue)- 03 items- consists of terms related to satisfaction, burnout, and stress. The second (green) 05 items encompass academic librarianship, work, parenthood, women, and gender-related aspects. The third one (red): 06 items that show job performance, job satisfaction, academic libraries, library personnel, and university libraries.

6.3 Occurrence of Terms Based on Abstract

The review of the abstracts shows three clearly segmented clusters, including the terms related to work-life balance in the library.

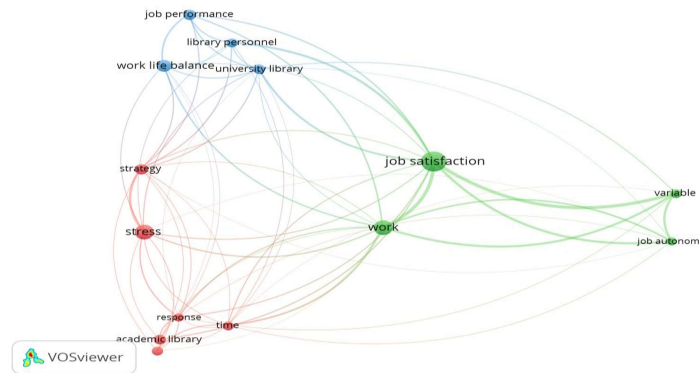


Figure 7. Co-occurrence of terms based on the title and abstract. Note: Minimum number of occurrences of a term:10

Out of the 183 terms, 24 meet the threshold. For each of the 24 terms, a relevance score was calculated. Based on this score, the most relevant terms were selected. Out of 24 most relevant terms, 60% (14) are selected. Method: association strength. Weights: Occurrences.

The Fig. 7 shows three clusters. The first cluster (red) - 05 items - is made up of concepts related to strategy, stress, response, academic libraries, and time. The second cluster (Green) - 04 items: job satisfaction, work, variable, and job autonomy. While the third Cluster (Blue)- 04 items- job performance, library personnel, work-life balance and university library.

6.4 Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance of Library Staff

Work-life balance can be affected by family-related factors as well as by organisational factors. The table below lists the *Family-Related Factors and Organisational Factors separately*, as identified in the literature under study.

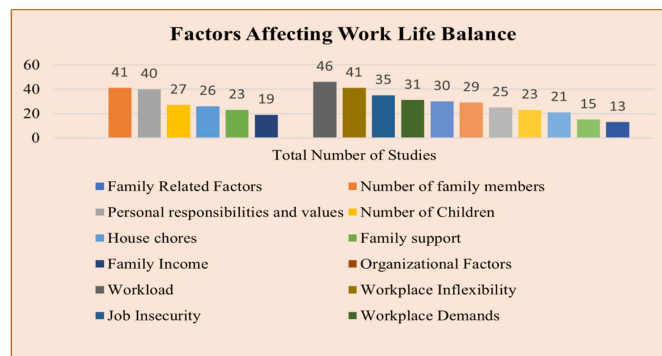


Figure 9. Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance of Library Staff

S.No	Factors of Work Life Balance	Total Number of Studies
	Family Related Factors	
1	Number of family members	41
2	Personal responsibilities and values	40
3	Number of Children	27
4	House chores	26
5	Family support	23
6	Family Income	19
	Organizational Factors	
7	Workload	46
8	Workplace Inflexibility	41
9	Job Insecurity	35
10	Workplace Demands	31
11	Annual & Casual Leave	30
12	Outdated Increment	29
13	Technology Advancement	25
14	Unequal Treatment	23
15	Colleagues Support	21
16	Work Location	15
17	Maternity/Paternity Leave	13

Table 7. Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance of Library Staff

Table 7 shows that the most significant Family-Related Factors influencing the work-life balance of library staff are Number of Family Members (41) and Personal Responsibilities and Values (40), while Family Income (19) has the least influence. The most significant Organisational Factors are Workload (46) and Workplace Inflexibility (41), while Work Location (15) and Maternity/Paternity Leave (13) have the least influence on the work-life balance of library staff.

