



# Changes Induced by the Containment Measures of the First COVID-19 Wave: A Scoping Review on Work-Family Balance Regarding Working Parents

REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a worldwide pandemic. To limit its spread, governments and institutions have implemented drastic measures with major repercussions on the labor market, workers, and their families. Business, school, and daycare closures, as well as telework and home-schooling, have challenged working parents. In this unique context, researchers have examined COVID-19's effects on work and family. Using the PRISMA-ScR guidelines, this scoping review explores, classifies, synthesizes, and analyzes the research findings from the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-family balance issues. More specifically, it examines how contextual forces hindered or facilitated working parents' time management and work-family balance, along with coping strategies they implemented. Searches were conducted in 18 databases to identify relevant French or English peer-reviewed empirical articles published before April 2021. Articles should include information on parent workers at the first wave of the pandemic. Of the 570 papers identified, 56 were retained and synthesized. The articles cover worldwide populations, with one-quarter from the USA. Based on the Decision-action model, a thematic analysis allows identifying how the experience of the early months of the pandemic affects the life course of working parents and the work-family balance project considering the contextual forces to which they were exposed, and the strategies deployed to meet their needs. Findings reveal the fragility of the work-family balance among working parents and the disorganization caused by a major social crisis. They also highlight the importance of individual, organizational and governmental strategies to better support workers, families, businesses and communities.

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## INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic. Most governments and institutions have taken drastic measures, such as containment, to prevent its spread. This has plunged the world economy into a crisis, which has had a major impact on family life, as the home has become the workplace for many workers and the schoolhouse for children (e.g., [Yerkes et al., 2020](#)). Thus, COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way people live and work around the world (e.g., [Adisa et al., 2021](#)) and has shifted the traditional face-to-face work mode to a virtual one (e.g., [Vaziri et al., 2020](#)).

COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainty as well as sudden, forced transitions that needed adjustments in a very short timeframe ([Anderson et al., 2021](#)). In this regard, [Schlossberg \(1981\)](#) distinguishes between anticipated transitions that give time for preparation and unanticipated transitions that can lead to crisis. There is little knowledge about the impact of crisis events on the work-family balance, so exploring individual transitions is important ([Eby et al., 2016](#)). Identifying the factors that drive these transitions and their consequences is also important ([Vaziri et al., 2020](#)). This unique context has prompted many international researchers to focus on COVID-19 effects regarding work and family life. It provides a privileged opportunity to analyze in depth and in a differentiated manner how telecommuting and flexible or reduced work hours can be used to achieve work-life balance, and to identify the most effective strategies for coping with the life role blurring resulting from the use of technology and working from home (e.g., [Feng & Savani, 2020](#)). Since other health emergencies or disasters are likely to occur, it is pertinent to document the COVID-19 situation for workers and employers (e.g., [Vaziri et al., 2020](#)).

Globally, individuals aspire to a work-family balance, but this goal is difficult to achieve and represents an issue of concern for many working parents ([Adisa et al., 2021](#); [Casper et al., 2018](#)). Women are particularly challenged in this regard by traditional roles arising from their social and cultural obligations as primary caretakers of the home, children, and often elderly parents (e.g., [Rodriguez-Rivero et al., 2020](#)). Despite the promotion of an egalitarian culture in many countries, the gendered division of labor persists and undermines work-family balance. While most people stayed at home during COVID-19's lockdown, even if they were still employed, the spatial organization of paid work as well as domestic and childcare responsibilities suddenly became similar for women and men. This opened up the possibility that the division of domestic and care work could be more egalitarian ([Craig, 2020](#)) or that the gender gap could be widened ([Fend & Savani, 2020](#)).

This article focuses on the first wave of the pandemic and provides a unique opportunity to document the experience of an unanticipated transition experienced by working parents around the world. This transition has

resulted in the closure of most businesses, schools and childcare facilities and has necessitated the use of distance education and working from home for many parents. In this context, understanding the issues related to work-family balance is crucial ([Anderson et al., 2021](#)), including the effects of multiple roles performed during confinement for women and the impact of COVID-19 on the usual and non-usual roles held by working parents ([Adisa et al., 2021](#)).

Although work-family balance has been the subject of much research prior to COVID-19, the definition of this concept is not consensual and has been subject to criticism. Following a review of the literature, [Casper et al. \(2018\)](#) proposed an integrative definition, that is, a worker's holistic and comprehensive assessment of how well he/she manages to combine the roles he/she values considering his/her level of commitment, satisfaction, and effectiveness. For [Wayne et al. \(2022\)](#), the main factors affecting balancing processes are conflict and enrichment between work and family. Conflict results from interference between these two life spheres in terms of time, tension, and behaviors that cause the demands of one sphere to compete with the achievement of those of the other ([Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985](#)). In contrast, enrichment results from the development of skills, positive emotions, motivation, and fulfillment in one sphere which contribute to the quality of life in the other ([Greenhaus & Powell, 2006](#)). Accordingly, the concept of balance reconciles the two main opposing perspectives underpinning most work-family research.

The Decision-action model ([Counoyer & Lachance, 2019](#)) will be used to examine this unique phenomenon by highlighting the tensions that arise from people's experiences. Through the lens of this model, work-family balance regarding working parents during the first months of COVID can be analyzed under two tensions and four dimensions. The first tension, referred as biographical, concerns the reciprocal way in which life course experiences (past to present) shape personal projects and goals (present to future) according to the times and sociohistorical contexts in which they take place, individual situations crossed, interrelated lives shared, as well as human agency deployed. The second tension, referred as interactionist, relates to adjustment strategies, whether intra- (specific to the individuals, their resources, and their psychological functioning), inter- (resulting from interaction with others) or extra- (available outside the individuals) personal mobilized in reaction to contextual forces that may be facilitating or hindering and also characterized as intra, inter or extra personal. Essentially, the contextual forces represent the constantly changing and interacting environmental factors with which an individual must deal at every point in time. Whether they are real or perceived, these contextual forces determine a person's adjustment strategies. In short, these strategies are reactions put in place to meet a person's adaptive needs, but they may be more or less adaptive.

The Decision-action model is an integrative framework for analyzing the processes of adaptive actions related to careers and the life role balance. It incorporates elements of the main theoretical perspectives recognized in the field of career development: 1) trait-factors, 2) developmental, 3) sociocognitive and decision-making, 4) constructivist, 5) sociocultural and contextual (Counoyer and Lachance, 2018). In this respect, the more or less adaptive actions and decisions implemented by working parents during the first months of COVID relate to several factors: 1) the level of the discrepancy between personal needs and characteristics, and those of their environment, 2) the cognitive and behavioral operations implemented for a better adaptation to contexts, 3) the various dimensions, perceptions and beliefs that can influence human actions, 4) the meaning constructed in a well-being perspective, as well as 5) the systemic barriers and tensions that can facilitate or hinder individual agency (Counoyer & Lachance, 2019). In this regard, time management and work-family balance can be considered as complex and dynamic decision-making processes relying on adjustment strategies related to contextual forces specific to the individual's needs.

### PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

A scoping review is a way to collate the body of knowledge and how studies have been conducted on a topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Consequently, it is well-suited to explore the extent and nature of the documentation on the COVID-19 pandemic. This type of literature review differs from a systematic literature review in being more concerned with gathering the body of knowledge on a topic, usually large and complex, through a reflective, flexible, and iterative approach, rather than supporting clinical decision-making (e.g., determining the feasibility, relevance, or efficacy of an intervention) (Peters et al., 2020). Unlike systematic reviews and meta-analyses, scoping reviews are not designed to provide evidence-based data or establish effect sizes across studies because of the range and diversity of the reviewed information (Munn et al., 2018). However, the inclusion of studies with a variety of research designs provides a broad overview and emerging themes of the research conducted on a topic, as well as related methodological trends (Peters et al., 2020). In this regard, Agrawal and Mahajan (2021) state that the work-family balance field could benefit from adopting an integrated and holistic perspective to highlight notably publication trends, methodological patterns, key dimensions, mediator or moderator mechanisms, etc. A holistic view of work-family balance would enable policymakers and practitioners to design strategies and plan interventions.

The purpose of this scoping review is to examine, classify, synthesize, and analyze empirical research on work-family balance and working parents conducted during the early months of the COVID-19 epidemic. Scoping review results include a table summarizing

the key findings. The latter will guide future research by highlighting knowledge and learning from an unexpectedly salient situation worldwide shared by working parents concerning adjustment strategies. They will also underline gaps in knowledge regarding gender and individual, family, work, sociocultural, or other contextual disparities and inequities.

## METHOD

The methodological approach is based on the five priority steps of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework: 1) identifying the research questions, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) study selection, 4) charting the data, and 5) collating, summarizing, and reporting of results. These steps were conducted collaboratively by the research team. To maximize the rigor of the process, scoping reviews methodological recommendations from Joanna Briggs Institute Task Force (Peters et al., 2020) and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018) were also considered. There was no registered study protocol for this scoping review.

### IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the research objective, two questions, based on the Decision-action model (Counoyer & Lachance, 2019), were formulated regarding working parents' situation during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic: 1) What contextual forces may have hindered or facilitated their time management and work-family balance? and 2) What adjustment strategies (intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal) were implemented to cope with these two issues?

### IDENTIFYING RELEVANT STUDIES

To answer those questions regarding work-family balance issues and the time spent doing housework, childcare, and paid work, the selected articles had to provide results on a population of workers with at least one child. Consequently, studies involving students or pregnant women were excluded from the body of research reviewed.

To be included in this scoping review, scientific papers had to be published in English or French peer-reviewed journals. They also had to report empirical results on the COVID-19 pandemic first wave and not focus solely on the authors' experience. The search was limited to articles indexed before April 1, 2021. These criteria were established to identify a realistic number of papers to be analyzed.

The search strategy was based on a controlled vocabulary, free-text terms, and truncation. It combined concepts related to the COVID-19 pandemic with those of work-family balance using the Boolean indicators "AND" and "OR" (see Table 1). Searches were conducted among indexed terms, as well as titles, abstracts, and keywords of the articles.

CONCEPT 1 COVID-19	AND	CONCEPT 2 WORK-FAMILY BALANCE
<b>Controlled Vocabulary</b>		<b>Controlled Vocabulary</b>
COVID-19		Family Work Relationship
Coronavirus		Family Work Conflict
Pandemics		Role Conflicts
Coronavirus Disease 2019		Dual Careers
SARS-CoV-2		Working Women
		Telecommuting
		Work-Family Conflict
		Family-Work Conflict
		Work-Home Interface
		Work-Life Balance
		Teleworking
		Telework
		Working from Home
<b>Free-Text Terms</b>		<b>Free-Text Terms</b>
Pandem*		Work-family
Corona*		Family-work
COVID*		Work-home
		Work-nonwork
		Work-life
		Interrole conflict
		Working mothers
		Working fathers
		Working parents
		Dual-earner
		Dual-career
		Work from home
		Work at home
		Remote work

**Table 1** Search Strategy.

Relevant studies were first identified by consulting specialized databases or publishers related to work and family: PsycINFO, SCOPUS, PubMed, ABI/INFORM Collection, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Business Source Complete, Cairn.info, Education Source, ERIC (EBSCO), ERIC (ProQuest), Erudit, JSTOR, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, Social Service Abstracts, SpringerLink, SocINDEX and Wiley Online Library Journals. In addition, the SOFIA search tool, available through all Quebec university libraries, and the Google Scholar search engine were used to find other relevant publications. Finally, the references of the selected articles were consulted to maximize the completeness of the literature search.

As suggested by Peters (2017), EndNote 20 software was used to gather the retrieved references considering the source and identifying duplicate articles. It was also used to screen the articles by title and abstract. The full-text of the selected papers was imported into the software which allowed managing references and recording decisions about each article rigorously and efficiently.

## STUDY SELECTION

The literature search produced a total of 570 results. After removing duplicates, the titles and abstracts of the 515 papers were independently reviewed by two of the authors (LL and CL). Of these, 73 publications were selected for the full-text review. A paper was excluded from the scoping review due to a permanent embargo. Articles rejected based on their content were checked by three team members (LL, CL, and LC). During the selection and synthesis process, weekly meetings were held to review the literature. Discussions between team members (LL, CL, and LC) showed that there were no discrepancies about selected papers. The full-text review resulted in the final inclusion of 56 sources. The flowchart illustrates the reasons for the exclusion (see Figure 1).

