

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE DURING COVID-19 AMONG STAFF OF  
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
IN MALAYSIA: COPING  
WITH TRANSITIONS**

**SWA LEE LEE**

**ASIA e UNIVERSITY  
2023**

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE  
DURING COVID-19 AMONG STAFF OF PRIVATE HIGHER  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN MALAYSIA: COPING  
WITH TRANSITIONS

SWA LEE LEE

A Thesis Submitted to Asia e University in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2023

## ABSTRACT

Many scholars have concluded that the formal definition of work-life balance (WLB) was ambiguous and lacked a well-developed concept when assessing the importance of creating balance. However, although the content and descriptions of the research findings varied depending on the theories used in the WLB study, these studies all focused on a similar issue: the organisations that offered a positive WLB, such as a healthy work environment to allow their employees to achieve work-related goals, have seen to increase in job performance, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction. Similar to this, the increase of "imbalance" between work and personal life, particularly as it affects people in contemporary society, might undermine job happiness and engagement. The outbreak of Covid-19 has further impacted the WLB of the staff of the Malaysian private higher educational institutions (PHEIs). The main goal of this study was to perform an in-depth analysis of the staff members' perceptions of WLB and their lived experiences as they moved in, moved through, and moved out of the Covid-19 pandemic environment. The Boundary Theory of WLB and the Schlossberg's Theory of Transition served as the theoretical foundations for the research. With its emphasis on the three transitional stages of moving in, moving through, and moving out, Schlossberg's Theory of Transition had provided a framework for an in-depth study of the staff members' experiences with the Covid-19 and how those experiences had affected their WLB during the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA, such as Covid-19) environment. Twenty one (21) staff participated in the study, representing from two types of comprehensive private higher educational institutions (PHEIs; conventional and Open-Distance Learning) that offered a variety of foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and cross-sectional (academic versus non-academic) functions of the PHEIs. Based on phenomenology approach, the Asynchronous Email Interviews (AEIs) were constructed and conducted that aimed to use one's past experiences, in this context how the participants perceived, interpreted, and gave the transition experience significance, concentrating on the components they considered were important relating to Covid-19 pandemic. The AEIs were validated, pilot tested and modified based on the recommendations of experts on WLB and Schlossberg's Theory of Transition. The results of the actual study suggest that the degree to which the participants were able to achieve their WLB was significantly influenced by how they perceived or defined their WLB. The definitions of WLB and its attainment did not appear to differ much between the staff of conventional and ODL institutions, nor between academic and non-academic people. As far as the PHEI staff under studied were concerned, majority of them were emphatic about the well-being of their staff by providing them leave and supporting messages, if they or their family were Covid-19 positive. It was noted that none of the staff were laid-off, but some experiencing reduction in their monthly pay. These support from the immediate family, the affiliated PHEI, and the Government's moratorium were seen effective and recommended to be continued. The analysis uncovered a number of recurring themes, including, there was no perfect WLB and its definition. The Yin-Yang Work-Life Harmony (WLH) model, and the SPARE (Sociological, Psychological, Administrative, Resources and Educational) Challenges, faced by the participants of this study especially during the trying times of the VUCA environment (in this context the Covid-19), stood out as being the two novelties of this research. It is crucial that the conclusions and follow-up suggestions made in this study find their way to policymakers at all levels, in case such VUCA calamity were

to happen in the near future. Finally, it is advised that PHEIs provide hands-on professional development courses on developing and managing WLH for their staff. A healthy WLH is an asset to the organisation.

**Keyword:** Work-life Balance, Schlossberg's theory of Transition, Covid-19 pandemic

## **APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this thesis conforms to acceptable of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in quality and scope, for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The student has been supervised by: **Associate Professor Dr. Sheila Cheng**

The thesis has been examined and endorsed by:

**Associate Professor Dr. Ilham sentosa**  
**UniKL**

Examiner 1

**Professor Dr. Khairul Anuar Mohd Ali**  
**UKM**

Examiner 2

This thesis was submitted to Asia e University and is accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**Professor Dr Juhary Ali**

Asia e University

Chairman, Examination Committee

(09 August 2023)

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted in fulfilment of the PhD degree is my own work and that all contributions from any other persons or sources are properly and duly cited. I further declare that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. In making this declaration, I understand and acknowledge any breaches in this declaration constitute academic misconduct, which may result in my expulsion from the programme and/or exclusion from the award of the degree.

