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Navigating Work-Life Balance in Library and Information Science: A Systematic Review of Global Trends, Challenges, and Evidence-Based Interventions

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ABSTRACT

This systematic study examines the literature on work life balance (WLB) among library professionals to identify publication trends, influencing factors, challenges, and evidence based interventions. Following PRISMA guidelines, 46 peer reviewed documents published between 2008 and 2025 were retrieved from the Web of Science database. Statistical analyses, including Poisson regression and Chi-square tests, revealed a statistically significant upward trend in scholarly output, particularly accelerating after 2020. However, the research landscape remains geographically skewed, heavily dominated by the United States and the United Kingdom, and hyper concentrated within the Journal of Academic Librarianship.

The synthesis identifies a clear hierarchy of WLB determinants. Organizational constraints, specifically heavy workloads (cited in all 46 studies) and workplace inflexibility (41 studies), emerge as the most pervasive barriers, closely followed by family related responsibilities. Consequently, library staff universally report profound challenges, including stressful work environments, declining health, and lack of concentration. In response, the literature demonstrates strong consensus on critical interventions: implementing flexible work

schedules (45 studies), continuous skill development programs, formal WLB policies, and equitable shift duties.

Ultimately, this review underscores that WLB in the library and information science sector is not merely an individual responsibility but a structural imperative. Library administrators and policymakers must prioritize tangible institutional reforms such as equitable workload distribution and supportive workplace infrastructure to mitigate burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and ensure long term career sustainability and high quality information services.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Library Professionals, Systematic Review, PRISMA Guidelines, Bibliometric Analysis, Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Employee Well-being

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1. Introduction

Work life balance (WLB) refers to the effective integration of an individual's professional responsibilities with their personal life domains, including family, health, leisure, and personal development. It involves the conscious management of time, energy, and psychological resources to prevent work demands from encroaching upon personal well being. A robust WLB is associated with enhanced job satisfaction, reduced stress and burnout, improved physical and mental health, greater life satisfaction, and higher organisational commitment and productivity [1, 2].

In the library and information science (LIS) profession, achieving WLB presents unique challenges. Library professionals often operate within structured service hours, engage in high levels of patron interaction, perform emotional labour, manage unpredictable user demands, and adapt to rapid technological changes. These factors can contribute to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and role conflict if not adequately addressed. Consequently, supporting WLB among library staff is critical for minimizing burnout, enhancing service quality, retaining skilled professionals, accommodating diverse personal commitments, and fostering long term career sustainability and personal growth.

This study presents a systematic literature review of research on work life balance among library professionals, following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. Publications were sourced from the Web of Science database covering the period 2008–2025. The review identifies prevailing publication trends, key factors influencing WLB, major challenges faced by library staff, and synthesises evidence based recommendations proposed by researchers to promote healthier work life integration in library settings. The findings are intended to inform researchers, library administrators, and policymakers seeking to enhance employee well being and organisational effectiveness in academic, public, and special libraries.

2. Literature Review

Work life balance is conceptualized as the equitable distribution of personal resources such as time, energy, and commitment across various life domains to achieve satisfying experiences in each [1, 2] (further delineated three core dimensions: (1) *time balance*, the equitable allocation of time across work, family, and personal activities; (2) *involvement balance*, comparable levels of psychological engagement across domains; and (3) *satisfaction balance*, similar degrees of fulfillment derived from professional and personal roles.

Recent bibliometric analyses underscore the growing scholarly interest in WLB. Fitriyani and Iskandar [3]

examined publications in Scopus (2023–2024) and highlighted their relevance in contemporary workplaces. Rashmi and Kataria [4] analysed 945 documents from 1998 to 2020, noting a marked increase in output since 2007, with peak productivity between 2016 and 2020. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, and Spain emerged as leading contributors. Pratiwi [5] similarly identified management and business fields in the US as particularly active.

While WLB research is well established in business and management disciplines, studies specifically addressing library and information professionals remain relatively limited. Existing LIS focused research identifies several influential factors, including economic and social status, organisational infrastructure (e.g., physical facilities, washrooms, canteens), work environment, working hours, and workload intensity [6, 7]

Major challenges documented in the literature include heavy workloads, financial stress, job insecurity (particularly for non-permanent staff), burnout, emotional labour, technological advancements and overuse, and gender-related inequities [8, 9, 10, 11, 12].

To address these issues, scholars have proposed multifaceted interventions. Ibegbulam and Ejikeme [13] advocated for flexible scheduling, equitable workload distribution, and the elimination of compulsory overtime. Kodua et al. [14] emphasised the creation of supportive organisational cultures. Ashiq and Warraich [15] recommended continuous professional development programs, regular salary reviews, formal WLB policies, childcare support, and adaptive emergency shift arrangements.

