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# From Balance to Boundary: A 21-Year Bibliometric Exploration of Work-Life Dynamics Trends

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## Abstract

In support of Sustainable Development Goals, which promotes inclusive economic growth and decent work, this study presents a bibliometric analysis of the scholarly landscape on Work-Life Boundary. Utilizing the SALSA framework and VOSviewer, 127 publications from the Scopus database (2004–2025) were analyzed to identify key trends, influential authors, prolific countries, and dominant research themes. Findings reveal a marked increase in WLB research since 2014, with the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada as leading contributors. Aljabr, N. and Kossek, E.E. emerged as prominent authors, while new technology, work and employment was identified as the most impactful source. Keyword mapping indicates central topics such as boundary theory, remote work, work-life conflict, and well-being. This study not only maps the intellectual structure of Work-Life Boundary research but also underscores its growing relevance in informing organizational policy changes that support flexible and sustainable work practices aligned with the principles of decent work.

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## Keywords

work-life boundary; boundary management; remote work; work-life balance; work-life conflict; well-being

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's digital work environment, the boundaries between professional and personal life have become blur than ever. As organizations adapt to new work structures such as remote work, hybrid models, and flexible scheduling, the concept of work-life boundary has emerged as a critical lens to enhance employee well-being and organizational sustainability (Kossek et al., 2012; Allen et al., 2014). Work-life boundaries refer to the psychological, temporal, and spatial separations individuals create to manage the interaction between work and non-work roles (Clark, 2000; Wayne et al., 2016).

Traditionally, much of the literatures focused on work-life balance, which emphasized the equilibrium between job responsibilities and personal life. However, recent studies indicate a paradigmatic shift from balance toward boundary perspective. Individuals experience and manage work-life roles in complex and often overlapping ways (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner et al., 2009; Mellner et al., 2021). This shift acknowledges for many professionals particularly in digital and knowledge-based industries, that rigid boundaries are no longer practical or desirable. There is increasing interest in how boundaries are negotiated, blurred, and sometimes segmented to support employee performance and well-being.

Recent literature indicates that a blurred distinction between work and personal life, often referred to as work-life integration, can either facilitate job satisfaction or lead to work-life conflict, depending on individual preferences and organizational support structures (Aditya et al., 2023; Mellner et al., 2021). The flexibility afforded by integrative approaches can empower employees to mold their work schedules around personal needs however, it also poses challenges in delineating professional responsibilities from personal time, which can exacerbate stress and burnout (Kumar et al., 2021).

Despite a growing body of literature on this topic, the research landscape remains fragmented. Many studies focus on specific themes such as telework, well-being, or gendered experiences without fully mapping the conceptual relationships across the field (Au et al., 2019; Mellner et al., 2021). While a few bibliometric analyses have been conducted on related areas like work-life balance or work-life conflict, a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis focusing on work-life boundaries over a multi-decade timespan remains limited.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to provide a systematic bibliometric review of the literature on work-life boundaries from 2004 to 2025. Drawing on 127 Scopus-indexed publications, this paper utilizes VOSviewer to analyze keyword co-occurrences, publication sources, citation patterns, and authorship networks. The objectives of this study are fourfold: (1) to assess key trends in the evolution of work-life boundary research; (2) to identify the most influential authors and journals; (3) to uncover conceptual clusters and thematic shifts over time; and (4) to propose future research directions that can guide both scholars and practitioners.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Foundations and Terminological Ambiguities of Work-Life Boundary**

The concept of work-life boundary has evolved over the past few decades, grounded in boundary theory and role theory, both of which explore how individuals navigate the demands of multiple life roles (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). Boundary theory specifically highlights how individuals construct, maintain, and negotiate boundaries between work and non-work domains, depending on their preferences for segmentation or integration (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Role theory complements this by emphasizing the behavioral expectations associated with different life domains.

However, the literature surrounding work-life boundary is often characterized by conceptual inconsistency, giving rise to what has been termed "jingle and jangle fallacies" (Kreiner et al., 2009). The jingle fallacy refers to the use of the same term to describe different constructs, while the jangle fallacy involves using different terms to describe the same concept. For example, terms such as "work-life balance," "work-life integration," "boundary management," and "role blending" are frequently used interchangeably or without clear definitions, contributing to conceptual ambiguity (Kossek et al., 2012). This inconsistency has led to a fragmented research landscape, making cross-study comparisons and meta-analyses more challenging. Although some researchers have attempted to clarify distinctions (e.g., integration vs. segmentation preferences), there remains a lack of consensus on terminology and measurement.

### **Evolution of Research and Bibliometric Trends**

Research on work-life boundary has accelerated in recent years, especially in response to evolving workplace dynamics such as remote work, globalization, and digitization. Early studies (e.g., Clark, 2000; Ashforth et al., 2000) primarily focused on physical and temporal boundaries, while more recent work considers psychological and digital boundaries (Kreiner, 2006; Mellner et al., 2021). Bibliometric reviews by Au et al. (2019) and Barbu et al. (2021) note a shift in focus from simple role conflict models to more nuanced discussions of boundary permeability, flexibility, and resilience. Despite these advancements, bibliometric analysis reveals ongoing fragmentation in the literature and a need for integrative frameworks that can bridge disparate terminologies and methodological approaches.

