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Work-Friendly Policy for Family Balance: How does it governed under Malaysian Administration?

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| Abstract:          | Work-family balance (WFB) is the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance emotional and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities. At the same time, studies have proved that good policy ensures WFB but the extent of influence of policy on WFB is found to be largely unexplored. Since the existing concept of WFB policy is more for the western setting, bringing the Malaysian policy into consideration will add to the eastern solution. This study was carried out to investigate what policies are adopted in relation to WFB and to provide local insight on how Malaysia governs for WFB. By using systematic literature review and official documentation methodology, this study found that there are five related WFB policies introduced, but their co-relation to reduce work family conflict are still under studied. |
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Work-Friendly Policy for Family Balance: How does it governed under Malaysian Administration.

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Abstract

Work-family balance (WFB) is the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance emotional and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities. At the same time, studies have proved that good policy ensures WFB but the extent of influence of policy on WFB is found to be largely unexplored. Since the existing concept of WFB policy is more for the western setting, bringing the Malaysian policy into consideration will add to the eastern solution. This study was carried out to investigate what policies are adopted in relation to WFB and to provide local insight on how Malaysia governs for WFB. By using systematic literature review and official documentation methodology, this study found that there are five related WFB policies introduced, but their co-relation to reduce work family conflict are still under studied.

Keywords: Work Family Balance (WFB), Women, Malaysia, Work Family Conflict (WFC), policy
INTRODUCTION

Balancing work and family is a delicate task especially for married women because they are closely associated with household cares and chores (Geetha Subramaniam and Doris Padmini Selvaratnam, 2010). In Malaysia, working mothers are part of a two-earner couple with children and must typically juggle multiple forms of childcare and their work schedule, along with unpaid household responsibilities. This situation contributes to social and work family conflict (WFC) (Sugumar, 2013).

One common research finding is that job satisfaction correlates with life satisfaction (Rain, Lane and Steiner 1991). This correlation is reciprocal, meaning people who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be satisfied with their life (and this includes family satisfaction) and people who are satisfied with life tend to be satisfied with their jobs. However, some research has found that job satisfaction is not significantly related to life satisfaction when other variables such as non-work satisfaction and core self-evaluation are taken into account (Rode 2004). Professional dissatisfaction leads to added costs for employers and for the health system, because it is associated with increased absenteeism, employee turnover, health and social problems among workers such as drug abuse, mental-illness and stress. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs live longer and are less likely to fall ill (Higgins et.al 1991)

Besides, frustration over not achieving work and family balance will likely make employees leave the organization and bring harm to the family and community. This implication is named as ‘negative externality’ (Sugumar 2013). Demographic changes like the low fertility rate, longer life expectancy, fewer extended households, increasing number of single parents, and growing divorce rate are testing the strength of family-work values (Swift 2002). A study showed that burnout among employees is more common and may affect every aspect of their
task, have a harmful effect on interpersonal and family relationships and lead to a negative attitude towards life in general (Lacovides et. al 2003). Based on research data of 1996, women generally face mental stress 1.5 times more than men. (Stienstra and Gucciardi 2002).

Generally, people with mental problems are also associated with family problems and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Currently, 50% of the labour force comprises women and 70% of them are married. Therefore, one group of people who are dealing with symptoms of mental illness are dual career couples. Dual career means the individual has the dual role of a homemaker and a wage earner in the workplace. Statistical studies in 2011 showed that there is one divorce every 15 minutes or three Muslim couples every hour in Malaysia. In 2012 56,760 divorces were recorded (Utusan Malaysia, 2013). Among the causes of stress among these couples was their race to balance career and home responsibilities.

Based on the above background and the fact that many studies in Malaysia have not focused attention on the policy angle, this paper attempts to further investigate the WFB related policies adopted in Malaysia. Learning from previous studies, this paper will correlate policy and issues that have emerged, in spite of the efforts made in the Malaysian context.
B. METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature indicates that increased job and home demands have made management of work and family life increasingly difficult (Shore 1998). It has also been recorded (Magnus et. al 2005) that employees face difficulties and challenges of managing their job and family roles at the same time and these challenges have become more numerous and complex. In dealing with the causes of such situations, studies indicate that they have been motivated by a number of major demographic changes (Jarrod, Chester and Mark 2009) including the increase in the elderly population (Robert 2000), the growing number of dual-career couples and single parent families (David 1994) and the increase in involvement of working women and mothers (John et. al 1998).

According to Duxbury and Higgins (1991), 27% of people experience work-family conflict but report being satisfied with their work, compared to 80% of employees who are not in this situation. Jarrod, Chester and Mark (2009) tried to examine how employees attempt to manage conflict which involved individual options such as getting help from family and relatives, hiring domestic help as well as organizational options, for example opting for flexi time, accepting childcare subsidy and taking unpaid leave as predictors. In general, their findings pointed out that the individual and organizational options highlighted in the study are more likely to increase rather than decrease the conflict. Although flexible time and flexible place programs have been adopted by many companies, as indicated by Hochschild (1997), they may not be fully utilized by employees.

