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Article

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A conceptual framework for the work–life balance of police officers: a post-COVID-19 perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study has undertaken a comprehensive review of literature from 2019 to 2021, encompassing work/life balance review articles to identify the research gap in the work/life balance area. Employing the PRISMA framework for systematic literature review, the study identified prospective areas for future research on work/life balance and variables associated with work/life balance in the police sector. The articles published between 2013 and 2023 relating to the police force over the past decade were reviewed to frame a conceptual framework for the work/life balance of police officers. Further literature review attests that there is a research gap in the police sector. The primary goal is to identify the area (work/life balance in the police sector) that lacked research and establish a conceptual framework addressing the work/life balance of police officers, even in challenging situations like COVID-19. The articles related to police from 2013 to 2023 were scrutinised through the PRISMA framework to identify variables necessary for constructing the conceptual framework for police officers. This article, set in the post-COVID-19 era, delves into the factors influencing police officers' capacity to uphold a healthy work–life balance. By pinpointing those research gaps, the article proposes a conceptual framework designed to help police officers balance their professional and personal lives. Such a framework can aid organisations in formulating effective strategies for employee well-being, facilitating work–life balance even in challenging circumstances, such as those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Investigating work/life balance within the police force holds substantial advantages for the community and law enforcement organisations. Foremost, a police force that maintains equilibrium and mental well-being is better equipped to safeguard and serve the public. This research aims to pave the way for formulating policies and methodologies that strengthen the welfare of officers, resulting in heightened levels of public safety. When officers have ample time for rest and personal life, they are more inclined to make rational decisions, exhibit sound judgment, and respond effectively to challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. Delving into this area of research sheds light on the intricate challenges police officers face as they strive to harmonize their personal and professional lives, pinpointing areas necessitating additional support and resources. By addressing these hurdles, police departments can cultivate a more favourable work environment, ultimately benefiting the community.

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Introduction

Over the past 50 years, changes in work, jobs, gender roles, and families have led to increased research on work/life balance (Powell et al., 2019). From 1970 to 1977, the phrases 'work/life', 'family', 'work', and 'non-work' generated only 68 hits. However, in 2010, there were more than 5000 hits (Powell et al., 2019). Longer working hours demanded by companies often result in less time for other

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responsibilities in life, depending on the organisation and type of employment. Additionally, the participation of both men and women in the workforce has resulted in less time for other responsibilities in life. Traditionally, men focused on their jobs as the 'breadwinners', while women took care of the house as the 'homemakers' (Asiedu-Appiah & Zoogah, 2019; Powell et al., 2019; Wood & Eagly, 2012). However, globalisation and liberalisation have enabled women to enter the workforce and raise family incomes to levels comparable to their male counterparts, allowing them to balance work and life. Despite this progress, women with professional and family duties still bear an unequal burden, making it challenging to manage both responsibilities and the imbalance of work and life (Lekchiri & Eversole, 2020). With dual earners and the blending of gender roles brought on by the same equality, the family structure has changed (Powell et al., 2019), leaving less time for managing personal and family responsibilities.

The evolving family structure significantly impacts both work and personal life, creating a ripple effect in both areas. As remote work gains traction in the post-pandemic era, the relevance of work-life balance for police officers comes into question. However, the answer is clear: yes, it is still essential. While some employees may solely complete office tasks online from home, police officers have diverse responsibilities requiring their physical presence. These include interrogating suspects, solving crimes, and attending private meetings. Although there may be some administrative tasks that can be completed remotely, the blending of work and personal life occurs less frequently in policing compared to other professions.

According to Kyprianides et al. (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on police practices and mental health. Police officers must operate more effectively and prioritise the general public's safety in the post-pandemic era (Kyprianides et al., 2021). However, the pandemic has presented challenges for police officers in effectively managing their professional duties and personal responsibilities. Despite these challenges, police officers have continued investigating crimes and adapting to the new regulations and facing difficulties at work while interacting with a significant portion of society. The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to changes in government policies and guidelines, making it increasingly difficult for police personnel to do their jobs. Notably, police officers have been particularly vulnerable to the virus due to their front-line work, which has often resulted in feelings of sadness and anxiety (Kyprianides et al., 2021). Additionally, the pandemic has increased the strain on police officers and other policing resources, making it crucial to evaluate how police officers manage their professional and personal lives. In this study, a conceptual framework is put forth to address police officers' capacity to manage professional and personal obligations in the wake of the pandemic, as it is crucial to evaluate how police officers manage their professional and personal lives. Through the research gap, this study examines the theoretical underpinnings of police officers' work-life balance.

Review of literature

Work/life balance and Police

The phrase 'work/life balance' has been used in ordinary speech since 1986 (Lockwood, 2003). Work/family balance was once more frequently utilised than work/life balance. The term 'balance' is a complex one in the English language and has several different meanings (Guest, 2002). A 'balance' is a term that refers to a set of scales, a weighing instrument, and the regulating mechanism in a clock. Balance occurs when there is an 'equal distribution of weight or amount' using scales (Guest, 2002). Furthermore, the kind of balance that many people seek may include different weights for each side. However, it can also refer to the 'stability of body and mind', both physically and psychologically (Guest, 2002). A person employs work/life balance to set aside specific time for work and non-work-related activities. Thomas Kalliath, a professor and researcher in work-family conflict and enrichment and work engagement, stated that actions carried out in both work and non-work domains are included in work/life balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). The concept of work-life balance today encompasses both work-related and non-work-related activities (Lockwood, 2003). The competing responsibilities that today's workforce must manage—work, kids, housework, volunteering, and taking care of

aging parents and spouses—put stress on individuals, families, and the communities in which they reside, making it difficult to balance work and life (Dhas, 2015). This challenge is further intensified by the escalation in female labour force participation, the rise in single-parent households, and the prevalence of dual-earner families, all of which contribute to the growing complexity of managing multiple responsibilities (Dhas, 2015).

