

# CHAPTER-05

## **NAVIGATING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A MALE PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS, MENTAL WELL-BEING, AND STRATEGIES FOR FULFILLMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter dives into the complex objective of work-life balance, notably from a male point of view, understanding the unique obstacles and barriers males experience in balancing their employment and personal fulfillment. It delves into the societal expectations placed on men as breadwinners, as well as the toll this may take on their mental and emotional well-being when personal needs are ignored. The chapter dives at social limits, the implications for mental health, and ways for men to have more fulfilled lives. Stress, strained relationships, and the effort to redefine success beyond professional accomplishments are addressed, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive strategy that includes personal development and relationships. As guiding lighthouses in navigating these issues, strategies such as efficient time management, setting boundaries, self-care routines, and building strong support networks are highlighted.*

**Keywords:** *Work Life Balance, Men's Perspective, Challenges and pressures, Time management, Cultural Expectations*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term 'work-life balance' is receiving essential attention and is frequently utilized in everyday language among academics, consultants, leaders, HR specialists, and employees. The chapter focuses on the challenges that males encounter in balancing job and family life. While studies of both men and women have been conducted to compare gender variations in work-life balance, the focus on men's work-life difficulties is frequently limited. It has been stated that feedback about men's work-life pertains are typically used to explain either women's exit from the workforce or the larger relationship between work and home. As a result, there is little study into men's involvement with their paid job and family life, as well as their ability to handle different positions within these fields. This study seeks to shed light on work-life integration from the perspective of males, with the goal of better understanding their experiences managing many commitments. One possible argument for why researchers studying work-life balance frequently neglect men's challenges is established traditional gender stereotypes that control a man's work both at his job and at home. Traditional societal and cultural expectations depict males as the 'breadwinners,' earning income to support their families. As a result, responsibilities such as caregiving, child-rearing, and domestic duties are frequently viewed as the domain of the 'caregiver' or the woman. This viewpoint absolves males of the burden for managing family responsibilities, potentially implying that they do not need a work-life balance because their primary position is regarded to be primarily focused on paid labor. However, the idea of a 'father's role' has shifted throughout time, with more fathers actively engaging in childcare and home tasks. Furthermore, research has shown that men experience larger

work-life conflicts than women, emphasizing the growing need for them to establish a better work and life harmony. Given these findings, as well as the major focus of research on work-life stability for both males and females within dual-earner households, there is an increasing need to specifically look into and investigate the work-life challenges faced only by men. This chapter embarks on a nuanced exploration, recognizing the myriad layers that compose the male narrative on work-life balance. It aims to unravel the complexities that arise from societal norms, dissecting how these norms intersect with career aspirations and personal choices. The chapter endeavors to delve into the confluence of professional ambition and personal aspirations, dropping mild on the interaction among societal pressures and individual desires. This exploration isn't just a literary pursuit but a touching reflection of the lived experiences of men striving to carve a path toward fulfillment. It is an invitation to fathom the emotional landscapes, intricacies, and strategies woven into the fabric of their journeys, in pursuit of a harmonious existence. Thus, this chapter stands as an aperture into a multifaceted prism, illuminating the intricacies and disparities faced by men as they endeavor to hit stability between professional obligations and personal contentment, ultimately paving the way for a more nuanced understanding and cultivation of work-life harmony.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