**Name: Swa Lee Lee**

**Signature of Candidate:**

**Date: 9 August 2023**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to have the opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the individuals, especially to the Founder President, Prof. Dato' Dr. Ansary Ahmed and Asia e University that have played a pivotal role in the completion of my PhD thesis. Their guidance, support, and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this journey.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sheila Cheng and Prof. Dr. Siow Heng Loke. Your profound knowledge, insightful feedback, and unwavering commitment to my academic growth have shaped me into a better researcher. Your mentorship and constant belief in my abilities have been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of my research.

I am also indebted to the members of my thesis committee, Prof. Dr. Juhary Ali, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ilham Sentosa and Prof. Dr. Khairul Anuar Ali for their invaluable guidance and expertise. Their constructive feedback and critical insights have contributed significantly to the refinement of my work.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the staff from School of Graduate Studies and School of Management, who provided an enriching academic environment. Their support in accessing research resources, administrative assistance, and technical expertise has been invaluable.

I would like to acknowledge the countless unnamed individuals who have contributed to my research in various ways. Their participation in interviews, surveys, and discussions has enriched my work and broadened my understanding.



Last but not least, I would also like to extend my gratitude to my family and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout this arduous journey. Their love, patience, and belief in my abilities have been a constant source of strength.

To all those mentioned above and countless others who have supported me along this path, please accept my deepest gratitude. Without your guidance, assistance, and encouragement, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

Thank you.

Best wishes,

Swa Lee Lee

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>ii</b>	
<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>iv</b>	
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>v</b>	
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>vii</b>	
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>ix</b>	
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xiii</b>	
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiv</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>	
1.0	Background of the Study	1
1.1	Statement of Problem	3
1.2	Objectives of the Study	16
1.3	Research Questions	17
1.4	Operational Definitions	23
1.5	Scope of the Study	25
1.6	Significance of the Study	26
1.7	Structure of the Thesis: Subsequent Chapters	28
<b>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>29</b>	
2.0	Introduction	29
2.1	Work-Life Balance (WLB)	29
2.1.1	The Theories of WLB	31
2.1.2	Analysis and Synthesis of the Theories of WLB	43
2.2	Influence of WLB on the Working Individual's Performance at Workplace as well as in Personal Life	53
2.3	Covid-19 Pandemic in Malaysia	57
2.4	Published Research on WLB & Covid-19 & Tertiary Education	60
2.5	Schlossberg's Theory of Transition	63
2.5.1	Approaching Transitions	66
2.5.2	Moving In	66
2.5.3	Moving Through	66
2.5.4	Moving Out	67
2.5.5	Utilisation of Coping Resources	67
2.6	Justification of Boundary Theory & Theory of Transition by Nancy Schlossberg as the Theoretical Frameworks	69
2.7	Data Collection Technique: The Asynchronous Email Interviews (AEIs)	72
2.8	Chapter Summary	77
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>78</b>	
3.0	The Research Design	78
3.1	Covid-19 Pandemic as the Phenomenon	78
3.2	Rationale for Choosing Phenomenology as an Approach for the Research	79
3.3	Selection of Participants	80