It is essential to understand the work/life balance of the police force who are responsible for safeguarding the nation. Policing, characterised by its involvement with cases of abused women and children, human suffering, and the necessity for sudden decisions with potential life-or-death consequences, is commonly perceived as more stressful than many other occupations (Viegas & Henriques, 2020). It also includes reducing crimes that affect people and property, providing emergency services, and investigating crimes to gather evidence. Because of their circumstances at work, police officers experience stress. Officers must recall every action taken in their presence and report it in the format specified (Gutshall et al., 2017). The job is regarded as one of the most stressful due to the irregular long hours and the nature of their work, adversely affecting police officers' mental and physical health (Aytac, 2015). During COVID-19, the day-to-day responsibilities of police officers changed due to a decrease in theft and burglary cases and an increase in domestic violence and child abuse cases due to the pandemic (Mohler et al., 2020). Due to the nature of their jobs, they are expected to work and remain calm in all circumstances, even when their lives are at risk (Gutshall et al., 2017).

Furthermore, they contend with an increasing demand stemming from public occurrences such as terrorist attacks, political events, criminal activities, and incidents like the COVID-19 pandemic. Police officers' working conditions harm their working memory and cognitive performance (Gutshall et al., 2017). In addition, stress symptoms, stress sources, and anger are related to each other, affecting their mental health altogether. As a result of higher stress levels, there are more physical and psychological issues among police officers (Aytac, 2015). Anyhow, it has been seen that workers with a strong work/life balance have fewer mental health problems and fewer unfavourable attitudes towards mental health problems. Therefore, mental health problems and attitudes are associated with work/life balance (Kotera et al., 2019). In order to achieve a work–life balance where health is valued equally by a family (Gragnano et al., 2020), it is crucial for organisations, including police departments, to focus on the well-being of their workforce. To be more precise, when coping with everyday stressors, grateful people have an optimistic perspective toward themselves and help relieve the adverse effects of stressors, which increases resilience and raises levels of well-being (Kong et al., 2020). Support from family, friends, organisations, supervisors, and co-workers is necessary to build resilience among employees to reduce stress levels (Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017), with reduced work hours and hiring more workforce.

The police profession has a very high level of occupational stress that negatively impacts both spheres (Viegas & Henriques, 2020). Uncertain workplace conditions such as isolation, which involves working alone, experiencing organisational isolation, and feeling unloved and uncared for, impact the well-being and job of police officers (Ricciardelli, 2018). Occupational stress harms job satisfaction and employee performance (Nisar & Rasheed, 2019). The conditions mentioned above are related to the work/life balance concept (Guest, 2002), which states that individuals' work and home cultures also determine the balance between their work and personal lives. The high levels of stress that come with being a police officer affect both work and personal life (Viegas & Henriques, 2020). Work and family are considered a person's two primary spheres of existence. Police officers experience high stress levels and various unpleasant scenarios at work, reducing job satisfaction (Viegas & Henriques, 2020). Like negative work features, low levels of positive work aspects, and work support, which are also associated with higher levels of depression and stress (Nelson & Smith, 2016), support for work/life balance strategies within organisations lessen the adverse effects of work on employees (Poulose & Dhal, 2020). Enhancing work/life quality in organisations supports employee productivity, skill deployment, and work/life balance (Bhende et al., 2020). The best work/life balance practices and work/life balance programs require favourable interpersonal and organisational support among managers, supervisors, and co-workers

(Olumuyiwa Oludayo & Ojo Omonijo, 2020), as this improves the quality of work and life. Since work/life quality affects work/life balance, support from the company, manager, co-workers, friends, and family can help to improve it. According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), a renowned researcher and professor in employee–organisation interactions, employee engagement, and innovation, mentioned organisational support is crucial since it shows that the company values and cares for its employees. An organisation must provide employees with work/life balance policies and implement coping strategies to minimise mental health concerns to achieve good company and employee performance and improve employee and company performance (Wiradendi Wolor et al., 2020). Police officers have also responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by safeguarding the public from danger, handling civil unrest, looking into crimes, and addressing the challenges of meeting the growing demands even in scenarios like COVID-19 (Tehrani, 2022). In contrast to most previous significant events, COVID-19 has remained a severe public health emergency for an extended time, making the situation much more challenging due to this pandemic (Tehrani, 2022). All these job-related situations and conditions impact police officers' work–life balance and mental and physical health.

All the events mentioned above, circumstances, and conditions influence individuals' professional and personal aspects (Staines, 1980). A positive work environment contributes to contentment in one's personal life, thereby establishing a parallel between events in the work and family domains (Staines, 1980). Enhancing job satisfaction and cultivating resilience is crucial for the above reasons, as it enhances individuals' capacity to cope with the inherent stressors associated with policing roles and working conditions (Hesketh et al., 2019). Therefore, it has become essential to examine the work/life balance of police officers. This article aims to identify the research gap in the work/life balance area and develop a conceptual framework for police officers.

