



# WORK-FAMILY BALANCE: “A STUDY ON DUALCAREER COUPLES”

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## ABSTRACT

*Dual-career couples are a common phenomenon these days. They often struggle to find a balance between their work and family responsibilities, and organizations worldwide need to be aware of these challenges. This study focuses on the work-family balance of dual-career couples and adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design. Both primary and secondary data were collected through structured questionnaires and in-person interviews with 51 participants. The data was analysed using simple tools such as descriptive statistics, Likert scale, mean and standard deviation, and percentage analysis. The results of the study acknowledge the challenges and stress faced by dual-career couples, but they also believe that working as a couple has a positive impact on their lives.*

## INTRODUCTION

Dual-career couples, where both partners have simultaneous careers, are a widespread and enduring phenomenon reflecting women's growing educational achievements and career ambitions globally (Smith, 1997). In recent decades, many researchers have shown interest in studying work-life balance, with dual-career couples being a major focus in this area. This trend benefits both men's and women's career development. With a substantial increase in women's participation in the labour force, traditional gender roles in the household must be reevaluated. Economic necessities have driven women to seek employment outside the home. Today, most dual-career families are in a state of transition, between the traditional structure and the double-career structure. Only a few egalitarian couples exist in modern society. Traditional family concepts always defined specific roles for men and women, but these roles have evolved with the changing family trends and patterns, particularly the rise of women as the primary economic provider for the family and more recently, men taking on more family responsibilities. This leads to improved career prospects for both partners and a transformation of the family unit, now referred to as a dual-career family. Dual-career families strive to find a balance between their work and family, which requires an equitable division of household tasks. However, due to societal norms, dual-career couples face greater challenges in reconciling their marital commitments and work demands. This paper examines the work-family balance of dual-career couples and the coping strategies they use to maintain this balance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Donna H. Green (1983) cites that Rapoport and Rapoport first introduced the term "dual-career" in 1969. In response to the growing prevalence of dual-career families in North American society, a vast body of literature has emerged. This literature spans a range of sources, including academic articles in professional journals of economics, business, sociology, psychology, and more, as well as self-help and trade books, such as Hall and Hall's "The Two-Career Couple," and even light articles in popular magazines. The author reviews this literature and explores the implications of the dual-career family structure from both an individual and organizational perspective

Delina, G., Raya, R., and Prabhakara, S. (2016) examine the key factors that impact the work-life balance of Indian dual-career couples working in knowledge-based organizations. This empirical study aims to understand how knowledge professionals perceive work-life balance across several constructs. The findings confirm previous research regarding differences between genders and family structures and demonstrate that the constructs of work-life balance significantly affect the respondents' satisfaction with their work-life balance.

Gloria W. Bird and Abrina Schnurman-Crook (2005) provide evidence that dual-career couples adopt professional and family identities that rely on competence and responsibility in both work and family roles. The coping patterns are similar across work and family domains, but strategy use is unique to the field and reflective of the couple's belief in the value of interdependent interactions. This qualitative study of 15 dual-career couples examines the connection between a partner's professional identity



and coping behaviours in response to work and family stressors. The study finds that strong self-identification with professional and family identities was a prominent feature in both individual and couple conversations.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The research questions addressed are:

1. What are the factors that affect the work-life balance of dual-career couples?
2. What challenges do dual-career couples face in balancing work and family?
3. Does having two careers result in work-family conflict for couples?
4. How do dual-career couples manage their time and stress levels?
5. Does having two careers result in increased financial independence for couples?

The study used a descriptive and exploratory research design and collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and in-person interviews with 51 participants. Descriptive statistics, likert scale, mean and standard deviation, and percentage analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study indicate that dual-career couples face challenges and stress in their work-life balance, but they also believe that working as a couple has a positive impact on their lives. The changing dynamics of dual-career families require a more in-depth understanding of their unique needs and challenges. By recognizing and addressing these issues, organizations can support the well-being and success of dual-career couples in the workforce.

### OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To determine the factors affecting the work-life balance of dual-career couples
2. To investigate the methods used by dual-career couples to balance work and family
3. To examine the work-life balance of dual-career individuals.

### METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The study utilizes a descriptive and exploratory research design and incorporates both primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was collected from various journals, magazines, and online sources. The primary data was collected from 51 participants using structured questionnaires and personal interviews. The collected data was analysed using simple statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, Likert scale, and descriptive statistics.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study aims to examine the work-life balance, coping strategies, and determinants of dual-career couples in the global workforce. The study design is both descriptive and exploratory, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to 51 participants, and analysed using descriptive statistics, percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, and the Likert scale. The secondary data was obtained from various journals, magazines, and online sources. The data was analysed using the SPSS software.

### Profile of Respondents

In this study, 51 dual-career couples were surveyed, with a diverse range of careers such as chartered accountants, doctors, lawyers, and nurses. 49% of the respondents were in the age range of 20-30, and over half of them worked in the private sector. 50% of the respondents reported working five days a week.

**Table 1, "Awareness of Spouse's Work Nature," indicates that all of the spouses were aware of their partner's work nature. This enhances the understanding between the couples.**

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	100
No	0	0

**Table 2: Work family balance score of dual career couples.**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
WFB	51	2.40	4.80	3.67	.558
Responses	51				

The table shows the results of the analysis of the Work-Family Balance Score of the 51 respondents. The minimum score was 2.40, while the maximum score was 4.20. The mean score was calculated to be 3.67, with a standard deviation of .558. All variables were analysed to determine the work-family balance score.