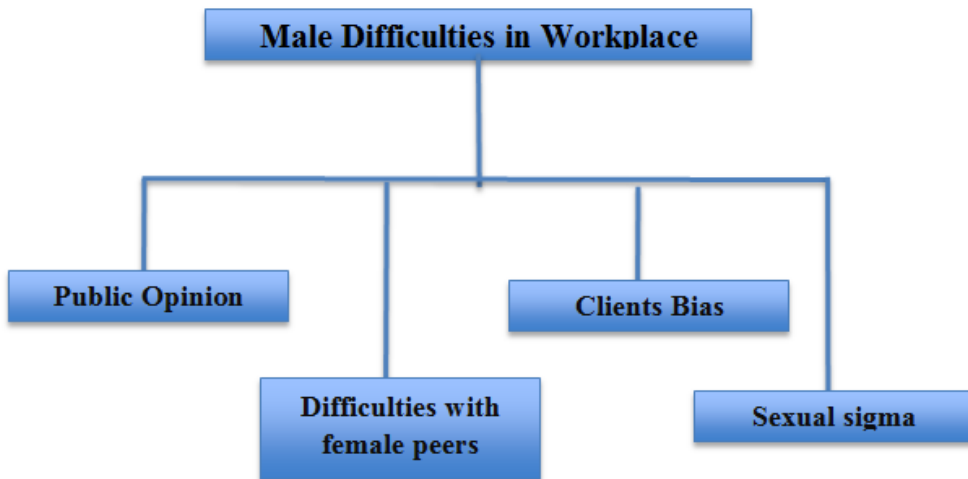
Work-life balance talks often fail to come to a conclusion on what "balance" actually means. A common interpretation sees it as a balance of work and life, with both being equally vital. However, there is some debate regarding whether this balance suggests that everything should be truly equal. Some think that "balance" demonstrates equal treatment between work and life, while others contend that work and life are not equally weighted, making perfect balance difficult to achieve. This disagreement about what "balance" actually means makes it difficult to define work-life balance. This chapter will look at other concepts of work-life balance that go beyond simply recognizing it to be a fair distribution. Many research give convincing evidence that work-life balance is critical for men's well-being. The typical "strong silent" male reputation, on the other hand, can deter men from getting treatment or expressing their emotions, aggravating their problems. Despite these barriers, there is evidence that creating work-life balance may stimulate men's well-being significantly. An increasing amount of studies shows that ignoring work-life balance has a negative influence on men's mental health. Karkoulian, Jordan Srou, Sinan (2016), the authors study, with a focus on gender, the relationship between work-life harmony, perceived pressure, and external and internal ability to take actions. It analyzes men's and women's problem-solving techniques in order to have a look the impact of gender on work-life stability. It investigates the

factors that contribute to a stable, dispute-free work life and examines employees' locus of control, with a focus on reported stress levels. Patricia A Thomas, Hui Liu, and Debra Umberson (2017), in an article discussed that Connections between families, particularly those established through marriage, across generations, and between siblings, have a substantial impact on one's general well-being. The quality and diversity of these relationships varies, necessitating greater inquiry into their complexities, unexpected advantages, and distinctive intersections with social standing. Future study should concentrate on unraveling the complexity inherent in these relationships in order to better understand their impact on the well-being of individuals. Kritika Bhardwaj (2019), in her chapter looks at work-life balance from the perspective of a man, emphasizing on perception, achievement, and the nature of work. It established two types based on a case study of the police sector: overall and continuing. Work-life separation allows for overall balance, whereas continuing balance reduces interference. According to the article, employees can alter their definitions to prevent conflict with circumstances at work, achieve overall balance, or minimize conflict to preserve work-life balance. Morris, John Larsen, Emma, Antony C. Moss & Stephan U. Dombrowski (2020), in their article, they studied social pressure with the context of alcohol intake in United kingdom adults, stressing its potential negative health consequences and the need for additional research. According to the results of this study, peer strain to consume alcohol is a complex and diverse case that occurs all through maturity and necessitates increased awareness in order to support operations that minimize the impact of stress-related circumstances and develop techniques to address perceived stress situations. Brené Brown's (2021) in her book questions the widely held notion of vulnerability as a weakness in her 2021 book, arguing its underlying strength. She throws light on the importance of embracing vulnerability with a view to experience genuine pleasure and form strong connections with people. Brown's viewpoint argues for an attitude shift, asking people to perceive vulnerability as a path to authenticity and lasting connections rather than something to avoid or hide. Her views dive into vulnerabilities transforming power, emphasizing its place for achieving tolerance and true feelings in our lives. Michael Kimmel's book chapter "The Male Breadwinner Myth: How It Hurts Men and Families" (2021) questions the traditional caregiver role, stressing its negative effects on men's mental and physical well-being. He claims that this societal expectation harms not only males but also families, and he advocates for a more equitable allocation of household tasks and childcare duties. By challenging this established societal usual, Kimmel hopes to promote a more balanced and healthy approach to gender roles, encouraging equity within familial relationships. Larissa Bartlett, Marie-Jeanne, Bindoff1, Richard Chambers ,Craig Hassed (2021), in their study explored the co-relation between awareness, perceived strain, and work engagement among English-speaking

men from 130 countries, and it measured self-reported changes after a 6-week awareness Open Online Course.