Objective

The article aims to identify the research gap in the area of work/life balance through review articles. The research gap in work/life balance can be seen in two articles. Rashmi and Kataria (2021) mentioned the research gap within any sector related to contextual (situational), psychological, and organisational factors in work/life balance in developed and developing economies. Thilagavathy and Geetha (2020) found a sector-wise research gap; the police sector is one of them in developed and developing countries. Then, this article aims to develop a conceptual framework for police officers to balance work and life even in challenging circumstances, such as those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research gap

Extensive research has been conducted on work–life balance across various industries. Notably, most of this research has focused on the service sector, while work/life balance needs to be studied more in the police sector (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020). Rashmi and Kataria (2021) mentioned the need to examine how contextual (situational) factors, psychological factors, and organisational culture affect work/life balance in developed and developing economies. From the above two papers, it is understood that there is a need to study work/life balance in the police sector considering contextual (family and friends support), psychological resources (resilience), and organisational culture (supervisor, co-worker, and organisational support) (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020). Moreover, in their systematic literature review, Singh et al. (2022) discovered only one research article addressing work/family conflict within the context of police. Additionally, the systematic literature review following the PRISMA framework on the police sector for framing the conceptual model gave points that there is a lack of research in the police sector in the domain of work/life balance.

The existence of a research gap within the police sector is perceptible, by the aforementioned researchers, and the systematic literature review reveal the existing research gap to be addressed. Regarding the variables in the study, the combined (social support) and single effect of the supervisor, co-worker, family, and friends, and organisational support can be studied as there is a research gap (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020) and also a systematic literature review found that these variables are not used in the context of work/life balance in police officers. A thematic analysis of police literature spanning from 2013 to 2023 reveals a recurring focus on the importance of resilience in enhancing the overall well-being of the police workforce (Hesketh et al., 2015). Additionally, the literature consistently underscores job satisfaction as a pivotal factor influencing police officers in executing their duties (Paoline & Gau, 2019). Also, the literature review found that research needs to be done considering social support, job satisfaction, and resilience relating to the work/life balance of police officers.

Methodology

This research article aims to identify the research gap in work/life balance. The search was conducted through a database provided by the University, which has access to databases like Sage, Taylor and Francis, and Springer. Search terms such as 'Work-Life Balance' and 'Balancing Work-Life' were used to find articles published between 2019 and 2021. A total of 121 articles related to the search terms were found. The search results were filtered using the journal option and $n=65$ articles were accessible in full text. The search was then refined to focus on review articles. Through Mendeley and inclusion and exclusion criteria, articles were screened for duplication and relevancy. $N=2$ review articles were identified for developing the conceptual model and finding the research gap.

Scholarly research articles related to police were identified using the search terms 'Police', 'Police-officers', and 'Policing' for the period between 2013 and 2023 to frame the conceptual framework. A total of $n=254$ articles were found. The search results were filtered using the journal option, and $n=84$ articles were accessible in full text. Through inclusion and exclusion criteria, selected research articles were screened for duplication and the relevance in Mendeley. $N=44$ articles were selected to identify the variables related to police officers' work and life. Of these, nine articles specifically addressed keywords like 'work', 'life', 'work/life', and 'work/family'.

These nine articles highlighted variables such as well-being, emotional intelligence, organizational support, resilience, work/life balance, stress, gender, job stress, job satisfaction, stress, and turnover intentions. In these variables, job satisfaction appeared most frequently in 22 articles, resilience in 10 articles, and work/life balance and emotional intelligence in only one article among the selected $n=44$ articles. The literature review identified a need to study work/life balance in the police sector. For thematic analysis, $n=24$ articles were selected using the variables identified through the keywords 'work', 'life', 'work/life', and 'work/family'. It is found that the key to maintaining and enhancing the well-being of the police workforce is increasing their resilience (Hesketh et al., 2015), and one of the critical elements for police officers to have a good life is job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2016). Also, job satisfaction is pivotal in influencing police officers to execute their duties (Paoline & Gau, 2019). $N=24$ articles are selected to frame the conceptual framework through thematic analysis (Tables 1 and 2; Figures 1 and 2).

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion parameters for identifying the research gap.

Inclusion criterion	Exclusion criterion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles from business and management, psychology and social sciences subjects were included. Review papers Papers published in English language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles from the subjects which are not in the inclusion criterion. Empirical papers Books, dissertations, book reviews and conference proceedings Papers published other than in English language

Source: Singh et al. (2022) and Author's work.

