

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES  
(IJEMP)**[www.gaexcellence.com/ijemp](http://www.gaexcellence.com/ijemp)**WORK-LIFE BALANCE CHALLENGES AND COPING  
STRATEGIES AMONG DUAL-CAREER COUPLES:  
A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

Suhanom Mohd Zaki<sup>1\*</sup>, Sharizan Sharkawi<sup>2</sup>, Norzanah Mat Nor<sup>3</sup>, Mohd Aidil Riduan Awang Kader<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

✉ [suhanom@uitm.edu.my](mailto:suhanom@uitm.edu.my)

iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1499-4862>

<sup>2</sup>Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

✉ [sharizan\\_sharkawi@uitm.edu.my](mailto:sharizan_sharkawi@uitm.edu.my)

iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2921-8711>

<sup>3</sup>Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

✉ [norzanah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:norzanah@uitm.edu.my)

iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3942-2780>

<sup>4</sup>Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang Branch Jengka Campus, 26400 Bandar Tun Abdul Razak Jengka, Pahang, Malaysia

✉ [aidilriduan@uitm.edu.my](mailto:aidilriduan@uitm.edu.my)

iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4799-2177>

\*Corresponding Author

**Article Info:****Article history:**

Received date: 01.07.2026

Revised date: 15.07.2026

Accepted date: 05.08.2026

Published date: 02.09.2026

**To cite this document:**

Zaki, S. M., Sharkawi, S., Mat Nor, N., & Kader, M. A. R. A. (2026). Work-Life Balance Challenges and Coping Strategies Among Dual-Career Couples: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices*, 9(35), 01-23.

**Abstract:**

Work-life balance has become an increasingly important issue for dual-career couples due to the growing complexity of managing professional responsibilities alongside family and personal commitments. Despite a substantial body of research on work-family dynamics, the existing literature remains fragmented across different disciplinary perspectives, limiting a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by dual-career couples and the coping strategies they adopt to address them. Therefore, this systematic literature review aims to synthesize contemporary evidence on work-life balance challenges and coping strategies among dual-career couples. Guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, an advanced search strategy was conducted using the Scopus and Web of Science databases for studies published between 2021 and 2026. Following the screening, eligibility assessment, and quality evaluation processes, a total of 47 primary studies were selected for final analysis. The findings revealed three dominant themes. The first theme, Dyadic Work-Family Conflict, Spillover-Crossover, and Well-Being Outcomes (n=22), highlights the impact of work-related pressures and stress affect both partners and influence well-being and family functioning. The second theme, Gendered Family Roles,

Childcare Responsibilities, and Spousal or Family Support (n=13), emphasizes the influence of gender norms, caregiving demands, and support systems. The third theme, Organizational Support, Policy, Work-Life Integration, and Intervention Strategies (n=12), underscores the importance of supportive workplace practices. Overall, work-life balance among dual-career couples is shaped by the interaction of individual, relational, family, and organizational factors. The findings provide valuable insights for researchers, employers, and policymakers seeking to develop evidence-based strategies that enhance employee well-being and promote sustainable dual-career family functioning.

**DOI:** 10.35631/IJEMP.935001

**Keyword:**

Challenge, Coping Strategy, Dual-Career Couple, Work-Life Balance



© The authors (2026). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact [ijmoe@gaexcellence.com](mailto:ijmoe@gaexcellence.com).

## Introduction

Work-life balance among dual career couples has become a critical concern in contemporary societies as economic pressures, rising living costs, and shifting gender norms drive the growth of households in which both partners engage in continuous, career-oriented employment (Krishnan et al., 2020; Mortejo, 2024; Owolabi & Ajibose, 2019; Saad et al., 2025). In these arrangements, partners must manage overlapping demands from work and family domains, often resulting in work-family conflict, conceptualized as interrole incompatibilities where pressures from work and family are mutually incompatible (Kaur, 2019; Sariroh et al., 2023). Research across regions and sectors shows that long working hours, work overload, irregular schedules, and emotionally demanding jobs (e.g., nursing) intensify stresses on couple and family functioning, with consequences for relationship satisfaction, psychological distress, burnout, and general well-being (Orellana, Schnettler, Miranda-Zapata, et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2016; Recuero & Segovia, 2021; Trošelj et al., 2026). At the same time, evolving work arrangements such as hybrid and flexible work further blur boundaries between domains, reshaping how dual career couples negotiate time, space, and emotional energy to sustain careers and family life (Grönlund & Öun, 2010; Mutter & Thorn, 2025; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014; Scurry & Clarke, 2021). Scholars have begun to examine both gendered and dyadic processes, including spillover and crossover of stress, and the role of personal and relational resources, organizational support, and social policies in shaping outcomes for couples (Chen & Hou, 2021; Krishnan et al., 2020; Schnettler et al., 2021; Shockley et al., 2017; Trošelj et al., 2026).

Despite this progress, important gaps and unresolved issues remain. Theoretical work increasingly recognizes that work-family conflict and role expansion can coexist, and that gender similarities in reported conflict may mask complex, context specific inequalities in partners' experiences and strategies for managing competing demands (Grönlund & Öun, 2010; Shockley et al., 2017). However, the empirical literature remains fragmented. Much existing work relies on cross sectional designs, focuses on individuals rather than couples, and is dominated by Western, urban, professional samples, leaving limited understanding of dual career dynamics in non-Western, lower and middle income, and culturally conservative contexts (Cavagnis et al., 2023; Krishnan et al., 2020; Mortejo, 2024; Owolabi & Ajibose, 2019; Rahman et al., 2016; Saad et al., 2025). While specific coping strategies such as mutual spousal support, communication, time management, use of domestic help, flexible work, and psychological reframing have been identified, their comparative effectiveness, potential gendered side effects and interaction with organizational and policy environments have yet to be systematically integrated (Cavagnis et al., 2023; Kaur, 2019; Mortejo, 2024; Rahman et al., 2016; Recuero & Segovia, 2021).

Recent dyadic studies demonstrate that family-to-work and work-to-family conflicts exert intertwined actor and partner effects on job satisfaction, family satisfaction, psychological distress, and relationship quality, highlighting the importance of couple-level and longitudinal perspectives (Chen & Hou, 2021; Orellana, Schnettler, Adasme-Berríos, et al., 2022; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014; Trošelj et al., 2026). Furthermore, emerging work arrangements, including hybrid work and post-pandemic changes to home and workplace boundaries, necessitate updated syntheses that connect established theories, such as conservation of resources, boundary and role theories, and spillover-crossover models, with recent evidence on boundary management and adaptive strategies among dual-career couples (Chen & Hou, 2021; Mutter & Thorn, 2025; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2014; Scurry & Clarke, 2021). Accordingly, a systematic literature review focusing on work-life balance challenges and coping strategies among dual-career couples can integrate fragmented findings, clarify multilevel antecedents and consequences of imbalance, compare coping mechanisms across different levels, and identify research gaps for future investigation (Cavagnis et al., 2023; Kaur, 2019; Krishnan et al., 2020; Owolabi & Ajibose, 2019; Rahman et al., 2016; Saad et al., 2025). Such a review can refine theory, inform evidence-based interventions, and support policies that promote sustainable and equitable careers and family lives for dual-career couples globally.