3.4	Instruments of the Study	83
3.5	Data Collection Procedures	84
3.6	Validation of Interview Protocols	87
3.7	Pilot Study	88
3.8	Data Analysis Procedures	88
3.9	Ethical Considerations	89
3.10	Chapter Summary	89
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>		<b>90</b>
4.0	Introduction	90
4.1	Profiles	91
4.1.1	Profile of the Participants	91
4.1.2	Credibility of Sub-Themes and Themes of WLB Practices Emerging from the AElS Data	92
4.2	Perceptions of Work-life Balance of Staff before Covid-19 Pandemic	93
4.3	Staff Experiencing the Transitions and Attaching Meaning to this Experience of Covid-19	97
4.4	Approaching Transitions: Textural Descriptions	99
4.4.1	Awareness of Covid-19 and its Danger	100
4.4.2	Participants' Perspective on Approaching Transitions	100
4.4.3	Synopsis of Textural Descriptions for Approaching Transitions	101
4.5	Approaching Transitions: Structured Descriptions	103
4.5.1	Situation	103
4.5.2	Self	105
4.5.3	Support	106
4.5.4	Strategies	106
4.5.5	Diagrammatic Representation	107
4.6	Moving In: Textural Descriptions	108
4.6.1	Preparation for the Moving In	109
4.6.2	Memorable Moments in the First Weeks	111
4.6.3	Biggest Challenges in the First Weeks	115
4.6.4	Has the 'Moving In' Affected your Work-Life Balance?	117
4.6.5	Description of Lived WLB during Moving In Stage and its Attainment	120
4.7	Moving In: Structural Descriptions	124
4.7.1	Situation	124
4.7.2	Self	126
4.7.3	Support	128
4.7.4	Strategies	131
4.7.5	Diagrammatic Representation of Moving in Stage	133
4.8	Moving Through: Textural Description	134
4.8.1	Significant Events during the Moving Through	135
4.8.2	Memorable Moments During Moving Through Stage	146
4.8.3	Impact of Covid-19 on Work-Life Balance during Moving Through Stage	150
4.8.4	Impact of Covid-19 Sickness on Participants Work-Life Balance	153
4.9	Most Difficult Experiences or Challenges	156

4.9.1	Strategies in Coping with the Challenges	160
4.10	Synopsis of Textural Description for the Moving Through Stage	163
4.11	Moving Through: Structural Descriptions	164
4.11.1	Situation	165
4.11.2	Self	169
4.11.3	Support	171
4.11.4	Strategies	174
4.11.5	Diagrammatic Representation	177
4.12	Moving out: Textural Descriptions	177
4.12.1	Feelings Surrounding the Relaxation of MCO	178
4.12.2	Plans after the MCO	181
4.12.3	Preparation for after MCO	183
4.12.4	Impact of Covid-19 on WLB during Moving Out Stage	184
4.12.5	Synopsis of Textural Descriptions for the Moving Out Stage	185
4.13	Moving Out: Structural Descriptions	186
4.13.1	Situation	186
4.13.2	Self	187
4.13.3	Support	187
4.13.4	Strategies	188
4.13.5	Diagrammatic representation	189
4.14	Chapter Summary	189
<b>CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: COMPOSITE DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>192</b>
5.0	Introduction	192
5.1	The First Research Question: Staff Perception of Work-Life Balance	193
5.2	The Second Research Question: Experiencing the Transitions and Attaching Meanings to these Transitions	196
5.2.1	Approaching the Transitions	197
5.2.2	Moving In	198
5.2.3	Moving Through	200
5.2.4	Moving Out	202
5.3	The Third Research Question: Experiencing the Challenges during the Transitions	205
5.3.1	The SPARE Challenge	205
5.4	The Fourth Research Question: Resources that Impacted the Transition Experience of the Staff	227
5.4.1	Situation	227
5.4.2	Self	228
5.4.3	Support	229
5.4.4	Strategies	230
5.5	Chapter Summary	231
<b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		<b>233</b>
6.0	Introduction	233
6.1	Significant Findings	233

