

Work-Life Balance of Malaysian Professional Women: Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

This paper provided a comprehensive analysis of work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia by using bibliometric techniques to explore current trends and research diversity. The review delves into various dimensions by drawing on data from Scopus and Web of Science databases encompassing over 21,000 research papers published between 2019 and 2024. It examines publication patterns, sample statistics, theoretical frameworks, top-cited articles and journals, frequent keywords, and recognized research clusters. The analysis uncovers significant patterns and correlations between work-life balance and professional women in Malaysia and offers valuable insights. Furthermore, a content analysis of recent literature highlights emerging research trends and identifies potential gaps. This study uses bibliometric mapping techniques to understand work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia and suggests a future study in this field.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Malaysian Professional Women, Bibliometric Analysis

Introduction

Adni et al. (2024) argued that more and more women increasingly desire to work, and there are many reasons, such as career aspirations and contributing to their family's economic well-being. Also, social and institutional factors significantly influence women's attention to work. When women workers get more power and trust in state institutions, they are socially integrated and more likely to join the workforce (Adisa et al., 2022). In addition, the number of women in the workforce has risen, and more women become professors in many fields (Catumba et al., 2023).

However, less than fifty per cent of women are employed worldwide, and less than twenty-five per cent are professionals, such as engineers (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2020). Managing professional work and personal life is a significant challenge for married professional women. Because many jobs require long working hours, leaving insufficient time for family or skill development (Coker et al., 2024). Despite education and economic development, the force

participation rate of women's labour in Malaysia remains lower than men's (Hamdan et al., 2024).

Since 2017, government policies have aimed to increase the percentage of women in high positions in Malaysia to around thirty percent (Koon, 2022). The number of female graduates in Malaysia is higher than in other South Asian countries, and the female graduates in Malaysia are twenty-six percent compared to the Philippines' eighty percent, Thailand's fifteen percent, and Vietnam's fifteen percent (Munyeka & Maharaj, 2024). However, it is still hard for women to develop their professional careers. Therefore, it is important to research this field.

Literature Review

The definition of work-life balance varies depending on each country's culture and national society. This study incorporates a comparative analysis of work-life balance between Malaysia and other countries. Employees from different societies might have different values of work and life, which could influence their work-life balance experience. For example, Work-life balance studies in Western countries focus more on personal accomplishment and personal fulfilment. However, other Eastern countries like Malaysia are focused on prioritizing communal and familial obligations (Coker et al., 2024). In Western countries, professional women want to balance work and life through flexible working hours to reduce stress and be more satisfied with work. However, in Eastern countries like Malaysia, professional women's experiences are related to culture and society to manage their professional work and life. Because their work value might be influenced by their culture and family (Mude & Wesley, 2024). Western and Eastern cultures have different perspectives on professional work and personal life (LeoGrande, 2023). As a multicultural and religious country, Malaysia may hold distinct values regarding work and life (Thisyakorn et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Malaysian women play vital roles in caring for both children and elderly parents due to cultural and religious factors. However, many Malaysian companies lack sufficient measures to support working women in balancing their family responsibilities and careers. As a result, it is difficult for professional women to develop their careers (Adisa et al., 2022). Also, understanding the culture and regions makes understanding the work-life balance among professional women easier. Moreover, working women and professional women in Malaysia play crucial roles in contributing to prosperity, political stability, social cohesion, and economic progress (Ntshongwana, 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to research work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. To comprehend the significance of work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia, it is essential to understand the varying concerns regarding work-life balance when comparing Malaysia with other countries.

To understand the importance of the work-life balance. This study employs a bibliometric methodology utilizing Biblioshiny within the Bibliometrix tool in R Studio to analyze work-life balance research worldwide and more deeply understand the concept of work-life balance research. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative approach that leverages data from published articles and academic journals to identify contemporary trends, emerging concerns, and future directions (Catumba et al., 2023). This study used Bibliometric analysis to understand the pivotal topics, influential authors, and significant contributions shaping the scholarly discourse on work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia.

