

Integrative Mapping of Factors and Dynamics of Work-Life Balance in Flexible and Remote Work Arrangements: Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to map the factors shaping and influencing the dynamics of work-life balance in flexible and remote work arrangements, as well as to identify research trends, theoretical perspectives, and existing research gaps in the literature. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach using the PRISMA procedure through the Scopus database. From an initial 120 identified articles, 31 articles met the inclusion criteria and were selected for the final synthesis. The findings indicate that work-life balance is influenced by psychological, organizational, social, technological, and individual factors. The results also reveal paradoxical dynamics, where flexible work arrangements can improve autonomy and well-being while simultaneously increasing stress, burnout, role conflict, and blurred boundaries between work and personal life. The study concludes that work-life balance is the result of interactions among multiple factors within the modern work environment.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Flexible Work Arrangements, Remote Work, Systematic Literature Review, Employee Well-Being, Flexible Work Dynamics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Global work system changes in recent years have transformed how individuals perform professional activities and manage their personal lives. Advances in digital technology, organizational restructuring, and increasing demands for flexibility have encouraged the emergence of *flexible* and *remote work arrangements*, which are now becoming an integral part of modern organizational strategies. This transformation accelerated after the pandemic, which encouraged organizations to adopt location-independent work systems. Studies by [1]–[4] indicate that work flexibility has fundamentally changed the relationship between work and personal life. These changes affect psychological well-being, work experiences, social relationships, and individuals' ability to maintain *work-life balance*.

Initially, *work-life balance* was understood as an individual's ability to balance time between work and family life. However, recent studies suggest that the concept has evolved into a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by psychological, social, organizational, and individual factors. Research by [5]–[8] shows that in flexible work environments, individuals are required to manage multiple demands simultaneously. As a result, *work-life balance* is shaped by role boundary management, psychological resources, and social interactions, indicating that it can no longer be explained through a single perspective.

Previous studies reveal that *flexible* and *remote work arrangements* generate paradoxical consequences for *work-life balance*. Several studies highlight benefits such as increased autonomy, time efficiency, and greater opportunities to manage personal needs [9]–[12]. In contrast, other studies report that work flexibility may increase work-life conflict, stress, and psychological exhaustion due to blurred boundaries between work and personal life [1], [13], [14]. These findings suggest that the relationship between work flexibility and *work-life balance* is not linear.

The complexity of this relationship indicates that *work-life balance* is shaped by the interaction of multiple factors. Tejero et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of *psychological detachment* in separating work demands from personal life, while [4] found a negative relationship between *burnout* and *work-life balance*. Furthermore, studies by [5], [15]–[17] highlighted the role of organizational support in improving workers' adaptability. Individual characteristics such as *self-efficacy*, *resilience*, *acceptance*, and *core self-evaluation* also influence individuals' ability to adapt to flexible work systems [6], [18]–[20].

Although research on *work-life balance* continues to grow, the literature still presents several limitations. Existing studies often examine variables such as *burnout*, *psychological detachment*, *work stress*, and organizational support separately [3], [4], [12]. In addition, many studies were conducted during the pandemic period and were influenced by situational conditions [13], [21], [22]. Therefore, this study employs a *Systematic Literature Review* approach to integratively map the key factors, dynamics, research trends, theoretical perspectives, and research gaps related to *work-life balance* in *flexible* and *remote work arrangements*.

Based on the phenomena and issues described in the previous discussion, this study identifies several important concerns related to the dynamics of *work-life balance*

in *flexible* and *remote work arrangements*. The increasing adoption of flexible work systems has created both opportunities and challenges for individuals in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Therefore, to better understand this phenomenon and address existing research gaps, the problems formulated in this study include:

- 1) What are the main factors identified in the literature that influence work-life balance within flexible and remote work arrangements?
- 2) How do flexible and remote work arrangements shape the dynamics of work-life balance according to existing literature?
- 3) What research trends, theoretical perspectives, and research gaps emerge in studies related to work-life balance within flexible and remote work arrangements?

Based on these conditions, this study aims to integratively examine the factors and dynamics shaping *work-life balance* in *flexible* and *remote work arrangements* through a *Systematic Literature Review* approach. The study seeks to identify key factors influencing *work-life balance*, explain the dynamics between work flexibility and life balance, and explore research trends, theoretical perspectives, and existing research gaps. This study is important because it integrates fragmented findings and provides a broader understanding of *work-life balance* as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the interaction of various factors. The findings are expected to enrich the literature and provide directions for future research in modern flexible work environments.

