

Work-Life Balance Satisfaction among Academics in Public Higher Educational Sector

Khairunneezam, M.N.¹, Siti Suriani, O.², Nurul Nadirah, A.H.³

¹ Corresponding Author. Department of Da'wah and Islamic Management, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia,

² Department of Communication, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia,

³ Department of Da'wah and Islamic Management, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia,

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Abstract

Work-life balance has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life. Balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal life's roles including academics in higher education. This article is based on a research developed in 2015, which aimed to investigate the state of perceived work-life balance satisfaction among academics in public universities in Malaysia. The research took the form of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with seventeen academics from three public universities in Malaysia. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques were implemented in this research. The findings shown that there are mixed responses in regards to the general feelings of satisfaction with the work-life balance among the interviewed academic members. Working overtime and on weekends, family support, and impacts of work towards life or vice versa were the key issues discussed among the academics regarding satisfaction with work-life balance. Findings of the study provides the universities and policy makers with key information to increase and maintain the work-life balance satisfaction and in the same time control the

¹ Corresponding Author. Department of Da'wah and Islamic Management, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, Email: neezam@usim.edu.my

² Department of Communication, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, Email: suriani@usim.edu.my

³ Department of Da'wah and Islamic Management, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, Email: nurulnadirah816@gmail.com

consequence variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover.

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1. Introduction

Work life balance is about forming followed by maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance life between personal and work responsibilities (Hasan, Sentot, Albert Feisal, Othman & Kaliammah, 2015:). In other words, work life balance is an operational idea that supports the efforts of workers to divide their locus of attention, time and dynamism between work and the other important aspects of their lives. It is also a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care and other personal activities (Hasan et al., 2015). Dundas (2008) explains that work-life balance is a significant issue in organisation nowadays because 'the need for balance is becoming more recognised because of the jobs we do, how we do them and the people employed to have changed'. Dundas further adds that particularly, more women and sole parents are in the workforce, and households now have to juggle the work arrangements of more than one paid job. Moreover, the workforce is ageing fast and becoming more diverse, businesses must compete globally to find skilled workers, standard working hours are no longer suitable for customers or staff, and technology have blurred the distinction between work and personal time.

Heraty, Morley and Cleveland (2008) argued that work-life relationships are complex and multidimensional and remain an important ongoing academic and social policy area that requires multidisciplinary and multi-level investigation and collaboration. In assessing the work-life balance issue, it is important to understand not only the underlying assumptions about work and life respectively, but also 'about the relationship between the two' (Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunschild 2007).

This article is based on a research developed in 2015, which aimed to investigate the state of perceived work-life balance satisfaction among academics in public universities in Malaysia. The research took the form of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The findings revealed that the general feelings of satisfaction with the work-life balance among interviewed academic members is at the moderate level. Then, issues that are raised by all interview respondents regarding satisfaction with work-life balance are elaborated. Section Three presents the discussion of findings together with recommendations for higher education policy makers, university management, and future researchers. The findings in this article contribute significantly in the methodology of work-life balance satisfaction among academics in Malaysia, particularly in the public higher education institutions. Since there has been no similar attempt done in doing such a comprehensive investigation on specific issues pertaining to work-life balance satisfaction, findings in the article could provide value in guiding future studies in similar educational setting either in Malaysia or in any other countries.

Apart from that, the article demonstrates the advantages in using mixed methods as a research strategy for human resource management and higher educational research, particularly a sequential mixed design. Then, the article also contribute on the context of

human resource management particularly among university management. In light of the findings in the article, it is worth considering that at the organisational level, there are a number of actions that can be adopted by the university management to increase and maintain the work-life balance satisfaction and in the same time minimise the negative impact such as overall job satisfaction, intention to leave and quitting among academic staff.

2. Work-Life Balance in Higher Education

Three broad sets of overlapping issues pertaining to work-life balance policy and practice identified by Guest (2002) are those concerned with developments at work that might be seen as causing the problem of work-life imbalance, those relating to life outside work that might be viewed as consequences of work-imbalance and those concerning individuals and their lives outside work that give rise to the need to address the challenge of work-life balance as a contemporary policy and practice issue.