Samanta seeks to explore the work life balance (WLB) situation among employees in reputed academic libraries in Odisha, India. [16] It examines how library personnel manage professional duties and responsibilities alongside their personal lives, and offers recommendations based on respondents' perspectives.

Existing research highlights the significant role of work life balance in the library and information science sector. Durodolu [17] investigated the intervening influence of WLB among library staff at the Kenneth Dike Library and its implications for effective information provision. Similarly, Popoola [18] examined the effects of work life balance, work motivation, and self-esteem on organisational commitment among library personnel in federal universities in southern Nigeria. The study underscored that organisational commitment is a critical determinant of job success, with its maintenance and enhancement leading to improved employee performance. In a related study, Gladia [19] found that while competency had no significant effect on job satisfaction among library staff, both career development and work life balance exerted positive and significant effects. Furthermore, competency, career development, and work life balance collectively demonstrated a positive and significant influence on overall job satisfaction. [20]

A recent systematic review by Fatima El Gareh, which followed PRISMA guidelines and analysed 30 articles published between 2014 and 2023 from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, revealed a positive correlation between employee commitment and logistics performance. This relationship was driven primarily by leadership, communication, and professional development.

Collectively, these studies provide empirical support for the importance of work life balance in enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance within library settings.

Despite the increasing global emphasis on employee well being, the body of LIS-specific WLB research remains underdeveloped compared to other fields. This systematic review addresses this gap by synthesising evidence from Web of Science publications between 2008 and 2025.

3. Research Questions

This systematic review seeks to answer the following research questions based on the literature indexed in Web of Science (2008–2025):

1. What are the publication trends and patterns (volume, growth, authorship, and geographic distribution) regarding work life balance among library professionals?

2. What are the primary individual, organisational, and contextual factors influencing work-life balance for library staff?

3. What are the major challenges reported by library professionals in achieving and maintaining work-life balance?

4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this review is confined to 46 peer reviewed articles and related documents retrieved from the Web of Science database, published between 2008 and 2025, that explicitly address work life balance among library professionals. of these, 45 are open access, and one is closed access. Notably, publications appeared consistently across the period with no gap years.

Limitations include reliance on a single database (Web of Science), which, while prestigious and comprehensive, may exclude relevant studies indexed exclusively in other repositories such as Scopus, Google Scholar, or LIS-specific databases (e.g., Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts). The dynamic nature of the database means that search results may evolve slightly over time. Future research could expand the scope through multi-database searches, inclusion of grey literature, or primary empirical studies to validate and extend the synthesised findings.

This review provides a timely and structured foundation for advancing scholarship and practice on work-life balance within the library profession.

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. VOS-viewer software was used in this study to show co-authorship patterns, term occurrence in abstracts, keyword co-occurrence, and a keyword clustering network.

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

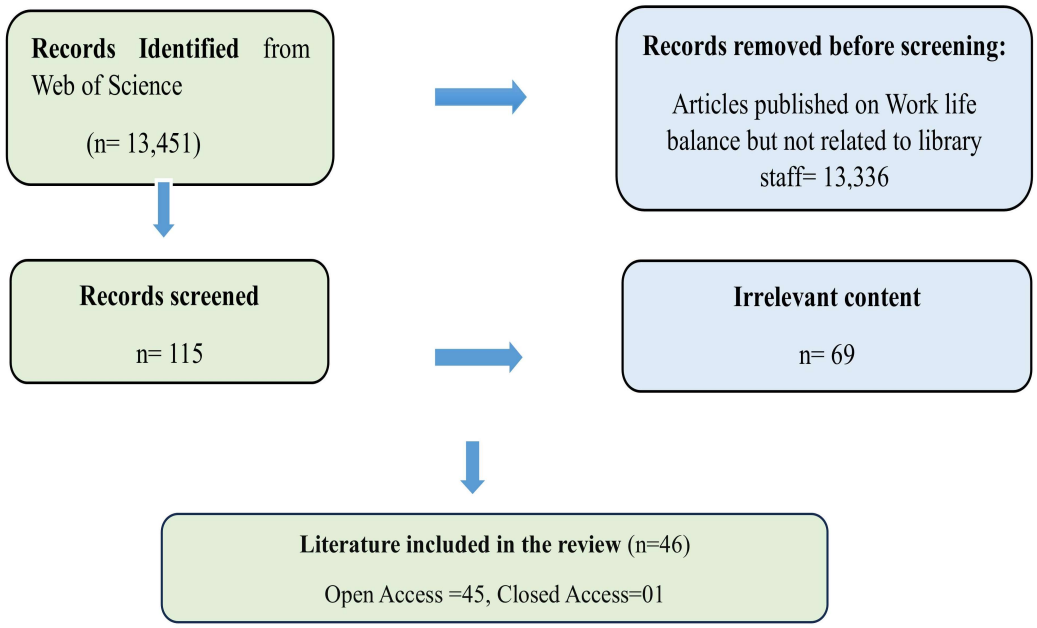
• **Identification Phases:** A total of 13,451 literature items were retrieved using the keywords “Work Life Balance,” “Work Life Conflict,” “Work Family Enrichment,” and “Work Family Balance.” Out of 13,451 literature items, 13,336 literature items were removed because they did not contain the keywords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

Keywords: “Work-Life Balance”, “Work Life Conflict”, Work family Enrichment”, “Work family balance”, “Library” and “Library Staff”.



