

International Journal of Research in Human Resource Management



E-ISSN: 2663-3361
P-ISSN: 2663-3213
IJRHRM 2025; 7(2): 559-568
Impact Factor (RJIF): 6.16
www.humanresourcejournal.com
Received: 07-07-2025
Accepted: 11-08-2025

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Factors influencing work-family conflict - a meta-analysis review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26633213.2025.v7.i2e.372>

Abstract

Work-family conflict (WFC) represents a critical concern in organizational psychology and human resource management, given its consequences for employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. This meta-analysis study has taken ten years of time to identify the renovation of the factors influencing the concept in the period of time. This meta-analytic review following PRISMA guidelines highlights the complex relationship of traditional and pandemic-induced factors influencing WFC from 2015-2025. This review synthesizes findings from 98 empirical studies published on Research Gate during 2015-2025 focusing on factors influencing WFC and related outcomes. To analytically review and Meta-Analyze factors influencing Work Family Conflict based on quantitative studies published on Research Gate during the years 2015-2025. Throughout this decade, research focus has evolved from stressing organizational and cultural supports to highlighting mental health and the management of personal resources, largely in response to the profound shifts in work arrangements initiated by the pandemic. Whereas work-family conflict (WFC) before the pandemic primarily stemmed from predictable pressures such as workload and time demands, the post-pandemic landscape emphasizes challenges related to boundary control and the need for emotional resilience in coping with new types of strain brought about by digital technologies and distant work models.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict, Pandemic, Post Pandemic, Meta-Analysis, Well-being, Job satisfaction, and Productivity

Introduction

Work-life conflict refers to the pressure and challenges that emerge when the responsibilities and demands of work clash with those of other areas of life, such as family commitments, personal relationships, or health essentials, causing difficulty in fulfilling both roles effectively. It occurs in two primary directions. Work-to-life conflict, where work responsibilities hinder fulfilling personal or family roles, and life-to-work conflict, where personal life obligations interrupt work performance. This conflict is shaped by factors like long work hours, job stress, family caregiving duties, and limited flexibility at work. The concept extends beyond just family roles to include various life aspects such as friendships, volunteer activities, and personal well-being. Understanding work-life conflict is crucial as it impacts employee satisfaction, mental health, productivity, and overall quality of life. Research on the topic has highlighted its multidimensional nature, including time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based conflicts, and has underscored the need for organizational support and flexible work arrangements to help mitigate its adverse effects.

Work-family conflict, often described as the inter-role conflict where demands from work and family roles are mutually incompatible, has emerged as a critical area of study due to its profound effects on individuals, families, and organizations. Over the last decade, research has increasingly focused on understanding the dynamics of this conflict and its implications on job performance, psychological well-being, and organizational outcomes. Key studies highlight that work-family conflict leads to reduced job satisfaction, higher stress and burnout levels, and decreased productivity, with variations across gender, age, and occupational roles. Emerging research also explores the psychological aspects such as cognitive and psychological flexibility as mediators that can mitigate the negative impact of work-family conflict. This growing body of literature has informed organizational policies aimed at promoting work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, stress reduction. Make the references in vancouver style with and all scientific name should be italic also

journals name should not be italic also full page number in references programs, and supportive workplace environments, reflecting the evolving nature of work and family roles in contemporary society.

This concept originated with studies on role theory in the mid-20th century and gained wider academic attention in the 1980s, especially through foundational work by Greenhaus & Beutell in 1985^[43]. Its importance is widely acknowledged across Human Resource Management (HRM) and psychology, as it directly affects employee well-being, organizational outcomes, and mental health.

Historical Origins

The study of work-family conflict began in the late 19th century, coinciding with industrialization, when work shifted from within the household to external settings like factories, therefore creating new boundaries between work and home life. Role theory, especially Merton's concept (1957) and Goode's role strain hypothesis (1960), laid the foundation for understanding inter-role conflict, which was formalized as work-family conflict in later research. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985)^[43] offered a widely accepted definition: work-family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict where demands from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.

Human Resource Management Perspectives on Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict is closely linked to key HRM concerns such as employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. When conflict is high, employees show higher burnout rates, increased occupational stress, lower organizational citizenship behaviours, and greater intent to leave their jobs.