2. METHODS

This study employed a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) design to integratively examine the factors and dynamics of *work-life balance* in *flexible* and *remote work arrangements*. The SLR approach was selected because the study aimed not to test empirical relationships among variables, but to synthesize and integrate existing knowledge from previous studies. Prior studies by [1], [3], [4], [7] indicate that findings on *work-life balance* remain diverse and sometimes contradictory. Therefore, this approach was considered appropriate for identifying research patterns, theoretical perspectives, and existing research gaps.

The unit of analysis in this study consisted of published scientific articles discussing *work-life balance* in the context of *flexible work arrangements*, *remote work*, *work from home*, and related topics. Literature searches were conducted through the Scopus database using keywords such as *work-life balance*, *remote work*, *flexible working arrangements*, and *employee well-being*. The initial search identified 120 articles. Publication trends showed a substantial increase during 2021–2025, with the highest number of publications recorded in 2024, indicating growing scholarly interest in flexible work and *work-life balance*.

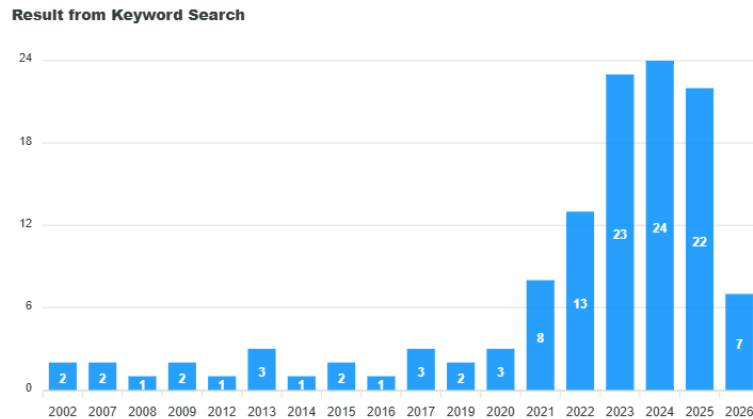


Figure 1. Keyword Diagram

Article identification and selection followed the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews*) framework. From the initial 120 articles, duplicate records, articles outside the publication range, papers not meeting journal quality criteria, and studies lacking abstracts were removed. Screening and eligibility assessments were then conducted to ensure relevance to the study objectives. Following a stepwise evaluation process, 31 articles met all inclusion criteria and were selected for the final synthesis. This systematic process ensured the quality and relevance of the data sources used in the study.