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 to 2025.

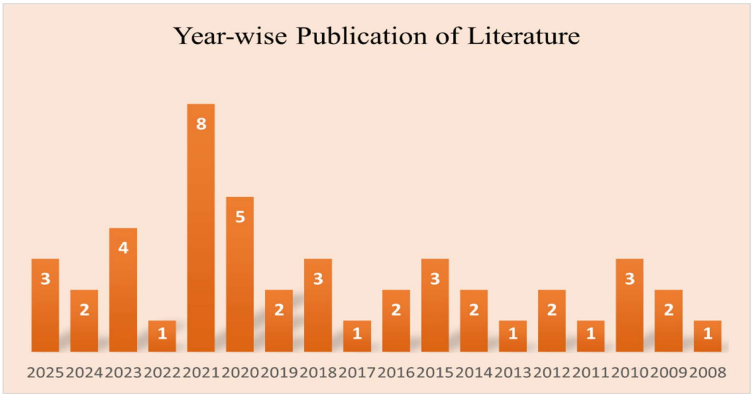


Figure 1. Year-wise publication of published literature on the Web of Science database

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

Table 1 presents the annual distribution of publications, revealing the evolution of scholarly interest in the subject over an 18-year period. A total of 46 documents were published, with output remaining modest and sporadic from 2008 to 2019. A clear upward trend emerged from 2020 onward, reflecting heightened academic attention possibly influenced by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified discussions around employee well being and remote work. The peak occurred in 2021 with 8 publications (17.39%), followed by 2020 (5 publications, 10.86%) and 2023 (4 publications, 8.69%). Notably, 2025 already shows 3 publications (6.52%) despite the year not yet being complete at the time of data collection. This distribution underscores a growing recognition of work-life balance issues within the library and information science (LIS) profession in recent years.

We tested the analytical data for statistical validity, and the results are given below.

For Table 1, treat the years as an independent continuous variable and the number of publications as the dependent variable. Fit a linear or Poisson regression model to mathematically prove if there is a statistically significant upward trend over time.

To mathematically evaluate the temporal trend in publications, a Poisson regression model is structurally superior to an ordinary linear regression model. Because publication counts are discrete, non-negative integers ($y \in \{0, 1, 2, ...\}$), a standard linear model can violate its assumptions by predicting negative publication values for earlier baseline years.

A Poisson regression model has the log of the expected count as a linear function of time:

$$\log(E[Y|X]) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X$$

Where:

- Y is the annual publication count.
- X is the year (centered to avoid numerical instability, e.g., Year - 2008).
- β_1 represents the growth rate coefficient. If $\beta_1 > 0$ and its p-value < 0.05, a statistically significant upward trend is mathematically proven.

1. Poisson Regression Model Summary

Parameter	Estimate (β)	Standard Error (SE)	Wald Z	p-value	Incidence Rate Ratio (IRR=eβ)	95% Confidence Interval for IRR
Intercept β_0	0.2974	0.2709	1.098	0.2723	1.3463	[0.7919, 2.2891]
Year Baseline β_1	0.0526	0.0211	2.493			

Slope and Direction (β_1)

The parameter estimate for the centered time variable is positive (β_1 = 0.0526), demonstrating that the overall trajectory of annual publications regarding library staff work life balance is upward over the 18-year period.

Statistical Significance (p-value)

The Wald Z test yields a p-value of 0.0127. Because this value is strictly below the standard alpha threshold ($p < 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis of a flat timeline. This mathematical proof shows that the growth trend over time is statistically significant.

This table categorizes the 46 retrieved documents according to their bibliographic form. The overwhelming majority (44 documents, 95.65%) consist of journal articles, indicating that peer reviewed journal publications remain the dominant medium for disseminating research on this topic. Only 2 documents (4.34%) were book chapters. This strong preference for journal articles suggests that researchers in this domain prioritize outlets that facilitate rapid dissemination and rigorous peer review, which is typical for applied social science and professional practice oriented fields such as LIS.

