

Information Technology and Women Academician Work-Life Balance

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Abstract

The continuing evolution of information technology (IT) allows work to be done anywhere, anytime. However, the use of IT has transferred work into the home lives of academicians and, in turn, has affected their work-life balance. Thus, concern about the influence of IT on academicians' work-life balance remains. This research utilises work-family border theory as a theoretical lens to investigate the impact technology has had on women academicians' work-life balance. Through a case study design, a public type of university in Terengganu, Malaysia, is selected as a research case to explore the use of IT and whether the IT benefited or otherwise women academicians' work lives. This research is expected to benefit academics and practitioners by contributing to the body of knowledge on the role of IT in women academicians' work-life commitment. Also, the findings are expected to provide women academicians with an explanation in understanding their dual-role thus, preparing them for better work-life balance.

Introduction

Information technology (IT) has been a primary means of communication that enables people in different geographical areas and even near locations to communicate across time and space (Waller & Ragsdell, 2012; Currie & Eveline, 2011). Recent research shows that IT has become an essential tool in almost any organisation that enables employees to have access from various mediums and anywhere to communicate personally and professionally (Currie & Eveline, 2011). For example, E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and blogs play a fundamental role in the communication network of many workplaces.

Despite this being an essential advantage of IT use, it brings consequences for employees, especially women who may have to continue working late in the evening, bringing their work back home and at the same time taking care of their family and children (Roy, 2016). This can have significant detrimental effects on women's work-life balance (Doherty, 2004). Moreover, the increased use of IT in universities as a core communication vehicle to keep pace with

changing education environment means additional pressure on employees, especially women (Wet & Koekemoer, 2016; Ranjan, 2008; Noor, 2011).

This is because most women nowadays are no longer full-time housewives but hold more significant responsibilities. Women who have entered the workforce are usually working mothers who juggle between working lives and household activities (Ahmad, *et al.* 2011). If the working mother cannot achieve their desired work-life balance, their income gets affected because they decide to leave the workforce and care for their children. Moreover, if many women leave the workforce, the economic development of countries is affected through a reduced labour supply (Chalawadi, 2008). Thus, balancing the work-family of working women is very important, especially world today is becoming increasingly technologically advanced (Anon, 2017). Indeed, IT is changing where and how people's work. Thus, this issue has created new concerns about limiting the scale of work with the presence of IT.

Despite the changes, IT has brought in people's lives as an enabler in the workplace where it plays a vital role in accelerating work, saving time, assisting in communication and increasing access to any people at any place (Roy, 2016). Nevertheless, there is a lack of understanding of the use of IT and its influence on women academicians' work-life balance. Since the use of IT has allowed people to work regardless of time and place. This scenario can be described as a 'portable humanoid office' (Challenger, 2002).

Given this background, this research aims to investigate the use of IT among women academicians and its impact on their work-life balance, by focusing on the following main research question of *'how does IT influence the work-life balance of women academicians?'*. The notion of IT accessibility in both work and home life is at the heart of this study, with the proposal that the use of IT in non-working hours results in an imbalance between work and life commitment. Investigation of this assumption underpins this paper, and its presentation is organised as follows. In the next section, the literature review emphasises work-life balance and IT and also the guiding theory used are explained. This is followed by the selection of the case study and the research methods employed therein. Finally, research contributions from the case study organisation are offered in the concluding section.

Literature Review

Generally, work-life balance relates to working and quality of life (Guest, 2002). However, there are various perspectives of work-life balance definition, which can be subjective or objective. For example, "a perceived balance between work and the rest of life" is seen as a subjective definition (Guest, 2002, p.263). This is because the 'balance' concept itself is difficult to operationalise. For instance, some people may prefer to work long hours for specific reasons, and on the contrary, some may want work and home aspects inseparable. In reality, balance is concerned with time and role enactment. Thus, work-life balance is defined as the 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict' (Clark, 2000, p.751).