Global and national continuous development in education produces significant challenges for higher education and academics. Issues such as globalisation, internationalisation of education, societal and industrial demands, and government intervention policies are some of the variables that affect higher education and academics (Lasanowski, 2009; Arshad, 2007). The socio-economic and political drivers of higher education might have a significant influence on academics' attitudes and behaviours. The impacts of these key issues and drivers on academics need to be vigilantly managed by the government and the universities, as academics may view them as burdens rather than as challenges.

Academics in higher education of Malaysia are expected to uphold the nation's aspiration of achieving a world class education level and produce multi-skilled and competent individuals (Hashim, 2012). On top of that, academics are an important player in nurturing the government's aims for the harmonisation and oneness of its people that will then carry the aspiration of the nation towards being a fully developed country by the year 2020. Their contribution in disseminating knowledge and cultivating the value of research and innovation has always been scrutinised by the government, the industry and the society. As evidenced by recent key policy decisions, education in the country is being liberalised, as educational achievement is seen to be the cornerstone from which national prosperity can be constructed (Knight and Morshidi, 2011).

In this realm, work-life balance is a pertinent issue among university academics. As Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006) assert 'single parents and other single individuals may have same load of difficulty in balancing work with children, friends, relatives, and other commitments outside the organisation'. It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal life's roles including academics in higher education. Multiple workplace roles by university academics alongside organisation and community pressures are likely to be viewed by the academics as significant triggers that influence their state of perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

Numerous studies have been conducted searching for the association between work-life balance and attitudinal job outcomes such as job satisfaction (see Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Hasan et al., 2015; Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton & Swart 2005; Scholarios &

Marks, 2004; Virick et al., 2007; Youngcourt, 2005; Zin, 2006). According to Moore (2007), the extant literature on the subject of work-life balance tends to make numbers of assumptions and one of those is that improving an organisation's work-life balance leads not only to greater productivity but to greater company loyalty and job satisfaction. Samad (2006) asserts that previous studies revealed that work and life factors are found to be an important concern of both individuals and organisations. This is due to 'the conflict that arises from work and life/family factors will lead to stress, resulting in negative consequences such as job and family dissatisfaction' (Samad, 2006).

Sverko et al. (2002) studied work-life balance and its antecedents and consequences among Croatian employees. Among the results was that work-life balance dissatisfaction led to higher job stress and low life satisfaction. Howard, Donofrio and Boles (2004) in their study concluded that work-family conflict which reflects work-life balance issues is significantly related to satisfaction with the job in general, pay, supervision, promotion, work, and co-workers. The findings from this study also revealed that increased levels of work-family conflict are negatively related to several different facets of employee job-related satisfaction and that responsibilities in the workplace and responsibilities at home cannot be perceived as mutually exclusive entities in employees' lives (Howard et al., 2004).

It is hard to find any research on work-life balance in Malaysia particularly in the Malaysian higher education sector. One of the scarce attempts at investigating work-life balance in Malaysia was made by Hasan et al. in 2015. In their study, work-life balance had a significant relationship with employee satisfaction and employee wellness programs acted as the most dominant factor of work-life balance. However the study was conducted among non-academic staff in a private higher education institution. Based on this scarcity, there is a dreadful need of evidence of work-life balance satisfaction context among academics in the higher educational setting. Therefore, the current article is aimed to fill a gap in the literature pertaining to the current work-life balance issue among academics in the Malaysian higher education.

3. Method

This article discusses a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with seventeen interviewees comprised of seventeen academics from three public universities. Purposive self-sampling and snowball sampling techniques were implemented in this qualitative study. Based on the steps for this sampling technique proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:176) and DeCuir-Gunby (2008:130), formal invitations were sent to several Key-Person (those who hold management positions in their universities respectively) and academic staff (including senior lecturers, lecturers and tutors) in several Malaysian universities to take part in the study. The consent had been given by all of the Key-Person and focus group interviewees. The research data was triangulated which followed Decuir-Gunby (2008) argument that this helped to reduce risk of bias and allowed a better assessment of the phenomena. In this study, triangulation was accomplished by comparing the consistency in responses from both the key-person (KP) and focus group (FG) interviews. Then, the method of member checks was used. This involved several steps where, first, all interviewees were given a copy of transcriptions of the interviews they have participated. Secondly, they were asked to examine the interpretations of their interviews and thirdly, give feedback for accuracy. The use of member check helps to clear up any

misconceptions and misinterpretations that may be made by the researcher DeCuir-Gunby (2008).

