

## Work-Life Balance: A Landscape Mapping of Two Decades of Scholarly Research

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**Abstract :** The purposes of this research are: (a) to provide an epistemological and ontological understanding of the WLB theory, practice, and research to illuminate how the WLB evolved between 2000 to 2020 and (b) to analyze peer-reviewed research to identify the gaps, hotspots, underlying dynamics, theoretical and thematic trends, influential authors, research collaborations, geographic networks, and the multidisciplinary nature of the WLB theory to guide future researchers. The research used four-step bibliometric network analysis to explore five research questions. Using keywords such as WLB and associated variants, 1190 peer-reviewed articles were extracted from the Scopus database and transformed to a plain text format for filtering. The analysis was conducted using the R version 4.1 software (R Development Core Team, 2021) and several libraries such as bibliometrics, word cloud, and ggplot2. We used the VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2019) for network visualization. The WLB theory has grown into a multifaceted, multidisciplinary field of research. There is a paucity of research between 2000 to 2005 and an exponential growth from 2006 to 2015. The rapid increase of WLB research in the USA, UK, and Australia reflects the increasing workplace stresses due to hyper competitive workplaces, inflexible work systems, and increasing diversity and the emergence of WLB support mechanisms, legal and constitutional mandates to enhance employee and family wellbeing at multilevel social systems. A severe knowledge gap exists due to inadequate publications disseminating the "core" WLB research. "Locally-centralized-globally-discrete" collaboration among researchers indicates a "North-South" divide between developed and developing nations. A shortage in WLB research in developing nations and a lack of research collaboration hinder a global understanding of the WLB as a universal phenomenon. Policymakers and practitioners can use the findings to initiate supporting policies, and innovative work systems. The boundary expansion of the WLB concepts, categories, relations, and properties would facilitate researchers/theoreticians to test a variety of new dimensions. This is the most comprehensive WLB landscape analysis that reveals emerging trends, concepts, networks, underlying dynamics, gaps, and growing theoretical and disciplinary boundaries. It portrays the WLB as a universal theory.

**Keywords :** work-life balance, co-citation networks; keyword co-occurrence network, bibliometric analysis

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