### **3. CHALLENGES FACED BY MEN IN THE WORKPLACE**

Regardless of many attempts to undo it, the separation of employment as "male" or "female" remains very entrenched in job markets. People have looked into how women get into jobs that are often reserved for men, such as customer service, petrol fillers, or production work. However, there is little research on males who start to work in jobs that are usually considered to be for women. There are numerous issues for men in these positions, particularly in the choosing of profession category. This topic is split into several parts: 1. People criticizing them; 2. Problems with lady coworkers; 3. Clients treating them unfairly because they are guys; and 4. struggling with unjust treatment because of their gender.



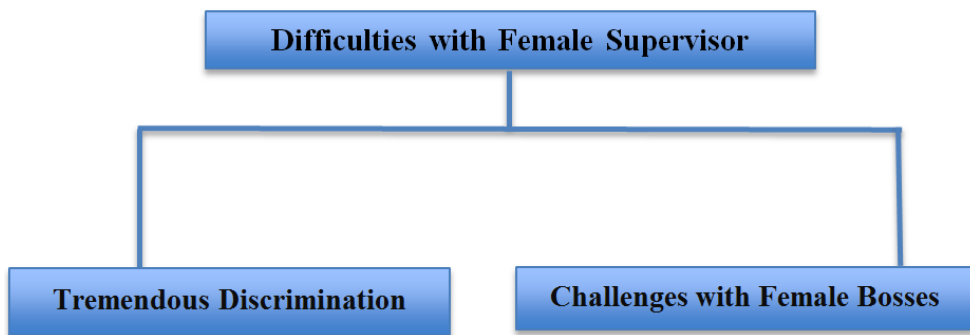
**Figure-1: Challenges Faced by Men in the Workplace**

*Sources: Developed by Authors*

- **Public Opinion** - A number of studies performed by various academics revealed that men who work in jobs traditionally reserved for women face discrimination. People may believe they are not a man or are not strong. Friends, family, and others may judge them for taking that job. In a study of students learning to counsel, if male students become friends with their peers, their friends and family can make fun of them a lot, leaving harder for them to fit in with their social groups.

- **Difficulties with female peers** - Several studies have investigated how difficult it could be for men to be accepted and integrated into traditionally female-dominated professions. In one study of midwives, female midwives often set up hurdles for men doctors by assigning them technical tasks while claiming emotional roles for themselves. This can make it difficult for male doctors, even those in higher positions, to assert themselves. Other studies have found that when men are outnumbered by women in the workplace, they sometimes struggle to be heard.
- **Clients Bias** - Researchers came across client bias in typically female occupations. When men work in childcare, for example, they frequently encounter suspicion and discrimination from their social groups, which derives mostly from assumptions about their sexual orientation. Parents are hesitant or even hostile to male workers. To address these concerns, childcare facilities place statutory and informal boundation on men's interactions with kids at work, such as being solo in a room with kids, doing physical contact such as cuddling, or helping with diaper changes. These policies, along with unspoken guidelines, contribute to men facing disagreement or prejudice.
- **Sexual Sigma** - Sexual Sigma is a criticism directed at someone owing to their sexual orientation. When men opt for non-traditional roles, their friends and colleagues may wonder about their sexual orientations. Male colleagues in female-dominated occupations face more scrutiny and confusion about their sexuality than their female counterparts, resulting in increased bias based on sexual orientation.