Research Methodology

The Scopus and Web of Science databases were used in this research investigation to find underappreciated publications and relevant subjects on the work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. This study used a bibliometric technique, examining 15,441 articles from the Web of Science and 6,000 papers from Scopus on work-life balance. The analysis provides insights into current research trends and recommendations for future research directions, making it valuable for research scholars, policymakers, and academicians.

To achieve this objective, the study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the chronological distribution patterns of journal articles on work-life balance?
2. Which countries contribute most significantly to work-life balance research?
3. Which journals demonstrate the highest productivity in the field of work-life balance?
4. What are the noteworthy contributions of eminent authors and researchers in the field of work-life balance?
5. What key terms and concepts are most frequently associated with work-life balance research?
6. How much research has been conducted on the work-life balance of professional women in Malaysia?
7. What directions should future studies and research on the work-life balance of Malaysian professional women take?

Database and Search Strategy

The Scopus and Web of Science databases were utilized to retrieve research publications on work-life balance, as they are among the most comprehensive peer-reviewed research resources in the social sciences. These databases are commonly employed for systematic reviews (Catumba *et al.*, 2023). This research exclusively considered articles and review papers published in English. The search focused on documents containing the keyword 'work-life balance' in their abstracts and titles. From 2019 to 2024, the Scopus database search yielded 6,000 documents, while the Web of Science database yielded 15,441 documents. The final dataset was analyzed using bibliometric techniques and VOSviewer.

Analysis and Discussion

This study employed a bibliometric approach by using the Biblioshiny package in the Bibliometrix tool in R Studio to delve into work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia (Uddin *et al.*, 2023). Patterns, themes, and gaps in the literature can be found to help to understand work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. This study uses a bibliometric method utilizing Biblioshiny in the Bibliometrix tool in R Studio to investigate global research trends in work-life balance. Using data from published papers or academic journals, a quantitative technique by the name of bibliometric analysis can help to identify new issues, emerging patterns, and recommendations for the future study of work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia (Catumba *et al.*, 2023). This study looks at bibliographic features such as authors' keywords and journals to construct and present bibliometric maps to garner international citations and provide insights into work-life balance research (Mude & Wesley, 2024). This method can help to comprehend and understand work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. This section will provide an analysis of the Annual Scientific Production Trends, Most Related Countries by Scopus and Web of Science and Most Related Words Scopus and Web of Science of the work-life balance these

dates and give suggestions for the future study of work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia.

Annual Scientific Production Trends

Figure 1 provides a chronological overview of the development of the scientific literature on work-life balance from 2019 until now. From the annual scientific production, we can see the trend of work-life balance research over the years.