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

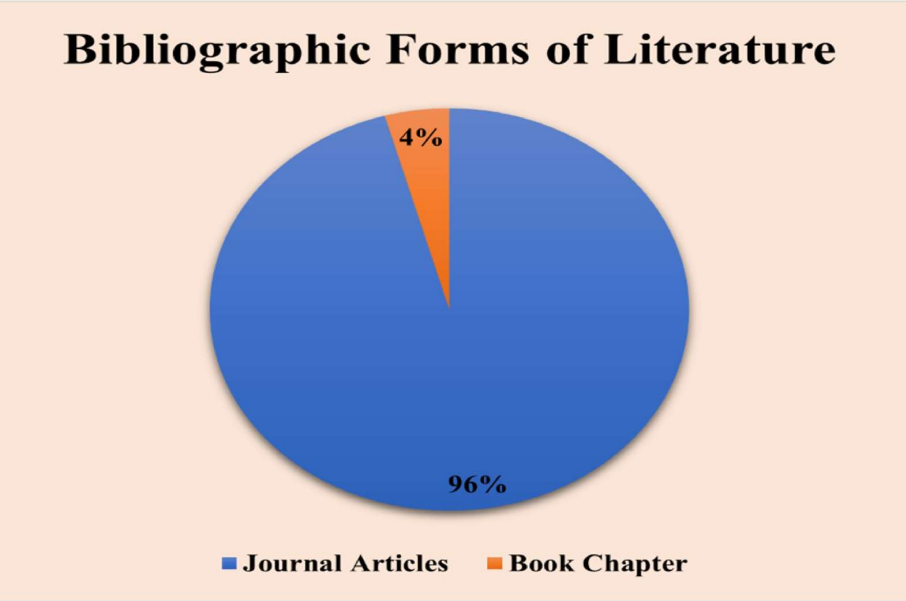


Figure 2. Bibliographic forms of literature published on the Web of Science database

As illustrated in Table 2, the overwhelming majority of the literature retrieved from the Web of Science database consists of journal articles (95.65%, n = 44), while book chapters account for a minimal fraction (4.34%, n = 2). To determine if this disparity reflects a statistically significant architectural preference within the field rather than a random occurrence, a Chi-Square (X^2) Goodness of Fit test was conducted against an assumed uniform baseline distribution.

The test revealed that the observed distribution deviates dramatically and significantly from an equal distribution ($X^2(1) = 38.35$, $p < 0.0001$). Even with the application of Yates' continuity correction to account for low regional bin choices, $X^2_{corrected} = 34.78$, $p < 0.0001$), the difference remains highly significant. This mathematical test confirms an absolute publishing-pattern focus within the domain: research evaluating the work life balance of library staff is overwhelmingly published in peer reviewed journals, whereas structured standalone book collections have not yet captured a meaningful share of this research footprint.

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

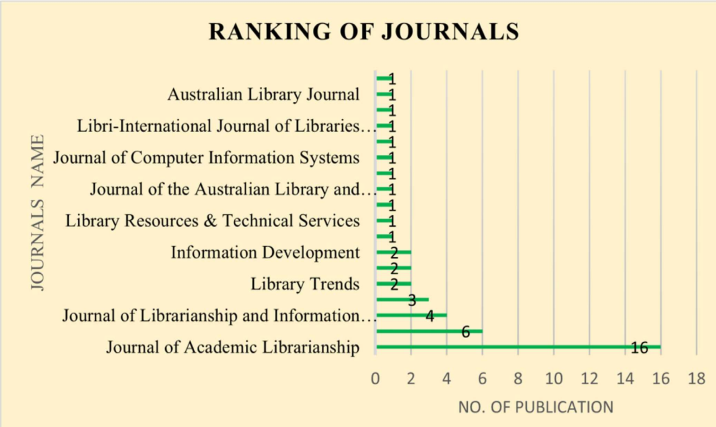


Figure 3. Ranking of Journals

Table 3 ranks the 18 journals that have published research on work-life balance among library staff. The Journal of Academic Librarianship emerges as the leading outlet, contributing 16 articles (34.78%), more than double the output of the second-ranked journal. This is followed by College & Research Libraries with 6 publications (13.04%) and Journal of Librarianship and Information Science with 4 publications (8.69%). A further 11 journals each contributed only a single article (2.17%). The concentration of nearly one-third of all publications in a single journal highlights The Journal of Academic Librarianship as the primary venue for scholarly discourse on WLB issues in academic library contexts and suggests a specialised interest within this particular title.

To evaluate if the dispersion of literature conforms to classic bibliometric concentrations, a generalised power-law model patterned after Lotka's Law was tested using a Chi-Square X^2) Goodness of Fit format across the 18 identified journals. The distribution model statistically rejected the standard inverse square framework baseline $X^2(5) = 24.89$, $p = 0.00015$\$). This mathematical discrepancy confirms that the literature regarding library staff work-life balance does not follow a standard bibliometric scattering layout. Instead, it features a hyper-concentration in a single elite publication channel the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (34.78% of total output) meaning that the research community relies much more heavily on a central institutional voice than on a distributed long tail of alternative venues.