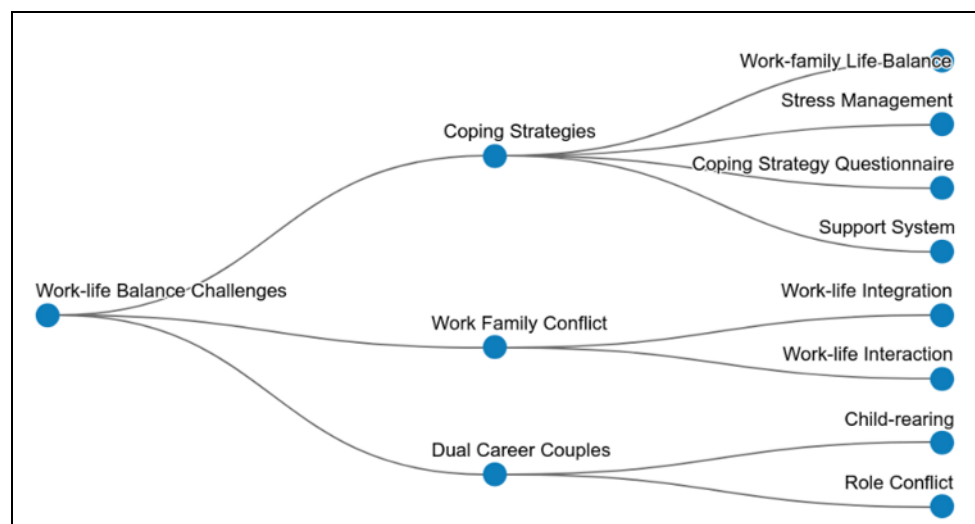
## Literature Review

Dual-career couples face unique challenges in balancing work and personal life due to the demands of managing two careers simultaneously. These challenges are intensified by factors such as geographic mobility, long working hours, and societal expectations. For example, dual-physician couples often experience reduced autonomy over work schedules and training locations, which may strain relationships despite the advantages of shared professional understanding and financial stability (Pop, 2022). Similarly, couples in fields such as geophysics and the oil and gas industry encounter pressures associated with frequent travel, fieldwork, and career decisions affecting both partners. Dual-career academic couples face additional stressors, including tenure requirements and limited advancement opportunities, that require careful planning and mutual support to achieve personal and professional goals (Vashisht et al., 2022).

The presence of children further complicates work-life balance. Dual-career couples with children often report inadequate childcare support, limited family time, and concerns regarding their children's well-being (Hosain, 2025; Shimazu et al., 2023). Women frequently shoulder greater childcare and household responsibilities alongside demanding careers (Escriva et al., 2024; Shimazu et al., 2023), reflecting persistent inequalities in domestic labor that intensify work-family conflict (Dorrance-Hall et al., 2024; Escriva et al., 2024). Nevertheless, family support and spousal collaboration have been shown to enhance work-life balance and life satisfaction, generating positive crossover effects for both partners (Ilies et al., 2024; Orellana et al., 2021).

To address these challenges, dual-career couples employ various coping strategies, including flexible work arrangements, shared domestic responsibilities, and mutual decision-making. Couples who equally share housework, childcare, and financial decisions report higher relationship satisfaction and better work-life balance (Schnettler et al., 2022). Workplace support, such as flexible scheduling, remote work options, and supportive supervisors, also enhances couples' ability to manage dual careers effectively (Garraio et al., 2023; Laß & Wooden, 2022). In addition, some couples engage in long-term planning to align career trajectories and personal goals, enabling both partners to progress professionally while maintaining balance (Scurry & Clarke, 2021). Technology, particularly video calls, has further facilitated relationship maintenance during periods of physical separation (Kumswa, 2024).

Cultural and societal factors also shape the experiences of dual-career couples. In countries such as Japan and Iran, traditional gender norms often impose greater burdens on women, contributing to elevated work-family conflict and lower marital satisfaction (Dargahi et al., 2021; Shimazu et al., 2023). However, supportive dyadic coping strategies, including shared problem-solving and emotional support, can alleviate these effects and improve relationship quality (Dargahi et al., 2021). Childfree dual-career couples also experience work-life challenges due to non-work obligations and differing career orientations (Boiarintseva et al., 2022).



**Figure 1: Network Visualization of Key Concepts Related to Work-Life Balance Challenges and Coping Strategies Among Dual-Career Couples**

## ***Research Question***

Research questions form the cornerstone of a systematic literature review (SLR), as they define the scope, direction, and methodological rigor of the review process. Well-formulated research questions provide a structured framework for identifying, selecting, and synthesizing relevant evidence, ensuring that the review remains focused on achieving its objectives. They guide the development of search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction procedures, and thematic synthesis, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and transparency of the review. Furthermore, clearly articulated research questions facilitate the systematic organization and interpretation of findings, enabling researchers to identify research trends, theoretical developments, practical implications, and existing knowledge gaps. By promoting methodological consistency and reproducibility, research questions strengthen the credibility and validity of review outcomes.

Formulating research questions (RQs) is therefore a critical stage in conducting an SLR, as they establish the methodological foundation of the entire review process (Kitchenham, 2007). As this study aims to systematically examine the existing body of knowledge on work-life balance challenges and coping strategies among dual-career couples, the research questions were developed using the PICO framework proposed by Lockwood et al. (2015). PICO, which stands for Population, Interest, and Context, is widely recognized for formulating research questions in qualitative and exploratory research. By structuring the review around these three components, the framework facilitates a systematic investigation of the literature, enhances the precision of the search strategy, and supports the development of focused and meaningful research questions. Accordingly, three research questions were formulated to guide the review, as presented below.

RQ1: What work-family conflict, spillover-crossover experiences, and well-being outcomes have been reported among dual-career couples?

RQ2: What roles do gender dynamics, childcare responsibilities, and spousal or family support play in shaping the work-life balance experiences of dual-career couples?

RQ3: What organizational support mechanisms, policies, and intervention strategies have been identified to enhance work-life integration among dual-career couples?

## **Material and Method**

This systematic literature review adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, a widely recognized methodological standard that enhances transparency, rigor, and reproducibility throughout the review process (Page et al., 2021). The framework provides a systematic approach for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies, thereby minimizing selection bias and strengthening the reliability of the review's findings. To ensure a comprehensive and methodologically robust assessment of the existing body of knowledge, this review utilized two leading bibliographic databases (Scopus and Web of Science, WoS), which offer extensive coverage of high-quality peer-reviewed publications across diverse disciplines.

The PRISMA framework consists of four sequential stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During identification, a comprehensive search strategy is employed to retrieve potentially relevant studies from selected databases. The screening stage involves removing duplicate records and assessing titles and abstracts against predetermined criteria. Subsequently, the eligibility stage entails a full-text evaluation of the remaining articles to determine their relevance and methodological suitability. Finally, studies meeting all selection criteria are included for data extraction, analysis, and synthesis. This systematic and transparent process enhances the credibility, consistency, and validity of the review, enabling the generation of robust evidence and meaningful insights to inform future research, policy development, and practice.

### Identification

The identification stage represents the first phase of the PRISMA framework, during which a comprehensive and systematic search is conducted to capture all potentially relevant studies related to the research topic. In the present review, two internationally recognized bibliographic databases (Scopus and WoS) were selected because of their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications, rigorous indexing standards, and multidisciplinary scope, as shown in Table 1. The search strategy was developed using the key concepts “work-life balance” and “dual-career couples,” together with their related synonyms and alternative terms. The search yielded a total of 835 records, comprising 382 records from Scopus and 453 records from WoS. The large number of retrieved studies reflects growing scholarly interest in work-life balance and dual-career couples across organizational, family, psychological, and human resource management research.

The use of both Scopus and WoS was essential to enhance the comprehensiveness and robustness of the review. Although both index high-quality journals, each provides journal coverage and citation networks, reducing the likelihood of omitting relevant studies. Notably, WoS contributed slightly higher number of records ( $n = 453$ ) than Scopus ( $n = 382$ ), suggesting broader representation of the topic within the WoS collection. The retrieval of 835 records demonstrates the effectiveness of the search strategy and provides a strong foundation for the subsequent screening and eligibility phases, ensuring a comprehensive, transparent, and methodologically rigorous review process.