HRM practices aimed at mitigating work-family conflict such as flexible job designs, supportive work cultures, childcare facilities, and counselling can improve employee retention, engagement, and organizational effectiveness. The recognition of work-family conflict informs policies like parental leave, flexible scheduling, and wellness programs, driving organizational strategies to support both employee productivity and well-being.

Work-family conflict in Psychology

Work-family conflict is a central topic in organizational and social psychology, focusing on its impact on psychological health, stress, life satisfaction, and mental well-being. Increased conflict correlates with declines in psychological safety, reduced well-being, and negative cognitive, behavioural, and emotional outcomes for individuals. Understanding and addressing work-family conflict helps psychologists and organizational leaders implement interventions that support healthier work-life balance, improving psychological health and job performance.

Key Theoretical Bases

Boundary theory: Divides life into work and family segments, requiring transitional management as individuals switch between roles.

- **Resource drain theory:** Suggests individuals have limited resources (time, energy, attention) that become depleted, increasing stress when demands from both domains compete.
- **Role theory:** Views conflict as arising when

expectations of different roles cannot be satisfied simultaneously, leading to strain and stress.

Work-family conflict remains a vital intersection of inquiry in HRM and psychology, shaping research, policy, and organizational practice to address challenges faced by dual-earner families and diverse workforces globally.

Review of Literature

Work-family conflict (WFC) represents a critical concern in organizational psychology and human resource management, given its implications for employee well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. This review synthesizes findings from 98 empirical studies published on Research Gate during 2015-2025 focusing on factors influencing WFC and related outcomes.

Work Demands plays the primary role in Work Family Conflict. Consistently, high job demands, long working hours, workload overload, and irregular schedules exacerbate WFC by limiting the time and energy employees can devote to family roles (Rahman & Hossain, 2025; Fotiadis *et al.*, 2020)^[80, 35]. This time-based conflict arises when work encroaches on family responsibilities, fostering psychological strain. Family responsibilities such as childcare and eldercare obligations significantly increase conflict levels (Rahman & Hossain, 2025)^[80]. The intensity of these demands often varies with the number and age of dependents and inadequate family support further heightens this strain. Several studies detail how traditional gender roles amplify WFC for women, particularly mothers, owing to social expectations around caregiving and household management (Mittal & Kola, 2024^[66]; research within Asian contexts highlights rising female workforce participation pressures). The availability of family-supportive policies, flexible work arrangements, and supervisor support emerges as critical buffering factors against WFC (Rahman & Hossain, 2025; Allen *et al.*, 2020)^[80, 9]. Lack of organizational support corresponds with higher perceived conflict (Fotiadis *et al.*, 2020)^[35]. Negative affectivity, poor coping mechanisms, and stress sensitivity disproportionately enhance WFC severity. Psychological well-being suffers due to conflict spillover effects where stress in one domain carries to the other (Fotiadis *et al.*, 2020; Panatik *et al.*, 2011)^[35, 71]. With increasing telework, especially during COVID-19, technology's omnipresence has created blurred boundaries between work and home life. This boundary erosion intensifies role interference and conflict, particularly for remote workers managing simultaneous family demands (Brumley *et al.*, 2024; Ghislieri *et al.*, 2021)^[24, 40]. Household dynamics, such as supportive spouses or inter-role conflict crossover, heavily influence individual WFC experiences (Brumley *et al.*, 2024)^[24]. The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated many traditional factors and introduced new stressors, including increased domestic responsibilities due to school closures and health concerns, psychological distress, and a higher expectation for constant connectivity (Ghislieri *et al.*, 2021; Cha *et al.*, 2024)^[40, 28]. Socioeconomic disparities also modulated WFC levels, with low-resource households facing greater challenges.

Research Methodology

Research from 2015 to 2025 shows evolving factors influencing WFC, heavily impacted by the COVID-19

pandemic and the transition to remote work. This report synthesizes these factors and presents a structured meta-analytic approach based on PRISMA guidelines to comprehensively review studies published on Research Gate during this period.

Objectives of the study

- To systematically review and conduct a meta-analysis of quantitative studies published on Research Gate between 2015 and 2025 that examine factors
- influencing work-family conflict.
 - To identify and analyze factors that show positive and negative correlations with work-family conflict based on quantitative evidence from the reviewed studies.

