

# Drivers and Consequences of Work-family Conflict for Work from Home Employees: A Systematic Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

The changes in the nature of work-nonwork boundaries due to work-from home practices may results in potential shocks to role conflict among working married couples. However to date, there are still limited understanding of the prevalence of work-family conflict (WFC) among employees while working from home. Therefore, there is a need to explore regarding the stated issue. This systematic literature review has been conducted to figure out what have been found from past studies. This study echos the SLR steps proposed by Xiao and Watson (2019) to search for drivers and consequences of work-family conflict while working from home supported by Work-Family Border Theory and Work-Family Enrichment Theory. From 15 articles found from Google Scholar database, only 11 articles deemed suitable for further consideration. Analysis of the articles resulted in three categories of WFC drivers, which include personal factors, health-related factors, and job-related factors and three categories of consequences found, personal, social, and job outcomes. Findings of this study therefore are expected to be a value to scholars, community and nation as it will provide a new insight to the field.

**Keywords:** Work-family conflict, work from home, systematic literature review, drivers of WFC

## INTRODUCTION

Organizations were established to achieve the targeted goal. Given the current advancement in technology together with post-pandemic era, organizations need to explore latest solutions to maintain employees' performance. Work from home, telework or remote work (Popovici & Popovici, 2020) is a common practice in high income countries. Instead, Ziuznys (2022) study indicated that United Kingdom has the highest remote job opportunities followed by Germany. Different trend is seen in developing countries except in some multinational companies (MNCs). In Malaysia, Virtual Spirit, MoneyMatch, Maybank, Joget Technology Sdn Bhd, Touch n' Go Group, Coway Malaysia, Battle Mind Creative Sdn Bhd and Juris Technologies are among the companies currently practicing hybrid and remote working (VirtualSpace, 2022).

Despites of its potential to improve productivity (Galanti, Guidetti, Mazzei, Zappalà, & Toscano, 2021) and recommended to be one of the strategy to integrate work with family life, however, there are limited empirical studies support the tendency of work-family conflict could be reduced while working from home (van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2020). In addition to that, to date, there are still no systematic literature review has been conducted on the topic. Study by Pradoto, Haryono, and Wahyuningsih (2022) addressed that employee

performance might be negatively impacted if the environment at home does not support it mean. Therefore, there is a need to study the drivers of work-family conflict and its consequences while working from home.

Based on the presented need, this systematic literature review study has been conducted to identify drivers and consequences of work-family conflict among WFH employees. Findings of this SLR will provide significant insights towards the development of organizations WFH policies and practices. In accordance, this article has been arranged according to the following: Theorizing work-family conflict for WFH employees, drivers and consequences of work-family conflict, conceptual framework, methodology, findings, and conclusions and recommendations.

### Work-Family Conflict among WFH Employees

Generally, there are two types of work-family conflict. Firstly, work interfere the family matters (WFC), and secondly, family interferes the work matters (FWC). Traditional working arrangement allows employees to set a clear boundaries between work and personal matters. Accordingly, FWC is manageable, except for employees provided with work-time control which provides them with job flexibility (Yang, Zhao, & Ma, 2024). In the work context, job flexibility or also known as smart working (Angelici & Profeta, 2023) might include flexibility in working hours and working locations.

### Theorizing Work-Family Conflict among WFH Employees

Work-family conflict drivers and consequences among WFH employees in this study has been derived mainly based on Work/Family Border Theory by Clark (2000) and Work-Family Enrichment Theory by Greenhaus and Powell (2006).

### Work-Family Border Theory

Work-Family Border Theory argues that the primary connection between work and family system is human themselves. According to the theory, even though there is a clear grey line between the world of work and the world of family, individuals however are border-crossers who make daily transitions between the two worlds (Clark, 2000). These individual employees are responsible in shaping their world, and they are also shaped by their world. Work and personal life are intertwined through emotional factors (like satisfaction and pride), as well as spatial, temporal, social, and behavioral elements. Therefore, individuals need to cultivate a balance to ensure they feel fulfilled and effective both at work and at home. Figure 1 illustrates the central concepts of Work-Family Border Theory, which include work and family domains, borders between work and home, individual as order crosser, and border-keepers.