**Table 1: The Search String**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Scopus</b> | TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( "work-life balance" OR "work family balance" OR "work-family balance" OR "work-life integration" OR "work-family integration" OR "work-life harmony" OR "work-life fit" OR "work-life equilibrium" OR "work-life interface" OR "work-family interface" OR "work-life interaction" OR "work-nonwork balance" OR "career-family balance" OR "family-work balance" OR "work-family conflict" OR "work-life conflict" OR "work-family enrichment" OR "work-life" OR "family-work conflict" ) AND ( "dual-career couple*" OR "dual career couple*" OR "dual-earner couple*" OR "dual earner couple*" OR "dual-income couple*" OR "dual income couple*" OR "career couple*" OR "working couple*" OR "dual-career famil*" OR "dual-earner famil*" OR "academic couple*" OR "professional couple*" OR "employed couple*" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2021" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2022" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2023" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2024" ) OR |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2025" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , "2026" ) )  
AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( EXCLUDE ( DOCTYPE , "no" ) OR EXCLUDE ( DOCTYPE , "er" ) )

**Date of Access: June 2026**

**WoS**

"work family balance" OR "work-family balance" OR "work-life integration" OR "work-family integration" OR "work-life harmony" OR "work-life fit" OR "work-life equilibrium" OR "work-life interface" OR "work-family interface" OR "work-life interaction" OR "work-nonwork balance" OR "career-family balance" OR "family-work balance" OR "work-family conflict" OR "work-life conflict" OR "work-family enrichment" OR "work-life" OR "family-work conflict" ) AND ( "dual-career couple\*" OR "dual career couple\*" OR "dual-earner couple\*" OR "dual earner couple\*" OR "dual-income couple\*" OR "dual income couple\*" OR "career couple\*" OR "working couple\*" OR "dual-career famil\*" OR "dual-earner famil\*" OR "academic couple\*" OR "professional couple\*" OR "employed couple\*" ) (Topic) and 2026 or 2025 or 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 (Publication Years) and Article or Early Access (Document Types) and English (Languages)

**Date of Access: June 2026**

### ***Screening***

The screening stage was done to filter the initial pool of studies and ensure that only publications aligned with the objectives of the review were retained. From the 835 records identified during the search process, 617 studies were excluded based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Specifically, non-English publications, studies published before 2021, and document types such as conference proceedings, book chapters, review articles, and articles in press were removed as details shown in Table 2. These criteria were established to ensure the inclusion of recent and peer-reviewed empirical evidence, as well as to enhance the relevance, quality, and comparability of the selected studies. Following the screening process, 218 records remained, consisting of 99 articles from Scopus and 119 articles from WoS.

Subsequently, a duplication check was conducted to eliminate the overlapping records retrieved from both databases. This process resulted in the removal of 43 duplicate articles, indicating a considerable degree of overlap between Scopus and WoS coverage. The removal of duplicate records is a critical step in systematic reviews as it prevents the repeated assessment of identical studies and improves the accuracy of the review process. Consequently, 175 unique records were retained for the subsequent eligibility assessment, providing a focused and methodologically robust dataset for further evaluation.

**Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Study Selection**

| Criterion         | Inclusion         | Exclusion                |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Language          | English           | Non-English              |
| Timeline          | 2021 – 2026       | < 2021                   |
| Literature type   | Journal (Article) | Book, Conference, Review |
| Publication Stage | Final             | In Press                 |

### ***Eligibility***

The eligibility stage involved a comprehensive full-text assessment of the 175 unique records retained after screening and deduplication. Each article was evaluated against the review objectives and predefined eligibility criteria to determine its relevance. The full-text examination enabled a rigorous assessment of the conceptual focus, methodological suitability, and substantive contribution of each publication. Consequently, 128 studies were excluded because they fell outside the review scope, had titles insufficiently aligned with the research topic, presented abstracts unrelated to the study objectives, or lacked accessible full-text versions. This process ensured that only studies directly related to work-life balance and dual-career couples were retained. Following the eligibility assessment, 47 studies met all inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis. The reduction from 175 to 47 articles demonstrates the stringent selection process employed to enhance the quality, relevance, and credibility of the review findings. Excluding studies lacking conceptual alignment or accessibility minimized the risk of incorporating irrelevant or incomplete evidence. Consequently, the final set of 47 studies represents a focused body of literature that provides a reliable foundation for synthesizing current knowledge and generating meaningful insights into work-life balance challenges and coping strategies among dual-career couples.

### ***Data Abstraction and Analysis***

An integrative review approach was employed to systematically analyse and synthesize evidence from the selected qualitative studies. This approach enabled the integration of findings across diverse research contexts to develop a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance among dual-career couples. The analytical process commenced with an in-depth examination of the 47 articles included in the final review. Each study was carefully reviewed to identify relevant findings, concepts, and patterns related to the challenges and coping strategies associated with work-life balance. Figure 2 illustrates the systematic process adopted for the data extraction, analysis, and theme development.

Subsequently, the methodological characteristics and key findings of each study were compared and synthesized to identify recurring patterns and emerging insights. Through an iterative process of coding, categorization, and constant comparison, preliminary themes and subthemes were generated. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis, the authors collaboratively reviewed and refined the emerging themes to ensure that they accurately reflected the evidence contained within the selected studies. Throughout the analytical process, detailed memos and reflective notes were maintained to document analytical decisions, interpretations, and emerging ideas. Finally, the themes were cross-checked against the original studies to ensure consistency and coherence. Any discrepancies in interpretation or

theme development were resolved through discussion and consensus among the authors, thereby strengthening the rigor and reliability of the review findings.

### *Quality of Appraisal*

Following the guidelines proposed by Kitchenham and Charters (Kitchenham, 2007), the quality of the selected primary studies was systematically evaluated to ensure the credibility, rigor, and reliability of the evidence included in the review. Quality assessment (QA) is a critical stage in systematic literature reviews, as it enables researchers to determine the methodological robustness of individual studies and assess their suitability for inclusion in the synthesis process. In this study, the quality assessment framework developed by Abouzahra et al. (2020) was adopted, comprising six QA criteria designed to evaluate the methodological and reporting quality of the selected articles.

Each study was assessed against the six QA criteria using a three-point scoring scheme. A score of 1 (“Yes”) was assigned when a criterion was fully satisfied, indicating strong adherence to the quality requirement. A score of 0.5 (“Partly”) was awarded when a criterion was partially fulfilled but exhibited minor limitations or insufficient detail. Conversely, a score of 0 (“No”) was assigned when a criterion was not addressed or failed to meet the required standard. This structured evaluation process facilitated a consistent and transparent assessment of study quality, ensuring that only robust and reliable evidence contributed to the synthesis and interpretation of findings.

QA1: Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?

QA2: Is the interest and the usefulness of the work clearly presented?

QA3: Is the study methodology clearly established?