Phase	Description	Records / Studies
Identification	Records identified through Research gate search and supplementary databases	1245
Screening	Records after duplicates and irrelevant records removed	591
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	312
Included	Studies meeting all criteria included in meta-analysis	98

- 1. Identification:** Search engines/databases: Research Gate, Google Scholar, PubMed, Science Direct.

2. Screening: Removed duplicate entries, excluded studies lacking empirical data, theoretical-only papers, non-peer-reviewed content, or off-topic records.

3. Eligibility Assessment: In the inclusion criteria, the full-text is taken for review. The Empirical research on
- antecedents/correlates of WFC, peer-reviewed, English-language, clear methodology, quantitative data are considered.

4. Inclusion: Final 98 studies coded for: study design, sample demographics, geographic location, measured factors affecting WFC, statistical results (effect sizes where available).

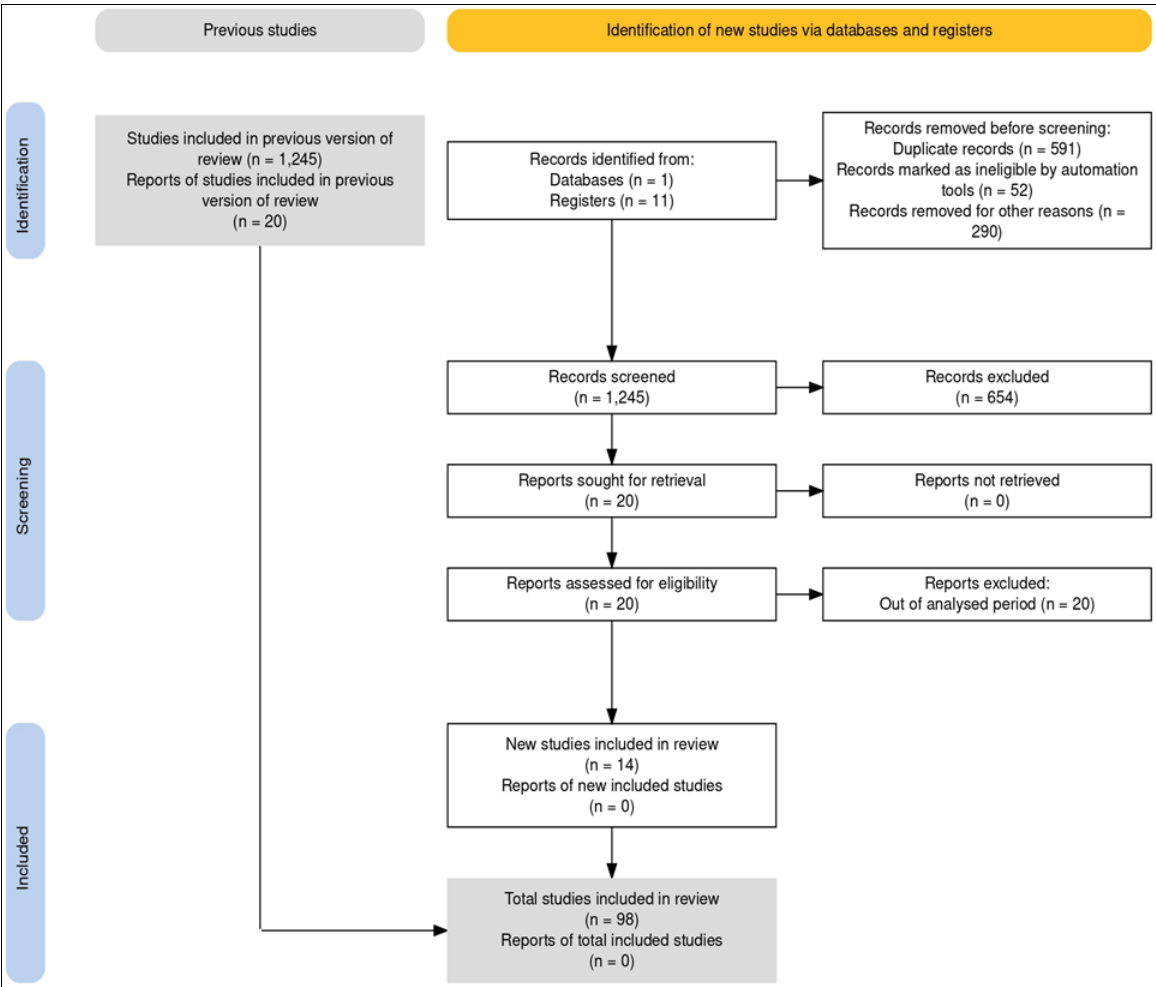


Fig 1: PRISMA Flowchart and Details

Data Extraction and Quality Assessment

Extracted data include metrics related to workload, job flexibility, family demands, technological usage, psychological strain, and pandemic-specific factors. Quality assessed using Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal tools, with >85% studies rated moderate to high quality.