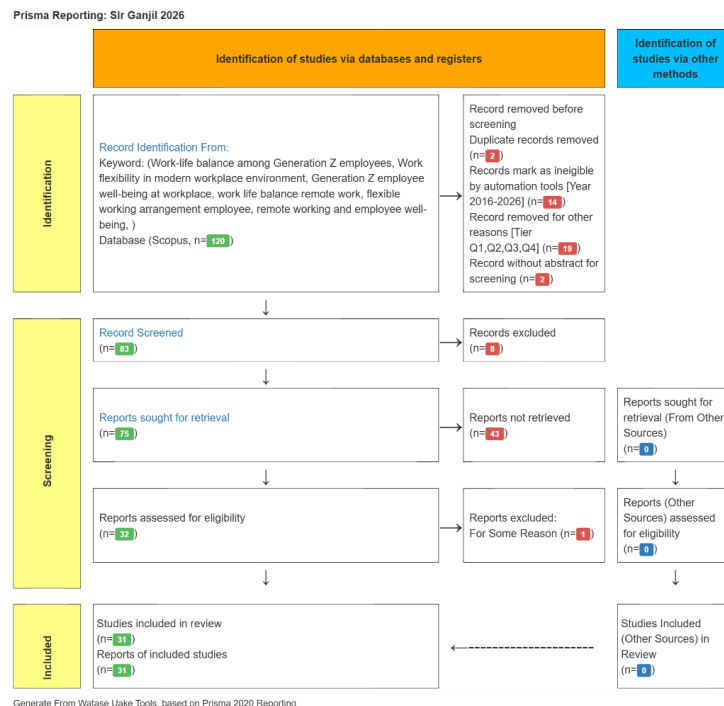


Figure 2. PRISMA Diagram

Data were collected using a structured data extraction form that included information on article identity, research objectives, methods, theories, key variables, findings, and implications. The analysis employed thematic analysis and narrative synthesis to identify major themes, similarities, differences, and emerging patterns. Findings were categorized into psychological, organizational, social, individual, and technological factors. The study also mapped commonly used theories, including *Job Demands–Resources Model*, *Boundary Theory*, *Conservation of Resources Theory*, *Person–Environment Fit Theory*, *Affective Events Theory*, and *Social Exchange Theory*, to develop a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of *work-life balance* in modern flexible work environments.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A synthesis of thirty-one selected articles shows that work-life balance in flexible and remote work arrangements is a multidimensional and dynamic phenomenon influenced by the interaction of various factors that cannot be explained in isolation. The research findings demonstrate that work flexibility is not simply a change in the mechanism of work execution, but rather a comprehensive transformation of the relationship between work, personal life, psychological well-being, and an individual's social system. A synthesis of previous research shows that changes in the digital work environment have altered how individuals construct boundaries between their professional and personal lives. This means that the experience of work-life balance is no longer determined by a simple division of working time, but by an individual's ability to manage interrelated demands. Research by [1]–[3], [7] shows that workplace flexibility has nonlinear consequences for work-life balance. In some cases, flexibility improves individual well-being, while in others, it increases psychological stress and role conflict. Therefore, the results of this study indicate that work-life balance in flexible work environments should be understood as a phenomenon shaped by the simultaneous interaction of psychological, organizational, social, technological, and individual characteristics.

1. What are the main factors identified in the literature that influence work-life balance within flexible and remote work arrangements?

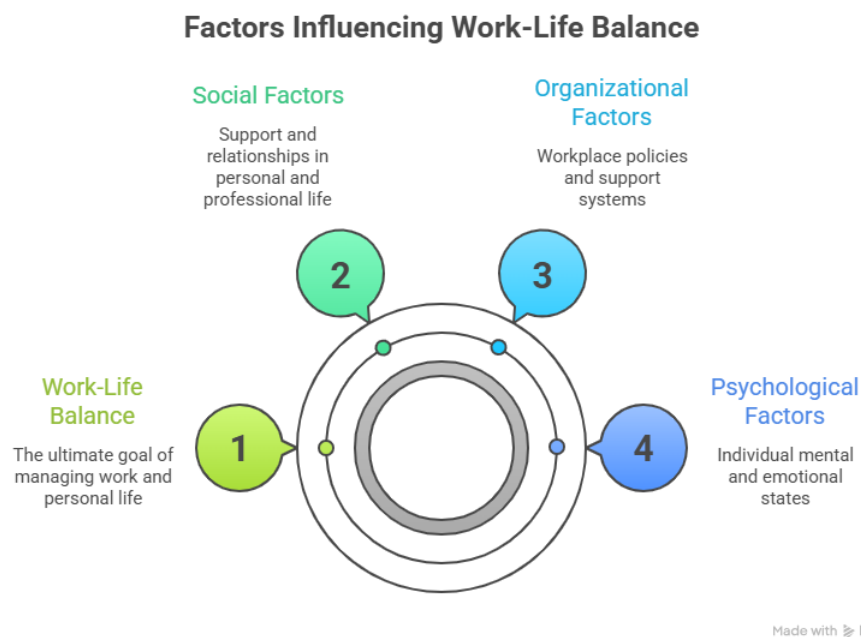


Figure 3. Factors Influencing Work-Life Balance

Research results indicate that psychological factors are the most important determinant of work-life balance, according to the specialized literature. The synthesis of these findings suggests that an individual's ability to manage their psychological state significantly influences their experience of this balance in flexible work environments. [1] demonstrated that psychological distancing is a crucial component for maintaining boundaries between work and personal life. When people manage to psychologically disconnect from work after completing their tasks, they are more likely to recover psychologically. Conversely, when work remains in their personal space through digital devices, people have difficulty recovering their emotional energy. This situation leads to increased psychological distress, which ultimately affects work-life balance. This finding is significant because flexible work systems eliminate the physical barriers between home and work. In conventional work environments, physical relocation helps people establish psychological boundaries naturally, whereas in teleworking, this mechanism is hindered.