#### 4. MEN COMPETING WITH WOMEN FOSTER INTER-GENDER WARFARE



**Figure-2: Difficulties with Female Supervisor**

*Sources: Developed by Authors*

- **Tremendous Discrimination** - Males may want to perceive themselves as being unnoticed in prefer of ladies in light of nice prejudice techniques. The notion that ladies can now be put on the 'fast music' makes many guys experience omitted, not noted, or excluded. Guys tend to mislay their macho picture because of their every so often violent battles with girls. They also see female's blessings because of robust place of work fairness and gender range guidelines. This may cause erroneous resistance to gender discrimination.
- **Challenges with female bosses** - Women looking for managerial posts may lean toward attributes considered as both masculine and feminine, while distancing themselves from qualities associated primarily with women, because men establish and manage organizations. Because of perceived workplace disparities in gender, cultural and institutional reforms tend to cultivate robust female personalities. As a result, women's arousal in self-expression may not be valued as highly as men's. This could explain why female supervisors who supervise male subordinates are less satisfied with cross-gender interactions. Furthermore, men who work under female managers may feel inadequate or threatened.

## **5. MEN'S EMOTIONS AND VOICES IN INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT**

- **Motion management and seeking support** - Men were raised to no longer specific their feelings. guys are frequently not able to understand and specific their feelings due to the crushing of weakness that starts off evolved in formative years while boys are driven to create their forceful self. In maturity, expressing ache, struggling, or dissatisfaction is regarded as weak, as a failure (through males and others), and may even lead to social discipline, ensuing in interpersonal warfare.
- **Difficulty in communicating oneself** - Few males seek medical advice and assistance. A probable motive for that may be the absence of male advisors. The capacity gender in shape among purchaser and advisor could not simply help adult males explicit themselves more openly, however it could additionally entice extra male sufferers. Despite the fact that this goal appears to be beneficial, accomplishing its miles greater tough because guys getting remedy seem to struggle with being heard as a minority in a generally girl surroundings. this may bring about sentiments being suppressed, in addition to loneliness and being alone. Gender-associated communicate discrepancies, in addition to the truth that adult males are underneath-represented, forcing men to continually monitor their speech.

## 6. DISCUSSIONS

Following are the strategies for Achieving Balance:

- **Tailored Managing Time Techniques:** Men frequently use time management tactics that are appropriate to their experiences. This could include task division, making particular routines, or utilizing productivity tools tailored to their specific needs. Efficiency without sacrificing personal well-being becomes a key component of these solutions.
- **Setting Boundaries and Prioritizing Taking care of oneself:** It is critical to establish boundaries between work and personal life. Men develop techniques to prioritize family time, interests, and self-care. This could entail withdrawing from work-related communication during personal time, engaging in activities that enhance mental and physical well-being, and seeking opportunities for rejuvenation without feeling responsible.
- **Building Support Networks:** Establishing a strong support network is critical. Men frequently seek out mentors, peers, or support groups to discuss their experiences and seek aid. These networks provide vital insights, encouragement, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

## 7. REDEFINING SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

- **Shifting Perspectives:** It is critical to encourage a movement away from the traditional pursuit of career-centric success and toward a more balanced sense of fulfillment. Men pursue routes that involve numerous parts of life, such as personal growth, relationships, and cultural contribution, realizing that success transcends career achievements.
- **The Relationship between Balance and Happiness:** A prominent theme emerges emphasizing the relationship between a balanced existence and overall happiness. Men know that striking a balance between professional obligations and personal fulfillment has a substantial impact on their overall well-being and contentment.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Both male and female opinions have significance in gender studies. Because there is improper study on male challenges, masculine viewpoints should be taken into account on a greater scale when advocating for gender equality. The majority of the research has been undertaken by sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists, as well as governments and Corporate Enterprises. By means of increasing and structuring

the present one thoughts on men's challenges and gender injustices, our chapter creates new perspectives and insights into them social relationships and interactions among human beings and corporations. We display that those the variations can affect each male and female. It is crucial to emphasize that the goal of this chapter is not to ignore the existence of gender disparity or to stand behind any shape of gender-associated motion. In truth, the goal is to offer a balanced view of the both aspects to create a broader and more complete consensus on gender equality solution.

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