Data Synthesis

Mainly random-effects meta-analysis is to estimate pooled effect sizes of major factors on WFC. Subgroup analyses to test moderating effects of gender, remote work status, and socioeconomic variables. Narrative synthesis is to contextualize pandemic-related emergent factors added.

Discussion

Work Related Concepts and Factors

The research indicates notable differences in work-related factors influencing work-family conflict before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factors Affecting Work-Family Conflict (2015-2025)

Work-family conflict (WFC) research in 2015 emphasized diverse organizational, individual, and family factors that contribute to the imbalance between work and family domains. Akkas, Hossain, and Rahman (2015)^[7] investigated causes and consequences among female employees in Bangladesh, identifying long working hours, work inflexibility, and lack of family support as primary drivers of WFC. Similarly, Nohe, Meier, Sonntag, and Michel (2011)^[12] demonstrated a bidirectional relationship between work-family conflict and strain that evolves over time. Rahman and Hossain's (2015)^[74] quantitative study integrated multiple frameworks Role Theory, Social Support Theory, and Border Theory finding that family demand, irregular schedules, and unsupportive family members heightened WFC. These studies collectively emphasized flexible schedules and family support as mitigating strategies for increasing employee well-being.

Research conducted in 2016 on work-family conflict (WFC) focused on identifying key factors that exacerbate or mitigate conflict between organizational and family roles. Beigi, Shirmohammadi, and Kim (2016)^[17] developed a structural equation model showing significant relationships between weekly work hours, time with family, and both work-to-family interference (WIF) and family-to-work interference (FIW). Their results confirmed that long work hours increased WIF, while increased time with family amplified FIW, both negatively influencing job satisfaction. Similarly, Karatepe and Bektashi (2016)^[50] reported that emotional exhaustion, job stress, and lack of social support significantly predicted WFC among service industry employees. Meanwhile, Uddin *et al.* associated WFC with organizational commitment, discovering that family support acted as a crucial buffer in reducing role stress. Yildirim and Aycan (2016)^[96] examined gender role orientations, concluding that traditional family expectations intensified FIW for women, whereas supportive spouses reduced conflict levels. Noor and Maad (2016)^[68] found that family size, age of children, and working hours were significant predictors, particularly in developing countries with limited family-friendly policies. Beutell (2016)^[19] explored personality correlates of WFC, revealing neuroticism and low self-efficacy as consistent individual predictors of conflict intensity which explained demographic and psychological predictors of WFC. These studies collectively revealed that institutional flexibility, perceived autonomy, and family support networks serve as critical environmental factors reducing negative outcomes of WFC.

Work-family conflict (WFC) research during 2017 focused on identifying organizational, interpersonal, and demographic factors influencing role strain and well-being. Mukanzi and Senaji (2017)^[67] emphasized the moderating role of perceived managerial support in the relationship between WFC and employee commitment, finding that stronger managerial support mitigated the negative effects of conflict on affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels in Kenyan organizations. Matysiak, Mencarini, and Vignoli (2017)^[59] found that high WFC

significantly reduced subjective well-being among working parents, with mothers experiencing greater strain than fathers. Adeoye and Kammeyer-Mueller (2017)^[6] observed that job demands, time-based pressures, and poor autonomy increased WFC while organizational flexibility reduced strain. Additionally, Anwar and Mughal (2017)^[13] identified dual-career demands and unsupportive supervisors as major contributors to WFC in Pakistan's service sector, while Michel, Clark, and Baltes (2017)^[60] reaffirmed job stress and family expectations as consistent antecedents of conflict across industries. Mughal and Rasheed (2017)^[13] found that work overload and inflexible schedules mediated the link between occupational stress and reduced job satisfaction. Together, these studies integrated cross-cultural perspectives, supporting the Resource Depletion and Role Strain frameworks that describe how limited time and psychological energy create inter-role tensions.