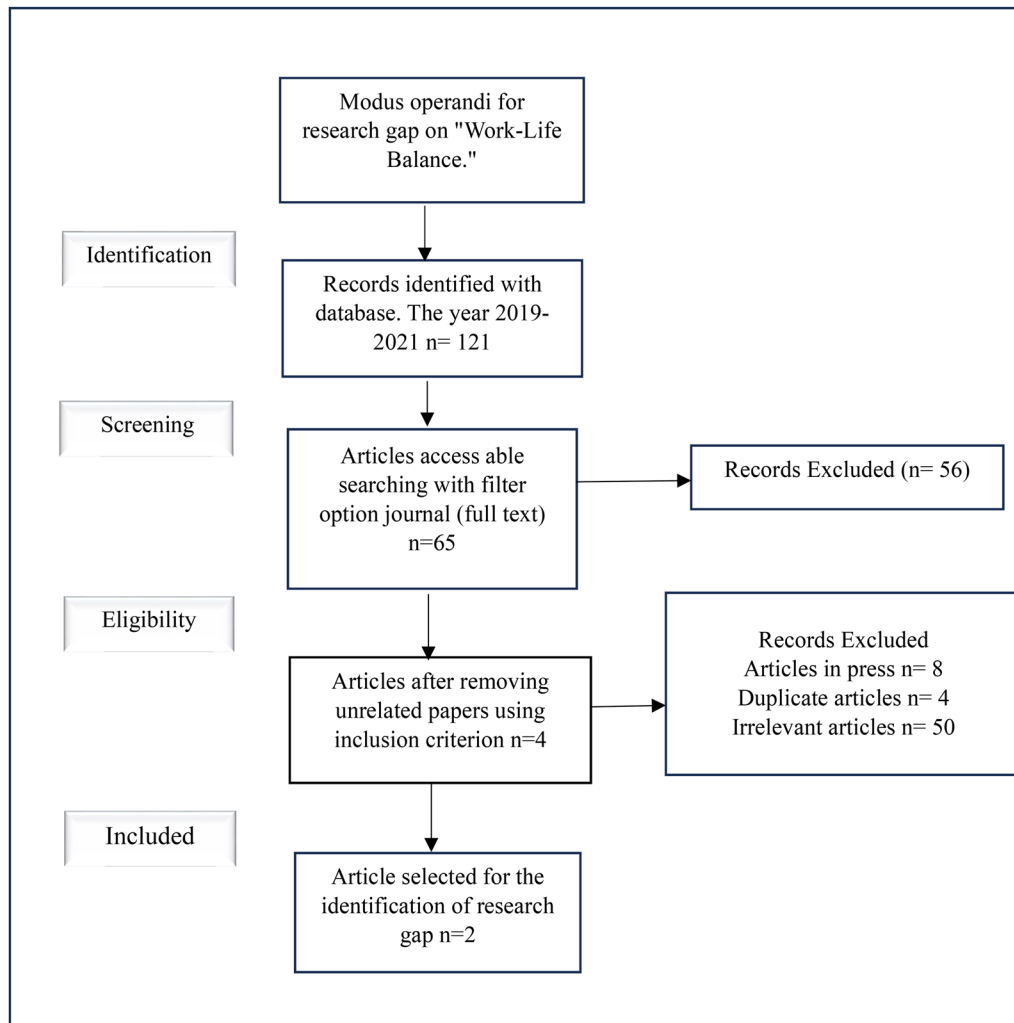


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart for Identification of research gap on work/life balance.

Source: Moher et al. (2009) and Author's work.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion parameters for identifying the variables for conceptual framework.

Inclusion Criterion	Exclusion criterion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles from business and management, psychology and social sciences subjects were included. Research papers Only papers published in English language In accessible articles to identify the variables for conceptual framework keywords like "Work", "Life", "Work/life" and "Work/family" were used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles from the subjects which are not in the inclusion criterion. Papers published other than in English language Books, dissertations, book reviews and conference proceedings Review papers

Source: Singh et al. (2022) and Author's work.

A theoretical basis for the development of the conceptual framework

The spillover and conservation of resource theories are considered as the theoretical foundation for the current study. The "Conservation of Resources" (COR) theory is introduced in 1989 by author and researcher Steven E. Hobfoll in stress, anxiety, and resilience. In Hobfoll's (1989) opinion, the primary motivation of individuals is accumulating, preserving, and developing their resources to safeguard their well-being and the social ties holding them together. Such an idea offers a framework for preserving the resources required for performing appropriate behaviours. According to COR theory, resources are crucial in stressful situations that help individuals cope with stress. These resources include objects (a house and a car), personal characteristics (self-esteem, appearance), conditions (a happy marriage and social

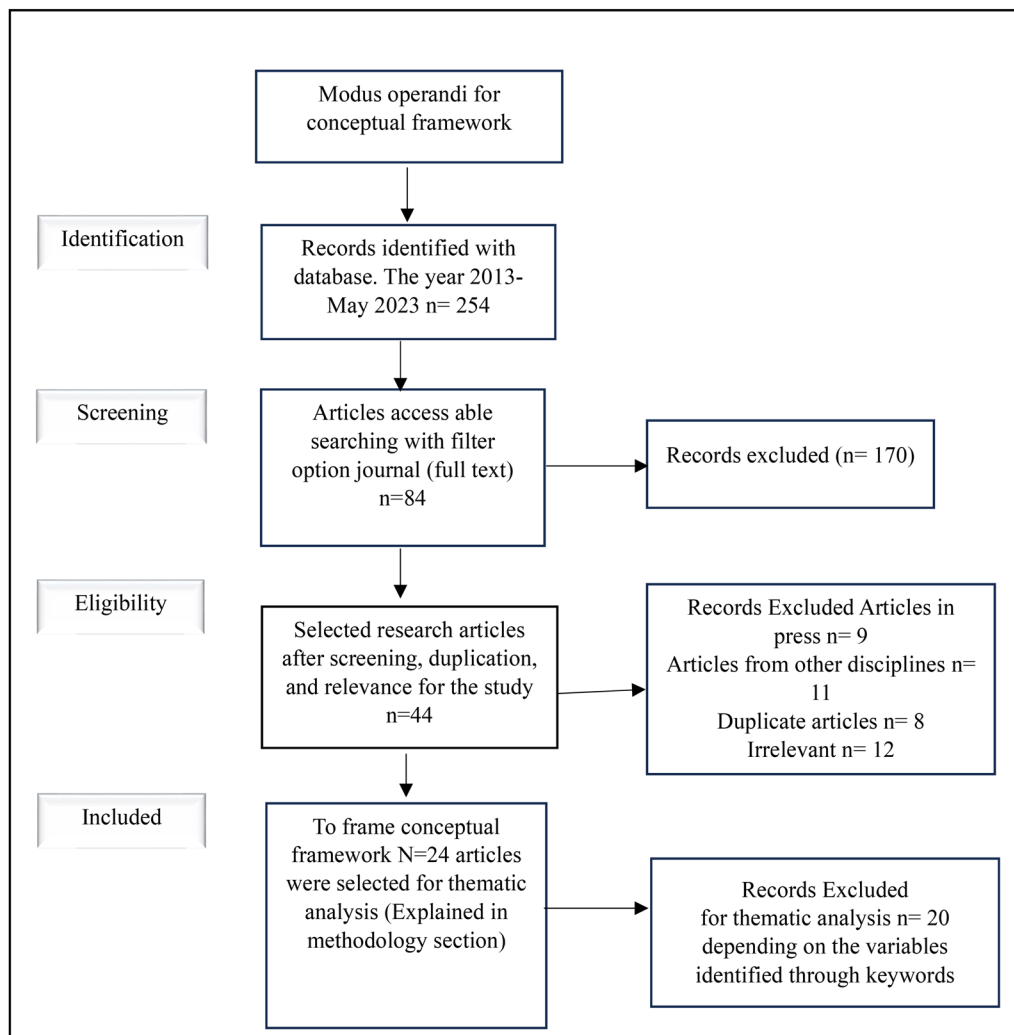


Figure 2. PRISMA flow chart for identifying the variables for conceptual framework of police officers.

