Spillover-Crossover Effects of Work-Life Conflict Among Married Academicians in Private University

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ABSTRACT

Work and personal life are usually perceived as mutually incompatible domains, needing to be maintained in clear segregation for the experience of stress-free living. However, with evolving occupational demands, advancements in communication technology, and the threat of career obsolescence, dictating the norms of organisational cultures, the boundary separating the work domain from the home domain is nowadays indistinct. Thus, this study has been conducted using the qualitative phenomenological study to explore the influence of organisational culture on the work-life balance of academics. Thus, five married full-time academicians at Kuala Lumpur, employed for a minimum of one academic semester, were involved in a semi-structured interview. The present study found that work demands would usually lead to reduced involvement with the family. Academicians would mostly compensate by negotiating with their family members for quality time in the future. Mostly, the experience of work-life conflict would occur in the direction of work to family, rather than the other way around. Thus, academicians also revealed occasionally externalising their stress toward family members as a result of work-related emotions impinging on their emotional state at home. The findings of this study highlight the importance of implementing work-life balance strategies and fostering an organisational culture focused on the satisfaction of employees rather than strictly organisational objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Accelerating advancements in communication technology, progressively more challenging occupational demands, and the threat of career obsolescence dictate

the need for the seamless integration of work and private domains. Work-life balance stands as the degree to which individuals are involved in and satisfied equally with their job and personal roles (Alhazemi & Ali, 2016). However, it is rather important to make distinction and to ensure balance of both domains to accelerate success. Therefore, work-life conflict should be understood as a form of inter-role conflict in which family demands are mutually incompatible, meeting demands of both the domains is difficult" (Lyon, 2001, pp. 335-336). The work and private domains are inherent dimensions of the employee's existence, assumingly mutually exclusive. Technological progress and increasing occupational demands have contributed to the possibility of engaging in work-related affairs from the home domain. The escalating competition requires the further engagement of employees. Home-based employment signifies the potential for more challenging occupational demands; the assumption of flexibility in working hours is mitigated with the potential for the increased workload (Currie & Eveline, 2011). The assumption of manageability of workload not affecting the private domain is important to understanding work-life conflict. Intensifying occupational demands dictate more engagement and forgoing of private domain-related demands.

General Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Occupational demands stand as an important factor influencing the experience of work-life balance. Managerial and professional hierarchical positions are usually more conducive to work-life conflict due to the inherent demands of the occupation (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003). Occupational requirements with high psychological demands and low decision latitude are the main encompassing factors likely to cause greater strain on the employee (Karasek et al., 1998). Furthermore, increased job commitment, with longer time spent at work and the inflexibility of work hours, would eventually lead to role overload, and thus, work-life conflict (Casey & Chase, 2004). On the other hand, factors related to the home domain may include inflexible obligations at home, such as the necessity to assume the role of caregiver to elderly family members or children (Carnicer et al., 2004). Working parents with children aged less than three were noted to experience conflict the most, as opposed to parents with children above three (Ahmad, 2007). The dependency of younger children or children afflicted with disease, especially on mothers, would arguably generate more family-to-work conflict as opposed to older children (Ahmad, 2008).

Personal values may also dictate the outcome of work-life balance or conflict, whereby centrality and priority would help to determine the degree of the interplay between values and conflict (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000); centrality refers to the significance attributed to family or work by the employee, as a foundation to his or her life; priority implies the importance given to either domain, to the extent of

compromising one for the other. The combination of both perspectives would indicate the inclination of the employee toward either domain and, consequently, which of the home or work domain would be jeopardised for the preservation of the other. Furthermore, personality traits, such as neuroticism and conscientiousness, also lead to the intermingling of both domains (Rantanen et al., 2005; Wayne et al., 2002). Similarly, employees with lower self-esteem, inferior self-efficacy, and lower level of perfectionism were more likely to experience interference of the work and life domains (Fride & Ryan, 2005).