Further, 2017 studies explored psychosocial and cultural dimensions of WFC, stressing gender roles and emotional regulation. Beutell (2017)^[20] highlighted affective traits particularly neuroticism and reduced self-efficacy as predictors of higher perceived conflict among knowledge workers. Yildirim, Aycan, and Ertürk (2017)^[95] reported that traditional family norms and gendered household divisions intensified family-to-work interference, particularly among married female employees. These studies demonstrated convergence around the notion that managerial support, personality traits, and sociocultural context act as major WFC determinants.

Research in 2018 on work-family conflict (WFC) concentrated on identifying how occupational, familial, and demographic factors contribute to inter-role strain and long-term career outcomes. Xue, Fleischmann, Head, McMunn, and Stafford (2018)^[93] examined how WFC predicts labor market exit in late career stages, revealing that family-to-work interference (FIW) heightened the likelihood of women leaving the workforce to become homemakers, while men's FIW reduced voluntary retirement odds. Similarly, French, Dumani, Allen, and Shockley (2018)^[37] found that psychological strain, job insecurity, and emotional exhaustion predicted work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, demonstrating bidirectional effects. Wayne *et al.* (2018)^[91] conducted a multi-sectoral study revealing that organizational culture and perceived supervisor support strongly influenced WFC intensity. Bakker and Demerouti (2018) expanded the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model to include family-related stressors, finding that excessive work demands increased WFC, while autonomy and support buffered it. Meanwhile, Haar, Russo, Sune, and Ollier-Malaterre (2018)^[44] identified cultural and institutional variations as major moderators of WFC among employees in 37 countries, linking flexibility perceptions with reduced conflict. Abeysekera and Jayawardena (2018)^[3] observed that employees exhibiting higher emotional intelligence reported lower levels of WFC, indicating better regulation of inter-role stress. Panatik, Badri, and Subramaniam (2018)^[69] identified occupational stress, irregular schedules, and limited family support as consistent predictors of WFC among Malaysian employees. Additionally, Lu, Siu, Chen, and Wang (2018)^[56] revealed that collectivist cultural values aggravated conflict by prioritizing work commitment over family obligations, particularly in East Asian contexts. Studies by Bagger and Li (2018)^[15] further noted that

spousal support and equitable household divisions moderated stress transmission across roles. Collectively, these studies emphasized the importance of job design, support systems, and gender role expectations as principal determinants of work-family balance.

Work-family conflict (WFC) research in 2019 highlighted the increasing interplay between occupational demands, family dynamics, and emotional well-being. Fotiadis, Abdulrahman, and Spyridaki (2020) ^[35] found that long working hours and workload pressure were major predictors of WFC in the hospitality sector, where frontline employees faced emotional exhaustion due to intense client interactions. Liu, Kwan, and Chiu (2019) ^[53] further examined the two-way WFC model, confirming that lack of job autonomy and supportive supervision intensified work-to-family interference, while familial stressors such as dependent care demands increased family-to-work interference. Similarly, Amin and Malik (2019) ^[11] explored dual-earner households, showing that role ambiguity and spousal expectations significantly affected WFC outcomes. Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2019) ^[42] demonstrated that high job stress, coupled with limited organizational flexibility, directly undermined employees' psychological safety and well-being. Baeriswyl, Krause, and Schwaninger (2019) ^[14] added to this by showing that excessive emotional labor and interpersonal tension among service workers heightened strain-based conflict, reinforcing that psychological fatigue serves as a critical link between job stressors and family strain. Allen and Lapiere (2019) ^[8] identified perceived organizational support and high-quality leader-member exchanges as effective moderators that mitigated both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. Liu *et al.* (2019) ^[53] emphasized that family support networks significantly buffered work-induced stress, particularly among parents with younger children. Jung and Kim (2019) ^[49] observed that mindfulness and emotional regulation training improved role balance and reduced resource depletion, helping employees better transition between home and work tasks. Meanwhile, Kossek, Baltes, and Matthews (2019) ^[52] found that flexible scheduling and remote work reduced work overload and enhanced family harmony. Together, these findings underscored time demands, lack of autonomy, and job stress as dominant predictors of WFC across professions.