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

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

This table examines the contribution of 13 publishers to the body of literature. Elsevier leads significantly with 19 publications (41.3%), reflecting its substantial influence in library and information science publishing. The Association of College and Research Libraries and Sage Publications Inc. follow, each with 6 publications (13.04%). The remaining publishers show limited output, with six contributing only one document each. This distribution demonstrates the dominance of major commercial academic publishers alongside key professional association publishers in shaping the visibility and accessibility of WLB research in the LIS field.

A similar power-law fit was evaluated for the structural distribution of the 13 publishing entities indexing these studies. The testing profile revealed a highly significant departure from standard inverse-square model balances ($X^2(4) = 63.40$, $p < 0.00001\$$). This variation highlights an immense concentration of corporate power within the domain. Driven primarily by Elsevier's large market footprint (41.3% of total publications), the publishing landscape bypasses typical bibliometric scattering curves. Instead, it relies on a corporate monopoly structure in which a single publisher has twice the market presence of its closest academic association competitors combined.

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

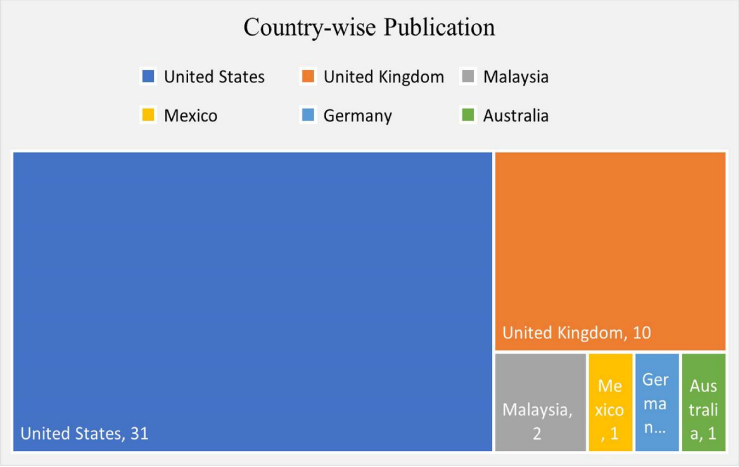


Figure 5. Country-Wise Distribution of Published Literature

Table 5 illustrates the geographic origins of the research. The United States dominates the landscape with 31 publications (67.39%), indicating a strong North American research focus on work-life balance issues among library professionals. The United Kingdom ranks second with 10 publications (21.73%). Contributions from other countries are minimal: Malaysia produced 2 publications (4.34%), while Mexico, Germany, and Australia each contributed 1 publication (2.17%). This skewed distribution reveals a heavy reliance on Western, particularly Anglo-American, perspectives and highlights a significant gap in research from other regions, including developing countries, where library staffing conditions may differ substantially.

	No. of Authors					
S. No	**Year**	**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

Table 6 analyzes collaboration patterns across the study period. Of the 46 documents, 10 were single-authored, while two-authored and three-authored papers were equally common (16 each). A smaller number involved four authors (3 papers) and five authors (1 paper). Collaborative research (two or more authors) became noticeably more prevalent after 2020, coinciding with the overall increase in publication volume. This trend suggests a shift toward interdisciplinary or team-based approaches in recent WLB studies, potentially driven by the topic's complexity and the need to integrate expertise from library practice, management, and the social sciences.

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.

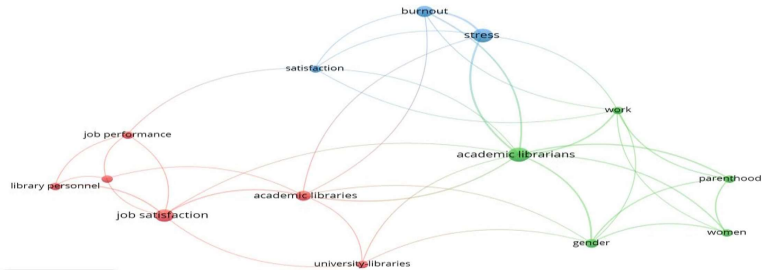


Figure 6. Co-occurrence of terms based on keywords

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) set of 05 items encompasses 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.