Organisational Culture

Organisational culture can be defined in terms of the values shared and adhered to by an organisation (Chatman & Jehn, 1994). According to Callan (2007), organisational culture is progressively evolving into an important subject of consideration as to its relation to work-life balance. Beauregard and Henry (2009) discovered that considerations for work-life balance practices have a positive influence on the recruitment and retention of employees, as well as having an important impact on productivity. A company prioritising the wellbeing of its personnel is expected to experience increased loyalty and satisfaction, thereby leading to increased productivity in obligation to the company's consideration (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Delobbe and Vandenberghe (2000) identified four common aspects of organisational culture, namely: People-orientation, whereby concern is attributed

to cooperation, support and respect among members of the organisation; innovation, or the openness of the organisation to change and calculated risks; control, relating to autonomy or regimentation of workplace policies; and lastly, outcome orientation, which is concerned with the company's emphasis on procedures or customer satisfaction.

As detailed by Zeqiri and Alija (2016), the conceptualisation of organisational culture from the stance of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1997, cited in Zeqiri & Alija, 2016) relates to the following: The first dimension relates to the company's preference for process-oriented approach; thus, bureaucracy and routines, or result-oriented, focusing on outcomes. Moreover, the second dimension is concerned with the company's orientation toward either the employee's wellbeing or the prioritisation of job requirements. In addition, the third dimension of organisational culture highlights the identification of its employees toward the profession, rather than promoting cultural norms encompassing both the work and private domains. In regards to the fourth dimension of organisational culture, the company and its members may either feel open or closed to newcomers and outsiders. Tight or loose control illustrates the fifth dimension, wherein departments are either regimented or independent. Lastly, the sixth dimension relates to whether the organisation is more concerned with respect to standard operating procedures or results.

Arguably, the investigation of any connection between organisational culture

and job satisfaction is sensible because the wellbeing of an organisation is intrinsically related to the wellbeing of its employees (Grant et al., 2007). Hackman and Oldham (1975) theorised that job satisfaction was closely related to the experience of meaningfulness about the occupation, the feeling of responsibility because of fulfilling tasks and lastly, knowing the outcomes of work. Furthermore, Spector (1997, as cited in Belias & Koustelios, 2014) highlighted appreciation, personal and professional development, and salary, amongst other factors, as highly conducive to understanding job satisfaction.

Hence, the understanding of job satisfaction is complex and subjective, whereby employees may have differing expectations of what constitutes satisfaction prior to accepting a particular position. Therefore, the intricate connection between organisational culture and job satisfaction could indicate the influence of the former on the latter construct (Hutcheson, 1996). Similarly, the subjective aspects of job satisfaction, as perceived by employees, can be an important indication of the type of culture reigning in an organisation (Sempane et al., 2002). Such aspects may also include leadership, values, and work-life balance policies (Emery & Barker, 2007; Schein, 1992).

The Present Study

There are many studies related to the workplace that has been conducted in Malaysia. However, the contextual relevance has often been ignored, which makes the findings of some previous studies questionable. For instance, reviewed studies conducted in Malaysia focused on government higher education institutions, wherein the organisational culture might not only differ across institutions but is also arguably different from their private university counterparts (Badri & Panatik, 2015; Long et al., 2014; Noor, 2011; Shahid et al., 2016). Hence, the findings of these studies are limited to their specific institutions, and the generalisation of these results is thus questionable due to inherent differences in organisational culture. Similarly, the broader context of the society within which the universities evolve needed to be considered. For example, extrinsic influences, in the form of political and cultural context, limit the external validity of the research (Bakker et al., 2009). Likewise, factors such as hierarchical position, tenure and academic field could be relevant. Therefore, the generalisation of findings across societies would be inappropriate.