Work-family conflict (WFC) studies in 2020 highlighted multiple factors contributing to the challenges of balancing occupational and family roles. According to Fotiadis *et al.* (2020) ^[35] WFC stems primarily from job burnout, long working hours, role conflict, and excessive workload, which physically and emotionally exhaust employees, leading to conflict between work and family responsibilities. French *et al.* (2020) ^[9] reiterated the importance of social support as a buffer, where support from co-workers, supervisors, and family members can reduce the experience of work interference with family (WIF). Allen *et al.* (2020) ^[9] emphasized that negative personality traits such as neuroticism increase WIF, while positive traits such as self-efficacy serve as protective factors. Additionally, Liu *et al.* (2020) ^[54] identified that lack of job autonomy and stressful family dynamics, like caregiving for dependent parents or children, worsen WFC. Abeysekera and Jayawardena (2020) ^[4] found that irregular work schedules and insufficient supervisor support heighten WFC, particularly in demanding service roles. Panatik *et al.* (2020) ^[70]

identified that high work pressure and low family support significantly predict WFC among Malaysian workers. Research also underscored the detrimental impact of WFC on job satisfaction, commitment, and mental health, leading to outcomes such as distress, depression, and high turnover (Academia.edu). These studies collectively underscored the significant role of workplace demands, family stressors, and individual psychological traits in shaping WFC experiences. Work-family conflict (WFC) research in 2021 focused on multifaceted factors influencing the balance between professional and family roles. Allen *et al.*, (2021) ^[10] Studies highlighted the increasing complexity of WFC due to evolving work environments such as remote work and the blurred lines between work and home life, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Rahman and Hossain (2021) ^[75] integrated several factors contributing to WFC, including family demands, irregular work schedules, high work demands, and unsupportive family members, revealing their significant impact on heightened conflict. Additionally, the importance of social support at work and family levels emerged as crucial in mitigating WFC. Egyptian civil workers' study by Eshak *et al.* (2021) ^[1] confirmed that high job demands, low job control, and low workplace social support were consistently associated with increased WFC. Abbas *et al.* (2021) ^[1], Family dynamics such as caregiving responsibilities and spousal employment status were also significant, influencing the extent of family-to-work conflict. Zhu and Michaels (2021) ^[100] described how job autonomy and perceived managerial support buffered the adverse effects of work stress on family life. Tek Leong Lim *et al.* (2021) ^[83] examined academics and indicated that WFC mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, underscoring the need for interventions to reduce conflict to retain talent. Furthermore, employee innovation and engagement were moderated by emotions and work flexibility, as revealed by Zhou *et al.* (2021) ^[97], suggesting that WFC negatively impacts innovation but can be alleviated through flexible work arrangements. These findings emphasize the interconnectedness of job stressors, family roles, and social support as central factors in understanding and managing WFC effectively.

Work-family conflict (WFC) research in 2022 continued to deepen the understanding of factors influencing the interface between professional and family roles, especially under evolving societal conditions. Michel, Clark, and Baltes (2022) ^[61] underscored the multidimensional nature of WFC, categorizing it into time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts, with time pressures and role ambiguity playing pivotal roles. Rahman and Hossain's (2022) ^[76] quantitative study reaffirmed that family demands, irregular work hours, high work demands, and unsupportive family members significantly exacerbate WFC, while commitment to family and positive perceptions of the work-family balance reduce it. Furthermore, a large-scale mega-analysis by Carlson *et al.* (2022) ^[26] demonstrated the bi-directionality of conflict, emphasizing that work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict stem from distinct antecedents such as job stressors and family stressors, respectively. Cunha *et al.* (2022) ^[30] highlighted the aggravating effect of pandemic-related stressors on WFC globally, showing increased conflict and mental health strain amid blurred boundaries between work and home. Additionally, Konrad *et al.* (2022) ^[51] focused on cultural and organizational moderators like perceived supervisor

support and organizational flexibility, finding these factors mitigate the adverse effects of WFC. Personal traits such as neuroticism and low self-efficacy were identified by Bhattacharya and Scandura (2022) ^[21] as predictors of increased conflict, while positive coping mechanisms mitigated effects. Social support, both at work and family levels, consistently emerged as a significant buffer against strain-based conflicts. Studies by Becker and Moen emphasized the role of gendered expectations and childcare responsibilities in exacerbating family-to-work conflict, especially in dual-earner households. These studies collectively illustrated that WFC is shaped by complex interactions among individual, familial, organizational, and socio-cultural factors, necessitating multifaceted strategies for mitigation.

