

Work-life Balance: A Concern on Effectiveness of Job Role and Employee's Engagement towards Organizational Goal

Nurliana Mohd Hassan

Institute of Islam Hadhari, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

This paper discusses work-life balance as the key issue in all types of employment. It reflects an individual's orientation of perception across different life roles within multiple domains of personal time, family care and professional work being maintained and integrated with a minimum of job role conflict. The Self Developed Model initiates the integration between employee's performance, family-work demand, family-work conflict and family-organizational outcomes which explains the cause and effects of implementing flexi-hours. The question is how can fulfillment of personal needs improve the success of organizational goal? How can flexi-hours increase employee's effectiveness and engagement? Through a content analysis research, this study explores the aspects of i) organizational needs, ii) time management, ii) team work, iii) compensation and iv) job scope resulting to i) success and satisfaction, ii) schedule, discipline and health, iii) nucleus versus joint family and iv) justice and freedom in the 9 Facts About American Families and Work. The main concern is majority of women who quit jobs after a marriage or after giving birth then re-enters labor market when their child are grown-ups. This study rely solely on the literature concludes that care giving responsibilities with the support of work-family policies may help families navigate complexities. This research will fill in the gap to the literature by showing the needs for further research in order to recognize the impact of work-life balance amongst the gen-Ys who nowadays are prone of job hopping which reflects their attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: Work-life balance, job role, self-developed model, employee's engagement, organizational goal

Introduction

Modern civilization that the human race enjoys nowadays is the result of consecutive integrations and harmonization's of all civilizations which have existed in history. Accordingly, civilizations include a commonality that the human race has created together beyond space and time. Boundary, called nation, drawn on the world map is illusion when observed by the level of civilization. Race and religion, ethnicity and nation, politics and economy within

societies and cultures are all a hybrid created by acculturation which continuously crosses each other's boundary (Tae-Man, 2005).

There is a strong interring connectivity between social values and the Islamic values to the extent that it is difficult to separate one another. Social values can be illustrated as the basic social standards shared by all members of the society and contribute towards contiguity among them. The values in this sense are derived from the social conditions that control the individual, determine behaviors and thinking patterns. It also influences methods of perception and learning. Each value has two meanings:

- i) An objective meaning connected with the society or the collective consciousness where the value becomes a subject of veneration and a model to be followed.
- ii) A subjective meaning tied to the individual where the value differs from one person to another, each according to his/her needs, tastes and social background which includes personal identification.

However, work domain and family domain are major stressors in the lives of employees which bring themselves juggling with the competency demand of work and family (Byron, 2005; Anuradha & Mrinalini, 2015). Every task needs time, energy and skill for its effectiveness to be executed, whereby women employees perform multiple roles compared to men. Therefore, building work-life balance has been emerging as new challenges through the issues arised in human resource development since 1970s when the term was first used in United States. The new paradigm shifts of managing people across a small regional centric organization to global diversified competitive business organization has put in loads of work pressure and enhanced responsibility on the employees as much as enhancing productivity at the same time creating work-life conflict (Anuradha & Mrinalini, 2015). For instance, women may be a top executive; still the "nurturing" or "care giving" roles are considered much a part of feminine roles (Sunita Malhotra & Sapna Sachdeva, 2005).

A proper balance between work life and personal life of a person is a state between work demand and family demand is it in the office or not. It can be achieved by better time management through task prioritization that helps women employee reduce their stress, conflict, absenteeism and turnover rate while increase their performance at home as well as at work. It is understood as a concept supporting employees to split their time and energy between their job roles. It was discovered that employees faces problems such as low level of job satisfaction, high level of stress, absenteeism, turnover due to work life imbalance as well as increase of divorce cases and poor family relationship problems at home. This affects the person's physical, emotional and social well-being. Thus, achieving work-life balance is a necessity for working women to have a good quality of life (Delina & Prabhakara, 2013). After all, the real balance is only when the individual feels that he or she has done justice to all her roles and is satisfied about it.