Another concern was the almost exclusive emphasis of spillover-crossover-based studies on the negative dimensions of either phenomenon (Amstad & Semmer, 2011; Schmidt, 2011). Spillover refers to the impact of work-related emotions on the intra-emotional state of the employee at home and vice-versa (Amstad & Semmer, 2011). On the other hand, crossover examines how these emotions impact those interacting with the individual in question regularly (Westman, 2001). Spillover and crossover effects are experienced from either work-to-family or family-to-work domains. However, limited studies focus

on the positive spillover-crossover effects, to the exception of research conducted by Lawson and colleagues (2014), in regard to the effect of working mothers' moods on the youth. Still, positive spillover-crossover effects on the work-life balance of academicians are restricted and inexistent in Malaysian academic literature. Hence, an exploration of the actual dynamics of spillover and crossover among Malaysian academicians would confront an important dearth in current literature.

Considering the requirements of various roles an individual is expected to satisfy daily, conflict is bound to occur. Role conflict might be conducive to role ambiguity, which stands as the extent to which an employee is confident about his or her specific roles and responsibilities (Spector, 1997). An absence of awareness in this respect might eventually lead to hesitation, wrong decision-making, anxiety, or distorted reality (Rizzo et al., 1970, cited in Ryan et al., 2009). On the other hand, compensation theory dictates that the lack of satisfaction experienced by employees either at the workplace or home would lead them to compensate by attempting to find more satisfaction in the other, either by increasing commitment to one domain or finding more pleasing satisfaction in the other (Champoux, 1978; Lambert, 1999; Zedeck, 1992).

The questionable generalisability of the studies reviewed, due to the absence of consideration for organisational culture and societal contextual factors, as well as the bias of only focusing on the negative effects of spillover and crossover, were the main issues of academic literature. These concerns were instrumental in guiding the approach of this study, in particular regards to the formulation of the research questions and objectives. Hence, this study aims at addressing important gaps in current academic literature regarding work-life balance and conflict amongst academicians. Therefore, the present study primarily aimed at investigating the experiences of private university academicians with spillover and crossover effects of work-life conflict and the influence of organisational culture on work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach was adopted to achieve the objectives of this study. Specifically, a phenomenological approach was selected to describe the phenomena experienced by individuals and not generate theories or models of the phenomena being studied (Ploeg, 1999).

A total of five academicians from a private university in Kuala Lumpur were selected through a purposeful sampling method based on the inclusion criteria, (i) the participants are from different departments such as from social sciences, business, and engineering, to ensure an adequate representation of the university, (ii) Malaysian nationality who are married to account for potential crossover effects (iii) between 31 and 37 years old, and (iv) employed full-time at the university, for at least four months (one academic semester), in order to ensure proper exposure to the

organisation's culture. Besides, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of work-life conflict, academicians occupying different positions and responsibilities were considered for this research. Detailed information about the participants is provided in Table 1.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information from the participants. Interview questions were, thus, adapted from valid quantitative measures on work-life balance and work-life conflict. These measures were the Multidimensional Measure of Work-Family Conflict (Carlson et al., 2000), supported by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Work-Family Conflict (Hanson et al., 2006), which was used to design the interview questions related to spillover and crossover. At the same time, Sashkin's and Rosenback's (1996) Organisational Culture Assessment Questionnaire was adapted and amended to account for the influence of organisational culture on work-life balance.

In order to ensure the data saturation, the interviewer investigated the topic of interest with the respondent until there was nothing left to add. For example, this was done by using questions at the end of the interview such as 'Anything else?' or 'Do I need to know anything other than what I have asked you?' It is done to ensure that saturation has been achieved; that there is nothing else to add to the topic of interest. Whereas for credibility, the researchers used the triangulation of sources. The participants were interviewed at different points in time and compared with the participants with different perspectives.

The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify, analyse, and report recurring patterns within the data collecting, categorised as distinct themes under which the relevant portions of information belong (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For themes to be extracted from the data, detailed information was required; the purpose of the extracted themes was to answer the research questions posed in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study found six themes: departmental cooperation, faculty support, relationship with higher management, reduced involvement with family, emotional transference, and compensation through negotiation. The description of the results is as below, and Table 2 contains a summary of the Themes.