6.1.1	The Participants' Perceptions and Attainment of Work-Life Balance before Covid-19	233
6.1.2	The Participants' Unprecedented Journey Affected by Covid-19	235
6.1.3	The SPARE Challenge of Covid-19 on Work-Life Balance	240
6.1.4	Integration of Factors Affecting Transition Experience	247
6.2	Participants' Balancing Their Work and Life	249
6.2.1	The Proposed Yin-Yang Work-Life Harmony Model	254
6.3	Recommendations	258
6.3.1	What Works	259
6.3.2	What Needs Work	260
6.4	Limitations of the Study	262
6.5	Implications of the Study	263
6.5.1	Implications for Theory	263
6.5.2	Implications for Practice	266
6.5.3	Implications for Methodology	268
6.6	Recommendations for Future Research	269
6.7	Conclusion	270
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	273
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	310
	Appendix A - Seeking Consent to Adapt the Interview Protocols	310
	Appendix B - Survey Consent Form	311
	Appendix C - Sample of the Asynchronous Email Interview (AEI) Protocols (Part of AEI)	313
	Appendix D - Sample Instruction for Validation of the Interview Protocols	315
	Appendix E - An Example of How the Cohen Kappa Inter-Rater Index among Raters was Computed	318

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.1	Mapping of Statement of Problem with Research Objectives and Research Questions	18
2.1	Summary of WLB Theories, their Major Concepts, the Authors and their Strengths and Weaknesses	45
3.1	List of Participants by Type of PHEIs and their Positions	82
4.1	Summary of Cohen Kappa Inter-Rater Index Among Raters	93
4.2	Approach to Data Analysis Presentation based on Schlossberg's Model	98
4.3	The Participants' Perceptions of the Memorable Moments in the First Weeks of Moving In Stage	114
4.4	The Participants' Perceptions of the Memorable Moments in the First Weeks of Moving Through Stage	150
5.1	Comparison between Participants' WLB and O'Neill (2018) Findings Based on Boundary Theory	194
5.2	The SPARE Challenges	206
6.1	Contrasting the Boundary Theory and Yin-Yang WLB	256

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.1	Network Visualisation of Links between Work-Life Balance and Covid-19 Pandemic Generated by VOSviewer	13
1.2	Network Visualisation of Links of Emerging Clusters on the Influence of Covid-19 on Work-Life Balance Generated by VOSviewer.	14
4.1	Sub-factors of the Main Factors of the 4 S System	99
4.2	Elements of the 4 S System in Action at Approaching Transitions	108
4.3	Elements of the 4 S System in Action during the Moving In Transitions	134
4.4	Elements of the 4S System in Action during the Moving Through Stage of the Covid-19 Transition.	177
4.5	Elements of the 4S System in Action during the Moving Out Stage of the Covid-19 Transition	189

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Achieving a balance between work and personal life through efficient management of numerous duties at work, home, and in other areas of life is known as Work-Life Balance (WLB). Both the corporation and the workforce should take this seriously. Over the past two decades, a considerable increase in jobs brought on by company growth, organisational reorganisation, and greater competition, as well as more recently the Covid-19 pandemic, have made WLB a hot topic. Working men and women nowadays encounter several daily obstacles that frequently lead to an imbalance between their work and personal/family lives. Therefore, a lack of WLB has an impact on how well working people perform both at work and in their home lives. The employees of Malaysian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), whose happiness was significantly impacted right before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, were among those people who were most influenced by WLB elements in both their personal and professional lives.

According to certain research, management studies create ways to uphold and enhance the WLB of workers, both academic and non-academic, throughout their academic careers (Ansary Ahmed, 2021; Soni & Bakhru, 2019; Amith, Vinay & Gowramma, 2019; Ansary Ahmed, 2021). Staff, particularly teachers, are regarded as a fundamental asset in higher education institutions (HEIs). Their performance has an impact on learning processes and student outcomes, which directly contradicts the objectives of any educational programme (Ansary Ahmed, 2021; Gooding, 2018; Sethi et al., 2017). It directly undermines any educational program's objectives (da Silva & Fischer, 2020a). According to research, instructors in higher education institutions