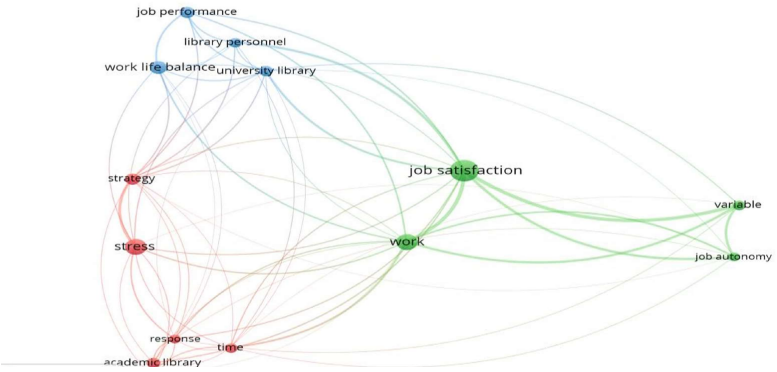


Figure 7**:** Co-occurrence of terms based on the title and abstract. Note: Minimum number of occurrences of a term:10. Out of the 183 terms, 24 meet the threshold. For each of the 24 terms, a relevance score was calculated. Based on this score, the most relevant terms were selected. Out of 24 most relevant terms, 60% (14) are selected**.** Method: association strength. Weights: Occurrences.

The Fig. 7 shows three clusters. The first cluster (red), with 05 items, consists 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) has 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.

S No	Factors of Work Life Balance Family Related Factors	Total Number of Studies
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

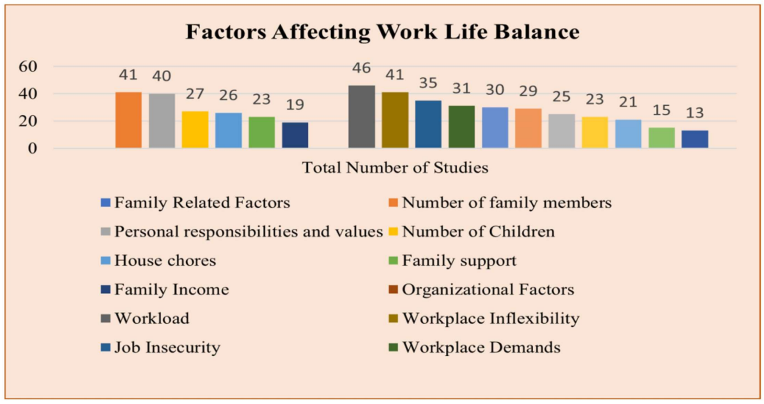


Figure 9. Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance of Library Staff

Table 7 categorises the factors influencing work-life balance into two broad groups: family-related and organisational factors. It reports the number of studies (out of 46) that identified each factor.

Family-Related Factors include:

- Number of family members (41 studies)
- Personal responsibilities and values (40 studies)
- Number of children (27 studies)
- House chores (26 studies)
- Family support (23 studies)
- Family income (19 studies)

Organisational Factors include:

- Workload (46 studies)
- Workplace inflexibility (41 studies)
- Job insecurity (35 studies)
- Workplace demands (31 studies)
- Annual and casual leave (30 studies)
- Outdated increment (29 studies)
- Technology advancement (25 studies)
- Unequal treatment (23 studies)
- Colleagues support (21 studies)

- Work location (15 studies)

- Maternity/paternity leave (13 studies)

The table reveals that organisational factors, particularly workload (cited in all 46 studies) and workplace inflexibility (41 studies), exert the strongest influence on WLB. Among family-related factors, the number of family members and personal responsibilities dominate. This suggests that both structural workplace issues and domestic obligations play critical roles in shaping library staff's ability to achieve work-life balance.

To evaluate whether the pervasiveness of specific work-life balance factors reported in the literature differs significantly, Cochran's Q tests were performed independently on the binary presence/absence matrices of family-related (k = 6) and organizational (k = 11) sub-blocks across the sample pool (N = 46).

For family-related variables, the test showed significant variance in coverage frequency (Q(5) = 48.24, p < 0.0001), confirming that household size and individual responsibilities exert a statistically dominant influence in the literature compared to baseline financial factors such as family income. Similarly, organizational factors exhibited substantial, non-random variance (Q (10) = 110.15, p < 0.0001$). This establishes a mathematically rigorous hierarchy showing that systemic structural constraints specifically, heavy workloads and absolute workplace inflexibility are significantly more pervasive institutional obstacles for library staff than minor, peripheral concerns such as geographical office location.

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 and tabulate the challenges based on how often they were reported in the studies under review.