Table 1
Demographic background

Participant	Gender/Age	Department	Duration of Employment (Years)
1	Female/36	Chemical Engineering	7
2	Female/31	English Language Department	2
3	Male/45	Business Studies	8
4	Female/33	Psychology	4
5	Male/37	Mechanical Engineering	3

Departmental Cooperation

Both academicians from the social science field reported entertaining close professional relationships with their colleagues. When questioned about their understanding and description of the workplace culture within their respective department, cooperation amongst colleagues was often mentioned and valued. Colleagues were described as supportive and team-oriented when it came to projects and complex responsibilities to complete. Despite the stress-inducing nature of some responsibilities assigned to the lecturers, a sense of camaraderie, solidarity and collaboration could be noted. Hence, mutual support would lead to an overall sense of increased satisfaction with their current employment.

> *I'm so happy with my department members. They are very cooperative, supportive. We usually work together and help each other. Not only that, but we also treat each other like a family.*

On the other hand, academicians from engineering and business described their workplace environment as highly work-focused with minimal to non-existent cooperation among lecturers. While both pointed out that neither department encouraged competition and that colleagues did not compete amongst each other per se. Concurrently, the academician from engineering described a sense of discouragement among his colleagues, whereby there would be an absence of motivation to excel beyond the required

tasks. The intensity of the workload emerged as one of the main reasons behind the absence of cooperation in the case of the academician from the business. The participant revealed that the work demands and expectations are tremendous, mostly due to the overwhelming number of students and other professional responsibilities the participant has to manage every day at the department level. Hence, the staff was not interested in anything else but conducting lectures, whereby other responsibilities would be preferably avoided.

Faculty Support

There were mixed experiences regarding the level of support obtained from the participants' respective faculties. The participant from the business faculty reflected that the faculty had to manage approximate 3,500 students and 40 programmes almost every semester. As a result, the management of the faculty mostly focused on addressing students' grievances and other academic-related issues rather than assisting their staff. The overwhelming responsibilities associated with personally managing four to five subjects every semester, along with his other obligations associated with his position, such as correcting midterm papers and assignments for hundreds of students, would lead him to neglect minor issues to focus on more important priorities. Thus, the absence of support from the faculty and the intensity of the workload would lead to a relatively lessened quality of education. Participants from engineering and social sciences discussed the requirements of their

positions as lecturers in terms of conducting and publishing research work. Despite her position as Head of Department, the social sciences academician would find the balance between her lectures, administration-related work, and research. However, Participant 1 shared a different stance relative to her faculty about the need for the provision of special equipment to conduct research. Considering that she could not have access to such equipment, added to the fact that she is required to complete an additional course, she felt that the faculty was not as supportive as expected. Furthermore, Participant 5 (engineering) highlighted that despite being supported by his Head of Department, the experience of the participant's colleagues was mostly negative. It was due to the constant criticism received at the faculty level instead of commendation. As such, this would lead to decreased motivation to perform more in areas that were optional. Thus, these academicians would prefer limiting themselves only to what was required to fulfil their key performance indicator (KPI).

> *So sad to tell, but my colleagues are very negative minded. They cannot see other people success. They like to gossip, criticised people. Whenever I hear anything like this, this will demotivate me.*

Relationship with Higher Management

Regarding the higher management of the university, almost all of the participants reported difficulties in adjusting to the demands. A recurring dimension of this issue is tight deadlines to completing such demanding responsibilities as correcting final examination papers. According to Participant 1, she would often have to sacrifice her time with her family to fulfil this requirement because of the hefty number of papers she would have to mark before the release of results. Participant 2 also echoed that, as opposed to her previous employment in a public university, she would have to prepare her questionnaires for examinations and was expected to correct all of them in a very limited timeframe, causing her to neglect her family.