Objective

1. To study about fulfillment of personal needs upon the success of organizational goal
2. To generalize on flexi-hours and how it can increase employee's effectiveness and engagement
3. To explore the aspects of organizational needs, time management, team work, compensation and job scope in relation to techno-scientific civilization

4. To discuss the impact of work-life balance upon supporting family friendly policies

Literature Review

In June 2014, The Council of Economic Advisers came up with a report of Nine Facts about American Families and Work. They are:

- Fact 1: Mothers are increasingly the household breadwinners.
- Fact 2: Fathers are increasingly family caregivers.
- Fact 3: Women make up nearly half of today's labor force.
- Fact 4: Women are increasingly among our most skilled workers, attaining the majority of college degrees, and deepening their work experiences.
- Fact 5: Most children live in households where all parents work.
- Fact 6: Care giving doesn't end when the children are grown: eldercare is a growing responsibility of workers.
- Fact 7: Men and women alike face challenges as they try to balance work and family.
- Fact 8: Many workplaces have not kept up with the needs of 21st century workers and families.
- Fact 9: Providing workplace flexibility and paid leave strengthens families, businesses and our economy.

It correlates to a comprehensive study of 700 firms in the U.S. and Europe conducted by business management researchers which found that work-life balance policies are positively associated with good management. While, a randomized evaluation found that when call center employees were allowed to work from home, there was a 13 percent performance increase. With women and men increasingly sharing breadwinning and care giving responsibilities, today's working families need a modern workplace - one with workplace flexibility, paid leave, and quality child and eldercare. Such policies are beneficial for the economy as they lead to higher labor force participation, greater labor productivity and work engagement and better allocation of talent across the economy. The International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have both identified childcare policies and paid leave as important drivers of female labor force participation. These policies are also essential for long run growth as they allow for better bonding between parents and children which has been shown to lead better outcomes for the kids as adults.

Self Developed Model is a conceptual model for cause and outcomes of work-life imbalance. The gap in work demands and family demands give rise to conflict. The conflict can be divided into two forms:

- i) Work-family conflict (WFC)
- ii) Family-work conflict (FWC)

Frone et al (1992) discovered that work demand is the most powerful causes of work-family conflict (WFC) and family demand is strongly related to family-work conflict (FWC).