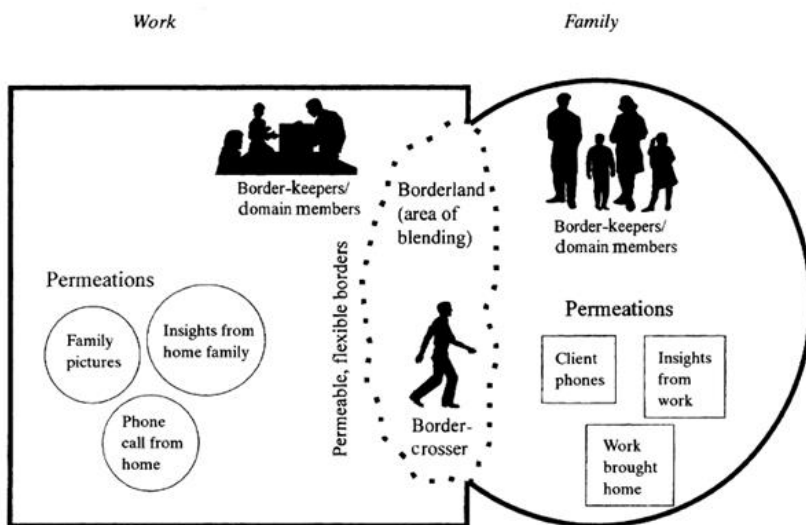


Figure 1: Work-Family Border Theory: A pictorial representation

Source: Clark (2000, p. 754

"Borders" establish the points at which different domains begin and end. Clark (2000) addressed that borders exist in three forms, firstly, physical which include the work physical setting and the home setting. Secondly, temporal border which pertain to work hours that separate work obligations from family responsibilities. Thirdly, psychological borders that consist of rules created by individuals that guide appropriate thoughts, behaviors, and emotions for each domain.

In the context of working from home, since domains and borders are seen as self-created (Clark, 2000), it is important to emphasize the attributes of individuals who navigate these border crossings. Individual factors include various factors at individual level such as psychological factors (e.g., personality, cognitive abilities, cognitive style, health status) and demographic factors (e.g., gender, parental status) (Benyon, Crerar, & Wilkinson, 2000; Sacau, Laarni, & Hartmann, 2008). Another important aspect to consider is the work-related factors that influence border crossing. Each border separating the work and family domains is defined by its strength, which encompasses three characteristics: permeability, flexibility, and blending.

1. Permeability refers to how easily elements from one domain can enter another. Higher permeability allows for more interaction between work and family life.
2. Flexibility describes the degree to which a border can contract or expand based on the demands of either domain. A flexible border can adapt to varying circumstances and responsibilities.
3. Blending occurs when there is a significant degree of permeability and flexibility, leading to a situation where the boundaries between domains become unclear. In this case, the established borders no longer serve to keep the domains exclusive from one another.

These characteristics illustrate how individuals navigate and manage the interplay between their professional and personal lives. WFC is deemed to happened if an individual faced with the weakly bordered domain.

### Work-Family Enrichment Theory

Work-Family Enrichment Theory proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) postulates that experiences in one role could improve the quality of life of the other role. Work-Family Enrichment Theory dictates that there are three ways in which participation in multiple roles can produce positive outcomes. Firstly, individuals who participate in (work and family roles) and are satisfied with (work and family roles) experience greater wellbeing than those who participate in only one of the roles or who are dissatisfied with one or more of their roles. Second, participation in both work and family roles can buffer individuals from distress in one of the roles. Third, experiences in one role can produce positive experiences and outcomes in the other role.

### METHODOLOGY IN SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

This article is based on a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology. Lame (2019) relates SLR as a research methodology that is transparent and replicatable, which include all relevant evidence on the topic. This study echos the SLR steps proposed by Xiao and Watson (2019) which consists of the following steps indicated in Figure 2.