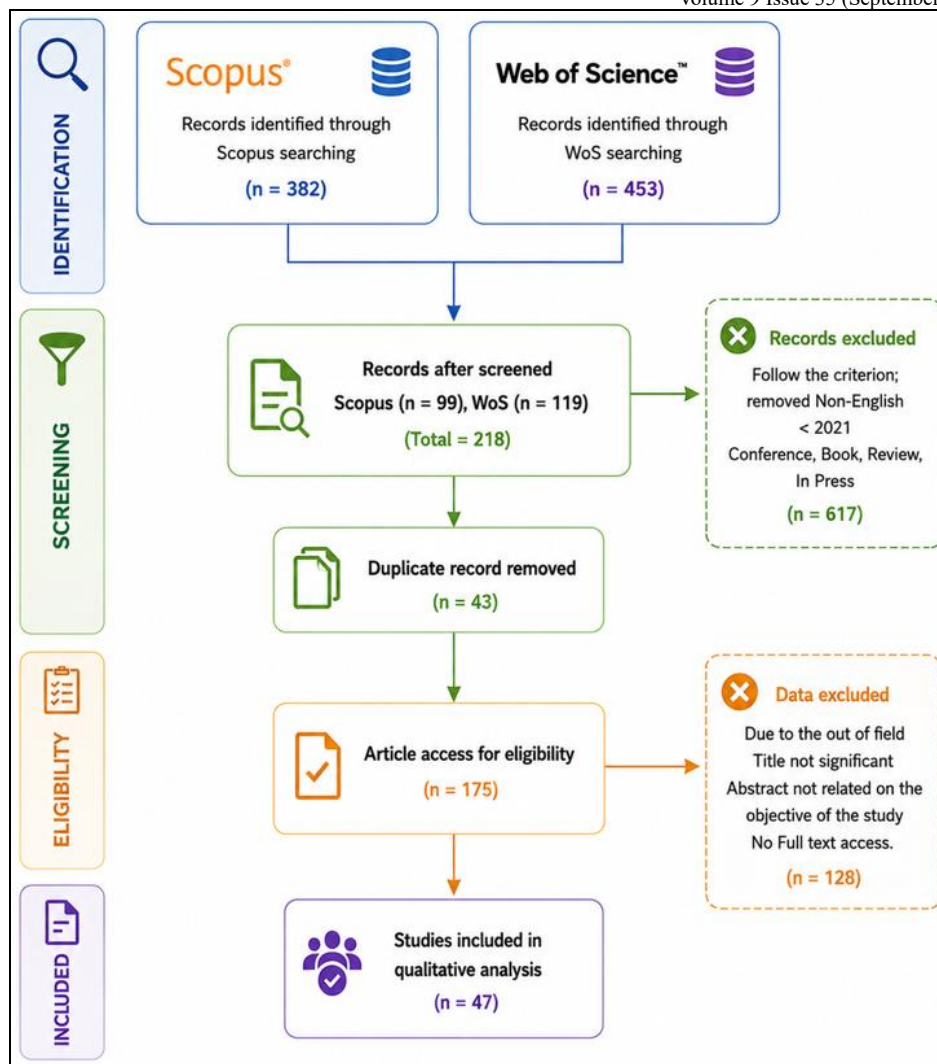
QA4: Are the concepts of the approach clearly defined?

QA5: Is the work compared and measured with other similar work?

QA6: Are the limitations of the work clearly mentioned?

Table 4 presents the QA framework employed to evaluate the methodological rigor and relevance of the selected studies. The assessment was conducted independently by three experts using a set of predefined quality criteria. For each criterion, studies were rated as “Yes” (Y) if the criterion was fully satisfied, “Partly” (P) if it was only partially fulfilled, or “No” (N) if the criterion was not met. The use of multiple evaluators enhanced the objectivity and reliability of the assessment process by minimizing potential individual bias.

The scores assigned by the three experts were subsequently aggregated to generate an overall quality score for each study. To ensure that only studies with sufficient methodological quality were included in the review, a minimum threshold score of 3.0 was established. Studies achieving a total score above this threshold were deemed to possess adequate quality and were retained for the subsequent stages of analysis. This rigorous evaluation procedure strengthened the credibility of the review by ensuring that the synthesis was based on robust, reliable, and methodologically sound evidence.



**Figure 2. Flow Diagram of the Proposed Searching Study**

## Result and Finding

Based on the quality assessment of the 47 selected studies (PS1–PS47), the overall methodological quality of the literature can be considered moderate. The studies achieved an average quality score of 3.82 out of 6 (63.66%), with scores ranging from 3.0 (50.0%) to 4.5 (75.0%), indicating a relatively consistent level of quality across the dataset. Most studies clearly articulated their research objectives, with 36 studies fully satisfying QA1 and the remaining 11 partially meeting the criterion. Methodological rigor was particularly strong, as 43 studies received a full score for QA3, demonstrating that the majority adequately described their research methods and procedures. Similarly, the concepts and approaches employed were generally well defined, with 26 studies fully satisfying QA4 and 21 partially satisfying it.

However, weaknesses were observed in the presentation of research significance and comparative evaluation. Although all studies acknowledged the usefulness of their work to some extent, only 16 fully addressed QA2, whereas 31 studies provided only partial justification for their contribution. The most notable limitation related to QA5 is that only three studies conducted comprehensive comparisons with existing approaches, while the remaining 44 offered only partial comparative evaluation. Furthermore, none of the reviewed studies

explicitly discussed their research limitations, resulting in a QA6 score of zero across all papers. Overall, the findings indicate that the selected studies provide a sufficiently robust foundation for the review topic, particularly regarding research objectives, methodology, and conceptual clarity. Nevertheless, future research would benefit from stronger benchmarking against related studies and more transparent reporting of study limitations to enhance the rigor, credibility, and reproducibility of the field.

**Table 4: Quality Assessment (QA) Framework**

| PS   | QA1 | QA2 | QA3 | QA4 | QA5 | QA6 | Total Mark | Percentage (%) |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|----------------|
| PS1  | Y   | P   | P   | P   | Y   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS2  | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS3  | Y   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS4  | P   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3          | 50             |
| PS5  | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS6  | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | Y   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS7  | Y   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS8  | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS9  | Y   | P   | P   | P   | Y   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS10 | Y   | P   | P   | P   | P   | N   | 3          | 50             |
| PS11 | P   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS12 | P   | P   | P   | Y   | P   | N   | 3          | 50             |
| PS13 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS14 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS15 | Y   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS16 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS17 | P   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3          | 50             |
| PS18 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS19 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS20 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS21 | P   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS22 | P   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS23 | P   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS24 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS25 | Y   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3.5        | 58.3           |
| PS26 | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS27 | P   | P   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 3          | 50             |
| PS28 | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS29 | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS30 | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS31 | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS32 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS33 | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4          | 66.7           |
| PS34 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS35 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |
| PS36 | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | P   | N   | 4.5        | 75             |

|      |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |      |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|------|
| PS37 | Y | P | Y | Y | P | N | 4   | 66.7 |
| PS38 | P | P | Y | Y | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |
| PS39 | Y | Y | Y | Y | P | N | 4.5 | 75   |
| PS40 | Y | P | Y | P | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |
| PS41 | Y | P | Y | P | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |
| PS42 | P | P | Y | Y | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |
| PS43 | Y | Y | Y | P | P | N | 4   | 66.7 |
| PS44 | P | Y | Y | Y | P | N | 4   | 66.7 |
| PS45 | Y | P | Y | P | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |
| PS46 | Y | P | Y | Y | P | N | 4   | 66.7 |
| PS47 | Y | P | Y | P | P | N | 3.5 | 58.3 |

### *Thematic Analysis*

A thematic analysis was conducted to synthesize the findings of the selected studies by examining the research objectives, methodologies, key findings, and contributions reported in each article. The analysis aimed to identify recurring concepts, dominant research directions, and common patterns across the literature on dual-career couples and work-family dynamics. Through an iterative process of coding, comparison, and clustering of related concepts, the studies were grouped into three overarching themes that represent the major streams of research in the field. These themes encompass: (1) dyadic work-family conflict, spillover-crossover, and well-being outcomes; (2) gendered family roles, childcare responsibilities, and spousal/family support; and (3) organizational support, policy, work-life integration, and intervention strategies. Together, these themes provide a comprehensive framework for understanding multidimensional challenges and support mechanisms influencing work-family experiences among dual-career couples. Table 5 presents a summary of the theme development process, including the focus area, number of articles, and main research direction associated with each theme.