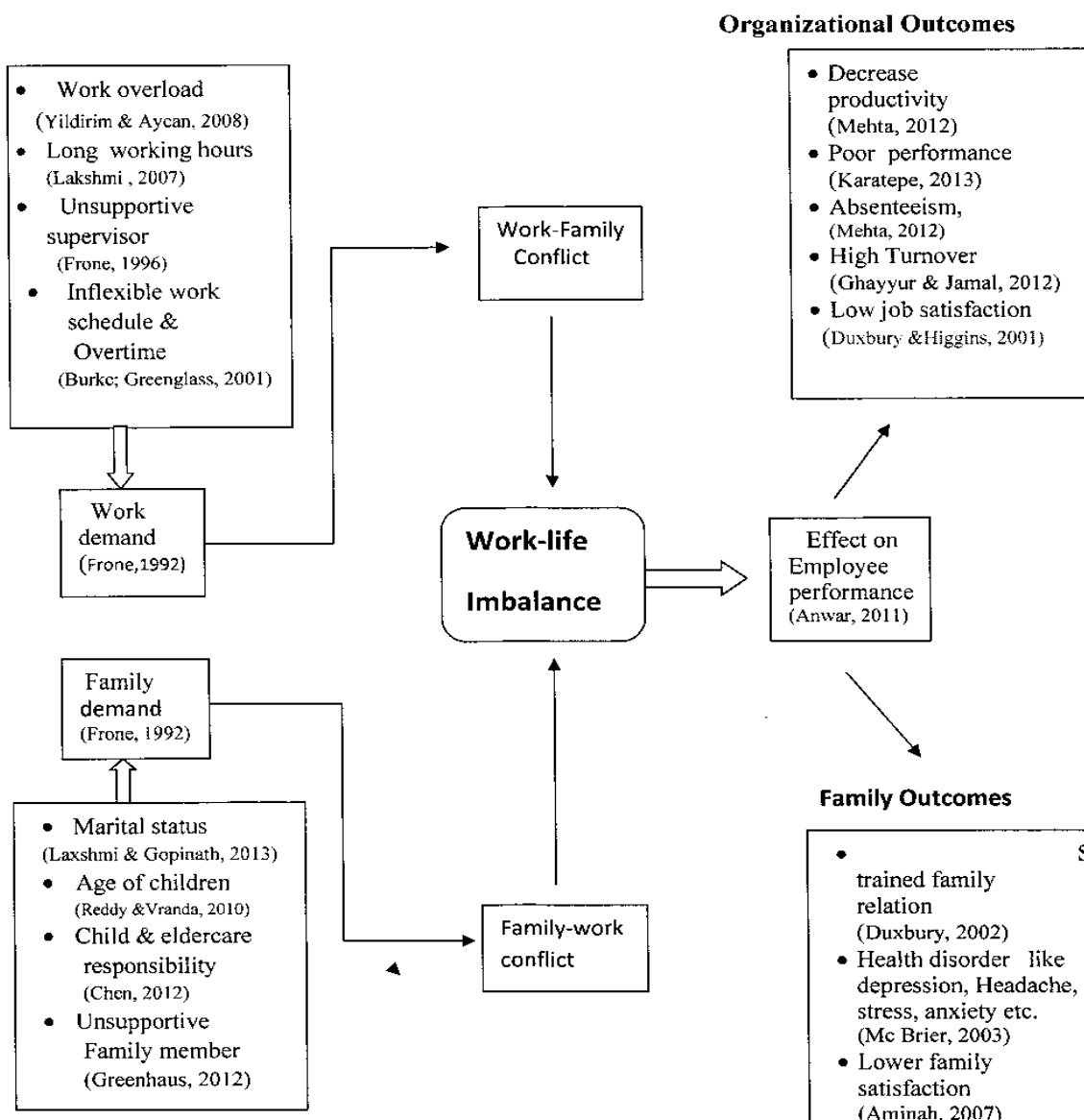


Figure 1. Cause and Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance
Source: Self-developed Model

The results of a study on Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance further revealed that there is a strong negative relationship between Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance. This study proves to be of great help to the management set-up to increase the level of work-life balance and decrease the level of occupational stress. This in turn will increase the organizational efficiency and effectiveness as the goal. Work-life balance and job stress go parallel to each other. What seems to be important in this connection is the importance of employees to keep on balancing their lives and the effectiveness of workplace practices and policies in supporting them to achieve such a goal (Ross & Vasantha, 2014). This can ultimately give rise to negative consequences for achieving the organizational goals and meeting the needs of the employees working with them.

An empirical study on Women and Work-Life Balance: Rationale behind Imbalance indicated that performance of multiple roles is part and parcel of an individual's professional life as employees perform multiple roles; they have to face multiple demands put on them by others, both within and outside the organization (ShailajaKarve and Kumar Nair, 2011).

Women typically assume the majority of childbearing duties (Porter & Ayman, 2010). These responsibility influences both stress and negative attitudes at work (e.g. role conflict, job burnout and dissatisfaction) . Upon the association between family type and work-life balance, it is revealed that the level of work-life balance is not influenced by the family type. If it is a nuclear or joint family, women have the same type of household or domestic work which cannot be avoided. Leena and Sudhir (2012) in their study revealed that, spending too much time on household chores disturbs the thin line of balancing between work and life, as females are generally more responsible for child care, elderly care and household responsibilities. This study also revealed that:

- Capability to work under stress is an important component of work-life balance. In basket training and other such programs will improve the level of role efficacy of the female employees. Hence less negative organizational stress improves the morale of the employees leading to increased productivity, accountability and commitment, which in return will help women employees to get promotions. Flexibility timing will be of help to women employees in balancing their work life.
- The organization can implement training based on 10 Life Skills of WHO (1997).
- Better work-life balance improves the psychological and physical wellbeing of employees and the important aspects of work-life balance including personal and social needs should be given consideration by the organization through good time management.