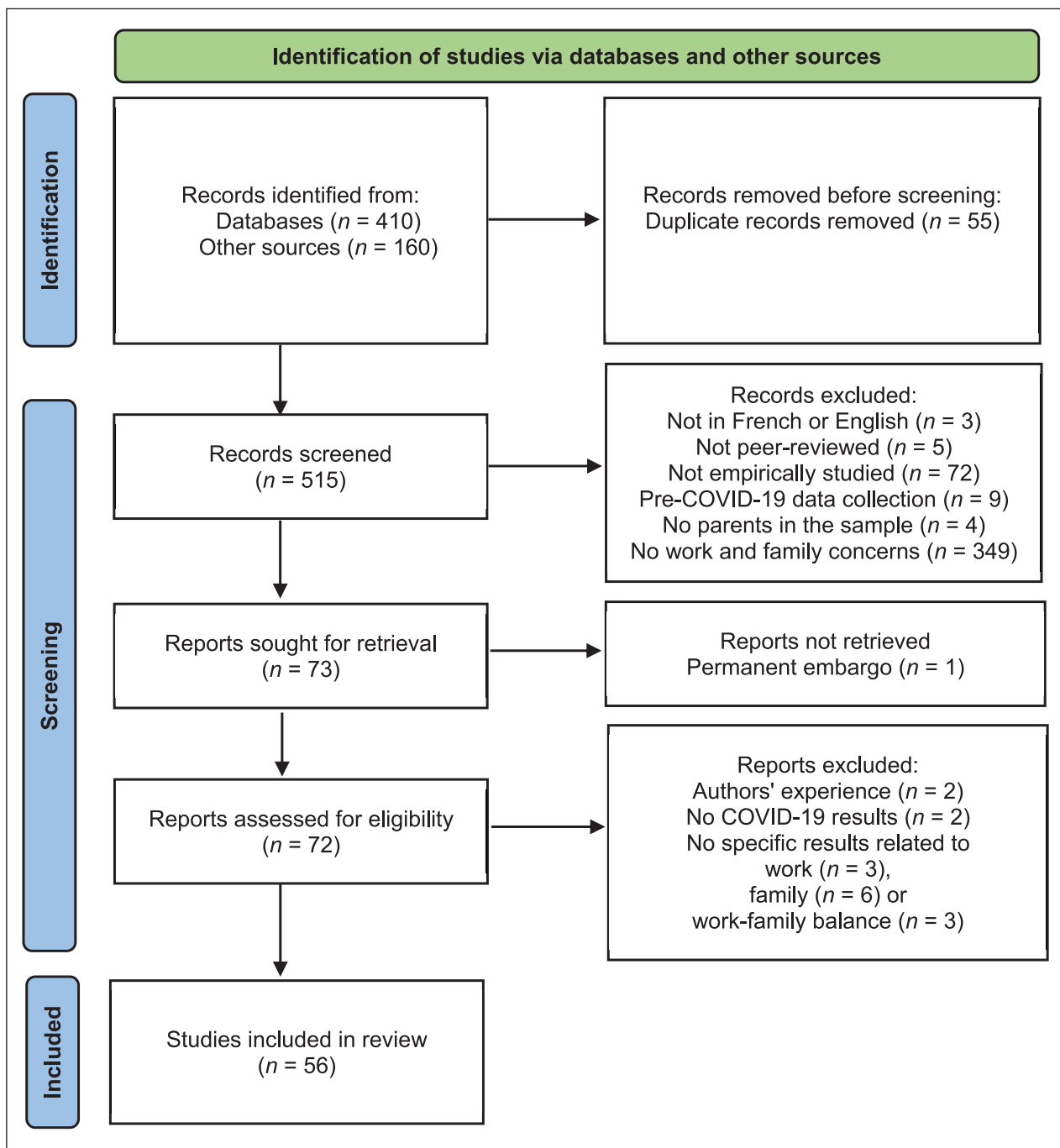
## CHARTING THE DATA

Information on the selected articles was transcribed and synthesized into an Excel spreadsheet by three researchers (LL, CL, and LC). As recommended by Peters et al. (2020), the data extraction table was validated by three team members on six studies before use. This procedure ensured that all necessary data were captured appropriately.

The final version of the table included the following information: 1) bibliographic details (authors, year of publication, journal, impact factor); 2) aim of the study, research questions or hypotheses; 3) conceptual models; 4) methodological information (countries of data collection, target population, sampling method, research design, sample main characteristics, data collection period and method, instruments, main themes or variables studied, analysis method); 5) main findings related to work-life balance, time and task allocation; and 6) information concerning the interpretation of the findings (explanatory hypotheses, limitations, further research, implications). Discussions were held by the researchers to clarify ambiguous information collected in the table (e.g., contradictions or errors in certain articles). To describe the literature selected in a parsimonious way, this table was refined and synthesized for presentation by three authors (LL, CL, and LR) by keeping only the most important elements (see Tables 2 and 3).

## COLLATING AND SUMMARIZING OF RESULTS

The selected papers' results were analyzed thematically to identify information relevant to research questions (Braun & Clark, 2006). All results information was retrieved from the Excel table for



**Figure 1** Flowchart of Studies Identified for Scoping Review.

From: Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *British Medical Journal*, 372, Article n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>.

coding. Following the repeated reading of the material, the result extracts were labeled with a code close to the original text. Then, similar codes were merged and grouped into broader ones. A preliminary code tree was developed to provide a visual overview of the codes and their hierarchical structure. To answer the research questions, codes were organized into themes to represent contextual forces and adjustment strategies related to work-family balance. The code tree and the operational definition of the themes were discussed by the research team.

Based on a framework synthesis approach (Dixon-Woods, 2011), researchers select an appropriate conceptual model to answer research questions and organize the results of the coding process, namely the Decision-action model (Cournoyer & Lachance, 2019). After highlighting the pandemic as a life course event and the work-life balance as a common personal project, a detailed analysis was conducted on the different types of contextual forces that might facilitate or hinder and the different strategies for work-family adjustment that were implemented to address them.

<b>AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>SAMPLING METHOD</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION METHOD</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PAID WORK</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>PARENT</b>	<b>COUPLE</b>
Abularour et al. (2021)	Germany, USA, and others	Identify factors influencing academics' productivity while working from home during the mandate to self-isolate	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	221 academics newly working from home	100%	66.1%	-	-
Adiso et al. (2021)	United Kingdom	Examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's work-family balance during the lockdown	Qualitative study (narrative approach)	Snowball or network sampling	Online semi-structured interviews	26 fully employed women with familial responsibilities	100%	100%	100%	57.7%
Allen et al. (2021)	USA	Investigate work-nonwork boundary management among workers who transitioned to remote work	Longitudinal quantitative study (5 waves)	Crowdsourcing	Online questionnaire	155 full-time remote workers	100%	41%	37%	46%
Amri et al. (2020)	Morocco	Assess the magnitude results of burnout and associated factors among primary school teachers in Kenitra during confinement period	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	-	Questionnaire	125 primary teachers	100%	56.8%	-	73.6%
Ashencaen Crabtree et al. (2021)	United Kingdom	Examine experiences and perceptions of academics, to inform how universities can improve their work-life balance during the current and post-lockdown scenarios, as well as in the longer term	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	146 UK academic respondents	100%	78%	-	-
Balenzano et al. (2020)	Italy	Explore the effects of social isolation from lockdown on families in terms of work-family balance, family functioning and parenting	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	104 parents in intact families with at least one child	71.2% (full-time)	80.8%	100% (2-14 yo)	100%
Bonkowsky et al. (2020)	Mainly in the USA	Understand the impact of challenges (e.g., work-life balance, COVID-19 pandemic effects) on perceptions, planning, and careers of pediatric neurology physician-scientists	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Invitation to the population	Online questionnaire	151 pediatric neurology physician-scientists	96.0%	-	-	-
Carreri & Dornoni (2020)	Italy	Explore researchers' processes of construction and de-construction of spatial, temporal, and relational boundaries that take place in the pandemic work life stay-at-home style	Qualitative study	Snowball or network sampling	In-depth online narrative video interviews	10 Italian researchers living in different regions	100%	50%	60%	70%
Cheng et al. (2021)	United Kingdom	Document how the COVID-19 pandemic and the policy measures to control its spread are related to the situation of working parents who now have to manage competing time demands across the two life domains of work and home	Longitudinal quantitative study	Previous study	Online questionnaire	15,665 completed at least one post-COVID-19 survey	100%	57%	43.3% (0-18 yo)	75.6%
Collins et al. (2021)	USA	Examine changes in mothers' and fathers' work hours from February through April 2020, the period prior to the widespread COVID-19 outbreak in the USA and through its first peak	Longitudinal quantitative study (3 waves)	Multistage sampling	Online questionnaire	7,296 dual-earner heterosexual parents with children	100%	50%	100% (1-17 yo)	100%
Craig (2020)	Australia	Explore gender relations, and the division of employment, domestic labor and care, drawing on early results from an online survey, Work and Care in the Time of COVID-19	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	-	Online questionnaire	Nearly 3,000 responses	-	-	-	-

(Contd.)

<b>AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>SAMPLING METHOD</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION METHOD</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PAID WORK</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>PARENT</b>	<b>COUPLE</b>
Craig & Churchill (2020)	Australia	Investigate how working parents managed paid work and family care at home simultaneously	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Previous study	Online questionnaire	1,536 parents in a dual-earner couple with children	100%	-	100% (0-17 yo)	100%
Del Boca et al. (2020)	Italy	Analyze the effects of working arrangements due to COVID-19 on homework, childcare and home schooling among dual-earner couples	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Previous study (representative)	Online questionnaire	520 women in a dual-earner couple	100%	100%	67%	100%
Feng & Savani (2020)	USA	Examine gender gaps in work-related outcomes in the context of COVID-19	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Crowdsourcing	Online questionnaire	286 full-time employees from dual-career working newly from home	100%	49.3%	100%	100%
Goldberg et al. (2021)	Mainly in the USA	Address how 89 adoptive parents (lesbian, gay, heterosexual) with school-age children are navigating a major public health crisis with social, economic, and mental health consequences	Mixed-methods study	Previous study	Online questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions)	89 adoptive parents (lesbian, gay, heterosexual) with school-age children	83.1%	66.3%	100% (8-21 yo)	89.8%
Gopalan et al. (2021)	India	Test the role of active coping and self-efficacy in moderating the impact of family incivility on work engagement mediated through family-work enrichment	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	478 university faculty in different educational institutions	100%	63%	73%	84%
Hasmi et al. (2021)	Malaysia	Investigate the employees' work stress, work-family conflict, and work performance with the mediation of organizational support during the COVID-19 pandemic in the country	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Invitation to the population	Questionnaire distributed by email	316	99.7%	57%	-	34.8%
Heggeness (2020)	USA	Examine the impact of the COVID-19 shock on parents' labor supply during the initial stages of the pandemic	Longitudinal quantitative study	Multistage sampling	Survey primarily via telephone	314,331 individuals aged 15 or older & 62,702 parents of school age children	55.3% & 77.8%	52% & 55%	19.6% & 100%	-
Hertz et al. (2021)	Mainly in the USA	Present the survey results of single mothers who live alone with their children and single mothers who live in multi-adult households	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	722 single mothers	91%	100%	100%	0%
Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir (2021)	Iceland	Explore the gendered realities of work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular how these societal changes reflect and affect the gendered division of unpaid labor, such as childcare and household chores	Qualitative study (diary study)	Snowball or network sampling	Open-ended realtime diary entries	37 mothers in heteronormative relationships	75.6%	100%	100%	100%
Hoffman (2021)	USA	Compare individuals' perceptions of working from home and from their employer's workplace, paying particular attention to how these experiences differ for individuals with and without dogs and/or cats	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Quota sampling	Online questionnaire	454 full-time employees working both from home and from an employer's office	100%	50.9%	70.9% (0-18 yo)	-

(Contd.)

AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	COUNTRY	OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING METHOD	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	PAID WORK	FEMALE	PARENT	COUPLE
Israel et al. (2021)	USA	Ask extension professionals about sources used to inform their work, means used to inform clientele, and management of their health and well-being in the context of a pandemic	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	1,393 extension professionals in 18 states	100%	-	-	-
Iztayeva (2021)	USA	Examine how custodial single fathers navigated work and caregiving responsibilities prior to COVID-19 and compares them to the experiences of single fathers interviewed during the pandemic	Qualitative study (grounded theory approach)	Snowball or network sampling	Interviews in person (prior COVID-19) and via Zoom (during the quarantine)	30 working custodial single fathers	100%	0%	100%	0%
Jain & Mohanan (2020)	India	Study working women and homemakers to understand the challenges they faced during the emergency of COVID 19 in maintaining work life balance and the parameters that helped overcome these challenges	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	-	Questionnaire	Women (employed and homemakers)	88%	100%	32%	28%
Kannampallil et al. (2020)	USA	Investigate the effects of trainee exposure to patients being tested for COVID-19 on their depression, anxiety, stress, burnout and professional fulfillment	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Invitation to the population	Online questionnaire	393 physician trainees at an academic medical center	100%	55%	24.9%	62%
Krisjane et al. (2020)	Latvia	Shed light on work-life balance in Latvia during the state of emergency	Mixed-methods study	Stratified sampling	Online questionnaire	1,473 respondents	78.3%	51.1%	-	-
Krstic et al. (2020)	Serbia	Determine whether there is a gap between what children and youth expect from their parents' workplaces and the family-friendly business practices that employers apply	Descriptive study	Volunteer sampling	Online questionnaire	1,279 children/youth & 64 companies (62.5% micro and small enterprises)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Krukowski et al. (2021)	USA	Assess associations of gender and parental status with self-reported academic productivity before and during the pandemic	Longitudinal quantitative study (2 waves)	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	284 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine faculty at universities/colleges	100%	67.6%	57% (0-18 yo)	86.6%
Lemos et al. (2020)	Brazil	Understand the impacts that working from home during the COVID-19 quarantine period had on the work-family conflict for Brazilian female workers	Qualitative study	Snowball or network sampling	Online semi-structured interviews	14 professional women aged 33-55 years old, newly teleworking due to the pandemic	100%	100%	64.3% (0-18 yo)	71.4%
López-Núñez et al. (2021)	Spain	Research relevance of social/work status and personality variables in the prediction of psychological health (anxiety, depression and life satisfaction)	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	1,659 adults	≥ 69.7%	77.4%	54.2%	51.5%
Manzo & Minello (2020)	Italy	Explore how the increase in remote working has created unequal domestic rearrangements of parenting duties with respect to gender relations during the COVID-19 lockdown	Qualitative study (virtual ethnography)	Snowball or network sampling	Online interviews and virtual ethnography	20 women who work from home and had preschool children	100%	100%	100% (0-5 yo)	-

(Contd.)