In Malaysia, higher learning institutions have been expanding due to the increasing number of students from local and international and various courses offered (Noor, 2011). Moreover, with technological growth around the globe, most organisations, including higher learning institutions, face challenges transforming their traditional way of providing teaching and doing research and keeping pace with the fast changes brought from the advancement of technology (Johnston & McCormack, 1996). Thus, this adds pressure on academicians as IT changes their working methods (Wet & Koekemoer, 2016). Moreover, the working environment is somehow has impacted academicians work-life balance as they are struggling

to balance between quality of work and at the same time to own harmony family life, especially women (Waller & Ragsdell, 2012; Currie & Eveline, 2011).

In developing countries, women responsibilities begin to change. Traditionally, women are responsible for looking after their children and household matters (Roy, 2016). However, today, women play a dual role who contribute to work and family life (Chalawadi, 2008). With the availability of education, job opportunities and most organisations adopting information technology to support their operation, women are facing challenges to be successful in career and at the same time maintaining their family life (Roy, 2016). Previous research shows that the effect from stressful work results in burnout in women, which reduces energy, difficulties in dealing with others, and difficulties completing the required tasks and duties of a job (Ahmad, *et al.* 2011). Thus, there is concern about the blurred boundary between work life and family life, especially women. Nonetheless, research dealing with the work-life balance mainly focuses on the factors that influence work-life balance (Panda & Sahoo, 2017) and rarely focuses on how IT actually may affect women's work-life balance (Ahmad, *et al.* 2011). Hence, this research focuses on the 'how' question of 'how does IT influence the work-life balance of women academicians?' intending to explore how IT is used particularly among women academicians.

This research is expected to offer valuable insights about how to assist women academicians in higher learning institutions to reconcile their work and personal life commitments within the existence of IT.

Work-family border theory

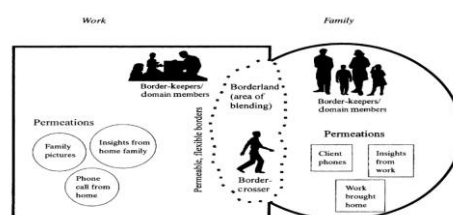


Figure 1: Work-family border theory (Clark 2000)

Figure 1 illustrates the work-family border theory (WBT) as proposed by Clark (2000). This theory is about work-family balance (Clark, 2000). The domains of work-family border theory are border crossers participation, border keepers members and border creation and management (Clark 2000). In addition, WBT focuses on finding how individuals integrate or segment different work and home domains, given that both have their borders, and how this could influence work-family balance (Wet & Koekemoer, 2016; Guest, 2002; Clark, 2000).

According to Wet and Koekemoer (2016), IT has helped employees manage their work-life interaction. However, recent research indicated that IT might also have a dual impact as it can improve work-life balance and lead to work-life imbalance if not adequately managed (Adisa, Gbadamosi, & Osabutey, 2017). Thus, this research suggests that IT has blurred the boundary between work and family life domains. Therefore, this present research employs the WBT (refer to Figure 1) as this theory can provide a theoretical framework that describes why conflict exists and how to obtain a better balance between work and non-work domains (Clark, 2000). Specifically, this theory can support the researcher to understand how IT may influence the border between work and family life of women academicians in public universities.

In this research, the term IT and IT-related devices represent communication and computing tools, which are also used for teaching and learning that allows academicians to use these tools in work and life at any given time. For example, IT and related devices refer to the Internet, mobile device types, applications and portability (Harpur, 2017; Malin, 2014; Owens & Price, 2014).

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative interpretive research methodology with a single case design with embedded multiple units of analysis (Yin, 2009). This qualitative case study research is used to capture the experience of women academicians of public universities in using IT towards their work-life balance (Merriam, 2009). The strength of the case study includes its ability as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a modern phenomenon within its real-life context' (Yin, 2009; p.18) regarding the role IT plays in work-life balance. IT was found crucial in today's working environment, including higher learning institutions, yet it is not evident, significantly, how IT can influence the work-life balance of women academicians in public universities.

Research Design

As previously noted, there is the limited existing knowledge of the influence of IT on the work-life balance of women academicians in public universities. This fact prompted the researcher to use a case study method that allows the study of the phenomenon in a natural setting and answers the "how" aspect of the phenomenon identified in the research question (Yin, 2012). A qualitative case study approach provides rich data and enables the researcher to understand the dynamics present within a setting as per the research objective (Merriam, 2009). The case study approach is interpretive and exploratory, i.e., the objective is to understand how IT influences women's work-life balance.