have the least steady WLB when compared to other positions (Kang & Park, 2019; Beer et al., 2015). There are limitations in the ability of studies that have examined the WLB of HEI personnel to pinpoint particular factors that contribute to this instability (Eberman, Singe, & Eason, 2019; Krueger et al. 2017; Nilsson, Blomqvist & Andersson, 2017). The knowledge of WLB indicators was indicative of the study's focus because teachers' well-being in particular can influence their ability to function well. in management, research, and teaching, thus lowering the standard of higher education (Austinson, 2022; Abramov, Gruzdev & Terentev, 2017). With both short- and long-term implications, HEI staff WLB may be a mitigating factor for undergraduate and graduate programme sustainability as well as teaching quality (Zehra & Rukhsana, 2020; Devi & Lalu, 2018; Beer et al., 2015). Therefore, it was necessary for HEI employees, notably teachers, to have a corresponding structure for a good working environment during professional training. The quality of services rendered, publication of scientific research, excessive workload, deadlines, ongoing performance evaluation of programmes, which necessitated regular participation at academic meetings, among other tasks inherent to the profession, were all sources of continual stress for HEI staff (da Silva & Fischer, 2020a; Johnson, Willis & Evans, 2019; Mercado, 2019; Beigi, Shirmohammadi & Kim, 2016).

The world has been rocked by the coronavirus (also known as Covid-19) outbreak. The World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, quickly after what had first been an epidemic (OECD, 2022, UNESCO, 2021). Many nations have been obliged to close their borders in response to the pandemic and put severe internal restrictions on all activities, enterprises, and other activities. The Movement Control Order (MCO) was a sudden, two-week state-wide prohibition that was issued by the Malaysian Prime Minister on March 18. The MCO mandated the

shutdown of all non-essential companies, including higher education institutions. Many businesses, especially private higher education institutions (PHEIs), were forced to continue using online learning and learning procedures because they have no other choice. Many PHEIs that depend on tuition to maintain and survive have seen a substantial financial impact from the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic. In May 2020, Malaysia's unemployment rate rose by 5.3 percent, making it the highest level since 1990 (Shanker, 2020). The PHEI personnel and parents of students pursuing higher education are among those whose employment have been eliminated or whose incomes have been reduced (Lim, 2022; Mohamed, Isahak, Awg Isa, Nordin, (2022); Lee & Tsai (2022)). The outbreak of Covid-19 has further impacted the WLB of the staff of the PHEIs, and therefore warranted to conduct an in-depth study of the lived experiences of PHEIs staff as they move into, through and out of the Covid-19 pandemic environment.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Many scholars (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018; O'Neill, 2018; Kalliath & Brough, 2008) have come to the conclusion that the formal definition of WLB was ambiguous and lacked a well-developed concept when assessing the importance of creating balance, as indicated by Kirchmeyer (2000), one of the forerunners of WLB. Kirchmeyer (2000) defined WLB as the accomplishment of responding to situations in various facets of life that needed a lot of resources, such as time and energy. Resources and dedication were dispersed in all areas. Over time, the way these problems are conceptualised has evolved from "work-family" and "family-friendly" to "work-life" and "WLB." Therefore, in recent years, the increased interest in the study of and conversation surrounding WLB also reflected the social, demographic, and professional environments. Changes in industries, such as globalisation, efficiency

initiatives, the Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0, organisational reform, 24/7 workplaces, etc., have an impact on the nature of work (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Shabir & Gani, 2020; Karkouljian, Srour & Sinan, 2016).

Based on 945 research articles published between 1998 and 2020, Rashmi and Katria's systematic literature review (SLR) and biometric analysis on WLB found that the term "WLB" was inclusive and included more non-specialist areas such as education, recreation, community service, personal values, and religious activities outside of family obligations (Rashmi et al., 2021; Shabir & Gani, 2020; Haar, Sune, Russo, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2018; Edura, Wan Rashid, Nordin, Omar, & Ismail, 2011). Workers perceived the notion of WLB to be more inclusive regardless of family status, while employers and policymakers perceived it to be more gender neutral (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Guest, 2002). Researchers such as McMilan et al. (2011) and Carlson et al. (2006) who followed a similar line of inquiry hypothesised that the phrases conflict, enrichment, enhancement, facilitation, and integration each described a particular type of work-life interface. Rashmi and Katria (2021) concluded that WLB was a holistic concept that took into account a person's different significant roles and that its execution was largely dependent on how their private lives' beliefs, aims, and ambitions were seen by others (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Kossek et al., 2014;). Henceforth, " Work-Life Balance" would be the study's main focus WLB.