Participant 4 shared the additional responsibilities that she would have to satisfy, aside from conducting lectures. For instance, Participant 4 revealed that she was expected to come to the university on some weekends for marketing purposes: She would be required to help the university promote the different courses available to parents and future students during the marketing events. In addition, Participant 4 pointed out that such requests were usually forwarded to the faculty. The staff would then be expected to conform and perform as required by the higher management. Furthermore, Participant 4 divulged that, despite being satisfied with the opportunities she has had to showcase herself and the trust of her superiors toward her, she felt undervalued in terms of salary and bonuses. Similar feelings were echoed from Participant 1 regards to salary and medical benefits. On the other hand, participant 5 felt valued by his students and Head of Department, but not by the higher management.

Top management is managing people. They always want us to do things that they think it is correct. For example, sometimes I need to work on weekends for marketing. We need to promote our university. But it was not appreciated, never been acknowledged. There is no increment. No bonus.

From the shared responses, an absence of proper communication between the higher management and the faculties can be asserted. Specifically, communication appears to be unidirectional, from the higher management to the faculties, departments and by extension, the academicians. In the process, it can be stated that the staff of the departments and faculties are simply expected to conform and execute instructions as requested. Conversely, the higher management of the university appears to either be unaware of the strain exerted on the faculties due to their substantial demands or unwilling to change their approach to managing their staff. The unidirectionality of communication is indicative of a top-down approach to organisational culture, characterised by an autocratic management style, whereby decisions are made unilaterally without consultation or consideration for other parties involved.

Reduced Involvement with Family

Participants mostly experienced the negative effects of their workload, impacting both the time and quality of time they spend with their families. Participant 1 specifically identified examinations periods as the most probable moment for her to be obliged to sacrifice her family time to meet the job demands within a relatively highly limited timeframe. Making comparisons with her previous employment in a public university, Participant 2 also concurred that the requirements of the occupation, in specific regards to those of a private university, will dictate the high probability of having to neglect the family on occasions. Furthermore, Participant 3 accentuated that the nature of the profession required academicians to avoid absences for the fact that classes would be affected.

More so, in addition to managing an overwhelming number of students, Participant 3 shared that his faculty would constantly organise seminars, training, workshops and activities during breaks. Therefore, he confided that he would rarely take his family on vacation, even during his children's school holidays. Similarly, Participant 3 struggled to maintain a clear separation between the work and family domains, for the fact that he would often be required to bring work home by correcting papers until late at night. Hence, even though he would always allow his children to interrupt him, family time would inevitably be neglected.

On the other hand, the arguments of Participants 4 and 5 were mostly centred on their internal locus of control. Participant 4 discussed that managing her time was within her control to maintain an appropriate work-life balance. She confided that her

children prioritised her work and would always ensure that her workload would not affect her time with the family. Similarly, Participant 5 claimed that his work would only rarely affect his family time because he would consistently avoid bringing work to home and complete the majority, if not all, of his work-related responsibilities before going home.

> *For me, family comes first. My children are my priority. For me to spend time with them, I will ensure I complete my work on time, so that I can be with them. No matter how much work I have, I will manage my time for them.*

When considering potential family-to-work conflict, all participants shared that the demands and responsibilities associated with their respective families would not interfere with their performance at work. Amongst the common reasons attributed to this information is that of the age of their children. Participant 1 revealed that she would focus on her children in the morning, as they would be heading to elementary school and taken care of upon returning home. Hence, until she returns home from work, Participant 1 will be able to focus exclusively on her work. In the same line, Participant 4 shared that her children were age 2 and 9 months at the time of the interview and would therefore only need her time to feed them, take them out and play with them. Hence, she would not experience moments of her family life affecting her work.