### **Work-Life Boundary and Related Variables**

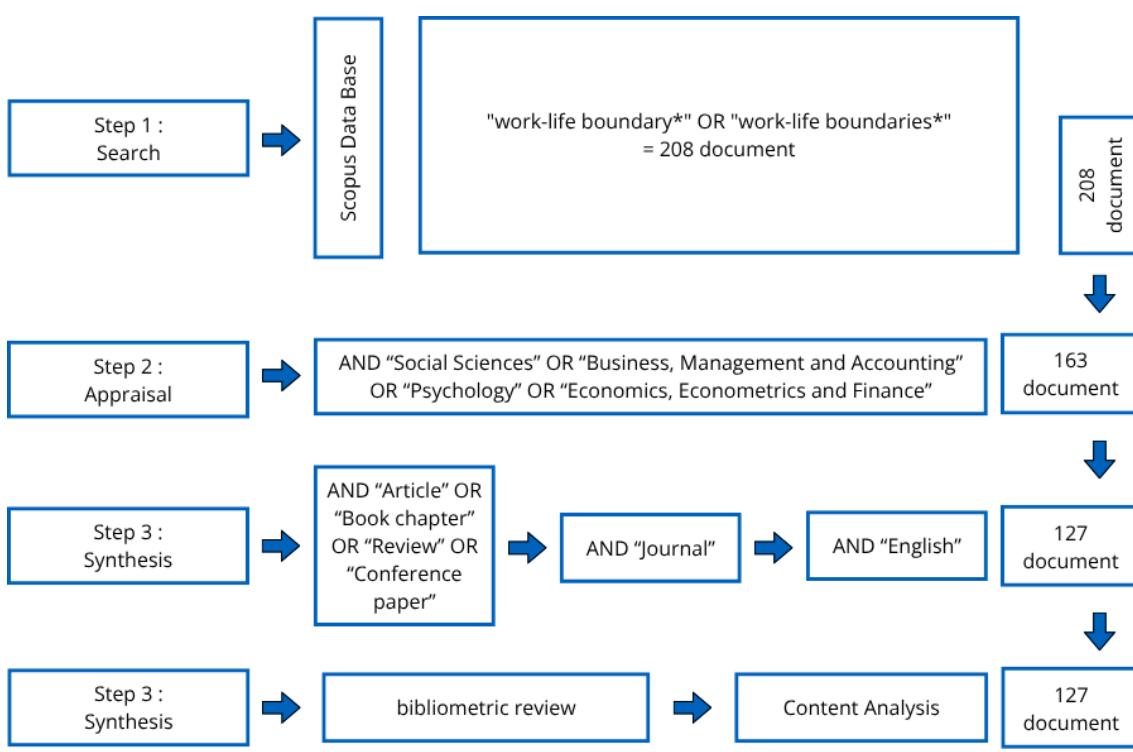
A significant strand of research explores the intersection of work-life boundaries with other organizational and behavioral variables. Technology, for instance, plays a dual role: while it enables flexible work arrangements (FWA), it also blurs boundaries, fostering "always-on" cultures that may increase work-life conflict (Derkx et al., 2016; Mellner et al., 2021). Flexible Work Arrangements, such as remote work, compressed workweeks, and flextime can either

support or hinder boundary management depending on implementation and organizational support (Allen et al., 2013).

Work-life integration is another important dimension, conceptualized as a fluid and synergistic approach to managing work and personal roles (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012). While integration can offer autonomy and satisfaction for some, it may also lead to role overload and burnout for others, especially in the absence of clear boundary-setting norms (Kumar et al., 2021). Finally, employee well-being, which includes physical, psychological, and emotional aspects, is closely connected to how well individuals manage the boundaries between work and personal life. Research consistently shows that when employees are able to manage these boundaries effectively, they tend to feel more satisfied, experience less stress, and show stronger commitment to their organization (Wayne et al., 2016; Martanto et al., 2019).

## METHODS

The literature on work-life boundaries using the SALSA (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis) approach (Figure 1). Data was obtained from the Scopus database due to its wide coverage, citation tracking capabilities, and reputation for providing high-quality scientific publications. In the first stage (Search), a search was conducted on 28 May 2025 using the keywords "work-life boundary\*" OR "work-life boundaries\*" applied to the title, abstract, and keywords, resulting in 208 documents.



**Figure 1 SALSA steps of data selection and analysis procedure**

Subsequently, in the second stage (Appraisal), the data was filtered based on relevant fields of study, namely Social Sciences, Business, Management and Accounting, Psychology, and Economics, Econometrics, and Finance, reducing the number of documents to 163. Further screening was conducted only to include documents classified as articles, book chapters, reviews, or conference papers, published in scholarly journals, and written in English, resulting in 127 documents eligible for further analysis.

The third stage (Synthesis) involved bibliometric analysis and content analysis of the 127 selected documents. Bibliographic data was exported in CSV format and analyzed using VOSviewer software. Analyses were conducted based on document type, publication source, annual trends, field of study, keywords, country and author productivity, and number of citations. Visual mapping was created to identify the most frequently occurring words and phrases in titles and abstracts, thus revealing the main research patterns in work-life boundary studies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part outlines the main results of the bibliometric review, shedding light on how research on work-life boundaries has developed over time. It reviews patterns in publication volume, identifies prominent researchers and contributing countries, and highlights core journals in the field. Additionally, it provides a visual overview of key thematic areas, followed by an in-depth discussion of major scholarly trends and suggestions for future exploration.