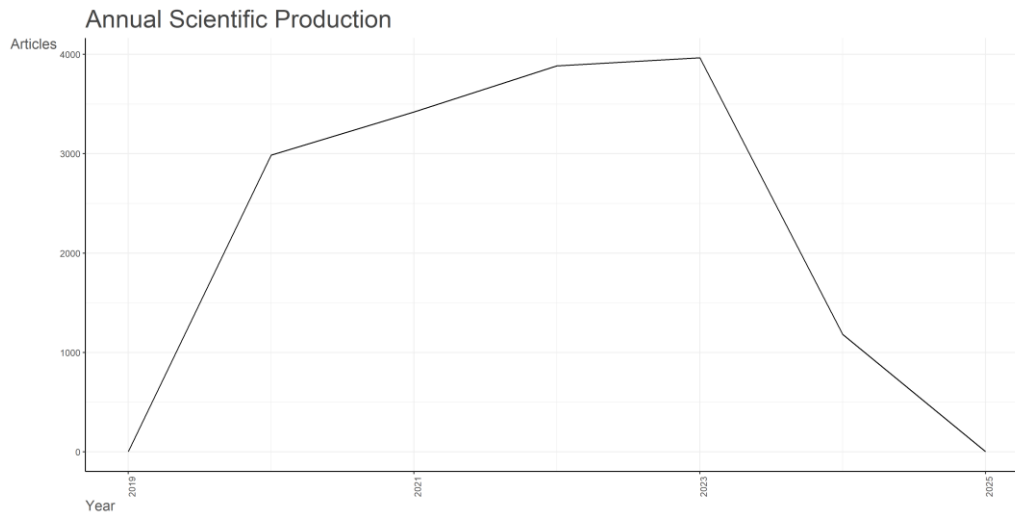


Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production

The data showed the number of work-life balance researchers has increased since 2019. The Annual Scientific Production Trends analysis shows that the concern about work-life balance research has increased and might become a hotter topic. Also, it is clear to conjecture that life balance is important in our lives, and many people are interested in it and more and more researchers might do research on work-life balance-related topics.

Most Related Countries by Scopus and Web of Science

Figures 2 and 3 provide an insightful viewpoint on work-life balance worldwide by the date Web of Science and Scopus databases. Moreover, it contributed to the most significant contribution of work-life balance researchers in countries. The figures also show which countries are highly or less interested in work-life balance research.

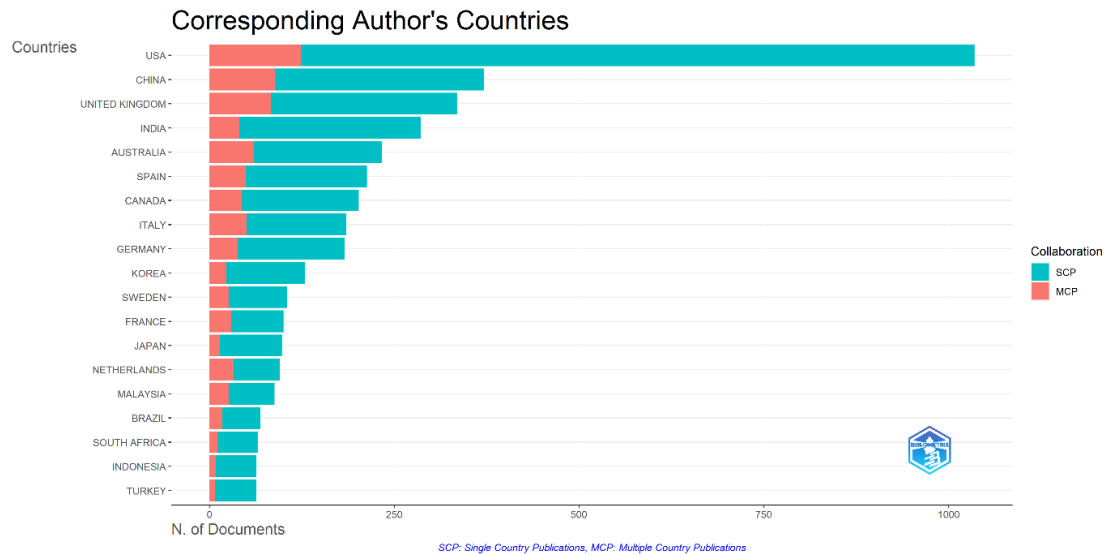


Figure 2. Most Related Countries by Web of Science

Figure 2 shows that the countries with the highest corresponding authors are the USA, China, the United Kingdom, India, and Australia. However, the USA had the highest number of corresponding authors, but Malaysia had the least corresponding authors compared with other countries. The data shows that there is less work-life balance research in Malaysia. More research on work-life balance might be needed in Malaysia.