Source: Moher et al. (2009) and Author's work.

support), as well as energies (knowledge, money, and time) that individuals value and that enable them to meet demands more quickly than they could without them (Hobfoll, 1989). As per the theoretical readings, resilience becomes one of the personal characteristics. Moreover, looking at Staines's (1980) spillover theory, the repercussions of work reflect at home. Individuals who are content at work are typically content at home. Similarly, dissatisfaction at work might result in a strained relationship with family members.

Conceptual framework

Saunders et al. (2007) state that "a conceptual framework presents the researcher's perspective on the concept involved in the research and relationship between the concepts." The evaluation of the literature results in the conceptual framework, which serves as a guide for the research (Abdullah Al Mamun & Nazmul Hasan, 2017). The elements or variables for this conceptual framework were drawn from a literature review and a research gap about work-life balance. Guest (2002), in his model, mentioned culture at work and home effect (social support being one of the determinants), an individual's work/life balance, and also, according to Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory. Every individual's attempt to have a work/life balance (dependent variable) achieving equilibrium between professional and personal life using resources, that is, conditions like social support (independent variables), personal characteristics like resilience (Hobfoll, 1989) (a mediating variable), to maintain work-life balance

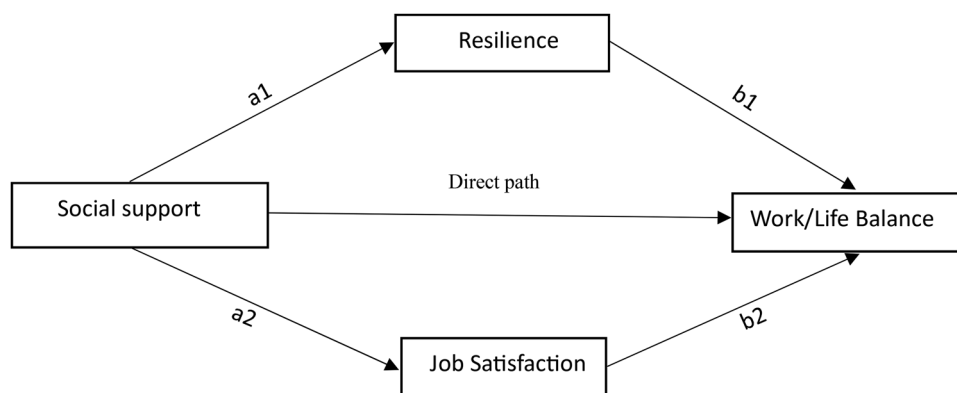


Figure 3. Illustration of conceptual framework.
Source: Author's work.

during difficult and stressful times. Staines's (1980) spillover theory holds that what happens at work spills over to the home environment, according to which job satisfaction (the mediating variable) leads to work/life balance. This research paper's conceptual framework views social support as an independent variable. It has four sub-variables: supervisor, co-worker, organisational, and family and friend support. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be explained by resilience and job satisfaction as mediating variables. Consequently, work/life balance becomes a dependent variable.

In the conceptual framework, variables can be measured using the following scales.

Social support is a 10-item scale given by Yucel and Minnotte (2017) with four dimensions as mentioned above (Figure 3). One or more variables in social support can be called social support. From the literature, it is found that sources such as significant others, family and friends are termed social support by Zimet et al. (1988). Kurtuluş et al. (2023) termed support from colleagues and managers as social support for the scale developed by Hansen et al. (2009). Xiao (1994), in their social support scale, termed the support from family, friends and social organisations as social support. Köse et al. (2021) termed support from a supervisor, co-worker, and manager as social support. Also, social support is defined as "social interactions or relationships that offer someone practical help or a sense of attachment to an individual or a group of individuals that are viewed as loving or caring" (Hobfoll & Stokes, 1988, p. 499). From the literature, we term the two or more supports from supervisors, co-workers, organisations, and family and friends as social support. The above scale can be used to identify the combined effect of all four supports, and for the single effect, different scales can be used for that particular sub-variable. The assessment of resilience can be conducted using a brief 6-item scale developed by Smith et al. (2008). Job satisfaction, on the other hand, can be measured through a 5-item scale provided by Lund (2003). Additionally, the Fisher McAuley work/life balance scale, condensed to 15 items by Hayman (2005), is a suitable scale for evaluating work/life balance. Items of each scale are given in the appendix.

Mediating Path: a1 and b1 from social support to work/life balance through resilience.

a2 and b2 from social support to work/life balance through job satisfaction.