### Annual Trends in the Publication of Work-Life Boundary

Figure 2 illustrates the temporal development of scholarly interest in work-life boundary research over the last two decades. The data reveals a biphasic trend in publication volume. The first phase (2004–2014) is marked by relatively low and inconsistent output, suggesting that work-life boundary was still an emerging theme with limited academic traction. During this initial period, publication rates fluctuated between 1 to 3 articles annually, reflecting exploratory studies and fragmented theoretical engagement.

Documents by year

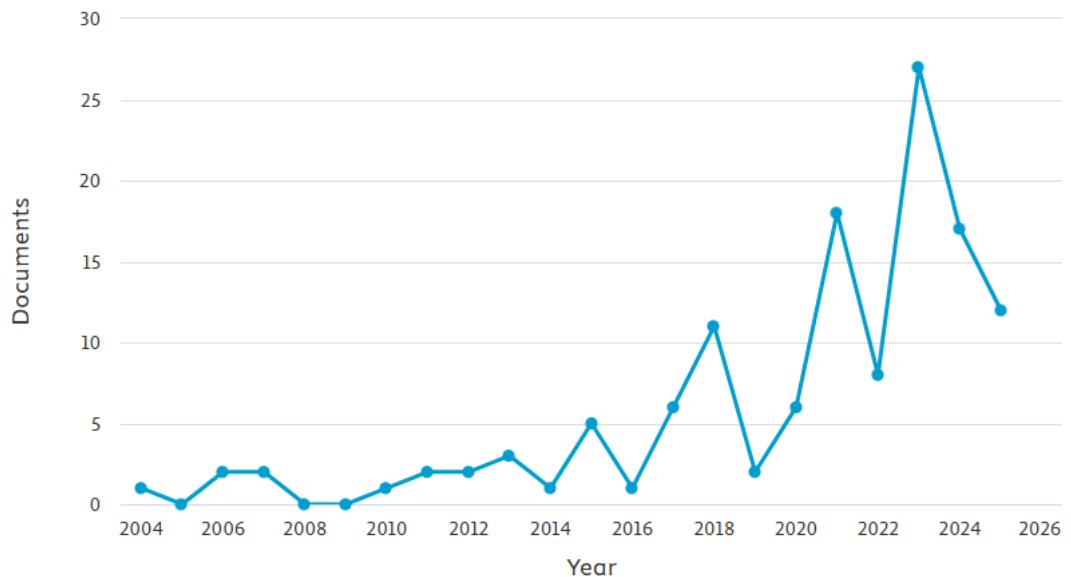


Figure 2 Trends in work-life boundary over the last 21 years (2004–2025)

In contrast, the second phase (2015–2025) demonstrates a significant and sustained increase in scholarly output. A pivotal moment appears to be the post-2015 period, coinciding with the global rise in digital transformation, remote work practices, and evolving organizational norms, which catalyzed greater academic attention to boundary-related issues (Derkx et al., 2016; Kossek et al., 2012). Although a temporary dip occurred in 2020 was likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting academic productivity, interest rapidly rebounded, peaking in 2023 with 27 published articles, the highest volume recorded in the observation window.

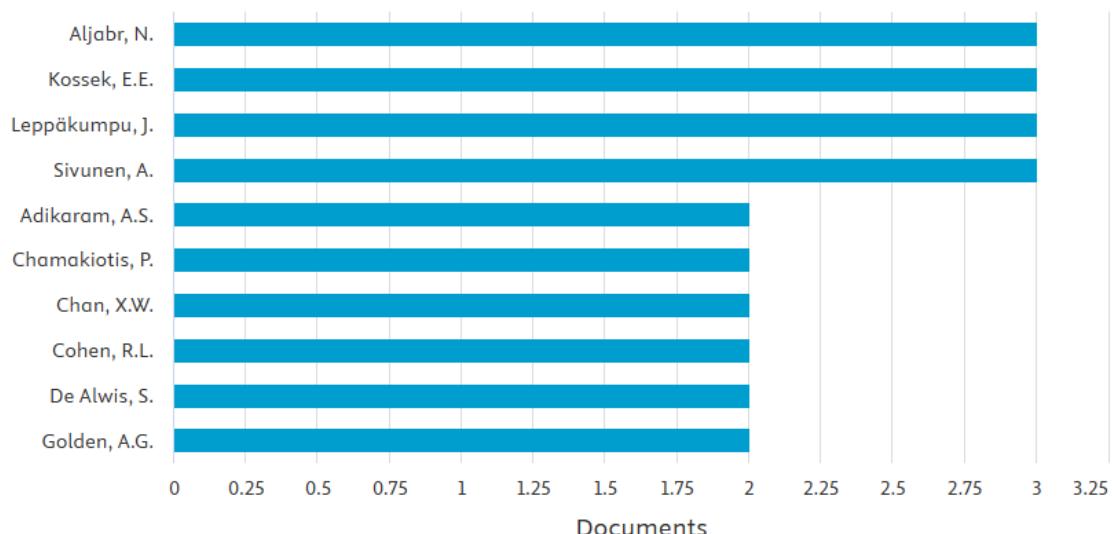
The sustained upward trend through 2025, with 12 articles already published by mid-year, suggests that work-life boundary remains a dynamic and expanding field of study, closely tied to ongoing societal shifts and workplace innovation. This growth aligns with observations from Barbu et al. (2021), who noted that flexible work arrangements and well-being considerations are driving forces behind recent interest in work-life boundary topics. It also underscores the field's transition from a niche area to a central concern in organizational behavior, human resource management, and psychological well-being research.