4. Result and discussions

In each of the interview sessions, a question had been asked about their general feelings of satisfaction with work-life balance. These answers were coded based on either they spoke of these in terms of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, or no response was given or it was unclear. Table 1 presents this data.

Table 1:
General Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

Interview Respondents	Responses	
Key-Person	KP1	Satisfied
	KP2	Satisfied
	KP3	Satisfied
	KP4	Unclear/no response
	KP5	Unclear/no response
	KP6	Satisfied
	KP7	Satisfied
	KP8	Satisfied
Focus Group 1	FG1-1	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
	FG1-2	Dissatisfied
	FG1-3	Dissatisfied
	FG1-4	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
	FG1-5	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
	FG1-6	Unclear/no response
Focus Group 2	FG2-1	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied
	FG2-2	Unclear/no response
	FG2-3	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied

Note: KP=Key-Person, FG=Focus Group

According to the findings in Table 1, six Key-Persons (KP1, KP2, KP3, KP6, KP7, and KP8) mentioned that they were satisfied with the work-life balance factor. Interestingly, none of the academics in focus groups mentioned that they were satisfied with work-life balance, five of them (FG1-1, FG1-4, FG1-5, FG2-1, and FG2-3) are neither dissatisfied nor satisfied and two are dissatisfied (FG1-2 and FG1-3). The other two respondents in focus group interviews gave an unclear or no response at all. In these particular interview findings, most of the management people acknowledged that work-life balance is a source of satisfaction. On the other hand, none of the respondents in focus groups who were at the operational level in their universities responded that they were satisfied.

4.1 Satisfied Respondents

Six of the respondents answered that they were satisfied with the aspect and policy of work-life balance practised by their universities (KP1, KP2, KP3, KP6, KP7 and KP8). A deputy provost

of a university (KP7) for instance said that he is satisfied with the issue of work-life balance. He further shared his own practice of balancing between workplace's needs and personal life's needs:

"I believe in the principle of 'All work and no play make Jack a Dull Boy'. Work and life must be balanced because I like to do my hobbies apart from my daily job as a lecturer. There are some of us who love to work, do overtime work and going back home also with a bundle of unfinished work. I love to spend my time with family and enjoy outdoor activities like fishing, golfing, travelling and so on. My wife and I will make sure that every year we will bring our kids to travel anywhere. This balance between life and work is a must not only for lecturers but also for all types of job. It will help in creating job satisfaction" (KP7 – Key-Person Interview).

Another top level management person, a deputy vice chancellor (KP2) proudly shared that he had successfully been juggling with the issue of work -life balance:

"Between personal life and work, I don't think I am prone to one of it and I am still able to balance both factors and maintain my job satisfaction. Instead of a good practice of work-life balance policy in a university, one also must be clever enough to balance priority for both work and life" (KP2 – Key-Person Interview).

A program coordinator (KP8) highlighted his satisfaction with the issue of work-life balance when he said:

"Lately, I always get home very late.... But I still can manage my family affairs and I am so sure that I satisfied with my job. No negative feedback or comments heard from my family members or from the university management. The ultimate reason is ourselves, how we juggle both sides (work and life) efficiently" (KP8 – Key-Person Interview).

4.2 Dissatisfied Respondents

There were two respondents who mentioned that they were dissatisfied with the aspect of work-life balance (FG1-2 and FG1-3). For instance, a female tutor (FG2-1) argued:

"If only I can have 34 hours in one day, I am sure I can be a better mum...(she laughed, then sighed)... The reality is most of my time was spent for office work. The dean (and university management) should have a look into the other side of her staff members' lives... we have families. But, what can I do, I am only an ordinary staff... she is the boss" (FG2-1 - Focus Group Interview).

Similarly, a female lecturer (FG1-2) expressed her dissatisfaction with the practice of work life balance policy in her university:

"How disappointed I was when there were several occasions that required us (the academics) to come over to the office in the weekends just to finish unimportant work! I still remember a couple of months ago, all of a sudden, the faculty decided to have a house-keeping program on Saturday, and I have no other choice rather than cancelling my family's program! (She

looked so emotional when she spoke). Can we just have that program anytime in weekdays? You (the faculty management) have five working days to choose (rather than Saturday and Sunday)!" (FG1-2 – Focus Group Interview).