Influencing factors for the work/life balance of police officers

Social support

Social support, both within and outside the workplace, is vital to the well-being of employees. A strong support network, including colleagues, friends, and family, provides emotional support, encouragement, and practical assistance during stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Research consistently shows that people with high levels of social support act as buffers against stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985), increase job satisfaction, improve mental health, and effectively navigate work challenges. Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation

of Resources theory reveals that conditions like social support improve individuals' work/life balance. Guest (2002) states that in the work/life balance model, social support is one of the determinants of home and work culture, directly impacting individuals' work/life balance. Cohen and Wills (1985) defined social support as a person's belief or awareness about the presence of social resources. Yucel (2020), in his paper, has referred to Hobfoll and Stokes' definition of social support as "social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance or with a feeling of attachment to a person or group that is perceived as caring or loving." Social support can be from both the work and home domains, friends and family support can be from the home domain. Supervisors, co-workers, and organisational support can be from the workplace (Yucel & Minnotte, 2017).

The organisation, supervisor, co-workers, family, and friends support the employee's work/life balance (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; Aras et al., 2022) and well-being (Padhy et al., 2022). In the workplace, individuals' psychological empowerment and innovative work behaviour are associated with support from supervisors and co-workers (Rehman et al., 2019), and social support reduces burnout, especially from friends (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003). In addition to that, workplace support shapes life satisfaction by facilitating a positive environment to reduce work–family conflict and poor mental health. The employees' mental health and life satisfaction are considerably affected by the low support from the workplace (Yucel & Minnotte, 2017) which in turn affects the work/life balance. Police are more stressed than usual; the higher the stress, the lower the well-being (Farr-Wharton et al., 2016), and support from organisations, supervisors, and co-workers is significantly related to employee safety and health compliance (Puah et al., 2016). The effectiveness and behaviour of police officers are influenced by organisational support (Boateng & Wu, 2018), which helps employees balance work and life (Baral & Sampath, 2019). Support from the organisation, colleagues, and supervisors increases job satisfaction among individuals (Yucel, 2020). Also, the work/life balance policies in the organisations increase work/life balance in employees through social support (Uddin et al., 2020). Social support with resilience (protecting against risk factors) leads to work/life balance (Köse et al., 2021). For this reason, organisation, supervisory support, co-worker support, and family and friend support are essential. It is imperative to have social support to balance the work and lives of police officers.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an individual's general contentment and fulfilment with their employment. It comprises a variety of elements that provide a positive atmosphere for working. Employees who remain content in their jobs display higher engagement, productivity, and commitment (Qureshi et al., 2016). An individual often finds purpose and meaning in their work when their work fits with their talents, interests, skills, and values. Factors such as supportive and respectful colleagues, a healthy work–life balance, opportunities for growth and development, fair compensation, and recognition for their contributions all contribute to job satisfaction (Maurya, 2019). Employees who feel challenged, appreciated, and satisfied with their work result in increased motivation and higher-quality work output. Ultimately, job satisfaction is vital in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee well-being, which is part of the work/life balance (Guest, 2002). Work/life balance promotes job satisfaction, whereas work/life imbalance promotes unhappiness at work (Guest, 2002). Work–life balance is critical to achieving job satisfaction and reducing stress and depressive symptoms (Haar et al., 2014). The mismatch between work and life brought on by the spillover effect from work has resulted in job discontent (Kaliannan et al., 2016). Work–life balance is possible for employees who are very satisfied with their jobs (Aruldoss et al., 2020). Work/life balance, therefore, is positively associated with job satisfaction.

Moreover, work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts are significantly influenced by job satisfaction (Yucel, 2020). The individuals most in demand for their jobs exhibit less imbalance between work and life (Yucel, 2020). Employees who are less satisfied with their jobs have less organisational, supervisor, and co-worker support (Yucel, 2020). Employees with organisational and supervisory support have job satisfaction (Kumar, 2017). Work/life imbalance and job satisfaction are negatively related, affecting the work/life situations of the professional's well-being (De Clercq et al., 2021). When there is a conflict

between work and family, police officers' job satisfaction decreases (Viegas & Henriques, 2020). Police officers are content when they enjoy their profession, are happy with their salary, have a manageable workload, and have a positive attitude towards their employment (Kumar, 2017). As a result, a reduction in work–family conflict is observed (Viegas & Henriques, 2020), and achieving work/life balance is facilitated through enhanced job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2020; Daud, 2010). The shreds of evidence from the literature show that there are only a few studies suggesting that work–life balance is an outcome of job satisfaction. So, there needs to be more research on job satisfaction influencing work–life balance in police officers. Staines's (1980) spillover theory states that work–life balance results from job satisfaction. He points out that, what happens at work affects the functioning of home as well. Based on spillover theory, the current study addresses job satisfaction as a mediator between social support and work/life balance.

Resilience

Resilience refers to the capacity to rebound or recover from difficulties, challenges, or adversity (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007; Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017). It is the capacity to adapt, grow, and thrive in the face of stress, trauma, or setbacks (Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017). It is not about avoiding or eliminating difficulties; resilience is about learning to navigate and deal with them successfully (Chitra & Karunanidhi, 2018; Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017). Resilience is negotiating and overcoming adversity, setbacks, and stressful situations (Chitra & Karunanidhi, 2018; Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017). A strong sense of inner strength, emotional fortitude, mental toughness, and a positive outlook in the face of adversity enables people to resolve and continue when faced with problems (Ahern, 2006; Grafton et al., 2010). Resilient people have a flexible outlook, understanding that setbacks are often opportunities for growth and learning. Additionally, individuals acknowledge and deal with challenging feelings while cultivating optimism, hope, and thankfulness. (Edward et al., 2009). Then, overwhelmed by adversity, they harness their resilience to develop effective coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills (Wu et al., 2012).