### **The Most Productive Authors in The Publication of Work-Life Boundary**

Figure 3 highlights the most productive authors in the field of work-life boundary research. The analysis shows that Aljabr, N. (Jubail Industrial College, Saudi Arabia) is currently the most prolific contributor, with three publications dedicated to this topic. This is followed closely by a group of scholars, Kossek, E. E., Leppäkumpu, J., and Sivunen, A, who have also published three articles each. Kossek's contributions are particularly notable due to her foundational work in boundary theory and boundary management profiles (Kossek et al., 2012).

#### **Documents by author**

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.



**Figure 3 Top 10 Contributing Authors in the Area of Work-Life Boundary**

Other authors such as Adikaram, A.S., Chamakiotis, P., Chan, X.W., Cohen, R.L., De Alwis, S., and Golden, A.G. have each contributed two publications. Although their publication count is lower, these authors play an essential role in expanding the scope of research, particularly in regional and applied contexts. The diversity of affiliations from institutions in Sri Lanka, Spain, Australia, the UK, to the United States also reflects the growing global interest in work-life boundary issues.

### **Top 10 Countries Contributed to The Publications of Work-Life Boundary**

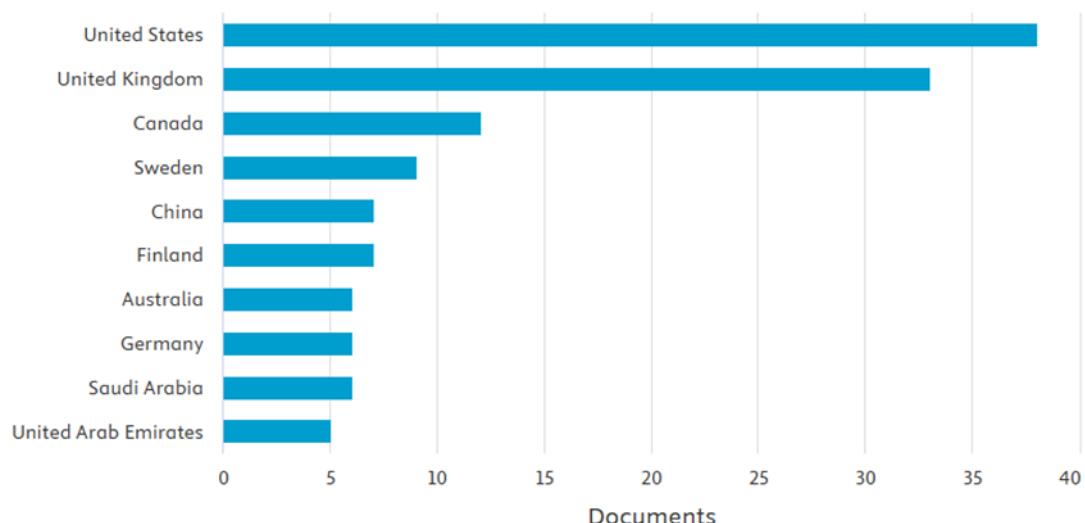
Figure 4 showcases the geographical distribution of academic contributions to the field of work-life boundary. The data reveals that the United States is the dominant contributor, accounting for 38 publications, affirming its leadership in shaping global discourse on boundary management, flexible work, and employee well-being. This is consistent with the country's extensive research infrastructure and long-standing academic interest in work-life dynamics.

The United Kingdom follows closely with 33 publications, reflecting its active engagement in social science and organizational behavior research. The presence of Canada in third place (12

publications) further underscores the influence of Western countries in the development of this field.

#### Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.



**Figure 4 Top 10 Countries Contributing on Work-Life Boundaries Research**

Beyond these leading nations, the figure highlights meaningful participation from other parts of the world. Countries such as Sweden (9 publications), China and Finland (7 each), Australia, Germany, and Saudi Arabia (6 each), and the United Arab Emirates (5 publications) indicate a growing internationalization of the research topic. The inclusion of both developed and developing nations suggests that work-life boundary issues are recognized as globally relevant, transcending geographic and economic divides.

This geographical distribution reflects not only where research is being conducted, but also potentially signals regional policy shifts, workforce cultural differences, and local institutional support for flexible work arrangements. The rise in contributions from non-Western countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE also points toward increasing interest in employee-centric work policies in emerging economies.

In sum, Figure 4 reveals that while North America and Western Europe still lead scholarly output, research on work-life boundaries is becoming more diverse and inclusive, both in terms of geographic origin and cultural context. This trend aligns with calls for cross-national collaboration and context-sensitive insights into boundary management practices in globalized work environments (Kossek et al., 2012; Barbu et al., 2021).

#### Top 10 Most Active Source Titles Contributed to the Publications of work-life boundary

Table 1 lists the ten most active academic journals that have published research on work-life boundary topics. Leading the list is *New Technology, Work and Employment*, which contributed five publications and accumulated 953 citations. Despite having fewer total papers than other journals, its high citation count and CiteScore (10.5) suggest significant academic influence within the field, especially on issues involving the intersection of technology and organizational practices.

*Human Relations* follows closely with four articles but leads in citation impact with a total of 3,552 citations and the highest CiteScore (12.6). This indicates that papers published in this journal are

not only frequent but also foundational in shaping theoretical discussions around work-life dynamics.