These arguments are manifestations of general dissatisfactions towards the issue of work-life balance among staff in the operational level. The tutor (FG2-1) intrinsically stated her desire to give more focus towards her family, but she could not do so because of the responsibilities she has at her workplace and towards her superior- in her case, the dean.

However, she seemed to hide her dissatisfaction without showing any further emotional statements. This was different with the female lecturer (FG1-2) who had emotionally argued the relevance of attending her faculty occasion while she was supposed to be with her family. Interestingly the interviews revealed that respondents who were satisfied with the aspect of work-life balance were those among the top management side. Additionally, none of the academics in focus groups responded positively. It clearly reflected that people who hold management position thought that they had a balance of time and responsibilities between work and life, but most people at the operational level in the universities thought the other way around.

Another vital finding was that the differences of work-life balance satisfaction were not clearly portrayed between male and female academics. It seems to be related to individual academic himself juggle between the needs of work and the needs of personal life. This is in accordance to the mixed responses given among different gender both in Key-Person interviews and focus group interviews. Finally, work-life balance is clearly a pertinent issue which can affect employees' attitudes particularly job satisfaction. This was mentioned by a female tutor (FG2-3) where *'work and life have great impacts towards her job satisfaction'*.

4.3 Issues on Work-Life Balance Satisfaction

Apart from the interview respondents' general satisfaction with work-life balance, they had also initiated discussions on several important issues that impacted on their satisfaction in this dimension. These issues were working overtime and on weekends, family support, and impact of work towards life and vice versa. Only one Key-Person among the management people talked on this issue. Eight Key-Persons and focus group members mentioned and discussed the issue of family support. Discussions on the issue of impacts of work towards life or vice versa caught the attention of five interview respondents.

4.4 Working overtime and on weekends

The top management level - via the statement of the deputy vice chancellor (KP2) above - thought that the university provides a fair and satisfying work and life balance policy. On the other hand, respondents who work in the operational level (academic staff) tend to think differently. This is evidenced by the fact that almost all respondents in Focus Group 1 Interview (except FG1-6) agreed that they are not happy with the direction given by the management to work overtime and to work on weekends. Their grievances were strongly expressed by respondent FG1-2:

"For us the dissatisfaction is when the management asked to work on weekends. It was a big problem for us, moreover if the direction was given at the last minute. To work in the weekends

will be a very big disturbance for me as a housewife and a mother. I need to have some privacy or ample time to spend with my family and have my personal good time. I am really dissatisfied with this, seriously” (FG1-2 – Focus Group Interview).

Another lecturer (FG1-5) in the same focus-group interview session mentioned:

“I had enough of this! This (working on the weekends) happen every time the university open for a new semester.. (she sighed). To some extent, I can hear my kids sadly say “dear oh dear... mummy will be away again (on the weekends)” (FG1-5 – Focus Group Interview).

4.5 Family support

Several of the interview respondents (KP5, KP8, FG1-1, FG1-6, and FG2-3) had raised the issue of family support where they believed it is vital for them in balancing both work and family commitment. A lecturer (FG1-1) argued:

“Family support is a vital element for my career success... My responsibility is equal between workplace and home. They (my family) must understand that I am holding a huge responsibility to get enough money for all of us” (FG1-1 – Focus Group Interview).

A tutor (FG2-3) also expressed the same issue that family support is really important:

“Problems at home like a fight between my husband and I should not be brought up to my workplace. If we keep busy thinking of our family, our house, our kids when we are working, it will be a great burden and make us dissatisfied. We cannot focus on our lecture, our job. For me, family support regarding on this (work and life balance) is very important and have a great impact towards our job satisfaction... and life satisfaction as well” (FG2-3 – Focus Group Interview).

As evidenced from the responses pertaining to this issue, interview respondents regarded that family support was a pertinent factor that leads towards their satisfaction with work-life balance and further has a positive impact towards their organisational attitudes specifically their job satisfaction.

4.6 Impacts of work towards life or vice versa

Some of the interview respondents also discussed the potential impact of one dimension towards the other in the issue of work and life balance. The deputy vice chancellor (KP2) asserted that:

“If we are able to manage all our personal business and at the same time able to contribute substantially towards our working organisations, I guarantee that we will get a high level of job satisfaction.... take a good care of our family and do our job at the workplace efficiently, it will maximise our job satisfaction” (KP2 – Key-Person Interview).