Public type of university is chosen as the case study with two public universities as multiple units of analysis, A-University and B-University, implementing IT in learning and teaching systems. The case research focuses on public universities in Malaysia because these universities have experienced reform due to their role, focusing on the pursuit of knowledge and their critical role in nation-building (Wan & Sirat, 2018). Moreover, the relevance of IT has been recognised in higher learning institutions as a tool that could facilitate learning and teaching ever since the Malaysian government has placed an effort on the Malaysian Super Corridor (MSC) project (Ahmad, 1998).

Both selected universities are of the same type established as public universities and belong to the Ministry of Higher Learning. This reduces extraneous variation (Yin, 2012) because their education system orientations align with the Ministry of Higher Learning vision. Thus, examining public universities in the same group provides a consistent setting for comparing technology and its influence on women academicians. Furthermore, these public universities were selected because both were conducting teaching and learning via online platforms. Therefore, through an in-depth analysis, this research examines the use of IT and its influence on women academic work-life balance in public universities.

The changing landscape in the workforce in Malaysia also contributes to the selection of the case. In Malaysia, women participation in the labour workforce accounts for just over 53 per cent (employment to population ratio) (Mahidin, 2019), with a high probability of opting out from work commitment between the late 20s to early 30s, usually due to family matters (Media Statement 2019). Based on these aspects, this research is set to be conducted in a

public university, Malaysia, with participation from women academicians. Furthermore, selecting multiple unit of analysis allows for the researcher to obtain either similar results (direct replications) or contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (theoretical replications) (Yin, 2012, p.8).

Data collection and analysis

The primary data collection method was interviews with women academicians from various roles from selected public universities to understand their actions and explore their experiences in using IT towards work-life balance (Yin, 2014). Semi-structured interview questions are designed based on the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) and work-life balance model from Guest (2002) to collect data from women academicians of the public university (Merriam, 2009). The procedures are; first to brief and inform the participants that all their information would be kept confidential, which will be used only for this research. Second, each participant will be informed about the research process. Prior to the interviews, an informed consent form is provided, requiring each participant to sign if they agree to participate in the research. In this procedure, the participants will have an opportunity to seek clarification before the interview was scheduled. Third, during the semi-structured interviews, each participant will have to answer some questions designed based on work-life border theory and guided by the research questions. The following are the sample of some specific questions for the interview:

- Explain the purposes and reasons for using IT and related-IT devices at work?
- Explain the purpose of using IT in personal life (including all the domains outside your work)?
- How do you experience work-life balance with the use of IT?
- How do you think the use of IT has influenced balancing between work and life commitment?

Furthermore, the main interviews were supported by follow-up interviews (Yin, 2016). The purpose of follow-up interviews is to improve confidence in and reliability of the results (Yin, 2012). In addition, secondary data collection was based on bulletins and documents provided by both universities. The documents included printed information obtained from the university website about the online learning platform. Additionally, the researchers conducted two days of field observations at the universities. Multiple data collection methods such as interviews, secondary data and observations were used to allow for triangulation of sources and increase the reliability of the findings (Yin, 2012). The field observations provided the researchers with context for the interview questions asked to interviewees. Table 1 lists the interviewees. The number of interviewees for each case are similar because the university students capacity and the total number of academicians are in the same range. The sessions were semi-structured to allow the interviewers to probe themes and opportunities during the conversation with interviewees. The interview questions were tailored according to the role of the interviewee. The questions begin about interviewees' experience in teaching at university, followed by questions to probe how the interviewees use IT. The interview data were analysed after each session to adjust subsequent data collection (Yin, 2012). Each interview session with the interviewees lasted an average of 30 to 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Table 1

Data of Interviews

Case organisations	Role	Number of interviewees	No. of follow-up interviews
A-University	Senior lecturer	3	2
	Junior lecturer	5	2
	Total	8	4
B-University	Senior lecturer	2	1
	Junior lecturer	6	3
	Total	8	4

Case Study Descriptions

The selection of the case study for this research is the public university that is based on several characteristics. First, the two public universities (made anonymous and herein referred to as A-University and B-University) have a strong history in their development. Both A-University and B-University were established around 1979 - 1980 as educational colleges and now have transformed into public universities considered comprehensive universities in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. These universities have produced thousands of graduate students in various fields of study. Thus, the universities history has made both the universities interesting cases for exploring the phenomenon, given that most academicians are familiar with using IT.