**Table 5: Summary of Theme Development Process**

| Theme                                                                                  | Focus Area                                                                                                                                                                    | Main Research Direction                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme 1: Dyadic Work-Family Conflict, Spillover-Crossover, and Well-Being Outcomes     | Work-family conflict, work-life balance satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, burnout, marital satisfaction, job performance, family satisfaction, and psychological well-being | This theme focuses on how work and family pressures transfer within individuals and across partners, showing that work-related stress, conflict, and exhaustion affect both personal well-being and couple/family outcomes. |
| Theme 2: Gendered Family Roles, Childcare Responsibilities, and Spousal/Family Support | Childcare, dependent care, gender role expectations, fatherhood, social support, family support, coping, care arrangements, and family systems                                | This theme highlights how dual-career couples negotiate family responsibilities, childcare demands, gendered expectations, and mutual support in maintaining work-family balance.                                           |

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme 3:<br>Organizational<br>Support, Policy,<br>Work-Life Integration,<br>and Intervention<br>Strategies | Family leave, supervisor<br>support, organizational culture,<br>work-life programmes, dyadic<br>interventions, work-life<br>integration, professional<br>couples, and support systems | This theme examines how<br>organizational policies, workplace<br>culture, institutional support, and<br>intervention programmes shape<br>employees' ability to manage<br>work and family roles effectively. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### ***Dyadic Work-Family Conflict, Spillover-Crossover, and Well-Being Outcomes***

The selected studies under this theme indicate that work-family conflict among dual-career couples is not only an individual experience, but also a dyadic process that affects both partners. Several studies show that job demands, work overload, weekend work, long working hours, evening work, and work contact during leisure time increase work-family conflict and reduce work-life balance satisfaction. Another study observed that excessive work demands create emotional exhaustion, lower balance satisfaction, and greater difficulty combining work and parenting roles (Carlson et al., 2023; Lott & Wöhrmann, 2023). These findings suggest that work pressure does not remain within the workplace but extends to the family domain through time-based and strain-based conflict. Furthermore, work-family conflict reduces marital or relational well-being, especially when stress at work, unequal division of labour, and family-to-work interference become part of daily couple interactions (De Andrade et al., 2023; Dorrance-Hall et al., 2024; Leong & Juhari, 2022).

A strong pattern across prior studies is the importance of spillover and crossover effects in explaining the way work and family experiences move across domains and between partners. Spillover occurs when one person's work experience influences personal family life, while crossover occurs when one partner's experience affects the other partner. Previous studies demonstrated that work-family conflict, job tension, and poor detachment can influence not only the worker but also the spouse's emotional state, job performance, and workplace behaviour (Sanz-Vergel et al., 2025; Schnettler et al., 2021; Thompson et al., 2021). Similarly, workaholism, parental burnout, job burnout, and negative interpersonal experiences at work have been reported to interrupt family space and shape partner well-being (Hamsyah et al., 2024; Ilies et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). These studies collectively confirm that dual-career couples should be examined as connected units, because stress, exhaustion, support, and behavioral reactions often operate through shared relational systems.

The findings also show that work-family experiences have wider consequences for psychological well-being, family satisfaction, life satisfaction, and child outcomes. Previous studies revealed that dual-earner families differ in their levels of life satisfaction, family satisfaction, mental health, and work-family interface profiles (Lim, 2024; Orellana et al., 2021; Schnettler et al., 2021). Families with higher work-life balance, stronger support, and lower psychological distress generally reported better family functioning and more positive outcomes. Parental work-family experiences also influence adolescent academic adjustment, food-related life satisfaction, and family satisfaction (Orellana et al., 2022; Schnettler et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). This indicates that work-life balance among dual-career couples has implications beyond the couple relationship, as parental stress or enrichment can influence children and the overall family environment.

Another important finding concerns positive work-family processes such as enrichment, work engagement, harmonious work passion, recovery experiences, and family support. Positive work experiences have been reported to enhance work-family balance, family citizenship behaviour, psychological well-being, and partner well-being (Hamsyah et al., 2024; Wan et al. 2022). In contrast, obsessive work passion and workaholism tend to increase work-family conflict and reduce recovery. Other studies further emphasized that social support, family support, good health, life satisfaction, and lower depression are associated with better work-family balance profiles (Ji & Jung, 2021; Li et al. 2025; Lim (2024). These findings suggest that dual-career couples do not only experience conflict; positive resources from work and family can also improve coping capacity and well-being outcomes.

Overall, the theme demonstrates that work-family conflict, spillover-crossover processes, and well-being outcomes are highly interconnected among dual-career couples. Across different national contexts, including the United States of America, Germany, Chile, Brazil, China, Italy, Croatia, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Slovenia, and Australia, the reviewed studies consistently show that work demands affect family life. Meanwhile, family experiences can influence work performance and relational well-being. Therefore, the literature supports a dyadic understanding of work-life balance, where challenges and coping outcomes should be examined through the interaction between partners, workplace demands, family responsibilities, and well-being consequences.

### ***Gendered Family Roles, Childcare Responsibilities, and Spousal or Family Support***

The reviewed studies show that gendered family roles remain a central factor shaping work-life balance among dual-career couples, especially when childcare and household responsibilities are involved. Dual-career parents often struggle to separate work and family responsibilities because parenting, childcare, and domestic expectations continue to place stronger pressure on women (Hosain, 2025; Showkat et al., 2025). Although fathers' roles are gradually changing, traditional cultural expectations still restrict equal caregiving involvement in some contexts. Women's work-family experiences have been reported to be strongly affected by care-load distribution, gender role beliefs, and limited childcare support (Escriva et al., 2024; Manzi et al., 2024; Townsend et al., 2024). These findings suggest that work-life balance is not only a matter of time management but also reflects deeper gender norms that structure the division of paid work, unpaid care, and emotional responsibilities.

Childcare responsibilities appear as one of the most consistent challenges across the selected studies. Dual-career couples with children face difficulties related to lack of quality time, limited childcare facilities, unreliable care workers, and competing demands between paid work and parenting (Caringal-Go, 2024; Hosain, 2025). During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, working parents have been reported to experience intensified work-family conflict due to home-based work, blurred boundaries, increased unpaid labour, and heavier supervisory care (Craig & Churchill, 2021; Manzi et al., 2024). The evidence indicates that childcare is not merely a private family issue, but a structural concern connected to workplace flexibility, institutional support, welfare systems, and broader social expectations about parenting.

Spousal and family support function as important resources for reducing work-family conflict and improving well-being among dual-career couples. Emotional, instrumental, and time-based spousal support can reduce pressure and improve work-life balance, although support effects may differ between husbands and wives (Aktaş, 2026; Pluut et al., 2025). Other studies further

showed that support from extended family members, colleagues, supervisors, and community networks helps couples manage childcare, daily responsibilities, and emotional strain (Caringal-Go, 2024; Escriva et al., 2024; Kumswa, 2024). However, support is not always equally exchanged. It is suggested that gendered patterns influence who provides support, who benefits from support, and the way support affects emotional exhaustion or life satisfaction (Orellana et al., 2021; Osca & Heras-Recuero, 2024; Pluut et al., 2025).

The reviewed studies also highlight coping strategies as relational and gendered processes rather than only individual responses. Coping, self-efficacy, and flexible beliefs about gender roles can reduce work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion (Aktaş, 2026; Townsend et al., 2024). Furthermore, identity integration, social support, religious practices, and self-care are important ways dual-career parents manage competing demands (Caringal-Go, 2024; Kumswa, 2024; Manzi et al., 2024). Coping also appears more effective when supported by fair role sharing and external resources. Besides, unequal dependent care and limited father involvement may increase overload and stress, particularly for women (Halinski & Duxbury, 2024; Showkat et al., 2025).