KP2 further argued that he wanted to share vital guidance on attaining job satisfaction by balancing both dimensions of work and life based on his own experience and also based on the experiences of academic staff members in his university. He explained:

“There are several prominent and quality academics we have here in this university. As far as I concerned, they had a good approach of dividing their attentions (responsibilities) towards the university and their own life” (KP2 – Key-Person Interview).

The deputy provost of a university branch campus (KP7) argued extensively:

“When somebody cannot afford himself to attend any university or academic programs like a seminar or workshop and saying that he needs to focus more on his family and personal business, it shows that he is unable to harmonise and balance between his life and his job. If he wants to be excellent, he must be able to do what other academics did in their career and at the same time be able to fulfil their personal needs. For example, if an academic is focusing more on his office work and pay no attention to his family’s needs, this reflects the dissatisfaction in terms of personal life. The same thing goes to a person who is too concern about his personal life and could not complete most of his responsibilities in workplace, this will affect his job satisfaction” (KP7 – Key-Person Interview).

Two respondents (FG1-2 and FG1-3) shared their dissatisfaction with their incapability to balance between work and life. They admitted that there were some negative impacts of one dimension towards the other one. Their views were depicted as below:

“Yes, work and life balance is a great issue in my life. You know, when we have a family, we need to focus on them fully no matter what it takes. In my case, I still cannot balance between my job and my family equally. Always think about home when I am in the office, and vice versa. I hate this feeling...” (FG1-2 – Focus Group Interview).

“... It is not easy because I tend to mix up both (work and life). For instance, one day I have been lectured by my superiors because of my mistakes at workplace, I cannot help myself to be very moody when I came back home. I scolded my kids for their little mistakes, being so harsh, lazy to do anything, and so on (FG1-3 – Group Interview).

The concerns of the academics in the operational level were more on their inability to juggle between work and life. The researcher believes that this was derived from the lack of guidance from the university and managerial people and weaknesses of the implementation of the work-life balance policy, if there is any. For instance, as mentioned by respondent FG1-3, his superiors ‘never try to discuss with academic staff members on the issue of work-life balance, even though it is a critical issue among academic staff’.

5. Result and Discussion

Several key findings were revealed in this article. Firstly, based on the interviews, all of the management people accepted that work-life balance is a contributor towards their job satisfaction. On the other hand, none of the respondents in the operational level responded that they were satisfied with work-life balance and they were mostly tended to show that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This is related to the changing nature of the people who were appointed for management position, where they learned better on how to balance the time for their work and for their family. Despite of having a lot of responsibilities at the workplace, they try very hard to win the hearts of their beloved ones at home. Key-Person 2 and Key-Person 8 shared on this previously, where their mutual concern is not on

the quantity of time they could spend for both workplace and personal life, but the quality of time they could spend for both important life spectrums. Broers (2005) asserts this as challenging and has a great impact on a person's satisfaction in his job.

Secondly, three key factors that lead to academics satisfaction with work-life balance were initiated and discussed by respondents in the qualitative study. The key factors were working overtime and on weekend, the importance of family support, and impacts of work towards life or vice versa. Thirdly, evidenced by the responses in the qualitative study, most of the academics in the operational level were dissatisfied with the issue of working overtime and on weekend. Conversely, this was not a dissatisfying factor for management people as argued by a key-person (KP8). Family support was regarded as a vital source of work-life balance satisfaction and job satisfaction among both respondents from the management group and the ordinary academics group. The issue of impacts of work towards life or vice versa was regarded as a factor that contributes towards dissatisfaction among several academics in the operational level, while academics in the management level tended to give opinions on consequences and benefits of having a good mechanism on balancing the influence of both dimensions- work and life- toward each other. Fourth, in certain demographic aspects, people kept comparing the disparity of what they and others had obtained, where different academics with different demographic backgrounds tended to unveil their dissatisfactions towards their counterparts in certain discussed antecedents and issues which related to work-life balance.