Second, these universities have their specialised field of studies focusing on various disciplines' teaching, practice, and research. A-University offers courses such as Islamic knowledge with other professional courses such as Accountancy, Law, Language, Design and Technology, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences. It also offers Medical and Nursing programs, Biotechnology, Bioresources, Food Industry, IT and Computing. B-University offers Biological Sciences, Mathematics, Maritime Technology, Environmental and many more. Despite the fact that both universities have similar programmes and have their specialised courses, generally, teaching and learning are similarly performed face-to-face and via online platforms. Third, the universities offer multiple programs for undergraduate and post-graduate students from local and international. Thus, the multi-disciplines programs offered require the academicians from both universities to obtain rich and complex experiences in using IT to support their teaching, learning and research agenda. Also, familiarity with using IT during work could directly contribute to the familiarity of using IT for family matters and community aspects. In turn, IT experiences of the women academicians could provide a compelling case for exploring the influence of IT among women academicians towards work-life balance.

Therefore, being the most prominent comprehensive university on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia with multi-disciplines programs for undergraduates and post-graduates with its academician's experiences in using IT, the university provided an opportunity for the researcher to understand the phenomenon by having close interactions with the women academicians. In summary, having the two cases would benefit the research field and contribute to understanding the Malaysian women workforce in public universities.

Case Analysis

Section 5 is organised into two main parts of sections 5.1 and 5.2. In the first section, the activities performed using IT in the three broad themes of i) work domain, ii) family domain and iii) community are explained in the context of WLB (refer to Table 2).

The second section discussed how IT is used among family, work and community to achieve WLB. Three key emerging themes were identified from the analysis. The themes for the integration among work, family and community domains towards the WLB are i) networking, ii) organising skills, and iii) time management (refer to Figure 2). The findings reveal that these three themes are the mechanism that enables IT to be used by women academicians in order to achieve the WLB.

Work, Family and Community

Table 2 presents activities performed using IT for each of the three domains of work, family and community area. In this research context, the border crosser refers to women academicians who can manage and utilise IT among the three aspects of work, family, and community (see Figure 1).

Table 2

Work, Family And Community Dimensions Of Work-Life Balance

	Borderland areas/domains		
	Work	Family	Community
Activities performed using IT in each area	Teaching and learning, research and publication, administrative	Daily routines, paying utilities, family entertainment	A conversation about a hobby, personal life

Work Domain

In the education sector, information technology (IT) has an important role, particularly to improve teaching, learning, and research publication. The Internet's presence further enables IT growth and can provide more information on teaching and learning via e-learning, mobile apps and gadgets. Most participants agreed that IT assist them in work aspects as women academicians. For example, participant-B1 (B-University) said that IT in education enables her to engage and understand her students more, thus being committed to providing better lectures (Su & Wood, 2012). For instance, IT helps to speed up her work when delivering teaching notes and information to the students. Furthermore, using IT in her teaching helps lessen her worries towards her students as she can provide notes through the online learning platforms and guide her students virtually with IT, in this case, by using WhatsApp to share relevant information with the students.

Also, another response from participant-A3 (A-University) explains that with the accessibility to the Internet, she can improve her skills in doing research, such as using IT to browse, gather and read articles for writing and publishing research papers. Similarly, participant-B5 (B-University) also said that the emergence of various IT nowadays really does help educators, not only men but also women, perform their jobs better. Back in her days, she does not get these privileges, but now it is different.

Participant-B5: It's a blessing for new academicians nowadays, as they have a better way to share knowledge with their students. All the online learning platforms such as WhatsApp, Media Players, and gadgets enable them to perform their work better than what I have used before. Anyhow, as I am still in the academic world, I would grab the opportunity to use IT appropriately for my work.

The findings from most of the lecturers from both universities explain that although the experiences in using IT are pretty different between senior and junior lecturers because of

their age, both roles agreed that IT benefitted women academicians. Thus, it can be concluded that IT does help in women academician's main work aspects, especially being committed towards teaching and learning, academic writing and publication.