**Tabel 1 Top 10 Most active source titles**

Source Title	TP	TC	Publisher	Cite Score	SJR 2023	SNIP 2023
<b>New Technology Work And Employment</b>	5	953	John Wiley & Sons	10.5	2.009	2.330
<b>Human Relations</b>	4	3.552	SAGE	12.6	3.597	3.007
<b>Community Work And Family</b>	3	657	Taylor & Francis	5.7	0.765	1.241
<b>Information Technology And People</b>	3	3.289	Emerald Publishing	8.2	1.244	1.530
<b>International Journal Of Human Resource Management</b>	3	6.592	Taylor & Francis	11.7	2.078	2.429
<b>Proceedings Of The ACM On Human Computer Interaction</b>	3	10.489	Association for Computing Machinery	5.9	0.979	0.982
<b>South Asian Journal Of Human Resources Management</b>	3	130	SAGE	2.3	0.444	0.736
<b>Work Employment And Society</b>	3	2.177	SAGE	7.9	2.135	2.584
<b>Cross Cultural And Strategic Management</b>	2	619	Emerald Publishing	4.7	0.648	0.976
<b>Culture And Organization</b>	2	370	Taylor & Francis	3.2	0.577	0.674

Note: TP = Total Number of Publications; TC = Total Citations

(Source: Data Processing by Author, 2025)

Several journals published three papers each, including *Community Work and Family*, *Information Technology and People*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, and *Work, Employment and Society*. While the number of contributions is the same, their influence varies. For example, *International Journal of Human Resource Management* stands out with a strong citation record (6,592 citations) and a high SJR (2.078), highlighting its relevance to HR-focused studies on boundary management.

Interestingly, *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* also demonstrates strong academic reach, which reflects the growing role of digital work environments in shaping the discourse around work-life boundaries. At the bottom of the list are *Cross Cultural and Strategic Management* and *Culture and Organization*, each contributing two publications. Although these journals contributed fewer articles, their inclusion signals that work-life boundary topics are being approached from cross-cultural and organizational behavior perspectives as well.

The diversity of source titles reflects the interdisciplinary nature of work-life boundary research. Studies in this field span across human resource management, organizational studies, sociology, information systems, and gender. This spread also shows that the topic is becoming increasingly important in both practical and academic areas.

### **Topic Area Visualization Using VOSviewer**

To gain a deeper understanding of the thematic structure in work-life boundary research, this study utilized VOSviewer for topic area visualization. VOSviewer is a powerful bibliometric mapping tool designed to construct and visualize co-occurrence networks of keywords, authors, or terms extracted from bibliographic data. In this study, keyword co-occurrence analysis was performed to identify dominant research themes and their interrelationships across the 127 selected publications.

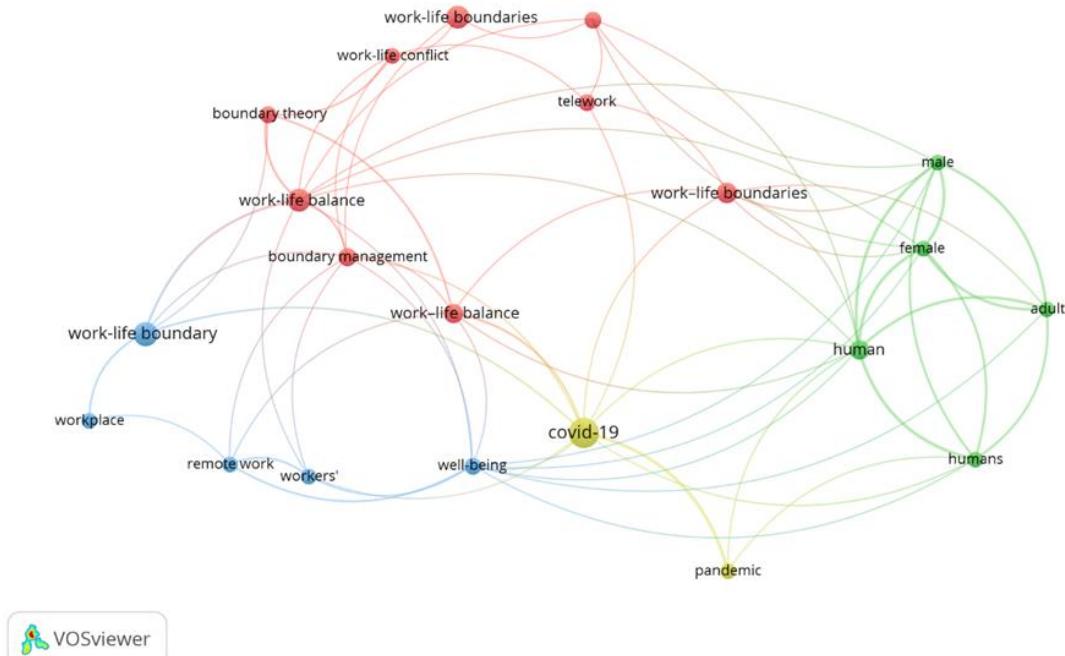
The resulting maps display clusters of terms that frequently appear together, indicating conceptual proximity. Each node represents a keyword, with its size reflecting the frequency of occurrence, while the lines connecting nodes indicate the strength of their co-occurrence. The clusters are

color-coded to differentiate thematic groupings, allowing researchers to observe how various topics such as boundary theory, remote work, well-being, and the COVID-19 pandemic are interconnected. This approach offers a visual synthesis of the evolving intellectual landscape in work-life boundary research and helps highlight emerging areas for future exploration.