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Mikolajczyk (2021)	Poland	Analyze various dimensions of mutual enrichment of the professional and private life of an individual and describe how positive experiences in professional and non-professional life influence the improvement of satisfaction, health, and achievements	Explanatory and qualitative study	Judgment sampling	Online in-depth interviews	34 experienced HR managers and employees at various levels of enterprises	100%	73.5%	-	-
Miller et al. (2020)	USA	Examine changes in the professional status and personal responsibilities of physicians related to COVID-19 and the stay-at-home advisories	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Invitation to the population	Online questionnaire	281 physicians	100%	65%	-	-
Möhring et al. (2021)	Germany	Examine how family and work satisfaction have changed over the lockdown, and how lockdown-driven changes in the labor market situation (i.e., working remotely and being sent on short-time work) have affected satisfactions	Longitudinal quantitative study	Multistage sampling	Online questionnaire	2,639 for family satisfaction & 1,663 for work satisfaction	-	-	-	-
Molino et al. (2020)	Italy	Apply the scale to investigate technostress during the COVID-19 emergency (study 2)	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Convenience sampling	Online questionnaire	749 workers	100%	58.5%	43.3%	51.1%
Nash & Churchill (2020)	Australia	Examine how Australian universities are supporting academics to manage remote work and caring during the COVID-19 pandemic	Qualitative study (desktop analysis)	Judgment sampling	University websites	51 sources of public information	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nikmah et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Examine and analyze the direct effect of job demands, role conflict, role ambiguity on work-family conflicts	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Convenience sampling	Online questionnaire	100 married female university lecturers	100%	100%	-	100%
Novitasari et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Measure the effect of work-family conflict on part-time employee performance of a packaging industry which are mediated by readiness for change	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Invitation to the population	Questionnaire	143 workers	100%	-	-	-
Petts et al. (2021)	USA	Examine whether the loss of childcare and new homeschooling demands are associated with employment outcomes early in the pandemic	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Crowdsourcing	Online questionnaire	1,514 different-sex working parents who resided with a spouse/partner	100%	41.1%	100%	100%
Qian & Fuller (2020)	Canada	Examine trends in the gender gap in employment among parents in the wake of the pandemic among parents with the youngest child aged 0-12 years and already attached to the labor market when the pandemic hit	Longitudinal quantitative study (4 waves)	Two-stage sampling	Online questionnaire	111,964 working parents, aged 25 to 54	100%	-	100% (0-12 yo)	> 82%
Rawal (2021)	India	Understand challenges during COVID which are being faced by school teachers in Noida delivering content to students from home and their surviving strategies	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Convenience sampling	Telephonic and online questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions)	255 female teachers at K-12 levels with at least one-year experience	100%	100%	57.3%	66.7%

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	COUNTRY	OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING METHOD	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	PAID WORK	FEMALE	PARENT	COUPLE
Rodriguez-Rivero et al. (2020)	Spain	Analyze the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown in Spain on families, from a gender perspective	Mixed-methods study	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions)	663 participants related to the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields	100%	64.3%	55.4% (0–14 yo)	84.2%
Roslan et al. (2021)	Malaysia	Examine the prevalence of burnout and its associated factors and experience among Malaysian healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic through an embedded mixed-method study design	Embedded mixed-method study (cross-sectional study + descriptive phenomenological approach)	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions)	893 healthcare workers; 72.7% of HCW with a high burnout score responded to the open-ended questions	100%	–	62.3%	69.3%
Sadiq (2020)	United Arab Emirates	Investigate how police employees' perceptions of the workload imbalance their family roles and increase their job stress and dissatisfaction	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Invitation to the population	Questionnaire	247 male constables on duties during lockdown	100%	0%	–	62.4%
Schieman et al. (2021)	Canada	How have levels of work-life conflict changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Longitudinal quantitative study (3 waves)	Representative sample	Online questionnaire	T1: 2,524 workers T2: 1,869 workers T3: 1,843 workers	100%	>48%	>28%	>58%
Sethi et al. (2020)	Pakistan	Explore COVID-19 pandemic impact on health professionals personally and professionally along with the associated challenges	Descriptive cross-sectional qualitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online open-ended qualitative questionnaire	290 health professionals from various disciplines in public and private sector	100%	56.6%	–	–
Shafer et al. (2020)	Canada	Compare retrospective reports of perceived sharing and equality of household and childcare tasks pre- and post-pandemic and describe perceptions of changes in fathers' engagement in these tasks by gender and employment arrangements before and during the pandemic	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Quota sampling	Online questionnaire	1,234 Canadian parents in different-sex relationships	–	50.3%	100% (0–18 yo)	100%
Shockey et al. (2021)	USA	Whether couples tended to fall back on familiar gendered patterns to manage work and family, or if they adopted new strategies for the unique pandemic situation	Mixed-methods study (7 weeks later)	Snowball or network sampling	T1: Online questionnaire (3 open-ended questions) T2: Online questionnaire (closed questions)	T1: 274 dual-earner couples with at least one child under 6 yo T2: 179 dual-earner couples with at least one child under 6 yo	100%	50%	100% (0–6 yo)	100%
Vaziri et al. (2020)	USA	Examine transitions in employees' work-family interfaces from before COVID-19 to after its onset (study 2)	One-group pretest-posttest design (study 2)	Previous study (crowdsourcing platform)	Online questionnaire	T1: 583 workers (≥ 32 hrs/w) T2: 371 workers	100%	T1: 57% T2: 54%	T1: 62% T2: 63%	T1: 62% T2: 63%
Wang et al. (2021)	China	Explore the challenges experienced by remote workers at this time, as well as what virtual work characteristics and individual differences affect these challenges	Mixed-methods study (qualitative explorative study + cross-sectional survey)	Snowball or network sampling and crowdsourcing	Study 1: Semi-structured interviews (audio or video calls) Study 2: Online questionnaire	39 full-time employees newly working from home & 522 employees having pandemic remote working experiences	100%	58.9% & 51.9%	46.2% & 58.6%	38.5% & –

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	COUNTRY	OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING METHOD	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	PAID WORK	FEMALE	PARENT	COUPLE
Wong et al. (2021)	China	Find out the factors affecting effectiveness of peoples working-from-home (WFH) and their interest pursuing WFH after pandemic	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	1,976 full-time Hong Kong workers	100%	67.7%	-	43%
Yamamura & Tsutsui (2021)	Japan	Explore how school closure influences parents' work style and analyze the effects of the presence of the children on their work at home by parent's gender	Longitudinal quantitative study (3 waves)	Representative sample	Online questionnaire	4,445 under 50 yo workers	100%	45.2%	~25% (primary school)	-
Yerkes et al. (2020)	Netherlands	Explore differences between mothers and fathers in paid work, repartition of childcare and household tasks, and quality of life (leisure, work-life balance, relationship dynamics), and explore changes prior and during the lockdown	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Representative sample	Online questionnaire	852 parents in couples with at least one member in paid employment	87.8%	56%	100% (0-18 yo)	91.6%
Zamarro & Prados (2021)	USA	Study how fathers and mothers are coping with this crisis in terms of childcare provision, employment, working arrangements, and psychological distress levels	Longitudinal quantitative study (8 waves)	Two-stage sample design for most batches	Online questionnaire	3,980 respondents (18-65 yo) living with a partner (across the 8 waves)	72% (March 2020)	51%	47% (school-age kids)	100%
Zhang et al. (2021)	China	Examine the relationship between work-family enrichment and two contextual factors (job support and family support), together with two personal factors (family boundary flexibility and prosocial motivation)	Cross-sectional quantitative study	Snowball or network sampling	Online questionnaire	258 Chinese nurses assisting Wuhan's anti-pandemic efforts	100%	93.8%	53.9% (0-18 yo)	65.1%
Zoch et al. (2021)	Germany	Examine the short-term consequences for care arrangements of working parents affected by schools and institutional childcare closure	Longitudinal quantitative study	Multistage sampling	Online questionnaire	785 working mothers in couples with at least one child & 295 working parents in couples with a child	100%	100% & 47.1%	100% (14-15 yo) & 100% (0-14 yo)	100%

**Table 2** Characteristics of Selected Studies (n = 56).

AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	MAJOR THEME(S)	KEY FINDINGS	MAIN INTERPRETATIONS
Abujarour et al. (2021)	Family-work conflict Working from home attitude	Both personal (work-family conflict) and technology-related factors affect an individual's attitude toward working from home and productivity.	Higher education has suffered greatly because of COVID-19. The way academics work has changed as universities face an uncertain future encompassing a return to campus. This "new normal" alters established responsibilities and work patterns.
Adisa et al. (2021)	Experience of the COVID-19 lockdown in relation to the quality of their work and family life	Findings illustrate how the COVID-19 lockdown has intensified women's domestic workload and has, thus, caused unbridled role conflict, which has further been exacerbated by structural and interactional roles undertaken by women, especially during the lockdown. Remote work has contributed to women's role congestion and role conflict and poses severe challenges to role differentiation. Furthermore, the lockdown has facilitated the rediscovery of family values and closeness, which is connected to the decline in juvenile delinquency and low crime rate that has resulted from the lockdown.	As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to determine the momentum of work and family lives, the work from home strategy and new roles undertaken by women at home continue to affect their work-family balance. The lockdown has meant that people are living and connecting in "social bubbles" and around their homes as opposed to wider social spaces once also known as "workplaces".
Allen et al. (2021)	Segmentation preferences and strategies Work-nonwork balance	The preference for segmentation was associated with greater work-nonwork balance. Having a dedicated office space within the home and fewer household members was associated with greater work-nonwork balance. However, these variables did not moderate the relation between segmentation preferences and work-nonwork balance as expected.	The higher than usual mean and compressed variation for segmentation could be based on expressed need due to the current context. While speculative without an assessment of boundary management preferences prior to COVID-19, it could be that the desire to segment had been enhanced from the experience of working remotely.
Amri et al. (2020)	Conflict of roles between teaching at a distance and the responsibilities of the family	For the distance education during the confinement period, 55% perceived a heavy workload, 56% declared work-family conflict, 49% have not used and developed their information and communication technology skills very much and 82% perceived weak support from their hierarchy, colleagues and even family members. The risk factors related to distance work associated with burnout by primary teachers during confinement period are the use and development of skills in new information and communication technologies, the distance work/family responsibility conflict, social support (hierarchy, colleagues, family) and the workload.	The burnout of teachers in confinement is the result of an energy process, with negative feedback on the requests via the low resources of the teachers. This could decrease, destabilize, and undermine their performances, and amplifies the process leading to burnout.
Ashencaen Crabtree et al. (2021)	Impact of pandemic lockdown on the work-life balance of academics	Quantitative and qualitative data revealed clear differences in how lockdown was experienced with respect to work-life balance. For some respondents juggling work and home became considerably harder, while for others life had improved considerably under lockdown.	Findings demarcate two overlapping phenomena representing significant inequalities in contemporary UK higher education. The first relates to career handicaps affecting women (e.g., slow and unequal progression rates, gender pay gaps) and the second concerns is the non-materialization of remedial action resulting from a genuine commitment to equality.
Balenzano et al. (2020)	Work-family balance Perceived quality of family relationships Parenting during lockdown	Findings evidenced an increase of parenting stress due to the social isolation and the persistence of gender inequalities in not-paid work division causing a penalty for mothers. Nevertheless, during the lockdown, families rediscovered the values of being together inside the house, improving both their cohesion and expressiveness and their positive parenting.	Probably due to both parents' additional time spent at home, a more equal division of domestic and childcare tasks between partners was found during the emergency compared to pre-pandemic. Consistently, parents showed good overall levels of satisfaction with the work-family balance, especially with the division of childcare responsibilities. Nevertheless, mothers perceived a more unequal distribution of both domestic work before the emergency and of childcare responsibilities before and after the emergency. Furthermore, they reported lower satisfaction with division of domestic work and childcare responsibilities.
Bonkowsky et al. (2020)	Impact of COVID-19 Anticipated changes in research Work-life balance	The impact of COVID-19 on research created challenges such as halting or slowing down work. It also created opportunities such as increased time for research and new areas of investigation (e.g., telemedicine). Results also revealed challenges about research funding, dedicated time for research, and hurdles for maintaining a work-life balance.	Discussion highlights importance to support early career investigators with a need for mechanisms to ensure retention of more senior researchers. Some barriers of adult and pediatric neurologists were similar (e.g., sufficient dedicated time to research), but work-life balance issues were identified only in the pediatric neurologist researchers survey.

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Carreri & Dornoni (2020)	Personal experience of working from home and reconciling with private and family life	Analysis highlights 2 ways of work-care-life organization: 'conquered time' (i.e., lockdown has allowed to rediscover personal time, free from the frantic rhythms of academic work and the hectic pace that the city and social life impose, and to open new spaces for critical reflection) and 'extreme neoliberalism' (i.e., emphasizing invasion of work in terms of time and space, into the home, completely changing its look). Moreover, academic mothers faced greater difficulties focusing on a topic, devising lectures, and writing papers, whilst dealing with domestic and care work. Researchers living alone during the lockdown perceived a condition of alienation, due to the pervasiveness of loneliness-related work.	Time and space are inextricably connected as time-space, which is socially constituted and shaped by power relations as different social groups have unequal access to and control over time and space dimensions. The lockdown exacerbating inequalities not only between women and men but also between academic women with and without children. The consequences of the division of work during the pandemic could last even longer during the recovery process, which can ultimately have negative effects on the career advancement of academic women with children in the long term.
Cheng et al. (2021)	Mental health Financial insecurity Engagement in childcare or home schooling	Deterioration of mental health is worse for working parents. It is strongly related to increased financial insecurity and time spent on childcare and home schooling. This burden is not shared equally between men and women, and between richer and poorer households.	While the COVID-19 lockdown policies put in place by the government were well-intentioned, the 'one-size-fits-all' approach resulted in less effective measures for working families. As financial and mental distresses are not equally distributed across the populations, results highlight that the most precarious groups of society are disproportionately more affected by mental distress.
Collins et al. (2021)	Hours worked Gender differences	Overall, mothers have reduced work time significantly more than fathers, especially for those with primary school-age or younger children in the home for whom caregiving and homeschooling demands are most intense. Moreover, results indicate that mothers' work hours are more vulnerable to reductions than fathers' when both are employed.	Pandemic is exacerbating gender inequality. Mothers appear to be taking on a larger burden of childcare and homeschooling at the expense of paid work time. The trends observed may partly reflect gender differences in work-hour reductions set by employers in onsite jobs that have experienced cutbacks (e.g., work-hour reductions in retail and food services).
Craig (2020)	Gender relations Division of employment, domestic labor and care	The lockdown increased unpaid work time. The increase in care time was greater for women than men. However, proportionally, the increases in care were greater for men due to their much lower average input prior to the lockdown. In households with children, this narrowed relative gender differences in care time. The same did not occur for housework and household management, which rose for both men and women, but retained the same relative gender gap. Although dissatisfaction with partner's share was predominant for women, some reported being more satisfied during the lockdown, which had engendered more equality.	For many, the crisis made it worse, and gender inequities proved resistant to changes in temporal and spatial workplace constraints. But for some, there was a welcome improvement in shares and time stress, and perhaps grounds for cautious optimism.
Craig & Churchill (2020)	Time allocation Work-family balance Satisfaction with task division	Overall, paid work time was slightly lower and unpaid work time was very much higher during the lockdown than before it. These time changes were most for mothers, but gender gaps somewhat narrowed because the relative increase in childcare was higher for fathers. More mothers than fathers were dissatisfied with their work-family balance and partner's share before COVID-19. For some the pandemic improved satisfaction levels, but for most they became worse. Again, some gender differences narrowed, mainly because more fathers also felt negatively during the lockdown than they had before.	Men prefer spending time with their children than to increase their share of housework and household management, likely because the former is more rewarding than the latter. Mothers retained disproportionate responsibility for the more boring and burdensome tasks of housework and household management than they did for care. Men are providing more care than before and the gender gap has narrowed, but not closed, leaving more women feeling that it is unfair. Mothers were already doing more, and the lockdown added to their workload, negatively impacting their perception of relative fairness, and compounding their already high dissatisfaction with their partner's share.
Del Boca et al. (2020)	Time allocation Work and family satisfaction	Most of the additional housework and childcare associated to COVID-19 fall on women while childcare activities are more equally shared within the couple than housework activities. The amount of time men devote to housework does depend on their partners' working arrangements: men whose partners continue to work at their usual workplace spend more time on housework than before. Working women with children aged 0-5 find balancing work and family more difficult during COVID-19. The work-life balance is especially difficult to achieve for those with partners who continue to work outside the home during the emergency.	Specific policy interventions introduced to face the emergency of COVID-19 may have important, perhaps neglected, indirect effects on gender gaps. One of the key factors that contribute to the prevalent use of leaves by women and the rare use of formal childcare is the strong gender stereotype and cultural biases that seem to resist the COVID-19 pandemic and the related changes in work arrangements. Working from home may facilitate a better sharing of family work within the couple. When men are working at the workplace and women at home, this leads to an unbalanced family life, with most work being done by women.