6.5 Challenges Faced by Library Staff in Maintaining Work-Life Balance

Maintaining work-life balance is not easy for library staff; an attempt has been made to identify the challenges and tabulate them based on how often they were identified in the studies under review.

Table 8 highlights the challenges faced by library staff in achieving work-life balance, as identified in the reviewed literature. The most frequently reported challenges include a *Stressful Work Environment* (46) and *managing a heavy workload* (46). In contrast, the least reported challenges were *Overtime Duties* (28) and *Work Location* (16).

The suggestions from the reviewed literature have been recorded in the table below.

S.No	Challenges	Total Number of Studies
1	Stressful Environment	46
2	Managing Heavy Workload	46
3	Lack of Concentration	41
4	Declining Health	39
5	Neglecting Personal Relations	35
6	Technology Advancement	31
7	Overtime Duties	28
8	Work Location	16

Table 8. Challenges Faced by Library Staff During Work-Life Balance

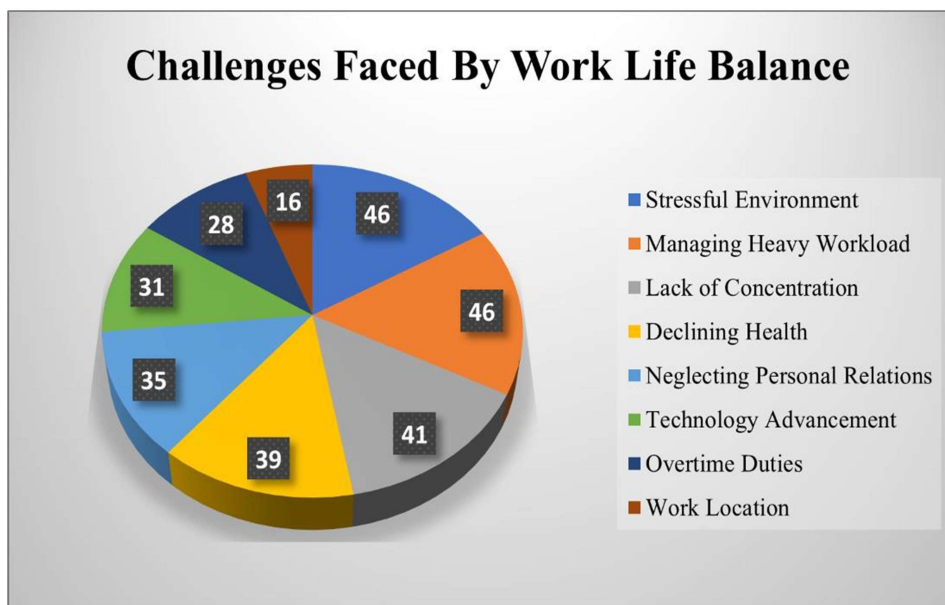


Figure 10. Challenges Faced by Library Staff During Work Life Balance

Table 9 presents the suggestions from reviewed studies aimed at enhancing the work-life balance of library staff. The most commonly suggested measures were offering a *Flexible Work Schedule* (45), followed by *Skill Development Programs* (41), implementing *Shift Duties* during emergencies (36), *Cancelling Overtime* (31), establishing *Work Life Balance Policies* (32) and the provision of *Childcare Facilities* (25).

S. No	Suggestions	Total Number of Studies
1	Flexible Work Schedule	45
2	Skill Development Programme	41
3	Shift Duties	36
4	Policy for Work Life Balance	32
5	Cancellation of Overtime	31
6	Childcare Facilities	25