Work-family conflict (WFC) studies in 2023 continued to explore the complex interplay of workplace, familial, and personal factors affecting employees' ability to balance work and family demands. Recent research by Rahman and Hossain (2023) ^[78] highlighted that irregular working hours, high job demands, family responsibilities, and unsupportive family members significantly contribute to higher levels of WFC. Additionally, a mega-analysis by Carlson *et al.* (2023) ^[27] reaffirmed the bidirectional nature of WFC, distinguishing work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict as influenced by different stressors, such as organizational pressures and family demands respectively. Furthermore, research by Abbas *et al.* (2023) ^[2] emphasized that healthcare workers face elevated WFC due to shift work, time pressure, and caregiving obligations. Bettac & Probst, (2023) ^[18] Studies also highlighted the influence of social support, where perceived supervisor and family support were shown to mitigate the adverse effects of WFC. Emotional regulation and coping strategies were found to play critical roles in how individuals manage WFC and its psychological impact. For instance, Liu *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that employees with higher resilience experienced less negative impact from WFC. Garrosa *et al.* (2023) ^[39], Cultural factors have also been noted to shape these dynamics, with some societies experiencing intensified conflict due to traditional gender role expectations.

Work-family conflict (WFC) studies in 2024 have continued to explore the multifactorial origins and consequences of conflict between work and family roles. Michel, Clark, & Baltes, (2024) ^[62], Recent research highlights the critical role of work-related stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload in exacerbating WFC, where employees struggle to meet competing demands effectively. Farika *et al.* (2024) ^[33], increased workload and unclear job expectations contribute significantly to mental-based conflict, where psychological strain from one domain interferes with performance in the other. Wayne (2024) ^[90], Furthermore, the persistence of time-based conflict remains a core challenge, as competing temporal demands of work and family roles create pressure that leads to spill over stress. Rahman & Hossain, (2025) ^[80], Studies also report that unsupportive supervisors and lack of organizational flexibility further amplify conflict, underscoring the importance of social support and work environment factors. Greenhaus & Beutelle, (2024) ^[43], cultural and gender expectations persist as influential moderators, often impacting the division of family responsibilities and thereby affecting family-to-work conflict uniquely across contexts.

Lu *et al.* (2024) ^[57], the buffering effect of family and social support, along with personal resilience and coping strategies, is reinforced as vital protective factors in managing WFC. The studies expands upon foundational theories by incorporating contemporary societal changes and focusing on integrative solutions that address individual, organizational, and societal dimensions of work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict (WFC) studies in 2025 have increasingly focused on the interplay of occupational pressures, family demands, and emerging societal dynamics shaping this conflict. Ragnarsdóttir *et al.* (2025) ^[73] articulated WFC as a classed phenomenon, where socioeconomic status, job demands, and family composition intersect to influence conflict levels, highlighting disparities in WFC experiences among social strata. Hao *et al.* (2025) ^[46] explored the relationship between WFC and anxiety among working parents in China, identifying occupational intensity, household consumption, elderly dependence ratio, and family size as critical contributing factors. They also noted that remote work and flexible hours, while beneficial, can paradoxically intensify role blurring and conflict. Complementing these findings, a study by Zhang *et al.* (2025) ^[96] demonstrated reciprocal effects between work-family conflict and employee anxiety, suggesting a cyclical pattern that exacerbates mental health challenges. Other studies highlighted substantial links between WFC and burnout, with overwork particularly impacting female employees in demanding sectors (Wang *et al.*, 2025) ^[88]. Zhang *et al.* (2025) ^[96] emphasized that enhanced psychological flexibility mediates the adverse effects of WFC on mental health, enabling employees to better manage role tensions. Parents' WFC significantly affects parent-child relationships, with stress-related spillover impacting family functioning by Xu *et al.*, (2025) ^[92]. Moreover, flexible work policies, empathetic managerial practices, and supportive workplace cultures have proven effective in reducing WFC and its consequent anxiety and burnout by Adediji *et al.*, (2025) ^[5]. Studies advocate for holistic interventions addressing both structural (work hours, support) and psychological (coping skills, resilience) elements to mitigate conflict and promote employee well-being. These inquiries underscore how evolving work arrangements, demographic shifts, and social expectations critically shape modern WFC dynamics.