An IBIMA Published in 2015, Journal of Eastern Europe Research in Business & Economics by Cristina Leovaridis and Elena-Mădălina Vătămănescu from National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania investigated on 'Aspects Regarding Work-Life Balance of High-Skilled Employees in Some Romanian Services Sector' and found that the necessity to provide some hours of one's free time in order to finish work duties, the best situation was found in IT&C sector and R&D sector (where none of the interviewees works in his free time and the employees' personal lives are not affected), followed by banking sector, where half of the interviewees work in their free time, in order to finish their tasks, then higher-education sector, where the majority claims to be working frequently after finishing teaching, in order to solve work tasks such as preparing lectures, research or administrative activities, coordinating theses, which affects their personal life, and the advertising sector, with two-thirds of respondents stated that they work in their free time, after hours, which affects their personal lives. The research was conducted with a literature review on a significant dimension of the employees' life quality, specifically the work-life balance, followed by a comparative statistical data analysis on the current situation of work-life balance in European countries. It is widely accepted that work-life policies evolved from family-friendly initiatives (White et al., 2003; Harris & Foster, 2008). Work-life balance is a much broader concept in comparison to work-family balance as it gathers a myriad of roles outside family life - leisure, friend and community networks, religious roles etc. (Frone, 2003; Gregory & Milner, 2009). It is said that there are nine categories which were created for a proper analysis of work-life balance fields of interest and they are:

- i) work-family conflict,
- ii) individual-related variables
- iii) family related variables
- iv) work-related variables
- v) family and work-related variables
- vi) outcomes of work-family conflict

- vii) individuals' strategies for work-life balance
- viii) organizations' strategies for work-life balance
- ix) organizations' initiatives and programs for work-life balance.

Results and Discussion

The SIOP White Paper Series prepared by the Visibility Committee of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology published in 2015 reported that in order to attain work-life balance, employers can promote a positive work-life balance culture by actions at different levels. Listed below are among the steps that can be considered:

i) at an organization-wide or department-wide level, consider implementing one or more work-life balance benefits such as telecommuting or flexible work hour options for employees, if and when possible and necessary. Look to other organizations as a source of innovative ideas.

ii) remember that when managers and supervisors have agreed upon the policies created to help balance work and life, employees are more likely to take advantage of them. Efforts targeted at supervisors can ensure that they understand how to implement these policies and benefits, as well as the potential benefits to the company of doing so.

iii) ensure employees are aware of efforts they can undertake to optimize their own work-life balance. For example, encourage employees to utilize vacation time for purposes of recovery. By doing so, employees physically and psychologically detach from their work, and they report greater well-being in general. Recovery periods like breaks during the work day or vacations could be particularly valuable for the employees whose jobs prohibit other work-life balance benefits.

iv) consider sharing information from recent studies that identify and describe how employees have dealt with specific types of work-home boundary violations.

v) lead by example. Employees may observe their manager setting firm boundaries between work and non-work domains, such as not responding to emails after 8pm.

Modern technologies, providing constant accessibility to internet and mobile devices, can blur the boundaries between work and non-work. Some employees' workplaces are portable by traveling in the car or airplane, and residing at home or other locations. Employees can easily import personal activities for instance they are capable of doing online shopping, videos, music, texting family and friends at the workplace. This new capacity created by technology appears to be a mixed blessing for employees and their organizations.

Previously, women in the workplace started to research on how female employees could successfully care for families while working, but today work-life balance is discussed with respect to multiple affected groups including men and single parents. Work-life balance signifies the extent to which an employee experiences feeling fulfilled and having his or her needs met in both work and non-work facets of life. Through experiencing greater work-life balance, individuals report feeling better in general. For example, greater job and life satisfaction. Plus they tend to behave in favorable ways which causes lower turnover and absenteeism.

Employees with work-life balance feel their lives are fulfilled both inside and outside of work (Byrne, 2005), and they experience minimal conflict between work and non-work roles. They achieve this balance and tend to have higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and life in general, as well as lower levels of stress and depression. An employer's viewpoint

may find that encouraging work-life balance may attract new hires, help reduce turnover and absenteeism, and increase the chances of employees voluntarily engaging in pro-social behaviors that rise above and beyond their job requirements. Moreover, having family-friendly work policies, with a firm management practices, does not detract from profitability, but may not always increase profits. Anyhow, evidence suggests a work strategy of “running yourself ragged” which has costs both for meeting performance goals and enjoying life whereby the employee and the organization benefit most when workers experience greater balance between what they do on and off the clock.