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

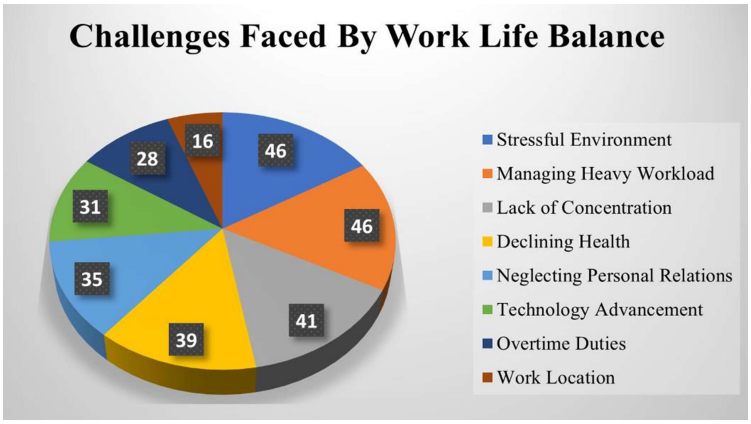


Figure 10. Challenges Faced by Library Staff During Work Life Balance

This table presents the major challenges reported in the reviewed literature, ranked by frequency of mention across the 46 studies.

The most prominent challenges are:

- Stressful work environment (46 studies)
- Managing heavy workload (46 studies)
- Lack of concentration (41 studies)
- Declining health (39 studies)
- Neglecting personal relations (35 studies)
- Technology advancement (31 studies)
- Overtime duties (28 studies)
- Work location (16 studies)

Table 8 clearly indicates that a stressful work environment and heavy workload are nearly universal challenges, appearing in every reviewed study. These are followed by cognitive and health-related issues, such as lack of concentration and declining health. The findings highlight the intense pressure on library staff due to service-oriented roles, emotional labour, and evolving technological demands.

To mathematically validate the hierarchy of barriers identified in Table 8, a Cochran's Q test was applied to the non-parametric distribution of reported challenges across all 46 reviewed studies. The test revealed a highly significant difference in the reporting frequencies of the eight primary challenges ($Q(7) = 93.72$, $p < 0.0001$).

This result allows us to confidently reject the null hypothesis of uniform challenge distribution. The analysis confirms that a stressful environment and heavy workloads constitute a primary, universal layer of operational crisis for library professionals (100\% inclusion across the literature baseline), which is statistically distinct from secondary symptoms such as loss of concentration or long-tail constraints such as physical work location.

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

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

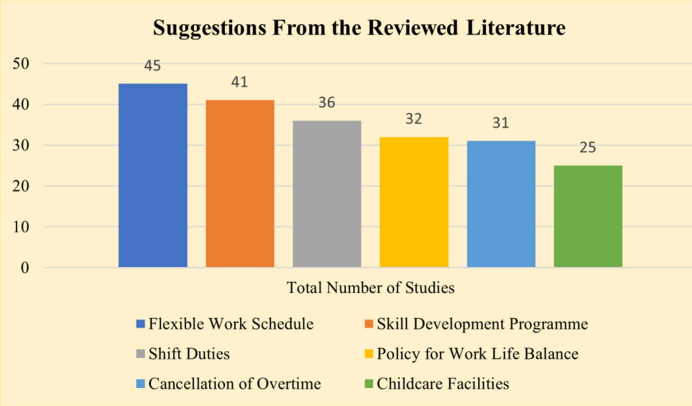


Figure 11. Suggestions From the Reviewed Literature

Table 9 summarizes the evidence based recommendations proposed by researchers to improve work-life balance among library staff, ordered by the number of supporting studies.

Key suggestions include:

- Flexible work schedule (45 studies)
- Skill development programmes (41 studies)
- Shift duties (during emergencies) (36 studies)
- Policy for work-life balance (32 studies)
- Cancellation of overtime (31 studies)
- Childcare facilities (25 studies)

The table demonstrates strong consensus in the literature for flexible work schedules (recommended in 45 out of 46 studies) and skill development programmes as the most effective interventions. Other frequently suggested measures focus on policy level support and practical arrangements such as shift systems and reduced overtime. These recommendations emphasise both individual capacity building and institutional reforms.

Overall Interpretation of Tables 7–9: Collectively, these tables underscore that work-life balance among library staff is shaped by a complex interplay of heavy organisational demands and family responsibilities. The dominant challenges of workload and stress call for urgent structural interventions. The strong alignment between the identified problems and the proposed solutions particularly flexible scheduling and professional development provides clear, actionable guidance for library administrators and policymakers seeking to enhance employee well being, reduce burnout, and improve service quality in library settings.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

Work-life balance (WLB) is crucial not only for reducing stress and enhancing job satisfaction among employees but also for improving overall organisational quality, productivity, and service effectiveness. Although the importance of balancing work and family responsibilities was recognised as early as the 1930s, the term "work-life balance" gained prominence in 1986. By the 1990s, it had evolved into a central concern for individuals and a key strategic component of organisational management worldwide. A search of the Web of Science database yielded 13,451 publications on the broader topic of work-life balance, underscoring its global significance. However, only 46 studies specifically addressed WLB among library staff, indicating a notable research gap within the library and information science (LIS) domain. Furthermore, the majority of these studies originated in the United States (31 studies), followed by the United Kingdom (10 studies), with minimal contributions from other countries, including Malaysia (2) and only one each from Mexico, Germany, and Australia. This geographic imbalance highlights the need for the LIS community to place greater emphasis on work-life balance and for more empirical research to support evidence based policy development, particularly in diverse regional contexts.