Family Domain

Other than the work domain, women academician commitment towards their family and personal life are crucial because family is the closest thing to a person's life. There is not much difference in the findings between A-University and B-University. Most women academicians use IT to perform daily routines activities, paying utility purposes and family entertainment. For example, one of the participants explains that she used an online platform for paying utility bills.

Participant-A4 (A-University): Nowadays, people do not even need to be physically available at the bank to make home utilities bill payments and transfer money. Instead, we could use online banking to settle these. Moreover, with the development of IT these days, every piece of information is just at our fingertips.

The findings also show that most women academicians in both universities used the technology for communication and entertainment. It is found that every household will at least have one or more devices in their house for communication and entertainment, such as mobile phones, tablets and notebooks. For example, participant-A7 (A-University) explains that although she is busy with work, she used to call her close family that is far away to have some small talk. Similarly, another participant shares her experience in using IT for family.

Participant-B3 (B-University): I often spent my golden time watching movies together during weekends with my children. Now that we have many online platforms that provide online movies, such as Netflix and ViU, my ample time is spent watching my kids' favourite movies. Moreover, my kids have their tablets, so I encourage them to watch youtube channels for learning and entertainment. Nevertheless, I have to monitor what they watch and put some limits, only on videos suitable for their age. It is easier these days to have these devices.

In summary, the findings reveal that IT could enhance the family relationships in which the technology enables the women academician to communicate with close family from a far distance and enable them to use IT to spend leisure time with their family and friends. Thus, IT enables women academicians to strengthen family relationships and improve their quality of time.

Community

The findings indicate that women academicians used IT for community and connection or social networking (Koch, Leidner, & Gonzalez, 2013; Liyanage, *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, the findings show that IT helps women academicians stay connected when they mingle with friends via online platform such as having a personal group of friends to communicate on personal and leisure things such as experienced by participant-A2 (A-University).

Participant-A2 (A-University): With technology, we can have a supporting WhatsApp group to discuss our hobbies, thus taking a break from our stressful

work lives. It's like therapy for me when we start to share our preferences on gardening activities such as planting vegetables, flowers, and other hobbies. Talking to someone help me to lessen my stress because I share something common with others. It makes me feel much more relaxed. As a women academician, being an academician sometimes tied us to our busy work schedules and, in turn, prevented us from having our own specific leisure time to travel and meet people. Thus, having technology help us to connect to people and share our preferences by having leisure conversations. In the end, it gives us the feeling of acceptance and belonging to a group of people who share the same thinking and 'problems'.

The findings reveal that most of the participants from both universities have a similar response in which they believe that the use of IT platforms enables them to socialise and communicate well, such as by creating a Whatsapp group to share about hobbies and leisure activities among friends and colleagues. As a result, the use of IT for community and connection enables them to obtain the feeling of self belonging and acceptance.

Integration among work, family and community areas

The integration among work, family and community are known as boundary management which shows there is no distinction between what is home and what is work (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014). Participant B8 (B-University) said that:

Participant-B8 (B-University): Being an academician means you have no borderline. I have to write and publish, and also need to teach my student. For writing and publication research papers, IT makes my work easier. I obtain relevant information and search for articles to read by using the internet platform. For life balance, as an academician, a wife, a mother and a daughter myself, I can say I have a huge responsibility, but it depends on how I manage the time I have, the situation and the need to socialise with peers. The bottom line is how to balance life at work, at home and with friends.

Furthermore, women academicians have realised the benefits IT could bring in many aspects of lives, and on top of that, the ability to manage the use of IT among family, work and community areas of women academician are crucial for achieving work-life balance. Therefore, the findings confirm the WLB theory, which indicates that working in a position of women academician means that there will be integration among work, personal life and community aspects. However, with the use of IT, it has expedited most of the everyday tasks by assisting the women academician to manage the boundaries among work, personal and community areas.

Figure 2 reveals the findings of the three emerging themes and answers the question of 'how IT influences women academician work-life balance?'. The key themes represent boundary management skills within the borderland area which are i) family-work area; time management skill, ii) family-community area; networking skill and iii) work-community area; organising skills. These findings unpack the black box of the how question, in which the boundary management skills identified are the key elements that enable the utilisation of IT

in the borderland areas to achieve WLB. With those skills, women academicians could maximise IT use appropriately, thus achieving their work-life balance.