Conclusion

Issues of work and life are an increasing focus for policy initiatives at government and organizational levels. There are four general policy areas that shape and impacting this domain (Brough et al., 2008; Baird, 2011; Hegewisch & Gornick 2011).

1. Related to employee-centered flexibility

- For example changing the location or scheduling of work to fit personal circumstances. Previous international reviews have shown strong evidence for the positive effects of flexible work practices on work-life balance, health and wellbeing and job outcomes (Nijp et al., 2012). Elsewhere, evidence is mixed regarding the degree to which flexible work practices impact on work-life outcomes (e.g. Allen et al., 2013).

2. Related to work-life interaction is paid and unpaid leave

- For example access to parental leave or holidays. Providing paid and unpaid family leave is considered best practice to enable workers to meet their paid work and family responsibilities (Baird & Whitehouse, 2012, King et al., 2012, Work + Family Policy Roundtable, 2013). Most research in this area addresses implications for gender equity in the workforce which involves women’s participation in paid work and at home involves men’s contribution to childcare. Longer periods of maternity leave are generally associated with better health outcomes for mother and infant (to review the research, please refer to Australian Government Productivity Commission 2009). Australian research has observed that fathers are unlikely to use unpaid parental leave (Whitehouse et al., 2007). An international analyses reportedly that fathers' uptake is most likely when framed that it is an individual right with universal eligibility with the thought of ‘use it or lose it’ policy or even with high wage compensation and allowances for flexible use of consumerism (Smith & Williams, 2007; Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011). Perhaps, benchmarking it is questionable.

3. The length of working hours

- A direct relationship between work-life conflict and long working hours or pressure to work long hours (e.g. Holden et al. 2010). Australia shows strong gendered patterns of working hours, with more men working full-time and long full-time hours. These gendered patterns of working are most evident for parents of young children, with women showing more variation in actual and preferred working hours over the life-span, closely linked to childcare needs (Pocock et al., 2012; Drago, Wooden & Black, 2006).

4. Relates to childcare and access to childcare.

- Similar to paid parental leave, access to high quality childcare is considered an essential support for parents’ participation in paid work. As per Bianchi and Milkie's (2010, 710) observation: childcare forms the thoughts of what many ‘work-family’ conflict is about how to care for children adequately when parents need or want to work outside the home? Most Australian and New Zealand research in this area examines:

- a) The impact of childcare accessibility (including quality and cost) on women's employment participation (Breunig et al., 2011)
- b) Factors that influence parents' decisions to use particular types of childcare (e.g., family-provided or formal services)
- c) Issues related to children's health (Bohanna et al., 2012).

They also emphasized on employees who were more favorable toward their organization's efforts to support work-life balance which also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction. Organizations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide organizational benefits. A variety of family friendly policies are being included accordingly but not limited to the following:

i) **Flexi time**

- Allows employees, to determine the start and end times of their working day, provided a certain number of hours is worked. This may allow them to meet family or personal commitments in fact, emergencies by enabling employees to respond to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances during the day, or to reduce their commuting time by starting and ending work before or after the rush hour. Researchers discussed three broad categories of FWA (flexible working arrangement) which is:

- flexi-time (flexibility in scheduling)
- tele-homeworking (flexibility in location)
- Part-time (flexibility in length of the work).

It is the ability of employee to control the duration of working time as well as location of work (remotely from office), this ability in scheduling work suppose to be offered by employer (Sussanna & Rashad, 2014).

ii) **Telecommuting**

- It is becoming more and more common for people to do at least some of their regular work from home instead of going into the office. This type of arrangement is often called 'telework' or 'telecommuting' and can be advantageous for employees by allowing them:

- to organize their work day around their personal and family needs
- to decrease work-related expenses;
- to reduce commuting time
- to work in a less stressful and disruptive environment.

It may also help to accommodate employees of particular disabilities, who are unable to leave home. The fact that employees who telework can use this added flexibility to capitalize on their personal peak productivity periods can also favourably influence a company's bottom line. Despite these benefits and the attention that telecommuting has attracted in the media, very few collective agreements contain telework provisions.