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Feng & Savani (2020)	Time allocation Work productivity Job satisfaction	Men and women reported more housework and childcare during COVID-19, but women's increases were 2.7% larger. Despite no gender differences prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, women reported lower productivity and job satisfaction during the lockdown.	Workplace shifts can reverse the trends toward greater gender equality in several work domains. Women might be less likely than men to benefit from telecommuting during times of crises. Even after the pandemic, if organizations adopt widespread work-from-home policies, such gender gaps might continue to persist.
Goldberg et al. (2021)	Division of labor Partner relationship	About 70% of participants had changed work situations, with most working from home just as their children began remote homeschooling. The division of labor was rarely a source of stress, although the parent who was more involved in homeschooling sometimes experienced resentment. Concerns related to the pandemic included worries about health and children's emotional well-being and global concerns such as the national economy. Almost half reported declining mental health (e.g., due to the stress of working and homeschooling), with lesbians reporting more declines. Declines in physical health were rarer (< 20%), with more than 25% reporting improvements (e.g., due to increased exercise). Few reported declines in relationship quality, although almost 25% reported declines in intimacy.	Lesbian mothers were more likely to be in a situation in which either both parents were working at home or divorced. They also had lower mean incomes and more likely to have children adopted from foster care who had the highest pre-pandemic rate of medication and therapy use. During the pandemic, parents may be more concerned about their children than themselves. This may be explained by greater behavioral children's issues (e.g., ADHD). Participants who described stress in their relationship often highlighted the challenges associated with being home all day not only with their children but with their partners too, with little change to their routine (but also little alone time). Among middle-class professionals, work flexibility and the ability to work remotely may represent personal resources that buffer stress and facilitate physical health during the lockdown, but it also suggests that people are becoming more dedicated to exercise during the lockdown.
Gopalan et al. (2021)	Family incivility Family-work enrichment Work engagement	Active coping and self-efficacy assist individuals in negating the negative impact of family incivility on work engagement through family-work enrichment. The mediated relationship between family incivility, family-work enrichment and work engagement was stronger for respondents with dual resources of active coping and self-efficacy.	Faculty had to adapt with speed to the emergency remote teaching environment due to the COVID-19 lockdown and ensuing restrictions. Work engagement is a crucial ingredient in successful and productive remote working. For academics working at traditional residential universities, this required preparing new approaches for online teaching, adapting to an online mode of instruction, ensuring the integrity and quality of online assessments, while still devoting time to scholarship and meeting various committee obligations. Through active coping, individuals may choose to focus less on stressors and more on positive aspects emanating from their daily experience. Moreover, having confidence the ability to juggle both family and work expectations, and finding a way to navigate unexpected family/work duties and demands may go a long way in enhancing the experience of work engagement. Finally, the collectivism and gender role notions in India may mean the need to maintain individualism and boundary expectations between family and work is less expected in India than in Western countries.
Hasmi et al. (2021)	Work-family conflict Work performance	The employees of the public and private organizations indicated that work stress and work-family conflict have a relationship and impacted their work performance. The organizational support has a mediating effect between work stress and work-family conflict toward their work performance.	The organizations need to extend their support to mitigate their employees' work stress as this will lead to their work performance. Similarly, the employees need to mitigate their work-family conflict, if any, from affecting their work performance.
Heggness (2020)	Hours worked Non-work activity	Although early shutdowns did not affect detachment or unemployment, mothers who had jobs in early closure states were 69% more likely to have a job but not be working. There was no effect on working fathers or working women without school age children. Mothers who continued working increased their work hours relative to comparable fathers; this effect, however, appears entirely driven by a reduction in fathers' hours worked.	Overall, the pandemic appears to have induced a unique immediate juggling act for working parents of school age children. Mothers took a week of leave from formal work. Fathers working fulltime, for example, reduced their hours worked by 0.53 hours over the week. While experiences were different for mothers and fathers, each is vulnerable to scarring and stunted opportunities for career growth and advancement due to the pandemic.

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	MAJOR THEME(S)	KEY FINDINGS	MAIN INTERPRETATIONS
Hertz et al. (2021)	Social support Care work Life before and during COVID-19	Single mothers in single-adult households experienced and reported greater stress associated with managing competing demands for their attention. They found it harder to do their jobs and to care for or supervise learning for their children than single mothers in multi-adult households. These latter fared somewhat better when they lost access to their networks, but when the other household members were older relatives who were less likely to become more active participants around helping with children or tasks, the benefit was only modest.	Lack of work-family boundaries may negatively affect productivity and commitment to the job. In single-adult households, mothers described their inability to set and enforce boundaries as a personal problem. This “introspective” view may explain the enormous efforts many made to segment time and space at home. Perhaps the most insidious of the stresses they described had to do with worries that lagging current performance/productivity might negatively affect their jobs or careers. In addition, the pandemic exposed the importance of employment as a means of maintaining independence. As a result of the lockdown, women’s well-being suffered because employment and social networks did not provide personal time and space.
Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir (2021)	Family and work-life balance Division of household duties and responsibilities	Juggling home schooling, childcare, and work created a lot of pressure on the mothers and some of them described the guilt they were experiencing from feeling that they could not keep up with everything. These unprecedented times revealed or intensified unequal divisions of duties at home, which made the mothers realize and reflect on their positions at home. During the pandemic, the mothers took on greater mental work than before. They also described intense emotional labor, as they tried to keep everyone calm and safe. The division of tasks at home lay on their shoulders, causing them stress and frustration.	Working from home and having flexible working hours must be considered very carefully in favor of the working parents, bearing in mind gendered social structures. Despite advances in gender equality over the last few decades, drastic events such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, can elicit situations that we do not necessarily pay attention to in our busy daily lives or even resist recognizing. There is an uneven division of labor within Icelandic homes as the mothers in the study bore the burdens of housework, childcare, emotional labor, and household mental work. If the aim is to close the gender gap both in the public and the private sphere, a focus on the gendered division of labor within the home is essential.
Hoffman (2021)	Teleworking experience Work-life balance	Males were less likely than females to prefer working from home. When participants worked from the office, they had more opportunities to socialize and reported less work-life interferences because family members were less likely to create distractions, particularly for those with dogs and/or children under 10. However, they were less likely to spend quality time with family members and pets on days they worked from the office. Finally, participants with dogs reported socializing more with others and getting more physical activity on days they worked from home.	Face-to-face interactions with coworkers can improve psychological well-being, particularly for individuals without partners at home. Despite technology enabling remote workers to collaborate, virtual interactions do not often foster close friendly relationships like those found at the office. Dog ownership may provide socialization opportunities that help offset the isolating nature of teleworking and the associated absence of opportunities to engage face-to-face with colleagues. It may also play an important role in the physical health of individuals who work from home, especially since teleworking reduces the utilitarian steps made by individuals. Some may find challenging to manage work-life boundaries because their animals are likely to be nearby and may exhibit attention-seeking behaviors.
Israel et al. (2021)	Work-life balance	Extension professionals sought information from trusted sources and large majorities were involved in disseminating online information to clientele. They felt well supported, were prepared to address the pandemic’s challenges, and were practicing recommended health behaviors. However, respondents reported high levels of stress and difficulty balancing professional and personal needs.	Given the widespread use of social media and websites for sharing information, the results suggest that extension professionals have a substantial capacity to work online. The widespread stress observed among their clients is likely to contribute to stress and worry among extension professionals because of the close relationships they may have with their clients. Some may be coping by working more hours, but others are having to shift working hours to balance work and family needs or are feeling added anxiety over how to maintain involvement in community activities (e.g., county fairs, educational events).
Iztayeva (2021)	Workplace flexibility Work-family conflict Fatherhood	Pandemic was especially challenging for blue-collar workers who could not work remotely. Men with white-collar jobs experienced less work-family conflict than men with blue-collar jobs. The way single fathers arranged childcare varied with the availability of extended family and the coparenting relationship with the child(ren)’s mother. Prior to the pandemic, many single fathers struggled with lack of leisure time and diminished social support networks that shrank with their initial break from their child(ren)’s mother. During the pandemic, the emotional burden faced by single fathers was substantially more intense.	The lack of work flexibility put men with blue-collar jobs in a precarious position in the labor market during the COVID-19. The pandemic significantly complicated childcare arrangements by removing the men’s access to extended family and intensifying already conflicted coparenting relationships. COVID-19 and related social distancing measures further exacerbated single fathers’ isolation.

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Jain & Mohanan (2020)	Work-life balance Time management	The shift of work at home has resulted in an increase of working hours and the sharing of personal needs and household chores with immediate house members. Women have indulged in more physical and recreational activities to seek mental balance and reduce stress. Regardless of their marital status or area of employment, the initial stressor during the pandemic occurred because of the shortfall in money they could spend each month. Women were overwhelmed with the lack of work-life boundaries as they had to work from home.	Pandemics have significantly impacted women's lives as they juggle household duties and professional responsibilities. The pandemic leaves little room for personal escape, resulting in more anxiety and mental disorders for women. Alongside women were also eroded by the concerns of well-being of their family members being exposed to the virus. Domestic activities (from household chores to tending children) are largely considered a woman's job. Women are also more vulnerable to be dismissed from their jobs during the pandemic. In fact, women faced a variety of structural and functional challenges. Despite chaos, they managed to maintain harmony and get used to the new normal.
Kannampallil et al. (2020)	Stress and burnout Work-family balance	Trainees exposed to COVID-19 patients had a higher prevalence of stress and burnout. They also experienced moderate to extremely high perceived stress regarding childcare and had a lower work-family balance. Female trainees were more likely to be stressed, while unmarried trainees were more likely to be depressed, and marginally more likely to have anxiety.	COVID exposed trainees had higher prevalence rates of depression, anxiety, and stress than the general population. The overall prevalence of burnout in the non-exposed group was lower, which may be related to modifications of trainee schedules such as reduced work hours or remote work. The impact of the pandemic on proximal stressors such as childcare and work-family balance was also significantly higher among the exposed group, illustrating the multi-faceted stressors introduced by the pandemic. The low utilization of resources is potentially related to the fact that trainees may feel reluctant to acknowledge their vulnerability to supervisors and peers.
Krisjane et al. (2020)	Work-family balance	The balance between work and private life is the most challenging to achieve, and several groups (e.g., parents, people living alone or with chronic illnesses, seniors) are more vulnerable to health-related issues. Parents with preschool or school-age children experienced a dramatic change in their daily routines since apart from their own employment-related commitments, they now had to make sure that requirements for distance learning were fulfilled. Moreover, younger children had to be assisted during their learning process. Respondents indicated that full-time remote work was the preferable work form during the state of emergency.	While on an individual level, people tend to estimate their level of concern as moderate, when it comes to their families, the level of anxiety is higher. Apart from individual struggles to maintain one's work-life balance, there were also intra-family and distant learning challenges. This may have contributed to increasing parental burnout and family violence. Finally, the 55–64 years old had more limited digital abilities or were employed in jobs that required working at the workplace.
Krstic et al. (2020)	Work-life balance	An apparent gap was identified between the family-friendly workplace (FFW) practices offered by employers and the needs that children have regarded their parents' workplace. Although employers confirm that COVID-19 provides an opportunity to encourage FFW practices, during the outbreak of the virus, they demonstrated responsibility towards employees but neglected their family members.	Internal personal relations, influencing most strongly the employees' abilities in maintaining work-life balance, were most favorable in micro and small companies due to the small number of employees and simple organizational structure. Employers are often unaware of how the workplace can, directly or indirectly, impact the children of their employees. Despite confirming the benefits of the family-friendly workplace concept, business goals still take precedence with employers. They also understand the challenge of striking a work-life balance for mothers, but in practice do not encourage fathers to take parental leave.
Krukowski et al. (2021)	Work-family balance	There was no significant difference in the hours worked per week by gender. Faculty with 0–5-year-old children reported fewer work hours compared to other groups. Women's self-reported first author's and coauthor's article submissions decreased, while men's productivity did not change. Faculty with 0–5-year-old children completed fewer peer review assignments, attended less funding panel meetings, and submitted fewer first authors' articles during the pandemic compared to the previous period. Those with children aged 6 years or older at home or without children at home reported increases or stable productivity.	In the first 2 months of the pandemic, faculty may have been working slightly less than normal, notably because they were previously reporting spending around 25% of their time on activities that decreased during the pandemic (e.g., conferences, workshops, traveling, meetings). They may also have been distracted by pandemic-related news, increased self-care needs without usual sources of personal assistance available, or other challenges to concentration in this unusually stressful context. Heightened needs of young children for physical supervision and attention can be substantial even when shared with a coparent. Fewer working hours may result in a reduction in publishing because these activities could be perceived as optional (particularly among those who are tenured) or not time sensitive, unlike other faculty activities such as transitioning course instruction to remote technologies. COVID-19 pandemic may be exacerbating preexisting gender inequities.