The results also indicate that burnout and work-related stress are important factors that are repeatedly identified in the literature. [4] found that levels of emotional exhaustion were negatively associated with work-life balance. These findings suggest that workplace flexibility does not always reduce the psychological burden. On the contrary, in some situations, flexibility increases work intensity, as people feel the need to be constantly available. Workers in flexible work environments may experience greater job demands due to the lack of clear boundaries in working time. This situation creates working conditions that can increase emotional exhaustion. This finding is important because it demonstrates that flexibility does not automatically lead to well-being. The results of this study show that the quality of the work experience is more influenced by how people manage demands than by the nature of the work system itself.

In addition to psychological factors, the synthesis results indicate that organizational support is a significant determinant of work-life balance. Research by [5], [15]–[17] revealed that workers who receive organizational support tend to have better work-life balance. This support includes flexible work policies, supervisor support, organizational communication, and the provision of adequate workplace resources. These findings demonstrate that workplace flexibility is inseparable from the organization's role. Flexible work systems without organizational support can increase role ambiguity and job stress. Conversely, organizational support helps workers develop a sense of security, control, and commitment to their work. These findings are important because they demonstrate the strategic role of organizations in the successful implementation of workplace flexibility. These results also broaden the understanding that work-life balance is not solely the responsibility of the individual.

The synthesis results also indicate that individual characteristics play a significant role in explaining variations in work-life balance. [6], [18]–[20] demonstrated that self-efficacy, resilience, acceptance, and core self-evaluation contribute to an individual's ability to adapt to flexible work systems. Individuals with greater psychological capacity tend to manage work demands more effectively. Conversely, individuals with lower adaptability tend to experience role conflict and stress more readily. These findings are important because they explain why the same work system can generate different experiences for different people. Therefore, this research demonstrates that work flexibility is highly contextual. Its impact depends on the circumstances of the individual experiencing it.

Furthermore, technology has emerged as an increasingly relevant factor in recent research. The findings indicate that it plays a dual role in shaping work-life balance. Technology increases accessibility, efficiency, and flexibility at work. However, it also increases technostress and the pressure to maintain digital availability. These findings highlight the technological paradox in flexible work environments. This situation is significant because modern work is increasingly dependent on digital communication systems. Greater reliance on technology can increase the likelihood of blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Therefore, technology is becoming an increasingly important factor in explaining the dynamics of work-life balance.

2. How do flexible and remote work arrangements shape the dynamics of work-life balance according to existing literature?

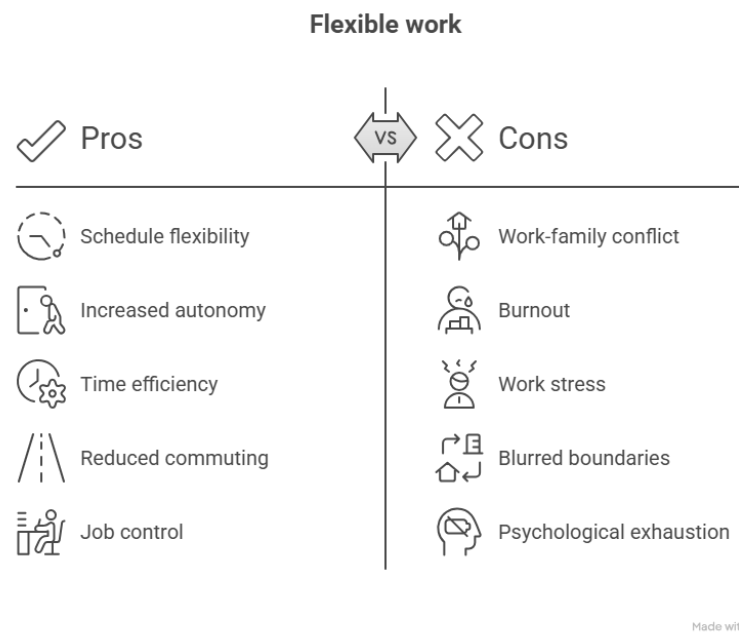


Figure 4. Flexible Work

Research findings indicate a paradoxical relationship between flexible and remote work arrangements and work-life balance. Studies by [9]–[12] suggest that flexibility offers benefits such as greater control over work and better time management. Individuals have the opportunity to adapt their work schedules to their personal needs. Flexibility also helps reduce commuting time and improve the efficiency of daily activities. These findings suggest that flexibility can enhance individual autonomy. Greater autonomy allows individuals to gain more control over their work-life balance. Therefore, flexibility can serve as a psychological resource that contributes to improved employee well-being. Research findings suggest that these benefits are one of the reasons for the increasing adoption of flexible work systems.