Although the content and descriptions of the research findings varied depending on the theories used in the WLB study, these studies all focused on a similar issue: the organisations that offered a positive WLB, such as a healthy work environment to allow their employees to achieve work-related goals, have seen increases in job performance, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and more (da Silva & Fischer, 2020a; 2020b; Haar et al., 2018; Sirgy and Lee, 2017; Williams et al., 2016).

In his evaluation of the literature, AlHazemi (2016) noted that a lack of WLB had an impact on how effectively workers performed both at work and in their personal lives. A worker who has a better WLB may make greater contributions to the expansion and success of the company. Similar to this, the increase of "imbalance" between work and personal life, particularly as it affects people in contemporary society, may undermine job happiness and engagement (Lee et al., 2020; Akanjiet al., 2020). By learning about how WLB policies and practises integrate with employees' families, psychological health, and overall happiness, the WLB study has now taken on significant importance (Kuehn, 2020; Lee et al., 2020). The evolution of (i) changes in the labour market, (ii) dual-income couples, (iii) changing gender roles, (iv) the contribution of women in the labour force, (v) communication technology's persistent interference with the distinction between work and non-work, (vi) working single parents, and (vii) aspirations for quality of life have all been influenced by the WLB discourse (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Shabir & Gani, 2020; Karkoulian et al., 2016). Rashmi and Katria's SLR (2021) made the claim that it was a fully thematic overview of the WLB corpus built on the basis of bibliographic linkage. It offered more details on upcoming work activities in the WLB field and suggested four groups that would be very interesting to research:

- (i) Flexibility in working conditions (FWA); Research papers from various nations in this group, most of which are developed nations, emphasise the goals and advantages of implementing FWA, such as teleworking, part-time employment, and flexible work arrangements. alternative, shorter workdays, time management, and flexible work schedules. (Lorette & Vickerstaff, 2015; Gregory et al., 2013; Lewis & Humbert, 2010; Russel et al., 2009; Golden, 2008).

- (ii) Disparities between genders in WLB; The majority of the papers in this cluster, in general, focused on various themes related to the work-life interface, such as conflict, enrichment, segmentation, loss, integration, and balance (Riley, 2021; Kuehn, 2020);
- (iii) The concept of the link between work and life; In conclusion, this group's conceptual sketch demonstrated how closely related the articles in this group were to one another and to activities, practises, initiatives, strategies, and WLB practices (WLBP) metrics.
- (iv) Policies and procedures relating to WLB as a whole, the group's conceptual sketch revealed that the articles in this group were pertinent to WLB, practises, initiatives, strategies, and measures, indicating a close connection between the articles (Kuehn, 2020).

Besides the SLR and Bibliometric review, Rashmi and Katria (2021) also found that:

- (i) Other significant and well-known theories included in WLB research are Institutional Theory, Boundary/Border Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Role Theory, Organizational Support Theory, and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Boundary Theory is the second most frequently utilised theory. Future studies are advised to look into how the many theories were used as the assessments of all the theories stated in this study were challenging to compile. To assess the significance of theories for the study of various situations in this field of study, additional research was required.
- (ii) They discovered that 21% of the 945 studies were undertaken in developing economies, whereas 79 percent were carried out in industrialised nations;

- (iii) Further segmentation of 823 empirical research revealed that 463 employed quantitative methods, 293 were based on qualitative methods, and 67 used mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative).