Resilient individuals draw strength from their connections by leaning on others, seeking help when needed, and offering support in return. In literary works, resilience is defined in a variety of ways. 'Resilience' measures, defines and recognises the ability of individuals who work in challenging and difficult situations and realise and develop their skills, even in unfavourable environmental situations (Riley, 2012). Richardson (2002) stated, 'The process of dealing with stress sources changes difficulties, or opportunities, resulting in the identification, strengthening, and enrichment of strength characteristics, or protective factors'. Connor and Davidson (2003) defined resilience as 'a measure of stress coping ability and, as such, could be an important target of treatment in anxiety, depression, and stress reactions'. Ann Masten defined resilience as "Resilience can help us adapt and get through the difficulties, challenges, and unexpected situations that life throws at us" (Southwick et al., 2014). She is well-recognised for her study on the development of resilience in children. The capacity of individuals to bounce back from stressful events and regain the abilities and behaviours they had prior to the challenging situations is what Garmezy (1991) characterised as resilience. According to Dunn et al. (2008), resilience enables people to outperform their peers and preserve their well-being even in high-stress situations. In policing, 'Resilience research offers the ability to improve understanding of this population and offer insight into potential therapies due to the uncontrolled nature of stressors in policing' (Chitra & Karunanidhi, 2018).

Resilience is a crucial attribute that assists individuals in navigating challenging and stressful situations in both professional and personal domains. Research offers convincing evidence that resilient people can handle the demanding nature of police and an unpredictable working environment (Hesketh et al., 2015). Building resilience involves increasing well-being, recognising rights, and investing in resources, activities, and interpersonal connections that lower risk (Smyth & Sweetman, 2015). Building and maintaining solid relationships and a reliable support network provide a source of encouragement, understanding, and guidance during tough times (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007; Fadardi et al., 2010). Individuals' resilience is increased when they have social support. By balancing out the work/life imbalance in the job and non-work domains, resilience in individuals overcomes all the challenges of achieving a work/life balance Köse et al. (2021). Kim and Windsor (2015) discovered that dynamic, reflective processes

generate resilience. Its characteristics include optimistic thinking, adaptability, taking ownership of one's actions, and separating one's job and personal life. Work-life balance can be achieved by shifting the focus from the negative to the positive, from rigidity to flexibility, task-centred thinking to person-centred thinking, and organisation to life. According to Köse et al. (2021), resilience modulates the link between social support and work/life balance. Resilience is primarily influenced by social support, and the degree of resilience influences work-life balance. Increasing social support makes it easier to balance work and life.

Köse et al. (2021) also discovered a beneficial connection between social support and work/life balance. According to the literature review, social support improves the harmony between work and life through resilience. It is critical to remember that cultivating and improving resilience is a skill that can be learned over time (Ahern, 2006; Grafton et al., 2010; Bahadır Yılmaz, 2017) and not a trait (Hesketh et al., 2015; Masten, 2014). Individuals considering their actions, using coping mechanisms, seeking assistance, and maintaining a positive perspective can improve their resilience and better handle life's ups and downs.

Discussion

This study aims to identify the research gap area in work/life balance and develop the conceptual framework for it. The present study bridges the existing research gap in the work/life balance in the police sector. Numerous research studies on social support have considered police officers' well-being (Jackman et al., 2020; Padhy et al., 2022). From the literature review, it is evident that there is a research gap considering the effect of social support on work/life balance and job satisfaction and resilience as mediators. Social support plays a crucial role in promoting mental and physical health; also, it can buffer the adverse effects of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985), enhance resilience and job satisfaction contribute to overall well-being. However, the specific combined and individual effects of supervisors, co-workers, family, and friends, as well as organisational support on work/life balance, remain underexplored in the police sector (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020) and also by literature review. Few previous studies from different areas of work-life balance found that social support from co-workers and supervisors can foster a sense of belonging, positively impacting work-life balance (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; Aras et al., 2022) by reducing feelings of isolation and stress. Previous studies have also found that social support plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's work/life balance (Kurtuluş et al., 2023; Marcinkus et al., 2007) and social support, which involves emotional instrumental and assistance from one's social network, that significantly influence this balance.

Moreover, social support enhances resilience, the capacity to bounce back from setbacks and cope with stress effectively (Ma, 2022). Resilience is vital to work/life balance as it helps individuals manage the demanding situations and challenges that arise in their professional and personal lives. Resilience relating to mental and physical well-being is studied in the police sector, as evidenced by studies from Chitra and Karunanidhi (2018) and Hesketh et al. (2019). The present results align with previous studies, which found that depending on social support during stress increases resilience (Kong et al., 2021). Building and nurturing social support at work and in personal life can positively impact an individual's resilience (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007; Fadardi et al., 2010). Kong et al. (2021) further elucidate that resilience is pivotal in connecting social support to individuals' overall quality of life. Resilience allows individuals to better navigate work-related stressors without spilling over into their personal lives, thus promoting work/life balance (Köse et al., 2021).

Furthermore, social support enhances individual well-being and cultivates job satisfaction, influencing work/life balance. Researchers have found that work/life balance leads to job satisfaction, and work/life imbalance leads to job dissatisfaction. There are very few numbers of research studies showing job satisfaction leading to work/life balance. Aruldoss et al. (2020) found that the mediating role of job satisfaction leads to work/life balance. However, more research needs to be done on the relationship between job satisfaction and work/life balance. When individuals receive support from colleagues, supervisors, or friends, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated at work. The support enhances police officers' effectiveness on the job and conveys a sense of appreciation from the organisation

(Lambert et al., 2016). Managers and supervisors must recognise the importance of supporting the officers under their supervision. The results of the study are in line with previous studies. As job satisfaction rises, individuals become more content with their work, making it easier to detach from work during personal time, thereby contributing positively to their work/life balance (Aruldoss et al., 2020). The research revealed a strong correlation between job satisfaction and overall life contentment within the group of police officers. When Indian police officers find fulfilment in their work, it enhances their happiness (Lambert et al., 2021). Job satisfaction goes beyond merely meeting financial necessities; it bestows individuals with a sense of purpose and achievement (Lambert et al., 2021), leading to work/life balance.