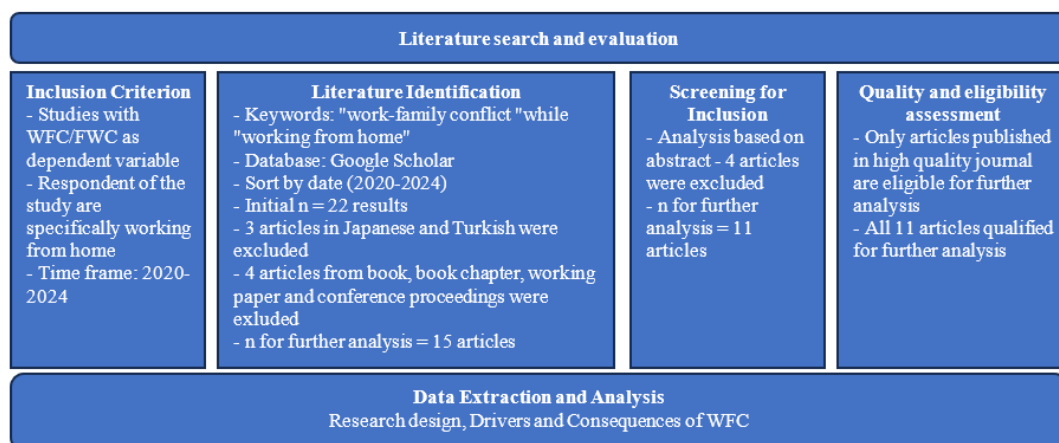


Figure 2. Step-by Step Systematic Literature Review Method

Inclusion criterion were finalized before the literature identification through Goole Scholar begins. The criterion include such as studies with WFC and/or FWC must be the dependent variable as the study conducted mainly on the drivers and consequences of WFC. Next, respondents of the study were provided with work flexibility, specifically working from home. This criteria is included following Marikyan, Papagiannidis, Rana, and Ranjan (2024) recommendations that the environment of remote work may impact differently on employees' performance. In this study, the "home environment" encompasses a shared living space where various family members—such as spouses, children, housemates, and extended family—coexist. This setting can significantly influence daily activities, particularly during working hours, as the presence of multiple individuals may impact focus, productivity, and overall work-life balance. The dynamics of these relationships and the physical space itself can create both opportunities and challenges for those working from home. Only articles published from 2020-2024 were included in the analysis.

Google Scholar serves as a valuable free academic search engine, offering access to a wide range of scholarly sources. While its accuracy may not match that of specialized databases like Scopus or Web of Science, Google Scholar provides researchers with the opportunity to evaluate the credibility of various resources. This accessibility makes it a useful tool for identifying relevant literature, enabling researchers to explore diverse perspectives and findings in their field of study. "Work-family conflict" while "working from home" is used as the main keyword. The quotes ("") were used to ensure exact matches of that phrase in the title and the body text of the document. This method helps to refine results, as it instructs the search engine to treat the phrase as a single unit rather than interpreting each word individually. Without quotes, the search may yield broader results that include documents containing the individual words in any order, which may not be as relevant to the intended query. The articles obtained from the the search were then sorted by date (2020-2024). From the initial set of 22 articles, 3 articles in Japanese and Turkish, as well as 4 articles from books, book chapters, working papers, and conference proceedings, were excluded. This process was repeated over four consecutive months—March, April, May, and June 2024—to ensure that no recent publications were overlooked. By the end of June, it was determined that only 15 articles met the criteria for further analysis.

The 15 articles were screened for inclusion based on their abstracts and findings. This analysis resulted in the exclusion of four articles that did not meet the targeted criteria, leaving 11 articles deemed suitable for further consideration. A quality assessment was then performed to ensure that only those published in reputable journals were included. All 11 articles met the quality criteria and were considered suitable for the study. Finally, data extraction and analysis focused on the research design, as well as the drivers and consequences of work-family conflict (WFC). Findings of the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of Drivers and Consequences of WFC while Working from Home

Articles Name	Authors	Year of Publication	Journal	Research design	Drivers of WFC	Consequences of WFC
Working From Home and Work–Family Conflict: The Importance of Role Salience	Yucel & Laß	2024	Social Indicators Research	Quantitative	Role salience, gender, parenthood status	NA
Double Challenges: How Working From Home Affects Dual-Earner Couples' Work-Family Experiences.	Carpenter & Davis	2024	TIP: The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist	Quantitative	NA	Increase withdrawal from work
Implications of remote work in post-pandemic times: a gender risk profile in Colombian workers	Campos García, Cabrera-García, Docal-Millán, Acuña Arango, & Munevar	2024	Gender in Management	Quantitative	Quality of life, gender	NA