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	MAJOR THEME(S)	KEY FINDINGS	MAIN INTERPRETATIONS
Lemos et al. (2020)	Work-family conflict Telework	Interviewees reported work overload due to organizational requirements, and the demands placed on them by their children and the home, but not necessarily intensifying work-family conflict. Feeling stressed, some resort to daily consumption of alcohol to unwind. Some interviewees stated that working from home brought them closer to their children and husbands and provided more time for physical and leisure activities. Interviewees with children, single and married, also reported that teleworking during the quarantine has helped them achieve a greater balance.	The work overload was due to the accumulation of tasks related partly to the need to dedicate themselves to domestic chores and childcare, since unavailability of usual cleaner services and remote schooling. In addition, the suddenness of transition to remote work and the lack of adequate material added to the overload. The work-family balance difficulties among single mothers with young children can be explained by the absence of support from other adults at home. Moreover, women have historically borne the greatest share of responsibility as regards housekeeping and care for children. Women seem to have better endured the telework overload during the quarantine because they were also able to have moments with their families that were possible thanks to the physical nearness contingent to the studied context.
López-Núñez et al. (2021)	Work-family conflict Gender role	Women and young reported higher anxiety, depression, conflict between work and family relationship, conscientiousness, and extraversion. Men reported higher emotional stability. The variables considered predicted a substantial percentage of variance on anxiety (36%), depression (38%) and life satisfaction (19%), with a significant relative contribution of personality traits. People with poorer psychological health also showed more conflict between work and family relationships. Working at the office was more related to anxiety while working at home was more related to depression.	The influence of the impact of job status and conflict between work and family relationship as mental health as performance might depend on individual differences. The prediction of depression, anxiety and life satisfaction by personality and social/work variables highlights the importance of considering these variables to address mental health related to COVID-19.
Manzo & Minello (2020)	Remote working Division of parenting duties	Mothers expressed a rescheduling of their daily activities (e.g., wake-up and bed times, work shifts, cooking, cleaning, plays, and childcare), even though fathers worked remotely or suspended their work. Almost all mothers took care of children during the lockdown, sacrificing work time and using strategies to cope with the situation. They radically reorganized home spaces (e.g., balcony used for an afternoon snack and games, living room for gymnastics, garage as father's office) and negotiated with their children concerning snacks and screen time and even breastfeeding to carve out time to work. The remote-working mothers primarily worked when their children were sleeping. Despite social distancing, most working mothers found creative ways to care for others and themselves through videoconferencing (e.g., children's birthday parties, lunches with family members, cocktails with friends).	The 'male-breadwinner' model, which unconditionally privileges men's work, prevailed. Reaching a compromise with children and partners in the daily organization of work and care did not mean finding a balance.
Mikolajczyk (2021)	Work-life balance Work-life enrichment	The work and personal life of the respondents interact, complement, and enrich in different ways, depending on the stage of the employee's life. Habits developed by practicing a specific sport discipline or other type of hobby are helpful in the effective implementation of professional tasks. In addition, non-professional interests, including communing with culture and art, have a positive impact on professional activities. The respondents also emphasized that thanks to their professional activities, specific to the type of work they perform, they are sometimes more extroverted, meticulous, organized, and consistent when performing activities outside of work and in other aspects of private life.	Findings show that the conscious role of the work environment in balancing the professional and non-professional activities of employees fits in with the idea of sustainable development and the concept of corporate social responsibility, both of which can apply to nature, economy, and society, as well as to an individual's life balance. Energy expenditure and recovery must be balanced in both personal and professional life to function effectively. A healthy enterprise, operating in accordance with the concept of sustainable human capital development, is one in which an employee can count on understanding his/her needs, enabling the implementation of non-professional activities, in which stress is eliminated and healthy behavior is promoted, including maintaining a work-life balance.

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	MAJOR THEME(S)	KEY FINDINGS	MAIN INTERPRETATIONS
Miller et al. (2020)	Time allocation Professional and personal responsibilities	96% of respondents reported no change in employment, but 47% reported a current or anticipated decrease in income with no gender differences. Overall, 14% of physicians quarantined from their families. Emergency medicine physicians were more likely to have quarantined than pediatric physicians. Most physicians reported spending increased time on childcare, home schooling and household care. This was accompanied by a decrease in hours spent on their professional physician duties and on self-care. More men reported increased hours spent on professional responsibilities compared to women. Females spent more hours on childcare and household care than males.	Results support concerns for increased professional gender disparities during the pandemic stay-at-home advisory, including fewer scientific publication submissions by women compared to men. These may be due in part to the hypothesized differential effects of school closures on women. Awareness of gender-specific impacts is important or we risk continuing to exacerbate gender disparities in wages and leadership.
Möhring et al. (2021)	Work and family satisfaction	Results show a general decrease in family satisfaction and an overall decline in work satisfaction more pronounced for mothers and those without children who have to switch to short-time work. In contrast, fathers' well-being is less affected negatively and their family satisfaction even increased after changing to short-time work. Changing to work from home is not related to satisfaction with work nor to satisfaction with family life.	The decrease in family and work satisfaction cannot be attributed to any specific change in the employment situation. For parents, it may result from increased stress due to the necessity to reconcile childcare and schooling with work, irrespective of whether they continue to work onsite or remotely. Especially mothers seem negatively affected by the COVID-19 lockdown as they usually bear the main burden of care work. For those without children, the negative lockdown effect may result from the impoverishment of social contacts. Only changing the work location does not bring about pronounced changes in well-being. The advantages of working from home for parents came with increased stress from reconciling paid work and care.
Molino et al. (2020)	Remote working Work-family conflict	Workload was positively related to techno-invasion, techno-overload, techno-complexity and work-family conflict. Techno-invasion was positively related to work-family conflict, which was positively associated to behavioral stress. Moreover, techno-overload and techno-complexity showed a direct positive relationship with behavioral stress. Finally, remote working showed a positive relationship with workload, techno-invasion and techno-overload, while its relationship with work-family conflict and behavioral stress was negative.	The intrusion of work into personal life, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), supports the negative spillover between the two domains. Techno-invasion (being always connected, feeling of being constantly reachable and attuned to work issues) represents the spillover of work technologies to the family domain and fosters the conflict between the two roles. A high level of workload is also a crucial determinant of perceived incompatibility between work and family roles. Moreover, remote working, introduced to help employees in achieving a more satisfactory work-life balance, can lead to more workloads because of three paradoxes. The autonomy paradox assumes that ICT provides more flexibility and autonomy, which lead workers to work more and feel controlled. The connectivity paradox implies that the use of ICT improves the quality and accuracy of data sharing and communication but increases expectations for constant connectivity. Finally, the telecommuting paradox posits that telework improves work-life balance and perceived autonomy but has negative effects on the quality of work relationships and career.
Nash & Churchill (2020)	Remote work Caring responsibilities	On the websites of 16 of the 41 Australian institutions reviewed, remote working arrangements for staff during COVID-19 were publicly available. During the pandemic, nine of the 16 institutions provided staff with three options: take a leave, discuss flexible working arrangements, or both. Provisions for 'COVID-19 leave' were variable and did not directly address the generalized need for employees to negotiate multiple impacts of the pandemic. Whereas Australian universities had strict provisions surrounding the use of different types of leave, the international universities had more flexible approaches. Most of the US institutions provided staff with information about emergency care arrangements that were not present in Australian institutional sample.	During the pandemic, the Australian higher education sector positions decisions about caring leave and participation in the paid labor force as 'private' matters in which employees (mainly women) design their own 'solutions' when compared with international institutional counterparts. COVID-19 provides another context in which universities have evaded their responsibility to ensure women's full participation in the labor force.
Nikmah et al. (2020)	Work from home Work-family conflict	Work demand, role conflict, and role ambiguity are related to work-family conflict, but role conflict shares the greatest common variance with work-family conflict.	Married women experience many conflicts in carrying out their jobs because other demands must also be considered, namely the mother and wife's role.

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Novitasari et al. (2020)	Readiness to change Work-family conflict	Work-family conflict has a negative correlation with employee performance, but a positive one with readiness to change. Readiness to change mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and employee performance.	During this pandemic era, the reality has pushed the employees to accept the conditions due to its international nature. With this awareness, employees will try harder to survive and adapt to the changes due to the COVID-19.
Petts et al. (2021)	Division of labor	For parents with young children, the loss of full-time childcare was associated with an increased risk of unemployment for mothers but not fathers. Yet, father involvement in childcare substantially buffered against negative employment outcomes for mothers of young children. For parents with school-age children, participation in homeschooling was associated with adverse employment outcomes for mothers but not fathers.	Consistent with broader social structures, the effects of the pandemic have been gendered, with women (particularly mothers) more likely to bear the burdens of the pandemic due to their disproportionate care responsibilities. Mothers are more likely to be employed when they have access to childcare options and to sacrifice their employment when faced to childcare problems. Even if mothers try to work-family balance during the pandemic, participation in homeschooling may signal a lack of commitment to one's job and reinforce employers' perceptions that mothers will prioritize childcare over work, increasing mothers' risk of termination or layoff.
Qian & Fuller (2020)	Division of labor	The pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities among parents, especially those with school-aged children. Not all educational groups bear the gendered burden equally. There was a significant disadvantage in employment for mothers with high school education or less than their male counterparts, and when the Canadian economy opened up in May, less educated women had a greater disadvantage in employment. By contrast, the employment impact of the pandemic is more equally distributed between highly educated men and women and does not seem to last.	Far from being a greater equalizer, the COVID-19 pandemic is in fact exacerbating preexisting inequalities. Among parents of children too young to be left unsupervised, mothers' employment is hit harder by the COVID-19 than that of fathers, widening the gender employment gap among parents. Mothers' concentration in occupations most at risk of job loss and their much higher likelihood of working part-time play a substantial role in explaining the enlargement of the gender employment gap among parents of young children.
Rawal (2021)	Work-life balance	Many variables can explain the work-life satisfaction of women teachers during work from home. Positive relations were observed with lifestyle and personal commitments (time devoted to personal commitments), work hours, and support system at home (family support in household work and childcare leads), while workplace culture (inflexibility, reduced autonomy, absence of harmonious and effective school policies), demographic profile (a higher level of education and income), work requirements (increased daily reporting and feedback to management on conduct of online classes and spending more hours on-screen than the respondent would like), were negatively related. Finally, financial commitments and situational issues were not significant.	With work shifting to a place which has no time or space boundaries, and with the breakdown of the distinction between professional and personal lives means additional burden. The data on employment-related decision-making shows that gender roles and responsibilities remain rooted in the social norms of our traditional societal norms. The increased burden of being available on the job 24 × 7, along with lack of family support for the additional burden is one of the reasons for women exiting the workforce. Support from spouse/family was one of the very important factors to maintain the work-life balance during COVID.
Rodríguez-Rivero et al. (2020)	Gender equality Work-life balance	The wage gap between men and women continues, and the difference in mean gross annual salary between women and men is significant for all ages, and in almost all labor sectors and educational background. Work-family conflict arises when people are engaged in paid labor and domestic work. For 48% of home-based teleworkers during the lockdown, the perception of time spent on care by men and women living together differs. Women spend more time on care than men. Men perceive that while his partner traditionally spends more time on care, both spend an equal amount of time on care during confinement. However, women reported spending more time at home before and during lockdown than their partners. When confined, teleworking offers flexibility and self-management, but it may not be ideal when children are at home and need attention. After the crisis, men and women reported wanting to continue teleworking.	There is still a salary gap between men and women at practically all levels, but it is more important the lower level of education. Women play a double role which has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis. Differences in perception between women and men regarding time spent to care may be due to mental workload, which is associated mainly with women, who, even when they are not performing care tasks, are often thinking about them. One of the problems that makes women more vulnerable in a crisis is that they are seen as an additional and flexible labor force. In sum, the great myths of gender inequality are still alive in Spain, and that a crisis of this nature can perpetuate them. However, the COVID-19 crisis and its learning about the importance of care can open the path to change.