Fifth, it is also worth noting that the result of the current study supports the past works of Burke, Burgess and Oberrlaid (2004), Forsyth and Polzer-Debruyne (2007), and Virick et al. (2007) which indicate that work-life balance is an important issue and variable which can have a substantial impact on other consequence variables at the workplace. This particular finding was in accordance with the findings of Huang et al. (2007), where they found that their respondents among academics in tertiary education institutions reflected mixed feelings and perceptions in regards with work-life balance. However, this particular finding was inconsistent with the outcomes of Premeaux et al. (2007) and Forsyth and Polzer-Debruyne (2007), where they found that their respondents have a low level of satisfaction with work-life balance. This might be so, evidenced by the arguments of some academics in the qualitative study where they feel uncomfortable with the way how they divide their focus towards their family and the workplace. Unremittingly, the Ministry of Higher Education implements the on-going improved key-performance indicators (KPI) on academics especially those in the public higher education institutions including the needs of involvement in more R&D activities, articles published in highly indexed journals, community engagement, professional membership in any academic-related institute, and patented products and services (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2012). The requirement of such KPI might be regarded by academics as a potential threat on their ability to balance between work and life.

6. Conclusion

This study has provided findings related to the perceived state of satisfaction with work-life balance among academics in public higher education institutions in Malaysia. In light of the findings in the qualitative study and information obtained from the literature, according to Deery (2008) it is worth considering that at the organisational level, there are a number of actions that can be adopted by the university management to increase and maintain the

work-life balance satisfaction and in the same time control the consequence variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover.

The following implications for the university and policy makers have been identified. University managers, as far as is reasonably possible, need to give academics sufficient control over the way in which they perform their duties (Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009), which may require that particular attention be paid to job design approaches, such as skill utilization (Khairunneezam, 2004). Furthermore, university managers should attempt to ensure that their employees do not feel isolated or undervalued, and that they have the opportunity to attain an appropriate success in their career (Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009), as compared to any other academics in the same university or from other universities.

In regards to the satisfaction with work-life balance, the implication of this study is that the boundaries between work and home are fluid. Academics especially females continually argued that they found this separation difficult to make with work encroaching on family time especially at weekends. This in particular led to poorer job satisfaction for women. Khairunneezam (2011) suggest that flexibility in work practice is becoming an integral part of employment, particularly in public sector organisations, which are in effect, leading the way on this issue of work-life balance. On top of that, academic staff also felt that they were forced to give more attention towards their work, and had limited time spent for their own life and family.

According to Deery (2008) it is worth to ponder that at the organisational level, there are a number of actions that can be adopted by the university management to increase and maintain the satisfaction towards work-life balance practice and policies and in the same time minimise the level of turnover among academic staff. The strategies to assist in balancing work and family life which offered by Deery (2008) include:

- a. providing flexible working hours such as rostered days off and family friendly starting and finishing times;
- b. allowing flexible work arrangements such as job sharing and working at home;
- c. providing training opportunities during work time;
- d. providing adequate resources for staff so that they can undertake their jobs properly;
- e. determining correct staffing levels so that staff are not overloaded;
- f. allowing adequate breaks during the working day;
- g. having provision for various types of leave such as carer's leave and 'time-out' sabbatical types of leave;
- h. rewarding staff for completing their tasks, not merely for presenteeism;
- i. staff functions that involve families;
- j. providing, if possible, health and well-being opportunities such as access to gymnasiums or at least time to exercise; and
- k. encouraging sound management practices.

It is anticipated that through the outcome of the current study, more research focusing on investigating the condition of work-life balance of academics in Malaysia and its association with any other critical attitudes and behaviour could be initiated. This could include occupational stress, organisational citizenship behaviour, perceived organisational support,

and absenteeism. Also, the investigation by future research would be so significant if the connectivity between the mentioned variables with work-life balance satisfaction be based on the differences of gender, age, tenure, and other personal demographic variables. For example research on differences of work-life balance value between men and women's perceptions, and between senior and junior academics. Through the future work on these demographic differences of work-life balance and intention to leave, it is hoped that better intervention could be implemented by the university to create and maintain an optimum level of work-life balance focusing on a specific group of academic staff members. It must be emphasised that the current study's results are based on academics in participating public universities and it is not possible to generalise to academics in other higher education institutions in Malaysia. Further similar works need to be done in the broader area of Malaysian higher education with segregation and focus among private and public university academics.

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Correspondent author: neezam@usim.edu.my (Khairunneezam Mohd Noor)