Articles Name	Authors	Year of Publication	Journal	Research design	Drivers of WFC	Consequences of WFC
Information quality, work-family conflict, loneliness, and well-being in remote work settings	Chuang, Chiang, & Lin	2024	Computers in Human Behavior	Quantitative	Information accuracy, Information timeliness	Well-being
The changing dynamics of work from home and its association with sleep disturbance through work-family conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic	Jung, Lim, Cho, Park, & Jeong	2024	Journal of Occupational Health	Quantitative	NA	Sleep disturbance
The effects of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance, work-family conflict and employee burnout	Khalid, Raja, Malik, & Jahanzeb	2023	Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance	Quantitative	Burnout	NA
Null effects of age and gender on worker well-being, work-family conflict and performance while working remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic	Marcus, Aksoy, Bolat, & Bolat	2023	Journal of Managerial Psychology	Quantitative	age, gender and potential caregiving responsibilities	Well-being, Job performance
Division in Gender Roles During the Pandemic Crisis and Smart (Agile) Working	Martini, Mebane, & Greco	2023	Italian Sociological Review	Quantitative	Gender inequality in domestic work	Work-life balance
Distance education and work-family conflict during COVID-19: Evidence from Turkey for a gender-moderated model	Görmüş & Baytur	2023	International Review of Education	Quantitative	Infrastructural and distance education-related challenges, gender	NA
What happened to parents' work-family conflict from before to during COVID-19? Findings from a longitudinal Australian study	Hokke, Bennetts, Love, Leach, Crawford & Cooklin	2023	Community, Work & Family	Quantitative	Gender (women), socio-economic (financial difficulties), care (single parent, younger children) and	NA

Articles Name	Authors	Year of Publication	Journal	Research design	Drivers of WFC	Consequences of WFC
					job (self-employment, long work hours) inequalities	
Establishing a Milestone in Knowledge Delivery by Examining How Academicians' Engagement in Their Job at a Private Higher Educational Institution in Malaysia Is Affected by Work from Home (WFH) Experience	Arumugam, Arumugam, Vashu, & Sethumadava	2023	Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities	Qualitative	Adapting to paradigm shift working from home	Loss of work engagement, socialization, declining performance

### Drivers of Work-Family Conflict for Work from Home Employees

Table 1 provides the summary of drivers and consequences of WFC while working from home based on 11 qualified articles found from 2020-2024 in Google Scholar. Majority of (91%) studies in WFC completed through quantitative research. Among the most regularly studied variables include gender (e.g., Yucel & Laß, 2024; Campos García, Cabrera-García, Docal-Millán, Acuña Arango, & Munevar, 2024; Marcus, Aksoy, Bolat, & Bolat, 2023; Martini, Mebane, & Greco, 2023, Görmüş & Baytur, 2023; Hokke, Bennetts, Love, Leach, Crawford & Cooklin, 2023), inequalities of home responsibilities (e.g., Yucel & Laß, 2024; Marcus, Aksoy, Bolat, & Bolat, 2023, Martini, Mebane, & Greco, 2023; Hokke, Bennetts, Love, Leach, Crawford & Cooklin, 2023).

Drivers of WFC presented in Table 1 have been grouped into three categories of personal, health-related, and job-related factors illustrated in Table 2. Identification of these group is in alignment with Work-Family Border Theory. Personal factors according to Grotkamp, Cibis, Nuchtern, Mittelstaedt, and Seger (2012, p.2), personal factors refer to "particular background of an individual's life and living, including features of the individual that are not part of a health condition or health states, and which can impact functioning positively or negatively". This category of factors is the most frequently examined in relation to work-family conflict among employees working from home. variables included in this category include gender, age, parenthood status, education level, gender role /care giving responsibilities, socio-economic level, marital status, number of children, and readiness to change.

van den Heuvel, Geuskens, Hooftman, Koppes, and van den Bossche (2010, p.4) proposed that health-related factors refer to "general state of health, the type of health condition, and the number of conditions". This study has identified two health-related factors which include quality of life and burnout that could resulted in work-family conflict while working from home.

Meanwhile, job-related factors according to van Rijn, Huisstede, Koes, and Burdorf, (2010) may consist of physical and psychosocial elements. However, since the work functions were accomplished at home, therefore this definition is deemed not suitable with the current setting. To suit with the current context of this study, definition of job-related factors by van den Berg, Manias, and Burger (2008) was adapted in this study. Job-related factors may include resources (information accuracy, information timeliness, employment status and technical infrastructure) and demands (long working hours).