The aforementioned findings show that 4,444 academics and many managers have turned their attention to WLB over the past 20 years (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). The lack of a widely accepted underlying core idea, however, profoundly questioned the link between life and work surveys. Therefore, it has been acknowledged that WLB researchers relied on and utilised several theoretical frameworks and factors to take into account concerns related to work and family (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). In his analysis of the available literature, Károly Ihrig came to the conclusion that the majority of research focuses on a small number of theories, namely the overflow theory, conflict theory, fractional integration theory, convenient enrichment theory benefit, and boundary/border theory, while the other theories he listed were infrequently examined (Ihrig, 2021). The reason for this was that while later theories were initially developed in the framework of other social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, systems theory, etc., the earlier ideas were primarily developed in the context of WLB. Furthermore, in contrast to earlier decades, the focus of current study has switched from problematic and contradictory aspects of labour to constructive and helpful features (Austinson, 2022). One can draw the conclusion that the absence of a single, widely accepted explanation profoundly undermines the relationship between life and work surveys. Therefore, it has been acknowledged that WLB researchers relied on and utilised several theoretical frameworks and factors to take into account concerns related to work and family (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014; Rincy & Panchanatham, 2014). WLB was viewed in a fresh way by Clark's (2000) border theory. This theory operated under the presumption that human roles take place

within the confines of specific domains of existence that are divided into discrete temporal, spatial, or emotional domains known as limits (Clark, 2000). One of the issues the theory attempted to address was the blurring of lines, particularly those between work and home. According to Bellavia and Frone (2005), the degree of aggregation and adjustment of the ease of transition between the two domains could be influenced by the ease and limitations with which people switched between their personal and professional lives. This is because when domains were separated, the transition became challenging while there was less conflict between work and family. Joint transitions became simpler when domains were correctly aggregated, but work-family conflicts could still occur. Boundary analysis in WLB could demonstrate the degree of personal control over work-family balance difficulties. Additionally, there was a strong correlation between the fields' levels of conflict.

Contrary to what Desroch, Cancer and Sargent observed in 2003, boundary theory was recommended because border theory was determined to be particular to familial domains and to function best with little to no role conflict (Clark, 2000). Boundary theory, first used by Nipert-Eng (1996a, 1996b), categorises workers as "segmenters" and "integrators" to explain WLB. WLB is now acknowledged as a significant management concern for both employers and employees. A badly managed WLB may be the cause of many WLB issues, including stress, absenteeism, employee retention, poor health, and low morale (da Silva & Fischer, 2020b; Syed, 2015). Egalitarianism, job security, flexible labour markets, and competitiveness are some new indicators that have been added to the current policy mix in the field of WLB globally (Bauwens et al., 2020; Hogarth & Bosworth, 2009). The boundary hypothesis, according to Allen, Cho, and Meier (2014), explains how people construct meaning at work and at home and helps people move between the two. Based on the idea of

boundary theory, Clark (2000) pioneered his theories on work-life boundary theory, which postulated that people regulated and negotiated public realms, work and non-work in a way to strike a balance between them. According to boundary theory, the interaction between domains was viewed as being along a continuum from segmentation to integration, with the two domains being mutually exclusive at the fractional pole and being regarded identical at the integrated pole (Voydanoff, 2005). The permeability and flexibility of the boundary between the two domains were then evaluated in order to analyse the dialectic between segmentation and integration. According to Saarenpää (2016), flexibility was the malleability of the boundaries separating two domains, and permeability was the degree to which the boundary permitted spiritual or behavioural factors to transfer from one domain to the next. Policies like flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time work, and teleworking could all be examples of boundary flexibility (Cowan & Hoffman, 2007). According to Clark (2000), who defined the borders in terms of permeability and flexibility, the limits might be strong (impermeable and inflexible) or weak (flexible and mixed), demonstrating that Individuals could be categorised as "those who cross boundaries." People were frequently viewed as cross-border negotiators and managers of the personal and professional domains. Both boundary/border theories were utilised as the underlying theories in the context of this research because they had similar presumptions.

Additionally, the Boundary Theory for WLB was used because the planned study showed that descriptive differences such as time, people, and place were concrete divides as well as psychological groups related to family and job. However, they emphasised that these research findings, including boundary theory, should be treated with caution because they vary in context, content, and description of the study