In order to provide a comprehensive visualization, the analysis is presented using three distinct mapping techniques: the first is a network visualization that illustrates the relationships between frequently co-occurring keywords (Figure 5), the second is an overlay visualization that applies a chronological color scheme to reflect the temporal progression of keyword usage (Figure 6); and the third is a density visualization that emphasizes the clustering intensity and frequency distribution of dominant research terms (Figure 7). This multi-layered approach offers a robust perspective on the intellectual structure of work-life boundary literature and supports the identification of both mature and emerging topics in the field.

### **Network Visualization**

Figure 5 represents a network visualization of co-occurring author keywords in the field of work-life boundary research, generated using VOSviewer. Each dot (node) represents an author keyword, and each line (edge) indicates a co-occurrence relationship between those keywords within the same publication. The thickness of the line shows the strength of association (link strength), while the size of the dot reflects the frequency of occurrence of that keyword. Dots are clustered into groups represented by different colors, indicating distinct thematic clusters that emerge from the co-occurrence analysis.



**Figure 5 Network Visualisation of Work-Life Boundary Using Vosviewer**

The network is segmented into four thematic clusters, each visualized with a distinct color. These clusters indicate groupings of keywords that often appear together in the literature, suggesting shared conceptual or topical frameworks:

**Cluster 1 (Red):** Focused on boundary management, work-life conflict, boundary theory, and related terms. This cluster captures theoretical underpinnings and the conceptual framing of work-life boundaries.

**Cluster 2 (Green):** Dominated by demographic descriptors such as male, female, adult, and human. This indicates a stream of research examining work-life boundaries through the lens of demographic and identity factors.

**Cluster 3 (Blue):** Composed of keywords such as remote work, well-being, workplace, and work-life boundary. This represents a practice-oriented cluster with focus on organizational settings and employee well-being, especially in remote or hybrid work contexts.

**Cluster 4 (Yellow):** Contains Covid-19 and pandemic, signifying a crisis-driven research stream that addresses work-life boundary disruptions during global emergencies.

### ***Co-occurrence***

The keyword co-occurrence analysis helps identify the major themes and their interrelationships within the literature on work-life boundary. Table 2 presents the top author keywords grouped into four clusters based on their frequency (occurrences), number of links with other keywords, and total link strength (TLS), which indicates the cumulative strength of connections with other terms.

**Tabel 2 Co-Occurrence of Authors' Keywords**

Author Keywords	Links	Total Link Strength	Occurrences
<b>Cluster 1 (9 items)</b>			
Boundary management	9	10	7
Boundary theory	4	8	6
Covid-19 pandemic	6	6	6
telework	4	4	6
Work-life balance	10	15	11
Work-life boundaries	3	3	11
Work-life conflict	5	6	5
Work-life balance	7	10	8
Work-life boundaries	7	7	9
<b>Cluster 2 (5 items)</b>			
Adult	6	17	5
Female	8	21	5
Human	11	26	8
Humans	7	17	5
male	8	21	5
<b>Cluster 3 (5 items)</b>			
Remote work	5	7	5
Well-being	11	12	6
Work-life boundary	5	9	12
Workers'	5	6	5
Workplace	2	3	5
<b>Cluster 4 (2 items)</b>			
Covid-19	10	17	18
pandemic	3	7	5

(Source: Data Processing by Author, 2025)

### Cluster 1: Work-Life Balance and Boundary Management

This cluster centers around the theme of work-life balance and boundary management, with "work-life balance" being the most dominant keyword (Occurrences: 11, TLS: 15). It shows the strongest connections to other keywords within the cluster, indicating its central role in the discourse. "Boundary management" and "boundary theory" also appear prominently, reflecting a theoretical focus on how individuals navigate the boundaries between work and personal life. The presence of "Covid-19 pandemic" and "telework" in this cluster shows the pandemic's influence on boundary dynamics, although their link strengths are relatively lower.

### Cluster 2: Demographic Factors

Cluster 2 consists of demographic descriptors such as "human" (Occurrences: 8, TLS: 26), "female", and "male" (both TLS: 21). These keywords are frequently used in studies focusing on gender and individual characteristics in relation to work-life boundaries.

### Cluster 3: Remote Work and Worker Experience

This cluster is led by "work-life boundary" (Occurrences: 12, TLS: 9), which connects closely with "well-being" (TLS: 12) and "remote work". Keywords such as "workers'" and "workplace" suggest a practical focus on how work environments and roles affect individual experiences.

### Cluster 4: Covid-19 Focus

This small cluster contains only two keywords: "Covid-19" (Occurrences: 18, TLS: 17) and "pandemic". Despite the limited number of keywords, "Covid-19" has a high frequency, signaling its widespread impact on the literature.

### Overlay Visualization

The overlay visualization using Vosviewer allows us to trace trends in research focus within the work-life boundary literature by identifying which topics are older and which are emerging. Figure 6 provides a powerful visual summary of thematic evolution in the work-life boundary literature.