Table 9. Suggestions From the Reviewed Literature

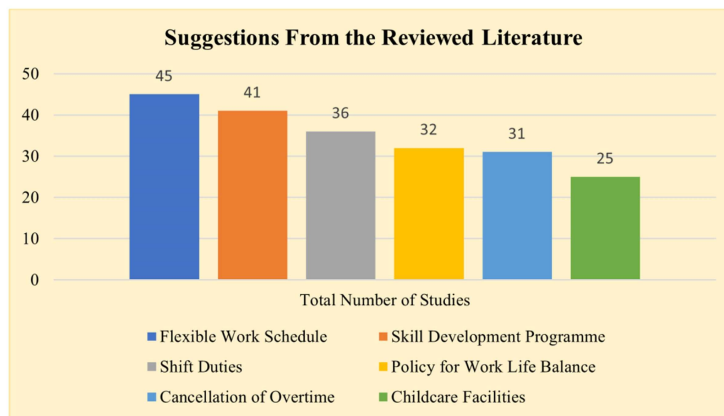


Figure 11. Suggestions From the Reviewed Literature

Table 9 presents the suggestions from reviewed studies aimed at enhancing the work-life balance of library staff. The most commonly suggested measures were offering a *Flexible Work Schedule* (45), followed by *Skill Development Programs* (41), implementing *Shift Duties* during emergencies (36), *Cancelling Overtime* (31), establishing *Work Life Balance Policies* (32) and the provision of *Childcare Facilities* (25).

7. Discussion and Recommendations

Work-life balance is important not only for reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction but also for enhancing the quality and productivity of an organisation. The importance of balancing work and family was realised in the 1930s, but the term work-life balance became popular in 1986, and by the 1990s, it had become a major concern for people and an essential component of every organisation’s global strategy. A search of the Web of Science database also revealed 13,451 publications on the topic, highlighting its importance. However, only 46 studies were found on work-life balance among library staff. Also, the majority of studies (31) were from the USA, followed by England (10); only one publication each was from Mexico, Germany, and Australia. The library and information science fraternity also needs to recognise the importance of work-life balance, and further research is needed in this area to inform concrete policies.

Publication trends show an increase in publications on the subject area after 2020 and more collaborative research, with 36 research papers having two or more authors. *Journal of Academic Librarianship* has the most publications (16) on the topic; however, there is no single preferred or dedicated journal for publishing on work-life balance among library staff, as the publications are scattered across 18 journals and 13 publishers.

The family-related factors that most affect the work-life balance of library professionals are identified as the *Size of the Family* and the *Family Responsibilities*. Large family size and the responsibilities of small children and the elderly affect work-life balance much more than family income does, contrary to popular belief. In the workplace, workload and Workplace Inflexibility have the maximum influence on the work-life balance of library staff. Library professionals view *Stressful Environment* and *Managing Heavy Workload* as the biggest challenges in maintaining work-life balance. Suggestions given

by authors of the studies under review emphasise providing a *Flexible Work Schedule* and *Skill Development Programs*. Libraries need to be developed as happy learning spaces with innovative services to enhance patron engagement and productivity. This would entail focusing not only on user needs but also on maintaining staff's work-life balance. Developing a work-life balance policy for libraries is the need of the hour. It should incorporate measures to ensure a stress-free work environment in the library that addresses both professional and family needs of the library staff.

It is suggested that guidelines for a flexible schedule, shift changes, and work-from-home in emergencies be developed. Cooperation and empathy among staff members can be enhanced by conducting regular discussions and workshops. Skill enhancement, especially in modern tools and techniques such as AI, should be emphasised so that staff can complete their assigned work easily and without stress. Infrastructure development is also important, like creating a creche or a restroom. Furthermore, teaching library staff to manage time and stress effectively and to make judicious decisions based on the situation to minimise work-life conflict is very important.

8. Conclusion

A librarian's professional life is influenced by their personal life and vice versa. This is also evident in the study: family-related and organisational factors intertwine with an individual's personal and professional lives, posing many challenges to maintaining work-life balance. It is an important issue already recognised and steps taken in many organisations. However, very few (46) records were gathered from the Web of Science database, which indicates that people are not particularly focusing on the work-life balance of library staff, and it needs more thought. Libraries ought to carry out a needs analysis to determine the areas in which librarians' personal and professional lives require development and design policies to address the gaps.

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