Table 2. Categories of Drivers of WFC while Working from Home

Factors	Personal Factors	Health-related factors	Job-related factors
<b>Definitions</b>	Particular background of an individual's life and living, including features of the individual that are not part of a health condition or health states, and which can impact functioning positively or negatively (Grotkamp, Cibis, Nuchtern, Mittelstaedt, & Seger, 2012, p.2)	General state of health, the type of health condition, and the number of conditions (van den Heuvel, Geuskens, Hooftman, Koppes, and van den Bossche, 2010, p.4)	Job-related factors may include resources (information accuracy, information timeliness, employment status and technical infrastructure) and demands (long working hours) (van den Berg, Manias, & Burger, 2008)
<b>Variables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Parenthood status</li> <li>- Education level</li> <li>- Gender role /care giving responsibilities</li> <li>- Socio-economic level</li> <li>- Marital status</li> <li>- Number of children</li> <li>- Readiness to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of life</li> <li>- Burnout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information accuracy</li> <li>- Information timeliness</li> <li>- Employment status (self-employed &amp; wage and salaried employees)</li> <li>- Long working hours</li> <li>- Technical infrastructure (e.g., computer, etc)</li> </ul>

### Consequences of Work-Family Conflict for Work from Home Employees

Based on the analysis presented in Table 1 and supported by Work-Family Enrichment Theory, this study identifies three types of work-family conflict (WFC) outcomes. First, personal outcomes refer to the effects of WFC on individual well-being, such as sleep disturbance, and work-life balance. Personal outcomes (e.g., well-being) is the most regularly mentioned consequences of WFC e.g., Chuang, Chiang, & Lin, 2024; Marcus, Aksoy, Bolat, & Bolat, 2023). Second, social outcomes encompass the impact of WFC on relationships with family, friends, and colleagues, influencing communication quality and support systems. Lastly, job outcomes relate to how WFC affects job performance, productivity, and career satisfaction. This framework highlights the multifaceted nature of work-family interactions and their implications for individuals' lives. Among the various consequences of work-family conflict (WFC), job performance is the second most studied outcome. Research by Marcus, Aksoy, Bolat, and Bolat (2023) and Arumugam, Arumugam, Vashu, and Sethumadava (2023) further emphasizes the significance of WFC in influencing job performance. Table 3 summarizes the consequences of WFC.

Table 3. Categories of Consequences of WFC while Working from Home

Factors	Personal Outcomes	Social Outcomes	Job Outcomes
<b>Definitions</b>	Effects of WFC on individual well-being	Impact of WFC on relationships with family, friends, and colleagues, influencing communication quality and support systems	WFC affects job performance, productivity, and career satisfaction
<b>Variables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well-being</li> <li>- Sleep disturbance</li> <li>- Work-life balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socialization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Withdrawal from work</li> <li>- Job performance</li> <li>- Work engagement</li> </ul>

## Proposed Framework

Figure 3 illustrates the proposed framework of the study based on reviews of past studies and supported by the two theories of Work-Family Border and Work-Family Enrichment theories. Drivers of WFC were rooted by the Work-Family Border Theory. Meanwhile, the consequences of WFC were supported by Work-Family Enrichment Theory.