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Roslan et al. (2021)	Work-family balance Burnout	Over half of healthcare workers experienced burnout, which is associated with involvement in COVID-19 screening or treatment, medical conditions, and a lack of workplace psychological support. Workload, pandemic uncertainties, and challenges to work-family balance were described as sources of burnout. The main symptom was exhaustion, and many participants used problem-focused strategies to cope with the adversities. Negative effects of burnout were reported in the physical, occupational, psychological, and social domains.	Long hours and unpredictable schedules can further stretch healthcare workers during the pandemic when they cannot find childcare support. Compared to the general population, who were mostly in quarantine, healthcare workers struggled with their workloads, work-family balance, as they were providing patient care. They also faced additional strain, as they had to wear personal protective equipment and deal with the fear of transmitting the virus to their family when they returned home.
Sadiq (2020)	Work-family conflict	Police constables' perception of workload cause work-family conflict, job stress and job dissatisfaction. In addition, work-family conflict mediates the associations of workload with job stress and job dissatisfaction.	Based on the principle of "spiral of loss of resources", police constables with heavy workload lose their time and energy (essential resources), making it difficult to fulfill their family responsibilities which results work-family conflict. If they remained unable to resolve such conflicts, lose further resources such as job satisfaction and well-being thus cause job dissatisfaction and stress.
Schieman et al. (2021)	Work-life conflict Work-home integration	Work-life conflict decreased among those with no children at home, but for those who do, the patterns depended on the age of the youngest child. Among individuals with children younger than 6 or between 6 and 12, no decreases in work-life conflict were observed. In contrast, those with teenagers did not differ from childless workers. Although these patterns did not significantly differ by gender, they were amplified among individuals with high work-home integration.	According to the restricted life spheres hypothesis, work-life conflict decreased for workers without children living at home. Those with young children (<13 y.o.) did not experience the same decrease in work-life conflict. The findings support the children-as-countervailing force hypothesis (e.g., education, supervision, daily care), but not for parents with teenagers. Teenagers might have been able to manage their schoolwork without much parental supervision. In addition, some loosening of social restrictions by June may have allowed them to see friends and be away from home. Women with young children were more likely to quit working or drop out during the study period, or high initial levels of work-life conflict led working mothers to quit. This may explain the non-significant gender difference in work-life conflict.
Sethi et al. (2020)	Work-life balance	Health professionals reported COVID impact on their mental, physical and social well-being. The clinicians mentioned facing an unprecedented workload in overstretched health facilities, while those in academia become engaged with planning/providing emergency remote teaching for the students affecting work-life balance. Home and family management and emergency remote learning as well as ensuring safety, keeping staff motivated, breaking bad news and dealing with indifferent public attitudes are part of the challenges of working at home and in hospitals respectively.	As health professionals have families, they will also feel considerable mental stress in the event that the virus reaches them. Many clinicians experienced increased responsibilities related to COVID-19 in screening areas, testing labs, isolation wards and quarantine centers. The use of technology has blurred the boundaries between work and home life as they were managing the office work, household and taking care of their families, all at the same time. With nowhere to go, they felt like they have no legitimate excuse for being unavailable. Those working in the hospital reported their vulnerability to get infected due to lack of personal protective equipment, standard operating procedures, and infrastructure.
Shafer et al. (2020)	Division of labor Gender equality	Results indicate small shifts toward a more equal division of labor in the early "lockdown" months, with increased participation in housework and childcare by fathers. The latter is particularly true for unemployed fathers. Fathers did significantly less when mothers worked at home part or all of the time during the pandemic compared to when mothers worked away from home.	Fathers may either overestimate their domestic involvement or are more likely to perceive that they are sharing equally with their partners, but mothers also reported more equal shares and more father involvement compared to life prior to the pandemic. Fathers' leisure was also constricted during the early pandemic, so regardless of work hours and location, they were likely to spend more time at home. Mothers' work arrangements during the pandemic may affect the association between need exposure and increased task sharing. Finally, although many fathers increased their share of domestic work during the pandemic, their efforts were focused on tasks traditionally performed by and culturally expected of fathers, complicating progress toward domestic equity.

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Shockley et al. (2021)	Gender dynamics Work-family management strategies	A latent class analysis identifies 7 subgroups of dual-earner couples plans to manage childcare and work commitments, with 44.5% of the sample using unique egalitarian strategies, 36.6% where women did most or all childcare, and 18.9% that were not clearly gendered or egalitarian. Seven weeks later, results suggested that women in the “Remote Wife Does It All” subgroup had the lowest well-being and performance. There were nuanced differences between the egalitarian strategies in their relationships with outcomes, with the Alternating Days egalitarian subgroup emerging as the overall strategy that best preserved wives’ and husbands’ well-being while allowing both to maintain adequate job performance.	Even though the separation of the spheres of work and home had largely disintegrated, and men were much more likely to be physically present in their homes, a substantial portion of couples were engaging in highly gendered strategies. The lowest well-being and performance of Remote Wife Does It All class may be due, in part, to the fact that the number of hours of care is very much greater than when childcare is outsourced during working hours. Men in these couples were not immune to negative outcomes, although their work situation appeared to be minimally altered, probably because of less focused at work due to marital strife resulting from the increased work-family burdens falling on their wives. Findings also suggest that in Alternating Days subgroup, both partners can maintain a separation between work and family, particularly when working outside home, which may explain the better health and performance outcomes.
Vaziri et al. (2020)	Work-family interface Segmentation preferences	Bidirectional conflict and enrichment are classified as beneficial (low conflict and high enrichment), active (medium conflict and enrichment), and passive (low conflict and enrichment). While many respondents remain in their pre-pandemic profiles, positive (from active/passive to beneficial) and negative (from beneficial to active/passive) transitions occurred for a meaningful proportion of them. Negative transitions are more likely to occur when people have high segmentation preferences, use emotion-focused coping, experience higher technostress, and have less compassionate supervisors. In turn, negative transitions were related to negative employee consequences during the pandemic (e.g., lower job satisfaction and performance, higher turnover intent).	The number and nature of profiles may endure, but some people move to a new profile during macro events. Transitions from some profiles were more likely (i.e., passive) than were others (i.e., beneficial). People with little conflict or enrichment (i.e., passive) before COVID-19 were more likely to face greater conflict and enrichment, transitioning to the active profile. Perhaps because of their comfort integrating work and home, employees with lower segmentation preferences (i.e., integrators) were more likely to benefit during COVID-19 by transitioning from an active to beneficial profile. Employees whose leaders exhibited fewer family supportive supervisor behaviors were more likely to transition from an active to passive profile but showed no transition to/from beneficial profiles.
Wang et al. (2021)	Remote work Work-home interference	Study 1 identified 4 key remote work challenges (work-home interference, ineffective communication, procrastination, and loneliness), as well as 4 virtual work characteristics that affected the experience of these challenges (social support, job autonomy, monitoring, and workload) and 1 key individual difference factor (workers’ self-discipline). In study 2, virtual work characteristics were linked to worker’s performance and well-being via the experienced challenges. Specifically, social support was positively correlated with lower levels of all remote working challenges; job autonomy negatively related to loneliness; workload and monitoring both linked to higher work-home interference; and workload additionally linked to lower procrastination. Self-discipline was a significant moderator of several of these relationships.	Many of the work characteristics identified are consistent with prior research on flexible working. During the pandemic, work-home interference was the most reported challenge in remote working. A pandemic could harm remote workers, since flexible working arrangements are only available to disciplined people who can work productively from home. Higher job autonomy allows employees to balance different responsibilities and demands more effectively. Job autonomy levels may be artificially high during the pandemic, suppressing its impact. The social distancing policy also limited employees’ opportunities to obtain social resources, rendering social support from work of ever-increasing importance. In this remote work context, monitoring and workload, often considered as job demands at work, may exacerbate employees’ home-work conflicts. Social support can provide self-regulation resources for people lacking discipline.
Wong et al. (2021)	Working from home Personal and family well-being	The findings indicate that working-from-home (WFH) effectiveness is improved by personal and family well-being but reduced by environmental and resource constraints. When workers are experiencing higher WFH effectiveness, they have a higher preference for WFH even after the pandemic. The female workers preferred WFH twice per week, while the male workers more often preferred WFH once per week. Finally, workers from the management and the self-employed levels demonstrated a lower preference for WFH, compared to the front-line and middle-grade workers.	Findings are consistent with work-family balance and role theories that suggest achieving work-family balance will reduce role conflict and enhance well-being, thereby improving job performance. WFH allows workers to quickly switch between work and family roles, and thus meet roles’ expectations more easily. This can improve family and personal well-being, as well as WFH effectiveness. Female teleworkers exceptionally benefited from WFH in which they can cope with caring responsibilities at home. Mistrust has been identified as one of the key factors that discourage WFH practices’ implementation.

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AUTHOR(S) (YEAR)	MAJOR THEME(S)	KEY FINDINGS	MAIN INTERPRETATIONS
Yamamura & Tsutsui (2021)	Working from home Gender differences	After controlling for various factors, results indicated that in cases where parents are full-time employees and the children are: 1) in primary school, mothers are more likely to work remotely, while fathers are less likely to do so and 2) in junior high school, the parents' work styles are hardly affected. Older workers are less likely to work from home, although the effect diminishes as they age.	The effect of primary school children on their parents' way of working may originate from their care needs. There were two reasons why fathers were more likely to work outside the home during school closings: the noise generated by children's play and the fact that their wives supported them by staying home. The older worker is more likely to hold a position of responsibility and deal with complicated issues in the office. Thus, COVID-19 increases childcare inequality.
Yerkes et al. (2020)	Division of labor Work-life balance	Mothers work in essential occupations more often than fathers, report more adjustments of the times at which they work, and experience both more and less work pressure compared to before the lockdown. They continue to do more childcare and household work, though some fathers report undertaking more housework and childcare during the lockdown. Mothers also declare a larger decline in leisure time than fathers. There was no gender difference in the propensity to work from home, in work-life balance, or in relationship dynamics.	Results show that the way in which parents were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic reflects a complex gendered reality. The gender inequality in paid work, the division of childcare and household work, and the quality of life are evident during the first lockdown period. The unique situation created by restrictive lockdown measures magnifies some gender inequalities while lessening others.
Zamarro & Prados (2021)	Division of labor Gender differences	COVID-19 has required women to provide childcare more than men, even while working. Working situations seem to have a limited effect on mothers' childcare provision. For working mothers, childcare division is associated with fewer hours of work and a higher risk of quitting their jobs. Finally, a small gap in psychological distress emerged between mothers and women without school-age children in the household in early April.	In accordance with other studies, the burden for women still increased during the lockdown and remained higher than that for men although the sharing of household chores increased during this period. The results for women with children are inconsistent with those reported in other countries, suggesting that labor market and family policies and norms in different nations may affect levels of parental psychological distress.
Zhang et al. (2021)	Work-family enrichment	The results showed that prosocial motivation, family support and job support predicted high work-to-family enrichment in nurses, while prosocial motivation, family support and family boundary flexibility predicted high family-to-work enrichment.	Considering infection risks, limited personal protective equipment, and staff shortages, health administrators prioritized nurses' safety. Besides their own safety concerns, nurses worried about their loved ones' health and loneliness while far from home. Insufficient human resources and uncertain anti-pandemic work may make flexibility impossible. The Chinese culture understands and tolerates work demands and job support does not play a key role in positive family-work interactions. Work-to-family enrichment can be difficult when multiple roles are in conflict. In the workplace, prosocial motivation is important to ensure a positive experience for workers.
Zoch et al. (2021)	Division of labor	Mothers continue to play a key role in the care arrangements during the first months of the pandemic. Results illustrate the importance of working conditions, especially the possibility of remote work for the altered care arrangements. Overall, the findings point towards systematic gender differences in the relationship between parental working conditions and the care arrangements.	The results are consistent with the few initial panel studies highlighting gender inequalities in family work during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany. Because of pandemics, mothers are more likely than fathers to work in system-relevant occupations, to work onsite, and to change their working hours. These gender differences suggest that working conditions have a positive influence on the bargaining power mostly for fathers, but not for mothers.

**Table 3** Major Themes, Key Findings, and Main Interpretations of Selected Studies ( $n = 56$ ).

## RESULTS

Before presenting the results related to the research questions, the main characteristics of the 56 selected studies are described.

### STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

Most of the papers reviewed came from North America (35.7%), Europe (32.1%), and Asia (23.2%); the remaining came from Oceania (5.4%), Africa (1.8%), and South America (1.8%). It should be noted that 32.2% of the studies were conducted on samples that came exclusively (25%) or primarily from the USA (7.2%).

Considering the research design, 73.2% of the studies were based on quantitative methods and 21.4% ( $n = 12$ ) were longitudinal. Seven of the latter focused on changes during the pandemic from online panel data (Collins et al., 2021; Qian & Fuller, 2020; Zamaro & Prados, 2021), crowdsourcing platforms (Allen et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020), social networks (Krukowski et al., 2021) or an academic survey (Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). The remaining five provided a picture of COVID-19-related changes through the availability of data collected on work and family life with panel surveys (Heggeness, 2020; Möhring et al., 2021; Schieman et al., 2021; Zoch et al., 2021) or a survey (Cheng et al., 2021) that took place before the pandemic. Nearly 16% of the studies used qualitative methods and two (3.6%) of them involved data collection at more than one-time points. The first (Iztayeva, 2021) compared the work and family experience of single custodial fathers before COVID-19 with the one of single fathers interviewed during the pandemic. The second (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021) relied on data collection through a two-week daily diary to understand how the pandemic affected the gendered division of labor related to unpaid work. Finally, 10.7% of the papers involved a mixed methodology.

All quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire, which most (85.3%) were online. Two were administered by telephone (Heggeness, 2020; Rawal, 2021) and one was sent by email (Hasmi et al., 2021). Four studies (Amri et al., 2020; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020; Sadiq, 2020) did not specify the modality. Nearly half (46.6%) of the qualitative data came from online semistructured or unstructured interviews. For comparative purposes, Iztayeva's (2021) research moved from an in-person (before the pandemic) to an internet modality (during the pandemic). One qualitative study (Sethi et al., 2020) and four mixed-method research (Goldberg et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Roslan et al., 2021; Shockley et al., 2021) analyzed open-ended responses to online questionnaires. Nash and Churchill's (2020) research focuses on remote working arrangements information from university websites and involves no participant.

Of overall analyzed studies, 66.1% used non-probability sampling methods. Those most often mentioned were snowball or network sampling (37.5%) and the solicitation

of participants of a previous study (8.9%). Of the 10 (17.9%) studies using a random sample, six adopted a multistage sampling method, one involved a stratified sampling method, and three did not state the sampling procedure, whereas they reported having a representative sample. Moreover, six studies rely on weighted data (Möhring et al., 2021; Petts et al., 2021; Qian & Fuller, 2020; Schieman et al., 2021; Zamarro & Prados, 2021; Zoch et al., 2021). Researchers of six (10.7%) studies contacted all members of a specific population. Finally, three (5.4%) studies did not specify the sampling strategy.

In 76.8% of the studies, the sample is composed solely of workers, and in the majority of the other cases, they constitute a significant proportion. Twelve studies were based on a sample with a relatively equal distribution of men and women. However, the majority of the research analyzed is based on a sample with a higher proportion of women than men. In addition, nine studies focus specifically on the situation of women compared to two for men. However, eight studies do not provide any indication of the gender distribution of participants. Overall, 17 studies are specific to parents or include a group of parents. Of these, nine involve parents in a couple relationship, five of which are dual-income. In addition, two studies examine single mothers (Hertz et al., 2021) or fathers (Iztayeva, 2021). Another research study targets children and employers of working parents (Krstic et al., 2020). Finally, Craig (2020) provides only an approximation of the sample size.

### FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

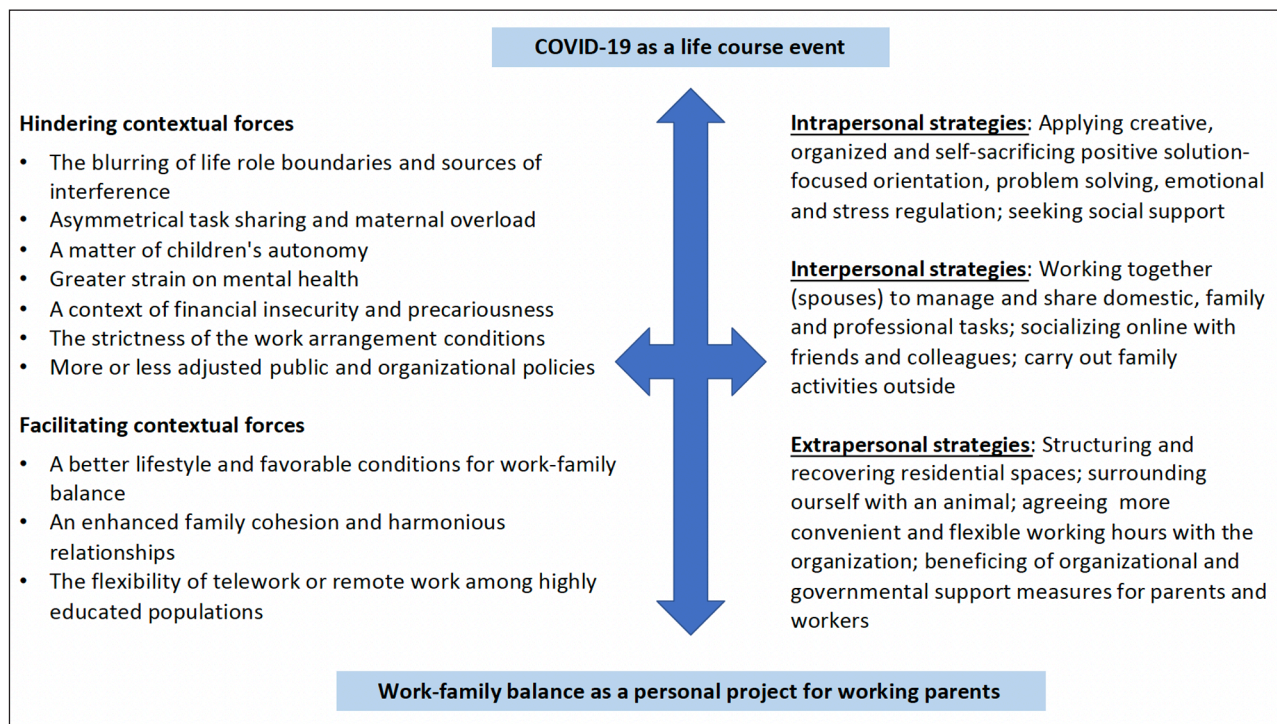
Considering the COVID-19 pandemic as a life course event for working parents around the world, and work-family balance as a common personal project for satisfying individual and family adaptive needs during this historical moment, a variety of hindering and facilitating contextual forces are identified and described, as well as deployed adjustment strategies according to these (see Figure 2).

#### COVID-19 as a life course event

For many, the spatial and temporal boundaries between their various life domains have been permeabilized or unexpectedly blurred (e.g., Vaziri et al., 2020), resulting in the reconfiguration of family and work dynamics (e.g., Del Boca et al., 2020). For parents, the repartition of childcare tasks was no longer restricted to hours outside the workday (e.g., Yerkes et al., 2020). As remote work has increased, men are much more present at home (e.g., Shockley et al., 2021). The physical proximity of family members and increased childcare demands have put pressure on traditional models related to the sexual division of labor (e.g., Craig & Churchill, 2020).

#### Work-family balance as a personal project for working parents

Work-life balance became a daily personal project for working parents, who then had to put in place different



**Figure 2** Summary of Contextual Hindering and Facilitating Forces as Well as Intra-, Inter-, and Extra-Personal Strategies Used for Work and Family Balancing During the First Wave of COVID-19.

adjustment strategies in response to a range of diverse and changing contextual forces. This indefinite period of working from home has altered radically workers' methods, schedules, and responsibilities (e.g., [Shockley et al., 2021](#)). The pandemic has forced many couples to decide how to divide tasks (e.g., [Craig & Churchill, 2020](#)). During this crisis, juggling paid work, household work, and childcare has been challenging (e.g., [Balenzano et al., 2020](#)). There is a need to develop strategies to restore work-family balance (e.g., [Allen et al., 2021](#)).

Pandemic's first months were shaped by multiple contextual forces. While some hindered working parents, others were rather facilitating. These intra-, inter- and extrapersonal contextual forces encountered by working parents appear, for the most part, in concomitance and are hardly distinguishable.

### Hindering contextual forces

**The blurring of life role boundaries and sources of interference.** Pandemic containment has blurred the life role boundaries of many working parents. Indeed, working from home or teleworking, new responsibilities for homeschooling, and childcare while supposedly in a daycare center have been brought to blend their various roles into the home in a short period. This context has led to dealing with an abundance of sources of interference on a personal or family ([Adisa et al., 2021](#); [Allen et al., 2021](#); [Carreri & Dornoni, 2020](#); [Goldberg et al., 2021](#); [Israel et al., 2020](#); [Krisjane et al., 2020](#); [Nikmah et al., 2020](#); [Rawal, 2021](#)), and professional or social level ([AbuJarour et al., 2021](#); [Amri et al., 2020](#); [Carreri & Dornoni, 2020](#); [Lemos et al., 2020](#); [Molino et al., 2020](#); [Sethi et al., 2020](#)).

### Asymmetrical task sharing and maternal overload.

The experience of hindering contextual forces is not necessarily the same between sexes. Although fathers' presence and involvement in domestic and childcare tasks increased during confinement ([Rawal, 2021](#); [Shafer et al., 2020](#)), mothers still struggle with most tasks ([Adisa et al., 2021](#); [Amri et al., 2020](#); [Balenzano et al., 2020](#); [Cheng et al., 2021](#); [Feng & Savani, 2020](#); [Hertz et al., 2021](#); [Lemos et al., 2020](#); [Möhring et al., 2021](#); [Nikmah et al., 2020](#); [Qian & Fuller, 2020](#); [Rawal, 2021](#); [Schieman et al., 2021](#); [Shockley et al., 2021](#); [Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021](#); [Yerkes et al., 2020](#); [Zamarro et al., 2021](#); [Zoch et al., 2021](#)). In fact, fathers' participation is often overestimated ([Craig & Churchill, 2020](#)). According to [Rodríguez-Rivero et al. \(2020\)](#), the only context in which men and women more equally share childcare tasks occurs when mothers hold a doctorate. Furthermore, [Shafer et al. \(2020\)](#) observe that partners' commitment to tasks is similar when they share household income. A situation in which men engage as much or more than women is when they work from home while their partner works outside (e.g., health services) ([Del Boca et al., 2020](#)).

Various studies showed that mothers have felt overwhelmed by all these expectations and demands ([Heggeness, 2020](#); [Jain & Mohanan, 2020](#); [Rawal, 2021](#)), to the point of reporting significant levels of stress and dissatisfaction ([Del Boca et al., 2020](#); [Feng & Savani, 2020](#); [Israel et al., 2020](#); [Jain & Mohanan, 2020](#); [Manzo & Minello, 2020](#); [Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020](#); [Zoch et al., 2021](#)), even injustice, helplessness, and frustration ([Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021](#); [Craig & Churchill, 2020](#); [Del Boca et al., 2020](#); [Hasmi et al., 2021](#); [Hjálmsdóttir](#)



& Bjarnadóttir, 2021; Feng & Savani, 2020; Hertz et al., 2021; Hoffman, 2021; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Molino et al., 2020; Nikmah et al., 2020; Rawal, 2021; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Sadiq, 2020; Schieman et al., 2021; Shockley et al., 2021; Zamarro et al., 2021). This context contributed to the development of conflicts between partners concerning the allocation of household and childcare tasks (Feng & Savani, 2020; Möhring et al., 2021; Novitasari et al., 2020; Rawal, 2021; Schieman et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020).

Single mothers feel tired, stressed, and guilty, which affects their availability for work, their performance, and ultimately their job retention (Hertz et al., 2021). Single fathers generally better handle this situation, although not as well as those in couples, especially when income and support received from ex-spouses and extended family for childcare and education are involved (Iztayeva, 2021).

**A matter of children's autonomy.** Many studies have found that the age of the children impacts the work-family balance in a pandemic (Allen et al., 2021; Amri et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2021; Del Boca et al., 2020; Israel et al., 2020). Given their greater level of dependence regarding care, feeding, and education, young children require more parental supervision (Schieman et al., 2021). Parental responsibilities are therefore often prioritized to the detriment of professional activities (Collins et al., 2021; Craig, 2020; Heggeness, 2020; Hoffman, 2021; Krukowski et al., 2021). Mothers are generally more affected than fathers (Qian & Fuller, 2020). Parents of young children who worked during the pandemic were also concerned about contracting and transmitting the virus (Del Boca et al., 2020; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Nikmah et al., 2020; Roslan et al., 2021; Sethi et al., 2020). Consequently, many chose to stay home, but mothers were often constrained to do so (Collins et al., 2021; Del Boca et al., 2020; Qian & Fuller, 2020). A study among children found that confinement may have positive effects on their emotional security, except for families affected by destabilizing situations, such as job loss (Krstic et al., 2020).

Children aged 10 or older generally show more autonomy, which reduces required parental supervision and work-family conflicts (Goldberg et al., 2021; Heggeness, 2020; Nikmah et al., 2020; Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). Thus, older workers are less affected by these realities since their children are also generally older. Likewise, they are more productive at work (Krukowski et al., 2021) and receive higher wages (López-Núñez et al., 2021; Schieman et al., 2021; Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). Similarly, workers without children are less exposed to interrole conflict. However, faced with the loss of social contacts due to the pandemic, some of them reported poorer psychological wellbeing and decreased job satisfaction (Möhring et al., 2021; Zamarro et al., 2021).

**Greater strain on mental health.** Over the weeks, leisure time and recreation spaces were restricted for parents and couples during the pandemic (Amri et al., 2020; Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2021; Hoffman, 2021; Israel et al., 2020; Lemos et al., 2020; Rawal, 2021; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Shafer et al., 2020; Wang, 2021; Wong et al., 2021; Zamarro et al., 2021). Lack of personal and relaxation time, along with space limitations for intimate moments, can lead to stress, fatigue, anxiety, social isolation, and mental health problems (Carreri & Dornoni, 2020; Cheng et al., 2021; Goldberg et al., 2021; Hertz et al., 2021; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Krisjane et al., 2020; Nikmah et al., 2020; Wang, 2021). In this regard, many studies have reported a significant deterioration of mental health among working parents, whether single or in couples, heterosexual or homosexual (Balenzano et al., 2020; Hertz et al., 2021; Hoffman, 2021; Iztayeva, 2021; Goldberg et al., 2021; López-Núñez et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Zamarro et al., 2021). Various studies revealed a high prevalence of exhaustion and depression among healthcare professionals (Cheng et al., 2021; Collins et al., 2021; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Möhring et al., 2021; Roslan et al., 2021; Sethi et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

**A context of financial insecurity and precariousness.** COVID-19 pandemic may have generated apprehensions related to a decrease in productivity and income, and ultimately to job loss (Feng & Savani, 2020; Möhring et al., 2021; Novitasari et al., 2020; Rawal, 2021; Schieman et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020), as well as precarious situations, reduced financial power and eventually poverty (Cheng et al., 2021; Möhring et al., 2021). The experience of less schooled parents appears particularly challenging (Qian & Fuller, 2020). Moreover, teleworking or remote work required adjustments that have hindered working parents' productivity and led some to burnout due to the pressure of meeting employers' expectations and avoiding their negative feedback or job loss (Amri et al., 2020; Hasmi et al., 2021; Möhring et al., 2021; Rawal, 2021). The pandemic context has thus contributed to increasing levels of insecurity, stress, and burnout, and to worsen other mental health problems among many working parents (Cheng et al., 2021; Collins et al., 2021; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Möhring et al., 2021; Roslan et al., 2021; Sethi et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021), particularly those with below-median incomes (Cheng et al., 2021; Iztayeva, 2021) already psychologically vulnerable before the pandemic (López-Núñez et al., 2021).

**The strictness of the work arrangement conditions.** The type of employment, income level, and education of working parents are related to work-family balance issues (Goldberg et al., 2021). Despite confinement, some jobs require a commute, which limits family time (Del Boca et al., 2020). For example, there was more work-family conflict among blue-collar men than white-collar ones because they had limited schedule flexibility and

could not work remotely due to the nature of their tasks (Iztayeva, 2021). However, parents who worked part-time before the pandemic had to make fewer adjustments to telework or work outside the home (Qian & Fuller, 2020; Wong et al., 2021). Men in low-income jobs are less likely than women to have flexible work arrangements to care for their children at home (Iztayeva, 2021).

Parents with higher education and income may experience problems with life role balancing given high work and time demands (Collins et al., 2021; Rawal, 2021). Furthermore, parents can benefit from working alternately from home and the workplace (Hoffman, 2021; Jain & Mohanan, 2020). López-Núñez et al. (2021) found that working at home was more associated with depression, while out-of-home work was more associated with anxiety. They attributed these results to personality-related variables.

**More or less adjusted public and organizational policies.** Public and organizational policies regarding employment and families vary considerably between countries (Carreri & Dornoni, 2020; Zamarro et al., 2021). They often appear inequitable between sexes, especially in terms of the resources and effort needed by women to balance personal and professional responsibilities (Bonkowsky et al., 2020; Del Boca et al., 2020). These policies also do not adequately address wages, job security, and advancement (Bonkowsky et al., 2020; Heggeness, 2020; Rawal, 2021). Although parents were informed of the emergency employment and family support resources available, very few used them, partly because they fear judgment from employers and coworkers (Kannampallil et al., 2020; Rawal, 2021).

Public and organizational policies implementation in the pandemic context may alter working parents' motivation, well-being, creativity and commitment, as well as their psychological (Mikołajczyk, 2021; Nash & Churchill, 2020; Zamarro et al., 2021) and physical health (Goldberg et al., 2021). Furthermore, organizational policies need to consider overall individual needs rather than only those related to work, and to adapt to one's priorities and life realities while recognizing the impact of social restrictions on work-family balance during a pandemic (Mikołajczyk, 2021; Nash & Churchill, 2020).