Overall, this theme reveals that gendered family roles, childcare responsibilities, and spousal or family support are deeply interconnected in shaping work-life balance among dual-career couples. The reviewed studies suggest that work-life balance cannot be fully understood without considering caregiving norms, parental identity, division of labor, and the availability of social and institutional support. Therefore, future research and policy should give greater attention to equitable caregiving, accessible childcare, supportive workplaces, and culturally sensitive interventions that recognize the lived realities of dual-career couples.

### ***Organizational Support, Policy, Work-Life Integration, and Intervention Strategies***

The studies under this theme indicate that organizational support, work-family culture, and institutional policy play important roles in shaping work-life integration among dual-career couples. Scurry & Clarke (2021) showed that dual-career couples do not only manage daily work-family demands but also need long-term strategies to maintain both partners' career development and family well-being. An unsupportive work-family culture may reduce emotional support within the couple and weaken work-family balance satisfaction, especially when organizational expectations are based on the ideal worker norm. Organizational and supervisor support can reduce work-family conflict and improve psychological detachment from work, although the effect may differ between men and women. These findings suggest that work-life balance among dual-career couples requires support beyond individual coping, particularly through workplace cultures that recognize employees' family and partner-related responsibilities.

Policy and formal support programmes also appear as important mechanisms for improving work-family outcomes. Family leave policies, supervisor support, and work-family life support programmes can influence employee attitudes, psychological distress, work-family balance self-efficacy, and organizational commitment (Garraio et al., 2023; Jeon & Hur, 2023; Shimazu et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of such support is not uniform across all groups. Jeon & Hur (2023) found that family leave provisions had stronger effects for married female employees, while Garraio et al. (2023) reported gendered differences in the way organizational and supervisor support influenced work-family conflict and detachment. Shimazu et al. (2023) further showed that structured intervention programmes can increase work-family balance self-

efficacy and reduce psychological distress, although effects on work-family spillover and work engagement were not significant. These observations indicate that policies need to be carefully designed, targeted, and sensitive to gender, marital status, family stage, and couple-level needs.

Work-life integration among dual-career couples is also shaped by broader career orientation, household structure, and non-work responsibilities. Dual-career couples are not a homogeneous group, as experiences differ according to career priorities, care orientation, flexibility, autonomy, and family arrangements (Boiarintseva et al., 2022; Vashisht et al., 2022) demonstrated that. Childfree dual-career couples still experience work-nonwork conflict because non-work life may include caregiving, personal interests, household obligations, and relational responsibilities. Professional couples also often face situational constraints, job insecurity, reduced social integration, financial conflict, and marital dissatisfaction linked to work-family tensions (Dargahi et al., 2021; Scurry & Clarke, 2021). Therefore, work-life integration should not be understood only through parenting issues, but also through the broader interaction between career progress, personal life, couple goals, and organizational conditions.

The intervention-related studies suggest that dyadic and tailored approaches may be more suitable for addressing work-family conflict among dual-career couples. The intervention designs should consider both partners, relational processes, and the multidimensional nature of interrole conflict (Shimazu et al., 2023; Smoktunowicz et al., 2023). Dyadic internet interventions may offer flexibility and accessibility, but barriers such as scheduling, privacy concerns, personal disclosure, motivation, and gendered communication patterns must be addressed. Other studies further suggest that positive resources can move across work and home domains when organizational climate, family climate, and personal efficacy support adaptive behaviour (Scurry & Clarke, 2021; Rofcanin et al., 2025; Smoktunowicz et al., 2025). Hence, interventions should combine individual skill development, couple-based communication, flexible delivery, and organizational-level support.

Overall, this theme shows that organizational support, policy, work-life integration, and intervention strategies are central in strengthening the work-life experiences of dual-career couples. The reviewed studies indicate that supportive workplaces, family-responsive policies, supervisor understanding, and structured programmes can reduce conflict and improve well-being. However, such support must respond to the complex realities of dual-career relationships. Thus, future organizational responses should move beyond generic work-life policies toward flexible, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and dyadic support systems.

## Conclusion

This systematic literature review was conducted to synthesize and critically examine existing knowledge on work-life balance challenges and coping strategies among dual-career couples. Guided by the PRISMA framework, studies published between 2021 and 2026, and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science were systematically reviewed. Following screening, eligibility, and quality assessment procedures, 47 primary studies were included. The review addressed three research questions concerning: (1) work-family conflict, spillover-crossover experiences, and well-being outcomes; (2) gender dynamics, childcare responsibilities, and spousal or family support; and (3) organizational support mechanisms, policies, and intervention strategies that facilitate work-life integration.

The findings reveal that work-life balance among dual-career couples is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon influenced by individual, relational, family, and organizational factors. The first theme revealed that work-family conflict frequently operates through spillover and crossover processes, affecting both partners' well-being, relationship quality, and family functioning. The second theme highlighted the importance of gendered family roles and childcare responsibilities, while emphasizing the protective role of emotional, instrumental, and social support from spouses and families. The third theme underscored the importance of family-friendly policies, flexible work arrangements, supervisor support, and intervention programmes in promoting work-life integration. Collectively, these findings suggest that successful work-life balance among dual-career couples depends on coordinated support across multiple levels rather than solely on individual coping efforts.

This review contributes to the literature in several important ways. First, it consolidates a fragmented body of research that is dispersed across organizational behavior, family studies, psychology, sociology, and human resource management. Second, the review develops a comprehensive thematic framework consisting of three interrelated themes that collectively explain the challenges and coping mechanisms experienced by dual-career couples. Third, the synthesis highlights the growing importance of dyadic perspectives in understanding work-life balance, demonstrating that experiences of conflict, support, well-being, and coping are often shared and interconnected between partners. The review also extends existing knowledge by integrating individual-level, family-level, and organizational-level perspectives into a single analytical framework, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of work-life balance among dual-career couples.

The findings generate several practical implications for organizations, policymakers, and practitioners. At the organizational level, employers should recognize that work-life balance is influenced by relational and family dynamics and therefore requires more comprehensive support mechanisms than traditional employee-focused initiatives. Flexible work arrangements, family-friendly workplace policies, supervisor support, parental leave provisions, and employee assistance programmes may help reduce work-family conflict and improve employee well-being. At the family level, the findings underscore the importance of equitable distribution of childcare and household responsibilities, open communication, and mutual spousal support in managing competing work and family demands. For policymakers, the review highlights the need for accessible childcare services, supportive family policies, and employment practices that accommodate the realities of dual-career households. Such initiatives may contribute not only to individual and family well-being but also to workforce sustainability, employee retention, and organizational effectiveness.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The review was limited to studies published in English and indexed within the Scopus and Web of Science databases between 2021 and 2026. Consequently, relevant studies published in other languages, regional databases, or outside the selected timeframe may not have been captured. In addition, the available literature remains relatively limited, reflecting the comparatively small number of studies that explicitly focus on work-life balance among dual-career couples. Another notable limitation is the geographical concentration of existing research. Most studies were conducted in Western countries, while evidence from Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and particularly Malaysian contexts remains scarce. This limits the generalizability of current knowledge across diverse cultural, social, and institutional environments. Future studies should expand research into underrepresented regions and employ longitudinal, mixed-method, and dyadic designs. Further investigation into

organizational interventions, digital work arrangements, and support mechanisms across occupational sectors and family life stages is also warranted.

In conclusion, this review demonstrates that work-life balance for dual-career couples is shaped by a complex interplay of work demands, family responsibilities, gender dynamics, social support, and organizational conditions. The synthesis of evidence provides a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by dual-career couples and the coping strategies that support successful work-life integration. More importantly, the review highlights the value of adopting a dyadic and multi-level perspective when examining work-life balance issues. As dual-career households continue to increase globally, systematic reviews such as this review play a vital role in consolidating evidence, identifying research gaps, refining theoretical understanding, and informing future empirical investigations. The resulting knowledge base offers an important foundation for developing evidence-informed policies, organizational practices, and research agendas that promote sustainable work and family lives among dual-career couples.