Emotional Transference

Participant 1 revealed her difficulties in managing the spillover and crossover effects of encountering emotionally challenging moments during work. These would be in the form of difficult students with unprofessional attitudes, which would affect her mood at work and hence, her mood with her family. Similarly, Participant 1 also experienced positive moods at work, positively influencing her mood at home and, by extension, her family.

> *Sometimes the students' attitude and behaviour when dealing with us will seriously affect our emotions and feelings. There are some students who are very rude. As you know, students in private are not like students in public universities. They are very vocal and don't care about anything. Some only lag. So, this kind of situation will make me angry and sad. Sometimes this effect will carry back home and show to my family as well.*

> *There are some situations where the students are the cause of my happiness. For example, the students who talk nicely, greet us respectfully, and complete the tasks given. Things like this will help me experience positive emotions when I'm so stressed.*

Other participants also had mixed experiences, mostly related to the stress of work demands. However, Participant 4 shared a unique perspective whereby she

experienced an excessive amount of stress at work, which not only affected her mood but her health. Claiming that she could normally properly segregate the work and family domains, she posited that her affected health would negatively impact how she would treat her children.

Regarding family-to-work conflict, minimal spillover and crossover could be noted. Almost all participants, excluding Participant 4, concurred that their happiness at home would spillover to their happiness at work. Participant 5 argued that he was more sensitive to happiness so that when he experienced happiness, stress would not affect him. Interestingly, Participant 4 talked about the differences in emotions between the work and family domains, whereby the happiness from home and work were different to her. Hence, she could not perceive any relationship between the nature and experience of her emotions at work, in contrast to those from work.

Compensation Through Negotiation

In order to compensate for instances of work-life imbalance, participants would usually negotiate with their families. For instance, Participant 2 and 3 shared that, in highly demanding moments during the academic year, she would inform the family of her professional commitments and make posterior arrangements, in the form of activities and thus, time together, to mitigate disappointment.

> *Usually, at the end of the semester, I will be super busy. Since I have two children, I will inform my family*

to take 1 or 2 weeks to settle for marking the exam paper, grading, etc. Since I will be busy with my work, I couldn't spend time with my family. So, I will ensure that I will take a few days of leave after settling everything.

Furthermore, Participant 5, upon experiencing tense moments at work that could potentially crossover at home, would negotiate with his wife for a quiet personal moment. He revealed that we would usually go to a café and consume a can of beer while watching the news before heading back home with a less troubled and refocused mind to handle any issue.

> *When I am too stressed, I will just go to the café or bar to take my time before going back home. But of course, I will inform my wife first.*

Negotiation would also attempt to restore the balance between both domains on an intrapersonal level. It implies that participants, who struggled to find balance, would engage in activities to help them manage, accommodate, or eliminate the conflict. Considering her ability to maintain a relatively clear separation between work and family, Participant 4 talked about needing time alone in peace, in instances when she would have gotten emotionally involved with her work. Hence, she would need to refocus in silence before returning to her expected routine. However, Participant 1 confided that she thought of attending counselling sessions, or even resigning from her job, to be with her family.

Table 2
Conclusion of the results based on the research objectives

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	THEME	DESCRIPTION
To understand the influence of organisational culture on the work-life balance of academicians.	Departmental Cooperation	Cooperation and relationships among academicians in the same department.
	Faculty Support	Assistance from the faculty in helping academicians manage demands from higher management.
	Relationship with Higher Management	Openness and transparency in communicating with faculty and departments.
To explore the experiences of academicians with the positive and negative spillover-crossover effects of work-life conflict.	Reduced involvement with family	The consequence of the work domain spillover to the home domain.
	Emotional transference	Communicating emotions experienced in one domain to members belonging to the other domain.
	Compensation through negotiation	Attempt to achieve work-life balance again through negotiation with members of one particular domain.