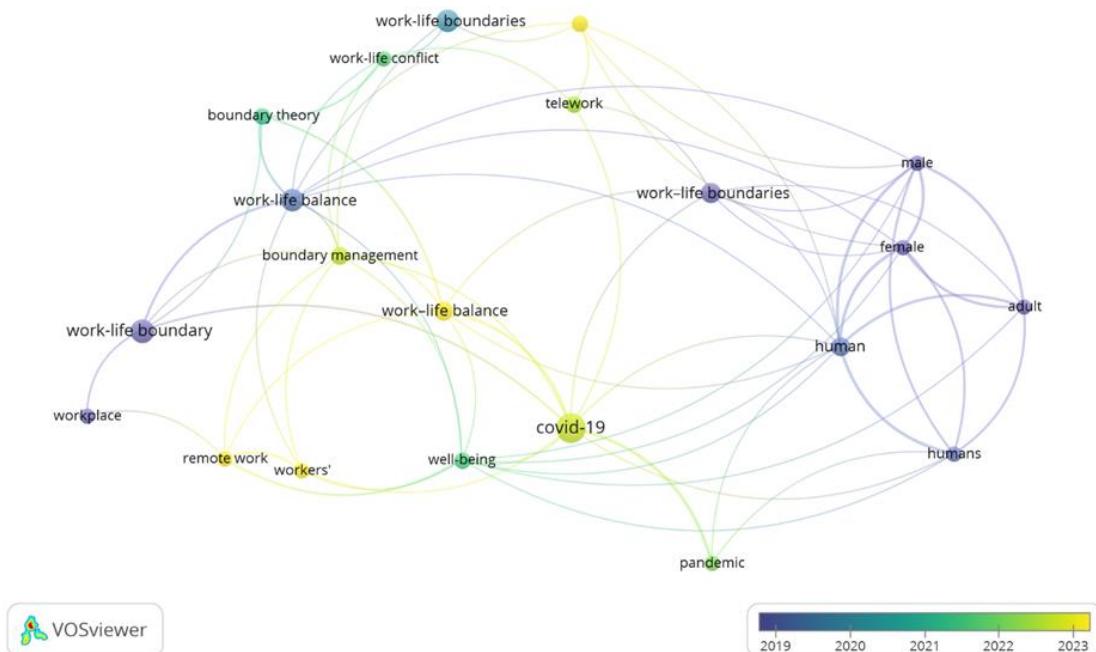


Figure 6 Overlay Visualization of Work-Life Boundary Using Vosviewer

### Earlier Themes (Purple-Blue)

Keywords like "boundary theory", "work-life conflict", and "boundary management" appear in cooler colors, indicating they were more prevalent in earlier publications (2004–2015). These terms suggest a strong theoretical focus in the initial stages of work-life boundary research, reflecting efforts to define and conceptualize how individuals navigate the interface between personal and professional roles.

### Transitional Themes (Greenish Tones)

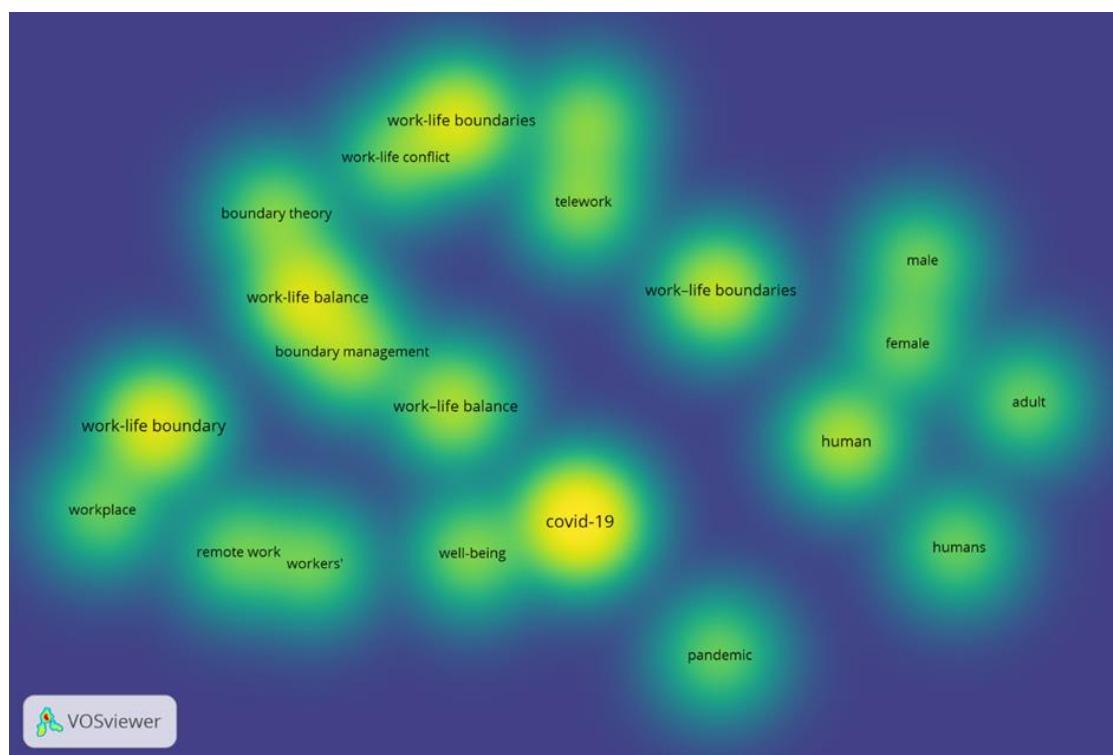
Terms such as "work-life balance", "telework", and "well-being" fall into the mid-range color spectrum, indicating a growing interest in practical applications and outcomes from around 2016 to 2020. These keywords signify the field's shift toward empirical studies and interventions that address the effects of boundary management strategies on employee experiences and organizational outcomes.

### Recent and Emerging Topics (Yellow)

More recent keywords include "Covid-19", "remote work", and "work-life boundary" (as a compound term). Their yellow coloring indicates they have become prominent in the literature only in the past few years, especially after 2020. The emphasis on "Covid-19" and "remote work" reflects the pandemic's profound impact on work arrangements and boundary dynamics.