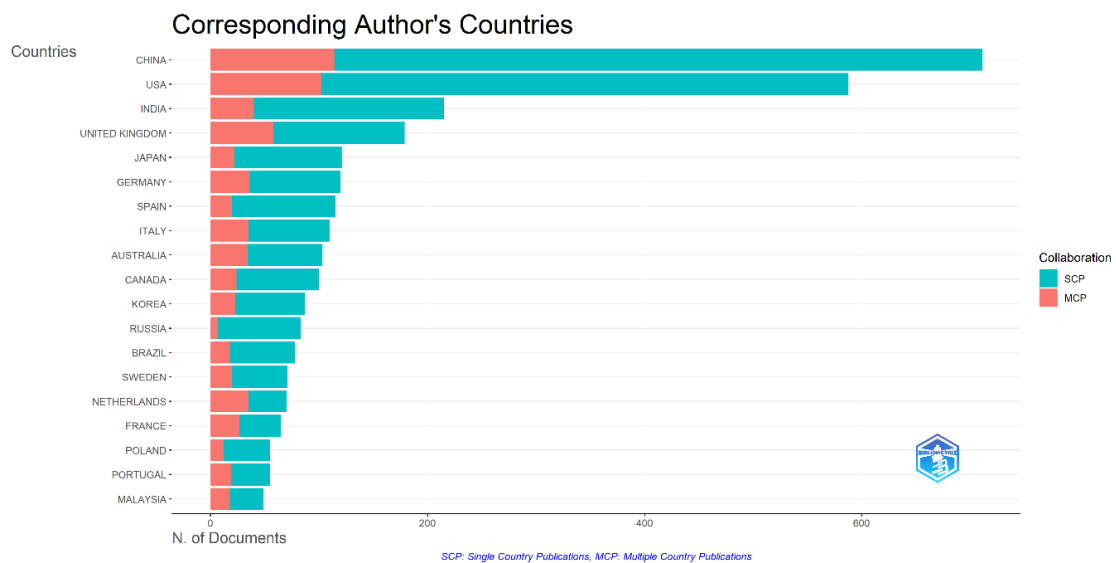


Figure 3. Most Related Countries by Scopus

Figure 3 shows that the countries with the highest number of corresponding authors are China, USA, India, the United Kingdom and Japan. However, China was the country with the highest corresponding author, and Malaysia was the country with the lowest corresponding author. Both dates showed less work-life balance research in Malaysia, and More research on work-life balance might be needed in Malaysia.