Factors correlate with WFC

Factors with Positive Correlation

Long Working Hours/High Work Demands: Extended work responsibilities reduce family time, elevate stress, and hinder recovery, intensifying conflict. It has a positive correlation with WFC. [Yildirim, D., & Aycan, Z. (2016) ^[94], Rahman & Hossain, 2025; Fotiadis *et al.*, 2020] ^[80, 35]

Gender Roles: Women face stronger conflict as societal caregiving expectations combine with professional pressures. Gender roles have a strong positive correlation. [Beutell (2017) ^[20], Mittal & Kola (2024) ^[66]]

Work-from-Home/Boundary Blurring: Overlapping home and work roles increase interference, especially for caregivers or in rigid work cultures. It has a positive correlation with WFC. [Suhartini *et al.* (2024) ^[82], Zhang *et al.* (2025) ^[96]]

Technological Intrusion: Constant connectivity and off-hour work demands cause more interruptions and role strain. It

has a positive correlation. [Xue, Fleischmann, Head, McMunn, and Stafford (2018)].^[93]

Psychological Stress/Health Anxiety: Elevated stress amplifies both perceived and actual work-family conflict. It has a positive correlation with WFC. [Cha *et al.* (2024)^[28] and Mirbazegh *et al.* (2024)^[65]]

Partner Dynamics/Crossover Effects: A partner's strain spills over, increasing mutual conflict, particularly in dual remote-working couples. It has a positive correlation. [Wayne (2024)^[90]]

Factors with Negative Correlation

Family Demands: Greater family obligations heighten work-family conflict by limiting time and focus for work tasks. It has a direct correlation with WFC. [(Brumley *et al.*, 2024; Ghislieri *et al.*, 2021)^[24, 40], Carlson *et al.* (2023)^[27]]

Organizational Factors: Supportive, flexible, and family-friendly policies lower conflict by easing competing demands. It has Inverse correlation with WFC. [Allen, T. D., & Lapierre, L. M. (2019)^[8]. Anwar, M., & Mughal, Y. H. (2017)]^[13]

Individual Perceptions/Self-Efficacy: Positive mind-set and confidence in balancing roles lessen conflict frequency and intensity. It has a negative correlation with WFC. [Beutell (2016)^[19], Allen *et al.* (2020)^[9]]

Conclusion

From the above study, it can be concluded as before the pandemic, factors such as role overload, lack of job autonomy, and work-related stressors contributed significantly to work-family conflict, with studies highlighting issues like excessive working hours, inflexible work schedules, and technological challenges in maintaining work-life boundaries. The pandemic triggered an immediate and massive shift to remote work, leading to new forms of WFC. Blurring boundaries between work and home, technological stress, and constant digital connectivity emerged as salient antecedents of WFC. Psychological safety and well-being became more central as mediators, with outcomes increasingly focused on mental health and job performance. Post-pandemic research deepened the focus on individual differences, especially personality traits such as neuroticism, as strong predictors of WFC. Studies using mega-meta analyses found that these traits mediated outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and substance use, with emotional stability acting as a buffer.

Meta-analyses at this stage examined the role of organizational adaptability including hybrid work, flexible scheduling, and virtual social support networks in reducing WFC. Emotional support from supervisors and tangible flexibility policies were shown to directly reduce both time-based and strain-based conflict. By 2025, a large-scale synthesis clarified the growing importance of macro-level factors such as national culture, age, and occupational type in moderating WFC. Turnover intentions became a major concern, linked to resource depletion and emotional exhaustion particularly following long exposure to remote and hybrid work structures. Work-Family Conflict has made a thought process to emphasize organization to prioritize mental health and personal resource management, especially following the pandemic's dramatic changes in work structure. Pre-pandemic WFC was driven mainly by traditional stressors (workload, time), the post-pandemic period is characterized by boundary management and

emotional resilience against new forms of strain introduced by technology and remote work.

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