However, research also points to negative consequences of flexible work arrangements. [1], [7], [13], [14] demonstrate that flexibility can increase work-life conflict. The blurring of physical boundaries between work and home makes it difficult to separate these roles. As a result, work can continue to encroach on personal life even after the workday ends. This situation increases psychological distress and reduces the quality of emotional recovery. These findings are significant because they demonstrate that flexibility is not always a positive concept. In fact, it can generate very different experiences depending on each person's situation and context. Therefore, flexible work arrangements should be understood as a system that simultaneously carries benefits and risks.

The findings on this flexibility paradox make an important contribution to the development of science. Most early research considered flexible work arrangements as a strategy to improve employee well-being. However, the synthesis of the results suggests that the relationship is far more complex. This research contributes by demonstrating that work-life balance is influenced not only by flexibility itself, but also by the conditions that accompany it. These findings broaden the perspective of previous research, which tends to consider flexibility as an isolated variable. The results show that flexible work systems should be understood as an ecosystem involving the interaction of diverse resources and demands. This contribution is significant because it provides a more comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding the modern work environment. Therefore, this research enriches theoretical studies on the dynamics of work flexibility.

3. What research trends, theoretical perspectives, and research gaps emerge in studies related to work-life balance within flexible and remote work arrangements?

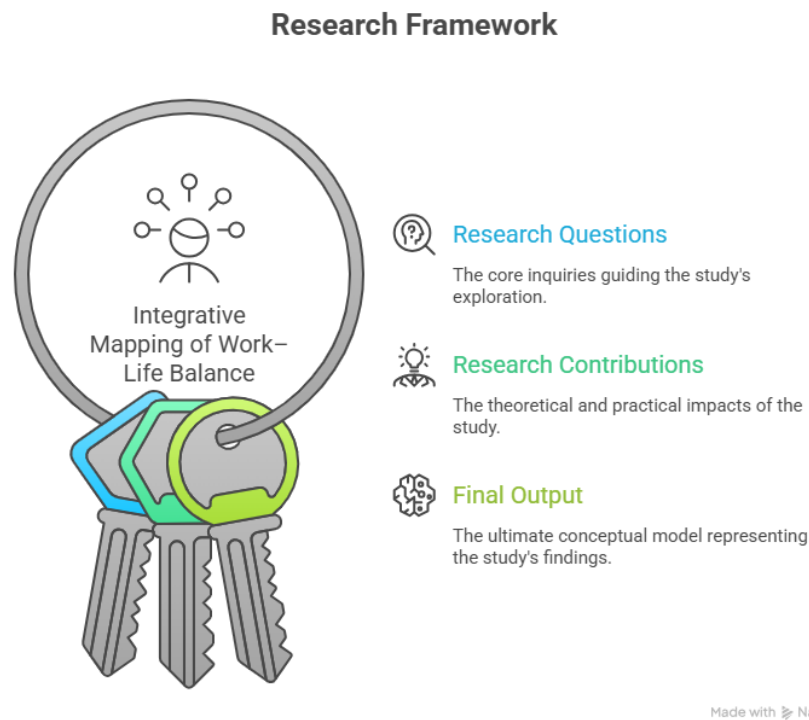


Figure 5. Research Framework

The research results show that the trend in work-life balance research has increased significantly since 2020. The search results graph shows a significant increase in publications between 2021 and 2025. [3], [4], [12] demonstrate that the increasing complexity of the work environment has led to the predominance of synthetic approaches, such as systematic reviews. These findings indicate a shift in research direction, moving from simple studies of relationships to broader conceptual integration. The literature has begun to shift from a focus on work-family conflict to psychological well-being, technology, and organizational dynamics. These changes demonstrate the maturity of work-life balance studies. The research field has become more multidisciplinary and complex. These results indicate a paradigm shift in contemporary research. The research also revealed that the literature employs diverse theoretical perspectives, such as the Labor Demands-Resources Model, Boundary Theory, Resource Conservation Theory, Person-Environment Adjustment Theory, Affective Events Theory, and Social Exchange Theory. These findings indicate that no single dominant theory fully explains the work-life balance phenomenon. Various theories are used because each addresses different aspects. This demonstrates that work-life balance is a multidimensional phenomenon requiring the integration of perspectives. Therefore, this study contributes by mapping the theoretical approaches used in the literature. This mapping can help future research determine a more appropriate conceptual framework. This contribution is crucial for strengthening theoretical development in this field.

In addition to its theoretical implications, this research also has important practical implications. Organizations can use the findings to design flexible work policies that focus not only on efficiency but also on employee well-being. Organizations need to pay attention to psychological support, workload management, and the establishment of clear work boundaries. They should also strengthen supervisory support and internal communication systems. The results show that the

success of flexible work depends not only on technology but also on the quality of organizational support. Therefore, flexible work policies should be designed more holistically. These practical implications are particularly relevant in today's digital work environment.