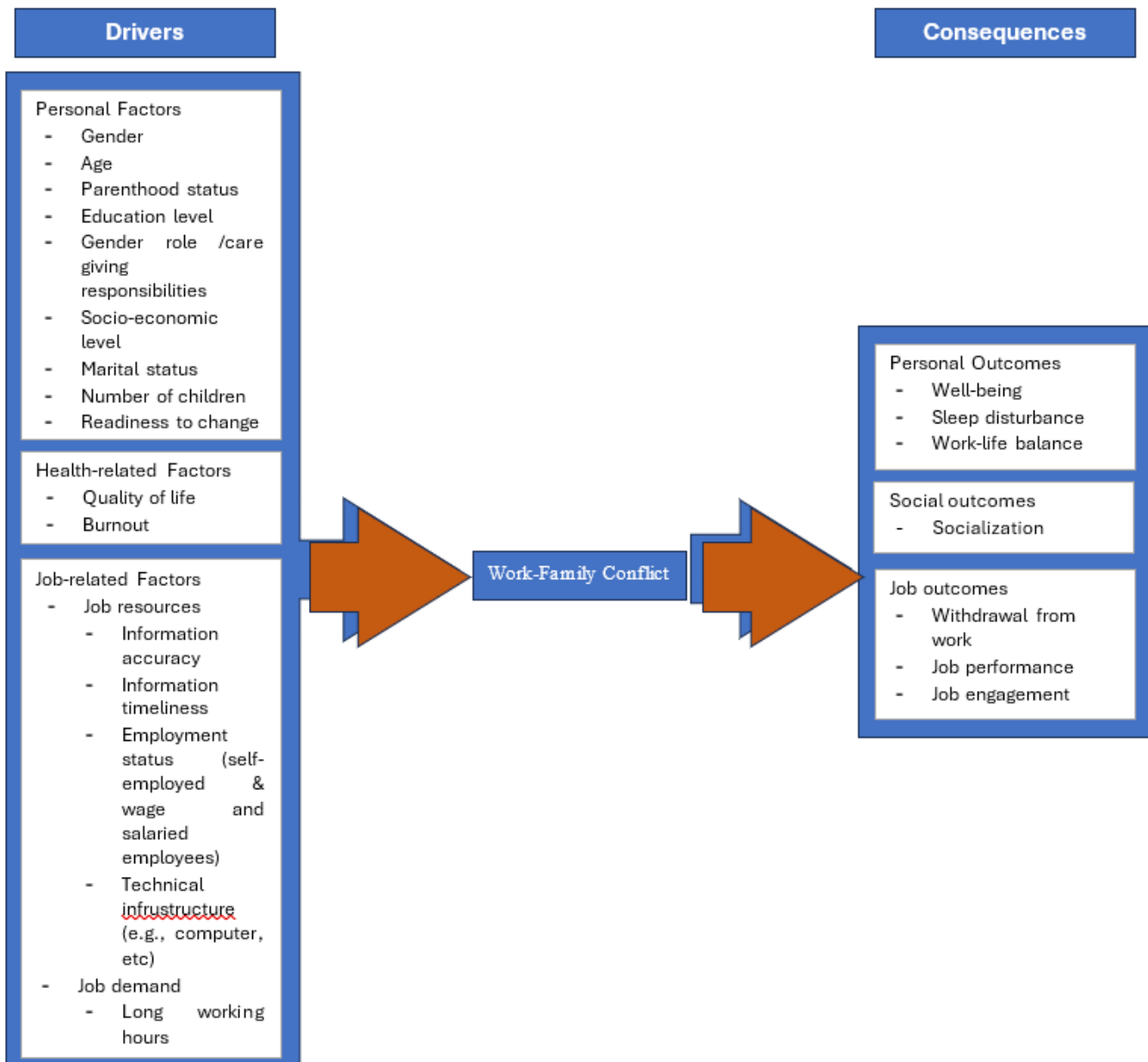


Figure 2. The Proposed Framework

## CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This systematic literature review has illuminated the complex dynamics of work-family conflict (WFC) experienced by employees working from home. By identifying key drivers and consequences of WFC, the study highlights the intricate interplay between personal, health-related, and job-related factors. The findings underscore the need for organizations to develop tailored strategies that address these challenges, ultimately enhancing employee well-being and performance.

Results from the above systematic literature review indicated that there are still limited number of studies that look into the factors associated to WFC and its consequences within 5 years framework. WFC, is a



transforming social issue, which requires continued understanding, particularly after a particular pertinent issue, e.g., Covid-19. Consider the increasing practical interest towards the implementations of WFH, more studies are needed. This understanding is crucial for organizations aiming to mitigate WFC and enhance employee satisfaction and productivity.

The identified consequences (e.g., personal, social, and job outcomes) underscore the pervasive impact of WFC on employees' well-being, relationships, and job performance among those working from home. Organizations should recognize that WFC not only affects individual employees but can also influence team dynamics and overall organizational effectiveness. Organizations should therefore, create a supportive work environment that includes resources such as mental health support, flexible working hours, and access to technology. This can help employees better manage their work-life balance and reduce stress.

Besides, the findings emphasize the necessity for organizations to develop tailored WFH policies that address the unique challenges and drivers of conflict faced by their employees. Policies should consider demographic factors, such as Organizations should actively promote initiatives that encourage work-life balance, such as wellness programs, family-friendly policies, and team-building activities that foster social connections among remote employees. gender and parenthood status, as well as health-related issues like burnout. By addressing these implications and recommendations, organizations can enhance their understanding of work-family conflict and create more effective strategies to support their employees in navigating the complexities of working from home.

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## DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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