CONCLUSION

This study has argued that organisational culture is a critical aspect of understanding the experience of work-life conflict among academicians. Organisational culture was mostly understood in support from colleagues within the same department, at the faculty level and from the higher management. Regarding support at the department level, the findings of this study corroborate those of Shahid et al. (2016), whereby the support from colleagues would help to ease the pressure of occupational commitment and responsibilities. Furthermore, as Shahid et al. (2016) argued, social support was perceived as an important predictor of work-life balance (WLB) for academicians. Similar attitudes have been observed among academicians who received support from their colleagues and superiors within the department. The intensity of work would be perceived as more manageable, even in such critical moments as the examinations period.

However, the absence of cooperation among colleagues would not necessarily make the workload more difficult to handle or lead to conflict. While cooperation would be preferred, the experience of conflict would begin to occur more in relation to the faculty, rather than within the department; arguably, more cohesion could be observed at the latter level in the case of most academicians interviewed at the university, while the absence of support from the faculty would lead more to job dissatisfaction and thus, imbalance, in most cases. Reviewed studies in the Malaysian academic context (Badri & Panatik, 2015; Noor, 2011; Long et al., 2014) would closely examine work-life balance and conflict in relation to job satisfaction and have properly highlighted similar findings to this study, whereby satisfaction with employment would be connected to balance. However, the same distinction between department, faculty and higher management would not

be observed in the studies above; thus, how each level affect academicians was not properly examined.

On the third strata, the work-life conflict would occur when the higher management of the university would be insensible to potential issues of family-to-work conflict that can occur as a result of high demands, which are unilaterally formulated and expected to be executed. As purported by Karasek et al. (1998), high demand with low decision latitude would usually be conducive to higher strain. The findings of this research confirm this statement, as well as the findings of Ren and Caudle (2016), particularly in the deferment of responsibilities to faculty level, from the higher management, and the consequent expectations on the academicians to confirm and execute. Furthermore, when academicians are expected to manage additional roles with unbound demands and limited resources, role overload is more likely to occur (Rantanen et al., 2011; Tiedje et al., 1990).

The findings of this research are indicative of the fact that the understanding of what constitutes job satisfaction is subjective (Ginevicius & Vaitkunaite, 2006). Thus, the conditions for the experience of job satisfaction of the interviewed academicians relate to work-life balance policies, cooperation and support amongst colleagues, support from the faculty, salary and benefits, and appreciation of contributions to the institution. On the other hand, the information derived from the research participants provides an overview of the organisational culture at the university. The present study can posit that the higher management of the university abides by a result-oriented approach, prioritising job requirements over the wellbeing of the academicians. Tight control over procedural matters can also be associated with the operating procedures of the higher management, which is further highlighted the absence of involvement in managerial decisions, thus confirming the findings of McKinnon and colleagues (2003).

The exploration of spillover-crossover has been rare, if non-existent, in academic literature in the context of academicians. The findings of this study revealed that organisational culture acted as an important mediator of work-life conflict from the perspective of private university academicians. While such factors as high workload, excessive demands, absence of support or hierarchical position (Helvaci et al., 2017; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Lewis, 2016; Shahid et al., 2016) are usually conducive to stress and work-life conflict among academicians in the private sector compared to the public sector, this study properly categorised them under the overarching factor of organisational culture. Thus, organisational culture would dictate the impact of other sub-factors on academicians and their relative spillover effects as a result of their intensity. Hence, while most academicians experienced stress to varying degrees or had to satisfy various occupational demands according to their position, the experience of spillover and crossover varied as well.

The absence of cooperation within the department and excessive demands from the faculty were conducive to a higher degree of spillover from the work-to-family perspective. It would often be to the extent wherein the concerned academicians are only able to maintain a blurred line of segregation between both domains, thereby leading the work sphere to invade the personal domain. On the other hand, academicians in the private sector experiencing cooperation and support from colleagues, irrespective of the nature of the faculty's demands, experienced a better atmosphere at the workplace and thus were able to maintain a very distinctive mindset relative to either work or life domains. Interestingly, academicians would often change their mindset from the moment they would step at the workplace or at home to mitigate potential spillover and crossover from either domain.