However, this research has several limitations. The articles used were obtained solely from the Scopus database, so relevant research from other sources may not have been included in the synthesis. Furthermore, most of the analyzed studies were conducted during the pandemic, so the crisis situation may have influenced the results. The study also found fragmentation of research variables, leading to disparate results compared to previous studies. Another limitation relates to the diversity of research methods used in the analyzed articles. Differences in methods can influence variations in research results. Therefore, future research should broaden the bibliographic sources and develop a more integrative synthesis model. Thus, research in this field still has considerable room for further exploration.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a systematic literature review of 31 selected articles, this study demonstrates that work-life balance in the context of flexible and remote work arrangements is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by a complex interplay of psychological, organizational, social, technological, and individual characteristics. The research findings show that work flexibility does not have a simple or linear relationship with work-life balance, but rather produces a paradoxical dynamic. On the one hand, work flexibility offers benefits such as greater autonomy, time efficiency, reduced mobility, and greater individual control over work and personal life management. However, on the other hand, flexibility can also increase role conflict, psychological distress, burnout, technostress, and blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. The synthesis also shows that factors such as psychological distancing, self-efficacy, resilience, organizational support, social relationships, and technology use are recurring elements in various studies. These findings demonstrate that the success of implementing flexible work arrangements depends not only on the specific work modality itself, but also on the ability of individuals and organizations to manage demands and available resources. Therefore, work-life balance in the modern workplace should be understood as the result of the interaction of various conditions that simultaneously influence one another.

This study also found that the study of work-life balance has undergone significant development, especially following the increasing adoption of flexible and remote work arrangements in recent years. The growing number of publications indicates that this topic has become increasingly important in the study of organizational behavior, human resources, and employee well-being. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the literature still exhibits conceptual fragmentation, as most previous studies examine specific factors separately and produce inconsistent results. Through a systematic literature review, this study makes a theoretical contribution in the form of an integrative mapping of the factors that shape work-life balance, the dynamics of the relationship between work flexibility and this balance, and emerging research trends and gaps. This contribution broadens the conceptual understanding of work-life balance as a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single theoretical perspective. Furthermore, the results of this study offer practical input for organizations to design flexible work policies that emphasize not only productivity but also the well-being and psychological needs of employees. Therefore, this study provides a conceptual framework that can serve as a reference for policy development and for future research in related fields.

However, this study has several limitations that require attention. The articles used were obtained solely from the Scopus database, so other relevant studies may exist that were not included in the synthesis. Furthermore, most of the analyzed studies were conducted during a period of increasing use of flexible work arrangements, which allowed situational factors to influence the results. Therefore, it is recommended that future research expand the bibliographic sources, utilize

additional databases, and develop a broader synthesis with a more diverse range of articles. Likewise, future research could develop a conceptual model that more fully integrates the relationships between psychological, organizational, social, and technological variables. In addition, future research could explore the dynamics of work-life balance in post-pandemic working conditions or in the increasingly emerging hybrid work systems. Consequently, further research is expected to generate a deeper understanding of the mechanisms shaping work-life balance in a constantly changing work environment.

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