---

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Acknowledgements:</b>               | The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School and Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang Branch for providing the necessary resources and support throughout the course of this research.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Funding Statement:</b>              | This work did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Conflict of Interest Statement:</b> | The authors declare no conflict of interest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Ethics Statement:</b>               | This study did not involve any human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical approval. The authors confirm that the research was conducted in accordance with accepted academic integrity and ethical publishing standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Author Contribution Statement:</b>  | All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Suhanom Mohd Zaki was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology and overall supervision of the study. Sharizan Sharkawi and Norzanah Mat Nor conducted the literature search, study screening and selection, thematic synthesis, and interpretation of the findings. Mohd Aidil Riduan Awang Kader contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission. |

---

## References

- Abouzahra, A., Sabraoui, A., & Afdel, K. (2020). Model composition in Model Driven Engineering: A systematic literature review. *Information and Software Technology*, 125(May), 106316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2020.106316>
- Aktaş, S. C. (2026). Work-family conflict in times of crisis: The moderating roles of self-efficacy and time-based spousal support during pandemic-induced remote work. *PLOS ONE*, 21(5 May). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0348368>
- Boiarintseva, G., Ezzedeen, S. R., & Wilkin, C. (2022). Definitions of work-life balance in childfree dual-career couples: an inductive typology. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 41(4), 525–548. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-12-2020-0368>
- Caringal-Go, J. F. (2024). Listening to Narrative Voices of Dual Income Parents in the Philippines. *Psychological Studies*, 69(1), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-023-00775-x>
- Carlson, D. S., Quade, M. J., Wan, M., Kacmar, K. M., & Yin, K. (2023). Keeping up with the Joneses: Social comparison of integrating work and family lives. *Human Relations*, 76(8), 1285–1313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267221094686>
- Cavagnis, L., Russo, C., Danioni, F., & Barni, D. (2023). Promoting Women's Well-Being: A Systematic Review of Protective Factors for Work–Family Conflict. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20216992>
- Chen, Z., & Hou, L. (2021). An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model of Work Challenge Stressors and Work-Family Outcomes: the Moderating Roles of Dual-Career Couples' Stress Mindsets. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36, 1109–1123. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-020-09724-1>
- Craig, L., & Churchill, B. (2021). Dual-earner parent couples' work and care during COVID-19. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 28(S1), 66–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12497>
- Dargahi, S., Damirchi, E. S., Givi, H. G., Sharif, A. R., & Nazari, A. (2021). Explaining occupational themes of marital dissatisfaction in dual-career couples: A qualitative study. *Journal of Occupational Health and Epidemiology*, 10(2), 99–104. <https://doi.org/10.52547/johe.10.2.99>
- De Andrade, A. L., Ferrão, L. F., & Techio, G. (2023). The Work-Family Conflict: Dyadic View of Brazilian Couples. *Interpersona*, 17(1), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.8533>
- Dorrance-Hall, E., Earle, K., Ma, M., Kuch, L., Zhang, Y., & Osika, K. (2024). Women's Work-Family Balance in Slovenia: Associations With Job Stress, Division of Labor Satisfaction, and Relational Well-Being. *International Journal of Communication*, 18, 4770–4791. <https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85216217145?origin=resultslist>
- Escriva, A., Bermúdez Figueroa, E., & Minguela, M. Á. (2024). Dual-career Spanish couples in Europe: Work-family balance in childcare. *International Migration*, 62(4), 160–172. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13047>
- Garraio, C., Barradas, M. I., & Matias, M. (2023). Organisational and Supervisor Support Links to Psychological Detachment from Work: Mediating Effect of Work-family Conflict on Dual-earner Couples. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 18(2), 957–974. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10124-1>
- Grönlund, A., & Öun, I. (2010). Rethinking work-family conflict: dual-earner policies, role conflict and role expansion in Western Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 20, 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928710364431>

- Halinski, M., & Duxbury, L. (2024). When spouses contribute at home: the impact of spouse dependent care on role overload and stress in dual-earner couples. *Community, Work and Family*, 27(1), 35–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2022.2100242>
- Hamsyah, F., Shimazu, A., & Hakanen, J. J. (2024). How work engagement and workaholism relate to individuals' and their intimate partners' mental well-being: a test of the spillover-crossover model among Indonesian dual-earner couples. *Industrial Health*, 62(6), 377–391. <https://doi.org/10.2486/indhealth.2024-0094>
- Hosain, M. S. (2025). The dilemma of work-family balance for the dual-career couples with child/children: qualitative evidence from Bangladesh based on Family Systems Theory. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 33(1), 25–42. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-11-2023-4096>
- Ilies, R., Yao, J., Pluut, H., Liang, A. X., & Weng, Q. D. (2024). Blurred lines: The spillover and crossover effects of interpersonal experiences at work on family behaviors and well-being. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2024.104043>
- Jeon, S. H., & Hur, H. (2023). Family Leave Policies and Employee Attitudinal Outcomes in Korea: The Moderating and Joint Moderating Effects of Gender and Marital Status. *Korea Observer*, 54(3), 465–493. <https://doi.org/10.29152/KOIKS.2023.54.3.465>
- Ji, S.-Y., & Jung, H.-S. (2021). Work–family balance among dual-earner couples in South Korea: A latent profile analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18116129>
- Kaur, D. (2019). Work-Life Challenges of Dual Career Couples and Their Related Coping Strategies in Corporate Sector. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3429653>
- Kitchenham, B. (2007). Guidelines for performing systematic literature reviews in software engineering. *Technical Report, Ver. 2.3 EBSE Technical Report*. EBSE.
- Krishnan, A., Alias, S., & Omar, Z. (2020). Factors Influencing Work-Family Conflict Among Dual-Career Couples: A Research Framework. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i9/7825>
- Kumswa, S. K. (2024). Social Support Available to Commuter Couples in Jos, Nigeria. *SAGE Open*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241234492>
- Laß, I., & Wooden, M. (2022). Weekend work and work–family conflict: Evidence from Australian panel data. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 84(1), 250–272. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12779>
- Leong, M. S., & Juhari, R. (2022). Work vs. Family and Marital Satisfaction among Malaysian Chinese Dual-earner Couples: An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. *Psychological Thought*, 15(1), 53–80. <https://doi.org/10.37708/psyc.v15i1.614>
- Li, M., Stas, L., Vanroelen, C., & Moortel, D. D. (2025). Linked lives and work-family dynamics: gendered workload, family support, and mental well-being among urban Chinese dual-earner households. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 24(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-025-02687-w>
- Lim, Y. (2024). Work–Family Interface Profiles and Their Associations with Personal and Social Factors among South Korean Dual-Earner Parents. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14100887>
- Lockwood, C., Munn, Z., & Porritt, K. (2015). Qualitative research synthesis: Methodological guidance for systematic reviewers utilizing meta-aggregation. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare*, 13(3), 179–187. <https://doi.org/10.1097/XEB.0000000000000062>