### Density Visualization

The density visualization in VOSviewer provides an intuitive way to assess the concentration and intensity of research focus within a bibliometric network from the highest to lowest interest of research in work-life boundary.



**Figure 7 Density Visualization of Work-Life Boundary Using Vosviewer**

### High-Density Research Areas

The brightest and most concentrated regions as a core themes in Figure, which are the following keywords: "Work-life balance"; "Work-life boundary"; "Covid-19"; "Well-being"; "Remote work".

These terms appear in yellow zones, indicating that they are not only frequently mentioned but also frequently co-occur with other major keywords. This reflects that the main body of literature focuses heavily on how individuals maintain boundaries between work and life, particularly in the context of remote work and pandemic-driven shifts in work arrangements.

### **Moderate-Density Areas**

Surrounding the high-density core are terms with moderate presence, such as: "Boundary management"; "Boundary theory"; "Workplace"; "Telework"; "Work-life conflict". These keywords appear in greenish areas, suggesting that while they are still part of the ongoing discourse, they are not as central as the top five terms. They tend to be used in more theoretical or segmented studies rather than dominating the field.

### **Low-Density Areas**

Blue areas in the visualization point to less dense keyword clusters. These include: "Workers"; "Adult"; "Male" or "Female"; "Pandemic". These keywords have lower occurrences or fewer strong linkages with other terms. Their peripheral position suggests they are either niche topics, demographic issues, or supporting variables rather than central research themes. It can be said that these themes still underexplored but it is possible will develop in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

A 21-year (2004-2005) bibliometric of work-life boundary research concluded that in early development, themes such as work-life balance emerged as the most popular issue, as evidenced by the results of the density visualization analysis. Subsequently, work-life boundaries began to attract interest from researchers of work-life dynamics. This is believed to be due to rapid technological developments that have increasingly blurred and blended individual life domains (Tennakoon, 2018; Shin et al., 2022), shifting the focus of researchers from balance to the work-life boundary research area (Wepfer et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2022). Individuals began to seek strategies to manage both domains rather than balancing them, as a difficult task in practice. Researchers also began to link boundary management strategies that impact individual well-being, especially among remote workers and teleworkers who frequently navigate these overlapping spheres (Wepfer et al., 2017; Rapp et al., 2021). In addition, the pressure of global crisis conditions such as the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered research into work-life boundaries to become increasingly studied. It also presents a pervasive context and distinct thematic focus, prompting a reevaluation of traditional work-life boundary models amid global disruptions.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

The bibliometric analysis of work-life boundary research offers significant theoretical contributions by mapping the evolution of scholarly thought from the concept of work-life balance to work-life boundary. By examining patterns of keyword co-occurrences, citations, and thematic clusters over the past two decades, this study helps clarify how the discourse has shifted from equilibrium toward boundary perspectives, particularly through the lens of boundary theory and boundary management. The findings highlight the relevance of these theoretical foundations in explaining how individuals negotiate the interface between work and personal life (Kreiner, 2006), especially in response to rapid changes in work structures (Tennakoon, 2018). These findings also enhance understanding of the need to expand theoretical focus to new contexts such as remote work and global crisis situations such as Covid-19 pandemic (Davies, 2021; Lal et al., 2023) which directly impact individual boundary management strategies. Furthermore, the findings suggest that issues such as gender differences, age, and worker identity are still minimally addressed within work-life boundary frameworks, offering an opportunity for the development of cross-disciplinary studies or intersectional perspectives in future studies.

### **Managerial Implications**

This findings also reinforce the importance of managers and human resource practitioners developing more adaptive and contextual work policies, particularly in the face of substantial changes in work patterns such as remote work and increased attention to employee well-being. Issues such as well-being and remote work, which emerged as dominant themes, demonstrate the need for organizations to design Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) (Sekhar & Patwardhan, 2023), supporting mental health (Brannan et al., 2018; Shifrin & Michel, 2022). Changes triggered by the pandemic require a reconsideration of working time policies, digital workspace management, and hybrid environment not only for remote workers, but also for all employees.

### **Future Research Directions**

Based on the results of a bibliometric review of the work-life boundary, several research gaps have been identified for future studies. *First*, although boundary management theory as a basic framework have been extensively studied, the development in a more contemporary context remains limited. Future research could expand the scope of this theory by considering new work dynamics, such as hybrid work systems, digital flexibility, and the psychosocial challenges arising from changes in work structures post-pandemic (Kossek et al., 2023).

*Second*, demographic dimensions such as gender and age show little exploration in the work-life boundary literature. Future research could seek out a deeper understanding of how variations in that dimensions or characteristics influence the ways individuals manage the boundaries between work and personal life. *Third*, there is a need to test the effectiveness of organizational policies in addressing the complexities of work-life boundary. Future research should examine how organizational setting (Van der Lippe & Lippé, 2020), both formal (e.g., work flexibility policies) and informal (social support) can contribute to improve employee well-being and productivity. Diverse organizational contexts, such as public sector or startups may offer valuable insight.

Finally, future research will focus on a cross-disciplinary approach (Harney & Collings, 2021) by combining perspectives from industrial psychology, sociology, gender, and information technology to better understand how the boundaries between work and personal life are formed, negotiated, and navigated in the changing world. Research will not only fill a theoretical gap but also make a significant contribution to work policies and more responsive to the today's workers needs.

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