Nonetheless, the paucity of telework clauses is partly due to the fact that not all occupations are amendable to such an arrangement. Moreover, employers may be concerned by the initial implementation of costs, potential legal liabilities, and difficulties in supervising and appraising the performance of teleworkers. Trade-Unions may disapprove of work-at-

home clauses if they perceive them as leading to greater isolation of employees, reduced job security and promotion opportunities, and diminished health and safety protection.

iii) **Compressed Work Weeks**

- A compressed work week is an arrangement whereby employees work longer shifts in order of an exchange for a reduction in the number of working days in their work cycle for example on a weekly or biweekly basis. This can be beneficial for employees in terms of additional days off work for instance longer weekends allowing “mini vacations” and reduced commuting time, whereas employers can extend their daily operating hours, with less need to accommodate overtime. Compressed work week arrangements may be particularly useful for employees who wish to reduce the number of days per week spent at work, but who financially cannot afford to decrease their working hours. It is often initiated by the employee, but sometimes the employer may initiate the option to improve operational efficiency in order to maximize production which is to reduce daily start up costs or to establish longer business hours that may enhance customer service. Common arrangements for a forty (40) hours work week are working ten (10) hours per day, four (4) days a week; working an (1) extra hour a day with one (1) day off every two (2) weeks; or working an (1) extra half hour (1/2) per day and having one (1) day every three (3) or four (4) weeks off.

In Sweden a reduction of weekly working hours from 8 to 6 hours per day with full wage compensation have led to the experience of more time for social activities, particularly time for family, friends and relaxation.

iv) **Part-Time Work**

- Part-time arrangements allow people with health problems, disabilities or limited disposable time for example, students to participate in the labor force, develop their skills and to obtain work experience. They may facilitate re-entrance into the workforce for those who have had career breaks, particularly mothers or fathers who have stayed at home to raise their children or may also provide a gradual exit for employees nearing retirement. From the employer’s point of view, the use of part-time workers can help maximize the application of human resources and increase operational flexibility, by providing additional coverage during peak periods. Otherwise, part-time employment can also be unsatisfactory for those employees who prefer working longer hours to increase their income furthermore ensuring a higher standard of living for their families. The European Working Conditions Survey found that 85% of those working less than 30 hours per week were satisfied with their work-life balance. Besides that, part-time workers and those working less than 35 hours a week are being reported for the lowest levels of both physical and psychological health problems. Part-time work is a strategy which frequently used by workers who wish to better balance their work and family life. Part-time work should be promoted in more higher-level occupations. For example, Daimler Chrysler in Germany promotes part-time work in leading positions in the company (Clarke, et al., 2004).

v) **Job sharing**

- An arrangement allowing two or sometimes more employees to jointly fill one fulltime job, with responsibilities and working time shared or divided between them. Job sharing may be appropriate where opportunities for part-time jobs or other arrangements are limited. Apart from the obvious advantage of allowing employees more time for other commitments, including family responsibilities, job sharing also facilitates the development

of partnerships, whereby job sharers may learn from each other while providing mutual support. It also benefit employers as well by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job. In some cases, such an arrangement can also provide additional coverage during busy periods, while ensuring continuity of coverage when one partner is on sick leave or holidays. For business with substantial numbers of administrative stakeholders, maintenance or customer-facing employees, offering flexible working conditions can be problematic whereby the hours of work are customer-driven, organizations face limitations on flexibility for employees, so this is when family-friendly programs such as child care would be most benefitting. A positive example of childcare support is Star City Casino in Sydney that provides a 24-hour childcare facility. Management believes this has helped both staff and the organization, as evidenced by the lowest staff turnover rate of any casino in Australia (Australia Government Website, 2005).

Focus factors that influenced the success of these work arrangements were:

- ✓ management and organizational culture support
- ✓ the presence of formal human resource management practices regarding reduced work arrangements
- ✓ assistance in the implementation of such arrangements.

It is hoped that building an organizational or institutional culture supports work-life balance as a long term process for large organizations. It involves changing the way people think and talk about their work and about work-life balance so that flexible working options and other work-life balance initiatives becomes applicable, accepted and normal for everyone regardless of their gender and seniority within the organizational, institutional or personal commitments.

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Corresponding author: Nurliana Mohd Hassan

E-mail: liana.mhassan@ymail.com