- Lott, Y., & Wöhrmann, A. M. (2023). Spillover and crossover effects of working time demands on work–life balance satisfaction among dual-earner couples: the mediating role of work–life conflict. *Current Psychology*, 42(15), 12957–12973. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03850-0>
- Manzi, C., Donato, S., Lagomarsino, F., Pacilli, M. G., Pagliaro, S., & Rania, N. (2024). Moving from “balancing” to “blending”: The role of identity integration for working parents. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 41(1), 200–224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075231211621>
- Mortejo, J. (2024). Balancing Work and Family Commitments: Adaptive Strategies of Dual Income Couples. *International Journal of Empirical Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.59762/ijerm205275792120240305170520>
- Mutter, J., & Thorn, K. (2025). Negotiating the boundaries: dual-career couples and hybrid work. *Personnel Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-11-2024-0967>
- Orellana, L., García, R., Miranda-Zapata, E., & Schnettler, B. (2022). Effects of work-to-family enrichment on psychological distress and family satisfaction: A dyadic analysis in dual-earner parents. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 63(6), 634–647. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12850>
- Orellana, L., Schnettler, B., Adasme-Berrios, C., Lobos, G., Miranda-Zapata, E., & Lapo, M. (2022). Family profiles based on family life satisfaction in dual-earner households with adolescent children in Chile. *Family Process*, 61(2), 906–925. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12714>
- Orellana, L., Schnettler, B., Miranda-Zapata, E., Lobos, G., Lapo, M., Adasme-Berrios, C., & Hueche, C. (2021). Resource Transmission is not Reciprocal: A Dyadic Analysis of Family Support, Work-Life Balance, and Life Satisfaction in Dual-Earner Parents with Adolescent Children. *Sex Roles*, 85(1–2), 88–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01207-0>
- Orellana, L., Schnettler, B., Miranda-Zapata, E., Saracostti, M., Poblete, H., Lobos, G., Adasme-Berrios, C., Lapo, M., & Concha-Salgado, A. (2022). Job satisfaction as a mediator between family-to-work conflict and satisfaction with family life: a dyadic analysis in dual-earner parents. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10082-8>
- Osca, A., & Heras-Recuero, L. (2024). Actor–partner effects of coping strategies on emotional exhaustion in dual-earner couples. *Family Relations*, 73(2), 1219–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12948>
- Owolabi, T., & Ajibose, K. (2019). Work-Family Conflict: Coping Strategies to Optimise Healthy Living and Wellbeing Among Career Couples in Lagos Metropolis. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.7176/rhss/9-8-08>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The prisma 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *Medicina Fluminensis*, 57(4), 444–465. [https://doi.org/10.21860/medflum2021\\_264903](https://doi.org/10.21860/medflum2021_264903)
- Pluut, H., Ilies, R., Curşeu, P. L., & Savani, K. (2025). The Things I Do for You... and for Myself: Dyadic and Dynamic Effects of Social Support in Dual-Earner Couples. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 40(6), 1337–1353. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-025-10020-z>
- Pop, S. R. (2022). Dual-Physician Marriages: Understanding the Challenges and Rewards. *Cutis*, 110(3), E14–E16. <https://doi.org/10.12788/cutis.0623>

- Radcliffe, L., & Cassell, C. (2014). Resolving couples' work–family conflicts: The complexity of decision making and the introduction of a new framework. *Human Relations*, 67, 793–819. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713506022>
- Rahman, R. A., Mustaffa, W., Rhouse, S., & Wahid, H. (2016). Work Challenges and Coping Strategies of Professional and Managerial Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia. *The International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 6, 256–271. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v6-i12/2492>
- Recuero, L., & Segovia, A. O. (2021). Work-Family Conflict, Coping Strategies and Burnout: A Gender and Couple Analysis. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 37, 21–28. <https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2021a5>
- Rofcanin, Y., Wang, S., Las Heras, M., Bosch Kreis, M. J., Berber, A., & Findikli, M. A. (2025). Understanding the dynamics of strategic renewal across domains: A work–home resources model perspective. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 98(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.70027>
- Saad, S., Ullah, K., Ahmad, S., Abid, A. U. R., Wali, F., Jabeen, I., Rahman, F., & Issac, S. (2025). EXPLORING CHALLENGES FACED BY DUAL-CAREER COUPLES AMONG NURSES IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN. QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY. *Insights-Journal of Health and Rehabilitation*. <https://doi.org/10.71000/hvqbyn14>
- Sanz-Vergel, A. I., Rodríguez-Muñoz, A., & Antino, M. (2025). Work–family conflict and spouse's job performance: when detaching from home is key. *Work and Stress*, 39(1), 66–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2024.2332170>
- Sariroh, S., Ali, M., & Syakur, A. (2023). Management of Dual-Career Couples in Maintaining Family Resilience and Harmony in Islamic Perspective. *An-Nisa Jurnal Kajian Perempuan Dan Keislaman*. <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v16i1.171>
- Schnettler, B., Grunert, K. G., Orellana, L., Miranda, H., Lobos, G., Miranda-Zapata, E., Lapo, M., & Hueche, C. (2022). The diverging patterns of life satisfaction between families: A latent profile analysis in dual-earner parents with adolescents. *Current Psychology*, 41(10), 7240–7257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01316-9>
- Schnettler, B., Miranda-Zapata, E., Grunert, K. G., Lobos, G., Lapo, M., & Hueche, C. (2021). Testing the Spillover-Crossover Model between Work-Life Balance and Satisfaction in Different Domains of Life in Dual-Earner Households. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 16(4), 1475–1501. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-020-09828-z>
- Scurry, T., & Clarke, M. (2021). Navigating dual-careers: the challenge for professional couples. *Personnel Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-05-2020-0367>
- Shimazu, A., Fujiwara, T., Iwata, N., Kato, Y., Kawakami, N., Maegawa, N., Nakao, M., Nomiya, T., Takahashi, M., Tayama, J., Watai, I., Arima, M., Hasegawa, T., Matsudaira, K., Matsuyama, Y., Miyazawa, Y., Shimada, K., Takahashi, M., Watanabe, M., ... Tokita, M. (2023). Effects of work–family life support program on the work–family interface and mental health among Japanese dual-earner couples with a preschool child: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 65(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/1348-9585.12397>
- Shockley, K., Shen, W., DeNunzio, M., Arvan, M., & Knudsen, E. (2017). Disentangling the Relationship Between Gender and Work–Family Conflict: An Integration of Theoretical Perspectives Using Meta-Analytic Methods. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102, 1601. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000246>
- Showkat, H., Rafique, S. T., Yaqoob, S. S., & Farhad, S. (2025). Rethinking Paternity: Understanding Father's Role in the Dual-Career Family System. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 37(3–4), 157–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2025.2505268>

- Smoktunowicz, E., Lesnierowska, M., Ziolkowska, J., & Roczniowska, M. (2023). Crossover of the dimensions of work-family and family-work conflict in couples: Protocol for a qualitative study. *PLoS ONE*, 18(9 September). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0290216>
- Thompson, M. J., Carlson, D., Crawford, W. S., & Kacmar, K. M. (2021). My Partner Made Me Do It: The Crossover of a Job Incumbent's Job Tension to the Spouse's Workplace Incivility. *Human Performance*, 34(4), 298–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.2021.1951271>
- Townsend, C. H., Kray, L. J., & Russell, A. G. (2024). Holding the Belief That Gender Roles Can Change Reduces Women's Work–Family Conflict. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 50(11), 1613–1632. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231178349>
- Trošelj, K. B., Krapić, N., & Kardum, I. (2026). Core self-evaluation, work–family conflict, and relationship satisfaction: evidence from Croatian dual-earner couples. *BMC Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-026-04014-6>
- Vashisht, S., Punj, N., & Vashisht, R. (2022). A qualitative analysis of experiences of work-life integration of dual career couples. *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 31(2), 216–228. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijbg.2022.125953>
- Wan, M., Carlson, D. S., Quade, M. J., & Kacmar, K. M. (2022). Does work passion influence prosocial behaviors at work and home? Examining the underlying work–family mechanisms. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 43(9), 1516–1534. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2566>
- Wang, W., Wang, S., Chen, S., & Li, Y. (2022). Parental Burnout and Job Burnout in Working Couples: An Actor–Partner Interdependence Model. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 36(5), 704–712. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000953>
- Wang, X., Zhang, L., Wu, X., & Zhao, M. (2021). Work-Family Conflict, Enrichment, and Adolescent Academic Adjustment in Dual-Earner Family. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.712954>