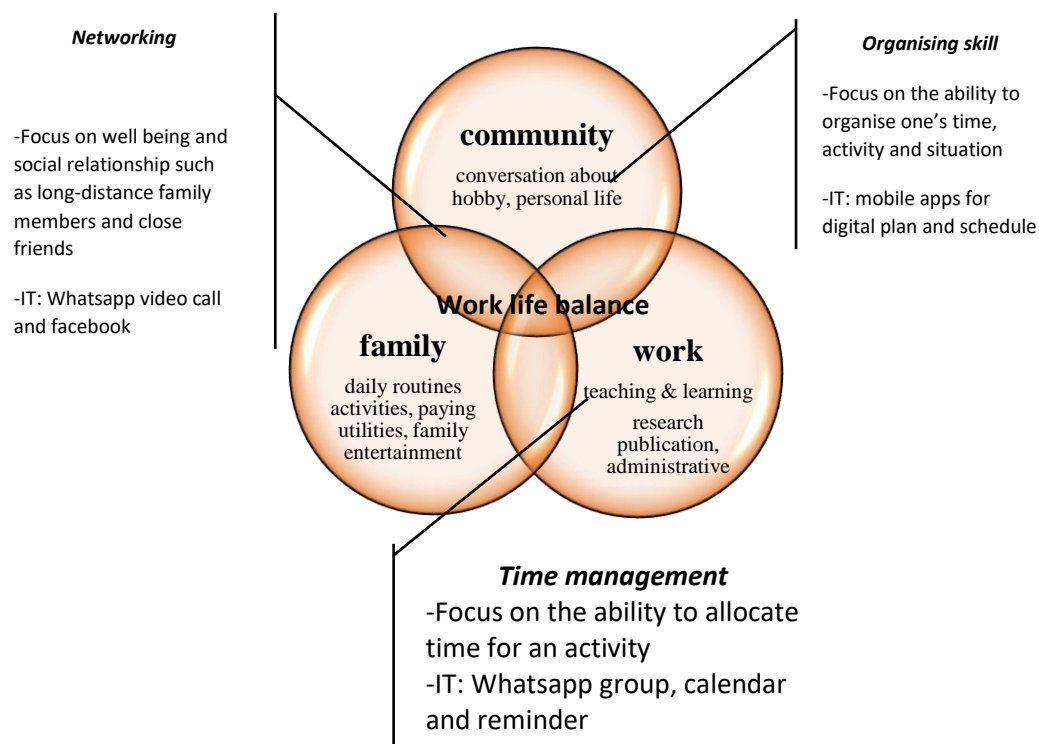


Figure 2: Integration of work, family and community for women academicians' work-life-balance

Family-Time Management-Work

The interviews show that time management is the key element that blends the family and work domain. The findings show that to achieve a balance between the family and work domains, time management is key because academicians usually have to work outside of their regular work hours without realising that the situation has a burden on their healthy work-life balance (Bauwens, *et al.* 2020).

For example, the findings reveal that most women academicians have many tasks at the workplace and tend to bring the work home. Most of them have difficulty focusing on the teaching process when they have many other works to accomplish. In order to solve this problem, it is found that women academicians have time management skills. The skill is supported by using IT, such as calendars and reminders in their mobile phones to organise their lecture time and family matters. In order to provide more access to teaching and learning contexts, they use the WhatsApp platform by creating a WhatsApp group with students. As a result, women academicians can manage the learning activities beyond their lecture time, while at the same time, WhatsApp is also used to communicate and obtain updates on family matters.

The time management skill enables women academicians to plan and decide when is the appropriate time to provide teaching information and respond to students via WhatsApp, and at the same time balance with when is the appropriate time needed to spend with families.

Participant-B1 (B-University): As a working woman, I can say that I am a multitasking person. IT helps me to manage my life efficiently and adequately between daily life at home and work.

I always plan on what tasks that I should do first. I need to have a sound time management system to know when I should do the next task. I utilise my mobile phone as using reminders and calendars to sort out the tasks. So, women need to manage their time correctly, which could be done with IT.