In a nutshell, social support emerges as a central factor facilitating job satisfaction and resilience, serving as mediator essential for attaining a balanced and healthy work/life equilibrium. The literature also suggests that fostering a positive environment with strong social support can enhance job satisfaction and resilience, leading to work/life balance. Organisations and individuals can contribute to a conducive professional and personal life by prioritising positive relationships and a supportive atmosphere.

Theoretical implications

The present study has developed the conceptual model for the work/life balance of police officers through research gaps by considering resilience and job satisfaction as mediators between social support and the work/life balance. These constructs are used to frame the conceptual framework by using the previous theories given by Hobfoll (1989), Staines (1980) and Guest (2002). Depending upon these theories, resilience and job satisfaction have been introduced as mediating variables along with support from family and friends, supervisors, co-workers and organisation, termed social support, according to Yucel and Minnotte (2017) and Hobfoll (1989). This study is a valuable addition to the present literature on the work/life balance of police officers. Social support is theoretically linked to increased resilience, and it escalates the work/life balance. With the availability of social support, there is also an increase in job satisfaction, which positively impacts work/life balance. Social support also directly influences work/life balance. Theoretically, developing resilience in police officers helps them cope with difficult situations and challenges like COVID-19 in future. According to the previously explained theories, these constructs positively impact their relationships in this framework, providing valuable insights for organisations aiming to create healthier and more productive work environments leading to work/life balance. Understanding these implications, police organisations can implement new policies and interventional studies, which leads to achieving work/life balance.

Recommendations for future research

The study's findings point towards certain limitations that call for further exploration in future research. To attain a more comprehensive understanding of police officers' work/life balance, researchers may utilise mixed methodologies and longitudinal studies rather than relying exclusively on quantitative approaches while accounting for these factors. Furthermore, examining the impact of cultural norms and values on this conceptual framework could be accomplished through cross-cultural and comparative studies, depending on the specific nation and its organisational context.

Conclusion

The present study has effectively introduced a conceptual model that can aid in comprehending and enhancing the work/life balance of police officers, even in the most challenging situations. Through bridging a significant research gap in the work/life balance field within the police sector, the developed conceptual framework integrates theoretical insights and emphasises the importance of social support. The study highlights the significance of social support, which provides individuals a sense of belonging,

encouragement, and guidance during challenging times, ultimately leading to work/life balance. Moreover, the study reveals that social support plays a significant role in building resilience, aiding in coping with difficulties, and promoting overall well-being. It also positively impacts job satisfaction, a critical factor affecting personal and professional well-being. The study suggests that social support from various sources, including the organisation, colleagues, supervisors, and family and friends, is crucial in shaping job satisfaction and resilience, ultimately contributing to a healthier work/life balance. To conclude, prioritizing social support, resilience, and job satisfaction is essential for achieving a work/life balance for police officers. By cultivating these factors, police officers not only enhance their overall well-being but also increase their capacity to cope with the demands of their challenging roles, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and satisfied police officers’.

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Appendix

Sl. No	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Work/life balance	1	2	3	4	5
1	My personal life does not suffer because of work.					
2	My job does not make my personal life difficult.					
3	I do not neglect personal needs because of work.					
4	I do not put personal life on hold for work.					
5	I do not miss personal activities because of work.					
6	I do not struggle to juggle work and non-work.					
7	I am happy with the amount of time for non-work activities.					
8	My personal life does not drains me of energy for work.					
9	I am not too tired to be effective at work.					
10	My work does not suffer because of my personal life.					
11	It is not hard to work because of personal matters.					
12	My personal life gives me energy for my job.					
13	My job gives me energy to pursue personal activities.					
14	I have better mood at work because of personal life.					
15	I have better mood because of my job.					
16	Resilience	1	2	3	4	5
16	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.					
17	I have a hard time making it through stressful events*.					
18	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.					
19	It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens*.					

Sl. No	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
20	I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.					
21	I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life*.					

*Items are reversed.

Sl. No.	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	Job satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	All in all, I am satisfied with the work of my job.							
23	All in all, I am satisfied with my co-workers.							
24	All in all, I am satisfied with the supervision.							
25	All in all, I am satisfied with my pay (total wages and tips).							
26	All in all, I am satisfied with the promotional opportunities.							
27	Emotional Intelligence I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.							
28	I have good understanding of my own emotions.							
29	I really understand what I feel.							
30	I always know whether or not I am happy.							
31	I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour.							
32	I am a good observer of others' emotions.							
33	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.							
34	I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me.							
35	I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.							
36	I always tell myself I am a competent person.							
37	I am a self-motivated person.							
38	I would always encourage myself to try my best.							
39	I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.							
40	I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.							
41	I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.							
42	I have good control of my own emotions.							

SL.NO	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Social support	1	2	3	4
	Family and Friends support				
43	I have the support I need from my family and friends when I have a personal problem.				

Sl. No.	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
44	I have the financial support I need from my family when I have a financial problem. Supervisor Support							
45	My supervisor or manager is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of – for example, medical appointments, meeting with child's teacher, etc.							
46	My supervisor or manager is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.							
47	I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor or manager.							
48	My supervisor or manager really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life Co-worker support							
49	I have the support from coworkers that I need to do a good job.							
50	I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with.							
51	I have support from coworkers that helps me to manage my work and personal or family life. Organisational support							
52	At my place of employment, employees have to choose between advancing in their jobs or devoting attention to their family or personal lives							