### Facilitating Contextual Forces

**A better lifestyle and favorable conditions for work-family balance.** For some parents, the experience of containment and integration of all life activities at home has resulted in less stress (Allen et al., 2021; Goldberg et al., 2021) as well as a more equal sharing of domestic tasks and childcare (Balenzano et al., 2020; Feng & Savani, 2020; Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021; Lemos et al., 2020). Furthermore, for many people, the reduced commute time was an opportunity to improve their diet (prepare meals and eat at home), increase their physical activity, and reflect on their personal and professional

life (Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021; Carreri & Dornoni, 2020; Craig & Churchill, 2020; Goldberg et al., 2021; Lemos et al., 2020; Schieman et al., 2021). According to Wong et al. (2021), many parents would like to extend this work arrangement beyond pandemic. The pandemic has given working parents more autonomy in managing work demands and priorities, in juxtaposition to those of their families (Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021; Craig & Churchill, 2020; Feng & Savani, 2020; Wang, 2021).

**An enhanced family cohesion and harmonious relationships.** Research shows that activities shared by family members and time spent together contribute to family cohesion, attachment, and mutual support (Adisa et al., 2021; Balenzano et al., 2020; Hoffman, 2021; Iztayeva, 2021; Möhring et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). There is also evidence that greater work productivity and more flexibility in life-role balance are associated with fewer conflictual parent-child relationships (Bonkowsky et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2021; Möhring et al., 2021; Schieman et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020; Zoch et al., 2021). Adisa et al. (2021) also find a significant decrease in juvenile delinquency.

**The flexibility of telework or remote work among highly educated populations.** Working parents with a graduate degree were more likely to telework or work remotely (Allen et al., 2021; Del Boca et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020). This allowed greater availability for childcare and home-schooling. Women with higher levels of education were also less likely to adjust their work hours or lose their jobs (Carreri & Dornoni, 2020; Qian & Fuller, 2020; Zamarro et al., 2021).

Studies involving academic researchers also highlighted the flexibility and benefits of their profession regarding work conditions (AbuJarour et al., 2021; Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021; Carreri & Dornoni, 2020). For those with older children, the pandemic has freed up time to write and to use new remote methods to conduct research without causing too much imbalance in family life (Bonkowsky et al., 2020; Carreri & Dornoni, 2020). However, the pandemic brought difficulties for women researchers, especially those with young children, and this could have a significant impact on those pursuing tenure (Krukowski et al., 2021).

### Adjustment Strategies Implemented to Cope with Time Management and Work-Family Balance

Reviewed studies focus mainly on contextual forces that hinder individuals. Few highlights adjustment strategies, more or less adaptive, used by working parents or implemented by workplaces and public organizations.

**Intrapersonal strategies.** Positive solution-focused orientation, problem solving, emotional and stress regulation, and social support seeking (Roslan et al., 2021) figured among the more adaptive responses comparatively to attitudes and behaviors of anxiety, distress, depression, loss of control, and even violence

(Israel et al., 2020; Kannampallil et al., 2020; Krisjane et al., 2020; López-Núñez et al., 2021; Molino et al., 2020; Vaziri et al., 2020; Wang, 2021). To maintain an acceptable level of normalcy and balance, mothers also had to be creative, organized, and self-sacrificing (Del Boca et al., 2020; Feng & Savani, 2020; Lemos et al., 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020; Mikołajczyk, 2021; Nikmah et al., 2020; Sethi et al., 2020).

**Interpersonal strategies.** The search for an equitable sharing of childcare and home-schooling tasks between spouses is undoubtedly the strategy that was most rapidly sought or implemented among working parents (Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2021). Over the weeks, strategies that may involve daily alternation of domestic tasks and work activities between spouses may improve sleep quality, work performance, and psychological health (Shockley et al., 2021).

**Extrapersonal strategies.** Some studies cite strategies to recover living spaces for specific uses: the balcony for snacks and games, the living room for exercise, and the garage used as an additional workspace (Allen et al., 2021; Manzo & Minello, 2020). Furthermore, time management strategies have been implemented to break up the schedule into shorter periods intended to work, childcare, home-schooling, household chores, meal preparation, screen time for children, breastfeeding, and other care for younger children, and tasks that can be done while other family members are asleep (Manzo & Minello, 2020).

Rescheduling daily life activities and socializing online helped maintain a dynamic social life for children's parties, family lunches, cocktail parties with colleagues and friends as well as online consultation with professionals, and personal or outdoor activities (Carreri & Dornoni, 2020; Jain & Mohanan, 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020). Pets, especially dogs, can be an additional source of demands, distractions, and noise, but they can also benefit well-being by calming, preventing telework isolation, keeping a certain level of daily physical activity, as well as socializing with colleagues online and neighbors outside the home (Hoffman, 2021).

Finally, some strategies were not implemented directly by working parents despite being the primary beneficiaries. For example, organizations may support work-life balance by offering more flexible or compressed hours, the possibility of working one or two days a week from home, various forms of family support (e.g., parental leave, childcare subsidies, corporate family events), workshops to help employees take better care of themselves, time off for birthdays, and financial support for the birth of a child (Mikołajczyk, 2021). As noted by Del Boca et al. (2020) and Vaziri et al. (2020), organizational and public interventions supporting personal, family, and work needs can have significant indirect effects often overlooked. A coordinated combination of work and personal actions can support individuals' potential

by increasing their energy, optimism, and performance (Mikołajczyk, 2021).

## DISCUSSION

This scoping review examines 56 published studies on work-family balance during the first wave of the pandemic, and the contextual forces that may have facilitated or hindered adaptive needs satisfaction, as well as the adjustment strategies implemented by working parents. In order to better meet the needs of their children and themselves during this period, most parents, regardless of their nationality or culture, implemented a variety of adjustment strategies on their own, but also in relation to their entourage (spouse, other family members, relatives, employers, teachers, etc.) as a result of contextual forces that imposed restrictions on the organization of family, marital, residential, and professional life. Among the findings are problems of incongruence between their personal needs and the requirements of their living environments (trait-factor approaches), as well as gaps between women and men in career development (developmental approaches). In addition, they emphasize the conditions and dispositions of working parents (e.g., mental health state) that may affect the nature, positive or negative, of their work-family balance experience (social-cognitive approaches), as well as their power to act relative to the meaning they attribute to the realities they experience (constructivist approaches). Lastly, the findings reveal that the work-family balance experiences of parents vary according to cultural, socioeconomic, organizational, political, and other factors (sociocultural and contextual approaches).

The pandemic was an impactful event, on both individual and collective life courses, and has caused the reorganization of parental and labor activities to facilitate the maintenance or improvement of performance and well-being projects and goals for some workers. It has also disrupted, slowed, or completely stopped those of others (e.g., Bonkowsky et al., 2020).

Couple strategies to manage childcare and household responsibilities may have, in some cases, contributed to reduce gender inequalities, but more frequently have exacerbated these contextual forces (Craig, 2020). Pandemic or not, and despite measures adopted by some countries to achieve gender equality, the sociosexual construction of roles and responsibilities within families appears to persist. Indeed, many studies suggest the idea that women are primarily responsible for the care of children, home-schooling, and household tasks. Mothers often compromise their career development (e.g., reducing working hours, withdrawing temporarily or completely from the labor force) to support their partner's professional activities (e.g., Collins et al., 2021).

As another possible consequence of the unequal distribution of roles and responsibilities, women have experienced the most psychological, relational, and functional difficulties, even if many men have suffered as well (e.g., Wang, 2021). Work allows parents to meet their needs for self-expression, self-actualization, and self-satisfaction as well as financial independence and quality of life (e.g., Mikołajczyk, 2021). Accordingly, some studies point out the importance of better normalizing distress feelings and addressing the social effects of stigma by encouraging employees to seek support and employers to adjust expectations to the life contexts of their employees (e.g., Kannampallil et al., 2020). Although the results suggest that the pandemic often increases interpersonal conflicts within families, it may also be an opportunity for bonding and cohesion (e.g., Vaziri et al., 2020). In spite of having experienced the same destabilizing life events (COVID-19), the contextual forces that the women faced to achieve a better work-family balance differed from those faced by the men. This is also the case concerning adjustment strategies implemented at the personal, interpersonal, or extra-personal level. Furthermore, the situation may differ from one individual to another, given the many variables involved and their interactions (e.g., age of children, marital status, support of family members, financial status, education, type of work, possibility of teleworking or remote work, employer expectations, health status, and any other personal, family, cultural or social dispositions) (e.g., Vaziri et al., 2020; Wang, 2021).

In sum, the studies reviewed focused primarily on the hindering contextual forces associated with the pandemic. Less information is available on facilitating contextual forces and strategies used by working parents. One of the most studied contextual forces is gender. Overall, research shows that the context of the pandemic has widened the gender gap in the division of labor in the home and in paid employment. In addition, some policies and measures offered by organizations and governments may have longer-term negative indirect effects on women's careers (e.g., Carreri & Dornoni, 2020). In addition to gender, other contextual forces related to telework or working from home that were identified in relation to work-family balance are consistent with those present prior to the pandemic (e.g., blurring of boundaries). However, the lockdown has brought to light new issues, such as the lack of own personal space or the accentuation of concerns such as precariousness and financial insecurity. In addition, it has promoted reflection and the pursuit of work-family-friendly lifestyles, which may affect the strategies and work modalities adopted by parents after the pandemic. Finally, beyond the issue of working parents, COVID-19 may also have implications for research modalities, as it has notably contributed to the development of online data collection methods.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDIES REVIEWED AND THE SCOPING REVIEW PROCESS

This scoping review is based on empirical articles with some limitations. Several studies have been conducted without stating the theoretical and conceptual foundations. Regarding data collection, many researchers rely on cross-sectional designs and self-reported measures. Consequently, results should not be interpreted causally and may be subject to common method bias. Some qualitative studies rely solely on the analysis of answers to open-ended questions from online questionnaires. This data collection method is not designed to encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences and is probably not very helpful in understanding the complex reality of working parents. Several authors report limitations regarding the size and characteristics of their sample affecting external validity. Indeed, participants are predominantly female, professional, highly educated, or with above-average income levels. In addition, they are mainly American, cisgender, and heterosexual. Finally, several research did not consider differences in the age of children or included adult children.

Scoping reviews are increasingly used to synthesizing literature because they tend to be more rigorous and replicable than literature reviews. However, a lack of methodological clarity persists, particularly regarding data analysis. Additionally, they do not highlight the significance or the effect size as with systematic reviews or meta-analyses. Some limitations to the scoping review process must also be considered. Despite the thoroughness of the literature search, a certain number of articles may have been missed. Moreover, the papers selected were limited to English- or French-language publications, which may result in a bias in the portrait depicted. Furthermore, only peer-reviewed empirical literature was considered, and no formal study quality was conducted. Although the latter and risk of bias are not required in a scoping review (Tricco et al., 2018), the peer-reviewed articles included in the synthesis were heterogeneous in terms of quality. Finally, the descriptive table was completed with the available information from the articles without contacting the authors for additional data.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations to this study may pave the way for future research. Study selections in this scoping review relate only to the first wave of COVID-19. Even if this allowed to collect initial reactions from working parents at a specific time point in the pandemic experience, a methodological approach extended to other waves could provide a more complete view of the experience given vaccines discoveries, decontainment, sanitary measures, changes in access to educational, professional, and commercial services, population weariness, etc. Thus, it would be possible to capture a fuller extent of the demands faced by families during the several waves of the pandemic. Beyond

the first months of the pandemic, all the dimensions of the adaptive decision-making action of the individual have been able to transform and evolve. In this respect, it would be interesting to conduct longitudinal studies to understand how the pandemic, as a life course event, may have been transformed over the months and to assess how working parents and institutions (schools, companies, governments) who have deployed, repeated and renewed strategies to improve work-family balance, have been able to reshape their contextual forces. Targeted or comparative studies considering variables as sex or gender, education level, job types, marital status, ethnicity, or country of origin could also provide a deeper understanding of the issue. This could shed light on how the individual or couple characteristics may affect working parents' interpretation of different contextual forces, as well as the strategies adopted to satisfy their specific adaptive needs.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this scoping review was to identify and describe the contextual forces that hindered or facilitated the work-family balance of working parents during the first wave of the pandemic, as well as the adjustment strategies implemented to meet their adaptive needs. Based on 56 articles, this scoping review highlighted several contextual forces that hinder work-family balance, namely sources of interference and blurring of boundaries resulting from working at home, inequity in the division of tasks between partners to the detriment of mothers, particularly those with young children, role overload and a lack of space and personal time that can lead to mental health problems, a context of precariousness and financial insecurity, restrictive working conditions with little flexibility, and public policies and measures that are not always adjusted to the needs of working parents. Conversely, the pandemic has provided conditions that can promote healthy lifestyles (e.g., meals at home, physical activity), work-family balance (e.g., reduced commuting, greater autonomy in prioritizing work and family demands), and family cohesion. Telecommuting or remote work has also been shown to be a source of flexibility for more educated populations. Research has been less focused on working parents' strategies during confinement than on the facilitating and hindering contextual factors. Nevertheless, they identified strategies that could be intrapersonal (e.g., problem-solving, emotional regulation), interpersonal (e.g., tasks sharing and shifting), or extrapersonal (e.g., alternative space use and rearrangement, time management, online social activities, organizational and public support). In sum, the experience of the pandemic varies greatly depending on the contextual factors to which working parents are exposed and the strategies they adopt or are able to access. The findings should stimulate researchers

to adopt an interpretive, culturally embedded, gendered, and sociohistorical approach to fully capture the issues and dynamics of adaptive decision-making actions in the life-role balance of working parents.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Lise Lachance: Conceptualization (lead); Data Curation (lead); Formal Analysis (lead); Methodology (lead); Validation (lead); Visualization (lead); Writing (lead); Louis Cournoyer: Conceptualization (lead); Data Curation (lead); Formal Analysis (lead); Writing (support). Chloé Lacoursière: Conceptualization (supporting); Data Curation (lead); Formal Analysis (support); Validation (lead); Visualization (support); Writing (support). Louis Richer: Formal Analysis (support); Validation (support); Writing (lead).

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