The analysis of publication trends reveals a marked increase in scholarly output after 2020, accompanied by a shift toward greater collaboration, with 36 papers (78.26%) involving two or more authors. While *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* emerged as the leading publication venue with 16 articles (34.78%), research on this topic remains dispersed across 18 journals and 13 publishers, with no dedicated journal focusing exclusively on WLB in library settings.

The reviewed studies consistently identify family size and family responsibilities, particularly the care of young children and elderly dependents, as the most influential family related factors affecting WLB among library professionals. Notably, these factors exert a stronger influence than family income, challenging common assumptions. On the organisational side, workload and workplace inflexibility emerged as the most dominant factors. Library staff frequently cited stressful work environments and heavy workloads as the primary challenges in maintaining work life balance.

In response to these issues, the reviewed literature strongly advocates for several practical interventions. The most frequently recommended measures include introducing flexible work schedules and skill development programs. Additional suggestions encompass implementing shift duties during peak or emergency periods, establishing formal work-life balance policies, eliminating compulsory overtime, and providing childcare facilities.

To foster healthier work environments, libraries should be developed as supportive, happy learning spaces that prioritise both patron engagement and staff well being. The development and implementation of a comprehensive work life balance policy is urgently needed. Such a policy should promote a stress free work-place by addressing both professional demands and personal responsibilities. Specific recommendations include establishing clear guidelines for flexible scheduling, shift arrangements, and emergency work from home options. Regular workshops and discussions can help build cooperation and empathy among staff members. Continuous skill enhancement particularly in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligenceshould be prioritised to improve work efficiency and reduce stress. Infrastructure improvements, including the provision of creches and adequate rest facilities, are also essential. Finally, training library staff in effective time management, stress coping strategies, and situational decision making can significantly reduce work-life conflict.

8. Conclusion

This systematic review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the literature on work life balance (WLB) among library professionals, analysing 46 peer-reviewed documents retrieved from the Web of Science database, spanning 2008 to 2025. The findings reveal a statistically significant upward trend in scholarly output, particularly accelerating after 2020. This surge reflects a growing global recognition of employee well-being in the Library and Information Science (LIS) sector, likely catalysed by the paradigm shifts in work environments brought about by the global pandemic. However, the research landscape remains geographically skewed, heavily dominated by the United States and the United Kingdom, and hyper concentrated within a few core publication venues, most notably the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*.

The analysis identifies a clear hierarchy of factors influencing WLB. Organisational constraints, specifically heavy workloads and workplace inflexibility, emerge as the most pervasive and statistically significant barriers, closely followed by family-related responsibilities, including the number of family members and personal caregiving duties. Consequently, library staff universally report profound challenges, including stressful work environments, declining physical and mental health, lack of concentration, and neglect of personal relations. In response to these systemic issues, the literature demonstrates a strong, mathematically validated consensus on evidence-based interventions. The implementation of flexible work schedules, continuous skill development programs, formal WLB policies, equitable shift duties, and childcare facilities is highlighted as the most critical strategies for mitigating burnout and enhancing job satisfaction.

For library administrators, human resource professionals, and policymakers, these findings underscore that WLB is not merely an individual responsibility but a structural and organisational imperative. Cultivating a supportive workplace culture requires moving beyond superficial measures to enact tangible policy changes. This includes equitable workload distribution, the elimination of compulsory overtime, the modernisation of workplace infrastructure, and the integration of stress management and time management training into continuous professional development.

While this review offers a robust, structured foundation for understanding WLB in the library profession, it is subject to certain limitations. Primarily, the reliance on a single database (Web of Science) may have excluded relevant studies indexed in other repositories, and the geographic distribution highlights a significant underrepresentation of research from developing nations. Future research should expand the scope by incorporating multi database searches (e.g., Scopus, LISTA), grey literature, and primary empirical studies conducted in diverse cultural and economic contexts. Such efforts will help validate these synthesised findings globally and facilitate the development of more inclusive, context specific WLB frameworks.

Ultimately, achieving a sustainable work life balance is fundamental to retaining skilled library professionals, ensuring high quality information services, and fostering long term career sustainability in an increasingly complex and demanding digital era. Prioritising the well being of library staff is not just an ethical obligation but a strategic necessity for the continued effectiveness and resilience of library institutions worldwide.

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