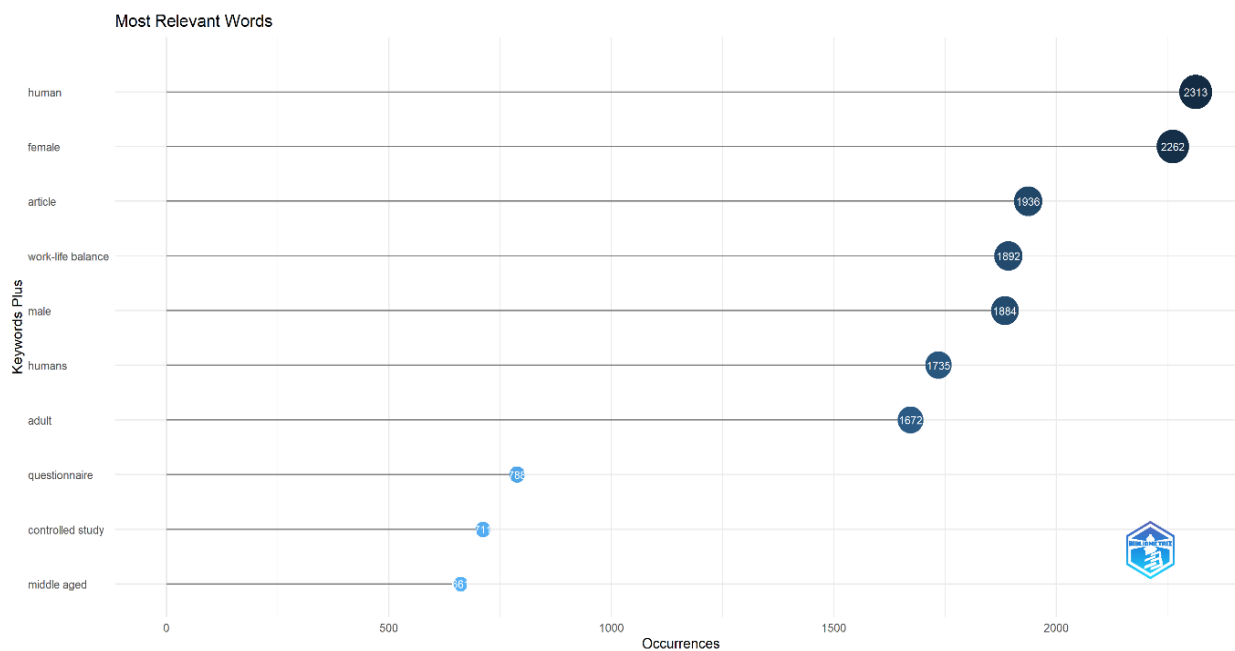


Figure 5. Most Related Words by Web of Science

In Figure 5, the top related word by Web of Science is 'human,' followed by 'women's studies,' indicating that a significant portion of the research is centred around gender studies and human-related issues. This reflects the interdisciplinary nature of work-life balance research encompassing gender studies.

This study provided a bibliometric analysis of scholarly articles on work-life balance published between 2019 and 2024, utilizing data from the Scopus and Web of Science databases and the key findings, highlighting significant trends and proposing directions for future research. The data reveals a notable increase in publications in 2023, marking it the most prolific year with over 1,200 articles. This surge reflects an escalating global interest in work-life balance, potentially driven by heightened awareness of its importance in evolving workplace dynamics post-pandemic. The analysis of geographical contributions (Figures 2 and 3) underscores the dominance of the USA in work-life balance research, followed by significant outputs from the UK, Canada, and Australia. These findings indicate robust research infrastructures and high academic engagement with work-life balance issues in these regions. However, the relatively low representation of Malaysian authors highlights a critical gap, underscoring the need for increased research efforts and collaborative initiatives within Malaysia to address local challenges and perspectives.

Furthermore, From Figures 4 and 5, it can clearly be seen that the work-life balance of gender studies is important, especially for women. Much work-life balance research all over the world is related to women. It shows that it is necessary to focus on research on work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. Also, Bibliometric analysis to analyse the work-life balance research from Scopus and Web of Science can help to understand the topic of work-life balance research and suggest studying work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. According to the analysis of work-life balance from the Web of Science and Scopus, it less research the work-life balance of collective Southeast Asia countries like Malaysia. Also, Malaysia is a multicultural and multireligious country. As a result, a work-life balance strategy

from another country might not suit Malaysian professional women to balance work and life. It might be necessary to establish a work-life balance for female research in Malaysia (Nizam,2018). Also, from figures 4 and 5, many studies are concerned with gender studies. This might be because the work-life balance of different genders might have different challenges to overcome (Koon,2022). In the future, it might be necessary to research the work-life balance of gender.

Conclusion

This study conducted a bibliometric analysis of work-life balance articles published between 2019 and 2024 from Scopus and Web of Science databases. The key findings highlight significant trends and the growing global interest in work-life balance and female studies. The geographical analysis underscores the dominance of research contributions from the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia, revealing robust research infrastructures and high academic engagement in these countries. However, there is little Malaysian research on work-life balance. This study highlights a critical gap, emphasizing the need for increased research on work-life balance in Malaysian and Malaysian professional women. Also, due to Malaysia's multiculturalism and multireligious, strategies for work-life balance from other countries may not be suitable for Malaysia. Therefore, it is necessary to do research on work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia. Future research should continue to focus on work-life balance among professional women in Malaysia to help understand the challenges of work-life balance in Malaysia.

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