In summary, the ability to manage time properly by utilising technology such as Whatsapp and mobile phone calendars allows women academicians to execute their tasks between their students and families effectively. Thus, the application of IT enables women academicians to solve work-life balance issues surrounding work and family context through time management skills.

Family-networking-community

In family and community area, networking skill is found crucial for balancing women academician's work-life aspect. Networking is identified as the key element which blends the family and community domain. Networking is defined as "the behaviours people use to build and maintain networks (Gibson, *et al.* 2013, p.151)". To ensure a work-life balance is achieved, most women academicians in the two public universities respond that they can balance family and community through networking. This has happened when the women academician spends time getting to know and developing a relationship with a peer or people close to them, such as long-distance family, friends and international colleagues. For example, one participant said she used social media such as WhatsApp video calls and Facebook to connect with her long-distance family and close friends.

Participant-A1 (A-University): In today's world, nothing is impossible. We have so many options that no longer will cost any money. Like WhatsApp call, it is free, and the video is good enough to see our family and friends who live somewhere far from me or live abroad and not lose contact. Everything could be done by only using a small device such as a smartphone to have a chat or video calling or watching entertainment at any time. What's important to me is to maintain that close-knit relationship for a long time, and it gives me a good feeling in life.

In summary, networking helps build a relationship between family and community aspects, which develops a structure of individuals' contact networks (Gibson, *et al.* 2013), thus influencing the work-life balance of women academicians.

Community-organising skill-work

In the community and work domain, organising skill is identified as the vital element that blends the aspects of community and work. Organising skills are a generic skill defined as organising one's time, activity, and situation (Quintini, 2014). For instance, many mobile applications offer a digital schedule which include so many benefits, such as it assists in organising different tasks to achieve an inevitable outcome.

In order to balance between community and work domain, the findings show that women academician has performed to-do-list by using mobile apps. For example, the findings reveal that to reduce stress at work, women academician combines their work and community plans in their to-do-list app such as including workout plan which women academician can have a personal coach to monitor exercises and diet intake. Thus, during working time, women academicians could feel relate to the community such as they could monitor their diet consistently by having a personal online coach.

Moreover, women academicians discuss research and teaching plans during working hours and could talk with their colleagues about balancing their working lives with a healthy lifestyle. Thus, these technologies, such as mobile applications could help women academicians keep track and become aware of their surroundings and working lives. This is true because (Currie & Eveline, 2011) stated that women academicians have little time for recreational and socialising and to be involved in the community because of working long hours. Therefore, having organising skills could help the women academician optimise their time and activities by using IT, thus taking care of both community and working aspects and achieving work-life balance.

Research Contributions

This research has two theoretical contributions. First, the research findings add to the literature on how information technology (IT) can play a role in women academicians of higher learning institutions. Second, this research also contributes to the body of knowledge in applying the Work-Family Border theory in women academicians in higher education institutions. The research found three emerging themes of borderland area with border management skills which are i) family-work area; time management skill, ii) family-community area; networking skill and iii) work-community area; organising skills which answer the research question of '*how does IT influence the work-life balance of women academicians?*'.

This study also has practical implications. This research is significant to academic institutions and women academicians. First, this study provides evidence on how IT is used and its impact on women academicians' work-life balance. Also, the findings from the research contribute to lesson learnt for women academicians in preparing themselves for better work-life balance. Second, the findings from this research may also be used by public universities management to give awareness and improve women academicians' work-life balance and well-being through revising work responsibilities given to women academicians. Third, this research has offered valuable insights about how women academicians could utilise IT and reconcile their work and personal life commitments, which in turn, prevent the adverse effects of work-life imbalance through, among others, the boundary management skills identified.

Conclusion

The main conclusion reached is that the work-life balance of women academicians is much influenced by IT as a medium of communication and specifically the ability to utilise the technology. Such integration or boundary management could be achieved by utilising IT but with appropriate technology skills, time management, networking, and organising skills. These skills are deemed necessary thus, could be used as a blueprint for public universities management to understand and interpret the role of IT within the nature and dynamics of the work, family and community domains of women academicians towards sound work-life balance.

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