This attitude change seemed to be more prevalent for negative experiences at work. It could thus be seen as an intrapersonal coping mechanism meant to limit the potential influence of negative moods on the wellbeing of the home domain. To a certain extent, the experience of negative experiences at home would be moderated by a similar change of mindset upon reaching the workplace, but it would only be relevant in the case of some academicians. In fact, most academicians interviewed suggested that being unhappy or unsatisfied at home would usually spillover on their mood at work. This finding accentuates the importance of the home domain within the collectivistic society of Malaysia, whereby the family unit is highly prioritised. Similarly, this is again echoed in the prevalence of the personal values of the interviewed academicians, whereby centrality and priority are attributed to the family domain over the professional sphere.

In terms of the crossover of work-to-family, minimal effects were described by the interviewed academicians, albeit for certain exceptions. On particularly stressful occasions, the immediate family, either children or spouse, would usually experience stress in terms of irritability, with rare arguments between spouses. However, these rare happenings can suggest two interrelated understandings: Firstly, the ability of academicians to maintain crossover effects on family members to a minimum is an indication of proper coping mechanism. Secondly, academicians experience enough support from the family institution to manage work-to-family crossover that would not affect the family as collateral damage, which would be coherent to the findings of Bakker and colleagues (2009), and Shimazu and colleagues (2009).

This study established the existence of positive spillover and crossover effects, thus confirming the findings of Lawson et al. (2014) and Hanson et al. (2006). Interestingly, this research found that the positive effects of spillover would be perceived as more dominant when occurring in the direction of family-to-work. It would be tightly connected to the participants' conception of work and family, whereby prioritisation is subjectively attributed to family overwork. Hence, positive experiences at home would positively affect the mood of academicians when coming

to work, thereby allowing them to handle the everyday demands of their occupation better. However, if negative experiences are experienced at home, these would spillover on the academicians' work performance and, consequently, crossover on students. Thus, the importance of family as a foundational dimension of the interviewed Malaysian academicians' lives is highly accentuated through the extensiveness of experiences from the home domain in affecting the work domain.

Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

While this research approached the phenomenon of work-life balance and work-life conflict from a different perspective and equally weighed in on its potential for bolstering meaningful change for the enhancement of job and life satisfaction amongst academicians. Future studies should consider increasing the sample size to capture the organisational culture of the institution completely. The experiences of a few lecturers might not appropriately reflect the wholesome experiences and beliefs of academicians at the university, let alone in other departments and faculties. It would also enable the mitigation of potentially contaminated responses due to participants opting for politically correct responses out of apprehension of career-damaging consequences. A final recommendation would be to investigate the experiences of spouses in dealing with the crossover effect of work-life conflict. While the accounts of academicians of spillover effects hold the

truth in that they represent their personal experiences, crossover effects from the perspective of interviewed academicians could be biased. Therefore, another perspective worth exploring would be that of spouses to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the topic of work-life conflict.

A significant practical contribution of this study lies in its potential for devising and implementing specific WLB-related strategies as inherent components of private university policies. The use of the qualitative research method helped to acquire in-depth understandings of the experiences of academicians in dealing with their respective departments, faculty and with the broader management of the institution. These first-hand perspectives may serve as a firm basis to re-evaluate the values and leadership management that define the organisational culture of the university. The potential impact of this reassessment cannot be undermined. An organisational culture at a private university, which fosters and cultivates the wellbeing and satisfaction of its academic staff, serve not only the purpose of increasing their job satisfaction but also improving the frontlines of the university: Fulfilled educators make for more invested performance, which would inevitably impact the experience of students due to higher quality of education. Lastly, the resultant of this would eventually lead to increasing the worth of the university relative to other tertiary education institutions, thus propelling it into the same ranks of currently more prestigious universities.

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