Coping strategies adopted by Dual career couples

**Table 3: Proper communication with partners**

Do you have proper communication with your partner	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
All of the time	4	3.16	4.56	3.97	.597
Most of the Time	2	2.40	3.33	2.86	.659
More than half of the time	1	3.30	3.30	3.30	.330
Less than half of the time	17	2.886	4.80	3.68	.415
Some of the time	27	2.53	4.80	3.69	.603

Table demonstrates the impact of proper communication with partners on the work-family balance score. It is evident that couples who have constant communication with their partners have a higher work-family balance score compared to couples who have limited communication. Effective communication serves as an effective coping strategy for dual-career couples as it reduces stress and enhances understanding and companionship between partners.

**Table: 4 Practicing Yoga**

Table shows the impact of exercise and yoga practices on work-family balance score. The results indicate that engaging in exercise and yoga activities have a significant impact on improving work-family balance. Hence, it can be concluded that incorporating exercise and yoga into daily routines is an effective coping strategy for dual-career couples in managing stress related to work and family and promoting better health.

Do you follow any exercise or yoga practices for reducing stress	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
All of the Time	27	2.40	4.80	3.61	.492
Most of the time	5	3.16	4.56	3.61	.568
More than half of the time	5	2.76	3.96	3.57	.470
Less than half of the Time	9	2.86	4.73	3.77	.636

**Table 5: Preparing to-do-list**

Table illustrates the relationship between the work-family balance score and preparing a to-do list. The results show that there is no significant correlation between the two. However, respondents who prepare a to-do list more frequently tend to have a better work-family balance score compared to those who prepare it only sometimes.

Do you prepare any to-do-list for managing time	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
All of the Time	15	2.40	4.13	3.47	.505
Most of the time	7	3.23	4.56	3.56	.465
More than half of the time	9	3.30	4.80	3.92	.525
Less than half of the time	10	3.16	4.73	3.78	.478
Some of the time	10	2.53	4.80	3.71	.746

**Table 6: Weekend outings**

Table clearly demonstrates that engaging in weekend outings is positively associated with high work-family balance. The mean deviation also shows a gradual increase in this case. This suggests that spending time together during the weekends by going out can help refresh the mind and reduce stress from work, leading to a better work-family balance score.

Do you engage in weekend outings with your family	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
All of the time	23	2.40	4.56	3.53	.504
Most of the time	7	2.86	4.20	3.50	.469
More than half of the time	3	3.53	3.70	3.62	.083
Less than half of the time	10	3.16	4.16	3.69	.367
Some of the time	8	2.53	4.80	4.21	.792

**Table 7: Correlation analysis of job satisfaction and work family balance**

Table shows a positive correlation between work-family balance score and job satisfaction score. When the job satisfaction score increases, it has a positive impact on the work-family balance score.



Work family balance score			Job satisfaction score
WFBS	Pearson correlation	1	.312*
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.026
	N	51	51
JSS	Pearson correlation	.312*	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.026	
	N	51	51

**Table 8: Correlation analysis of paid working hours and work-family balance**

Work family balance score			Paid work hours
WFBS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.184
	Sig (2-tailed)		.196
	N	51	51
Paid work hours	Pearson Correlation	-.184	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.196	
	N	51	51

Table clearly shows a negative correlation between work hours and work-family balance score, although the correlation is not statistically significant. It indicates that as the number of working hour's increases, there is a decrease in the work-family balance score.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The majority of the respondents are satisfied with their jobs, which allow them to advance their careers and learn new skills, improving their work-family balance. All respondents were aware of the nature of their spouse's work. Over half of the respondents reported feeling stressed when considering their responsibilities both at work and at home. This stress has a moderate impact on their work-family balance. The main challenges faced by dual-career couples include time pressure and emotional and physical exhaustion during work hours. To mitigate these challenges, the couples utilize various coping strategies such as maintaining proper communication with their partners, practicing yoga and exercise, preparing to-do lists, and taking weekend outings. These strategies help improve the couples' work-family balance and foster better understanding and companionship within the family. Most companies provide maternity leave for their employees, and most dual-career couples view their situation positively. The mean value of the work-family balance score is 3.67, indicating an average balance. A positive correlation was found between job satisfaction and work-family balance, meaning that individuals are more satisfied with their work when they are able to maintain a good work-family balance. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between hours spent at work and work-family balance, as longer work hours negatively impact the balance between work and family.

## CONCLUSION

Achieving a healthy balance between work and life is essential for one's overall well-being and success. Today, dual-career couples are a common sight, with young couples entering the workforce and building their careers and families together. However, this lifestyle can bring about challenges in maintaining a work-life balance. This study aims to explore the experiences of dual-career couples and the strategies they use to achieve balance. The study analyses various factors that impact the work-family balance of dual-career couples, as well as the positive impact of their chosen coping strategies. Despite the challenges and stress that dual-career couples face, they view their dual-career lifestyles as a positive aspect of their lives.

By adopting effective coping strategies, dual-career couples can successfully balance their work and family responsibilities. As the number of dual-career couples continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important for families and organizations to support them in achieving a work-life balance.



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