Randall and Altmaier (1994) mention that the consequences that most often arise due to stress are job dissatisfaction. Boswell (1992) in research on the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction of nurses found that these two variables are negatively correlated and
significant. Kavanagh, Hurst, and Rose in Mc Cormick and Ilgen (1985), in a study that measures the degree of stress and job satisfaction of air control officers (air traffic controllers), found that high stress correlates with a decrease in job satisfaction.

The meta-analysis done by Allen, Herst, Bruck and Sutton (2000) demonstrates that employees having difficulty balancing work and family life think more about changing jobs and are more likely to experience professional burnout. Work-family conflict is also linked to poorer professional performance, an increase in absenteeism, higher employee turnover and loss of motivation (Duxbury and Higgins 1991).

Unlike women in Japan and Korea who drop out of the labor force to care for children only to return again to work largely as part-timers when the children are older and become independent, a strong relationship was found between higher education in women and labor market participation in Malaysia (Cameron, Dowling and Worswick 2001). Data on whether they drop out of the labor force to care for family and children is not yet found.

Sabitha, Surena, Roza and Asmak (2011) present the results of a study that observed the relationship of work-family enrichment of administrators with work-family conflict in Malaysia. According to this research, there is a significant relationship between work-family conflict and work-family enrichment. It was also found that a supportive work environment has positive implications for both work and the family. Research done by Fauwaz (2014) on time spent for work, life and family routine in Malaysia has shown that time consumed on the road comprises about 6%, at work 40%, overtime work 2%, at home 20%, sleep 28% and for other activities 4%. This adds up to 48% spent for work, 20% for family and 32% for sleep and other activities.
Aminah (2004) and Aminah and Maznah (2003) examined the role overload experienced at work and its relationship with work-family conflict among Malaysian females who work as medical officers in public hospitals. The findings indicated that 87.7% of respondents experienced moderately heavy workload which could be based on the relatively high frequency of being on-call as well as the rise in the number of outpatients to be attended to. Apart from that, it could also be attributed to the increase in the number of patients in the ward. Therefore, the findings indicated that the respondents could experience a considerable intensity of work-family conflict and the conflict is likely to increase in tandem with an increase in the workload. Similar findings of a significant relationship between role overload and work-family conflict have also been shown by other researchers (Fu and Shaffer 2001).

Aminah (2008) has also carried out studies on job, family and individual factors as predictors of work-family conflict. In her model, she suggested giving consideration, firstly, to job-related factors including job type, work-time commitment, job involvement, role overload and job flexibility; secondly, to family-related factors such as number of children, life-cycle stage, family involvement, and childcare arrangements; and lastly individual-related factors such as life-role values, gender role orientation, locus of control and perfectionism.

As such, we have chosen to study this issue by reviewing the literature and analysing policy documentation contents pertaining to work-family policies and programs by Malaysian authorities. Since the WFB concept was developed mostly in the west, it has limited local policy inputs and perspectives. Shaffer, Joplin and Hsu (2011) indicate that “western assumptions permeate the methodologies, measures, and theories in existing international work-family research, limiting culturally appropriate perspectives and interpretations”. Thus, this paper provides some insight on WFB policies in Malaysia and in the local setting.
Understanding Concept: What is Work-Family Balance?

In the Malaysian context, the understanding of work-family balance (WFB) refers to an individual’s ability to successfully manage and juggle the roles of work and family. It contains five dimensions, viz work satisfaction, family satisfaction, work functioning, family functioning and role conflict (Aziz 2011). Othman, Ibrahim, Sheik Osman, Mohd Yusof and Md. Yussop (2011) defined it as individuals having control over when, where and how they work, leading them to be able to enjoy an optimal quality of work as well as family life. Meanwhile, Mahpul and Abdullah (2011) defined work-family balance as a satisfactory level of involvement or fit between the multiple roles in a person’s life. This understanding is not different from the western perspective as Clark (2000) defines work-family balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict”. Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) have defined work-family balance as “the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work and family role”. Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) regard work-family balance as a continuum where imbalance in favour of the work role lies at one end, and imbalance in favour of the family role lies at the other end, and balance lies in the middle, demonstrating a balance between the work and family role. In contrast, it is usually translated into not enough time and/or support to do, handle or manage work commitments or personal responsibilities (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw 2003).

Furthermore, according to these researchers, work-family balance consists of three dimensions, namely, time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance. Time balance refers to equal time devoted, involvement balance refers to equal psychological effort...
and presence invested, and satisfaction balance refers to equal satisfaction expressed across work and family roles.

Based on currently available scientific data, there are numerous studies defining balance and work-family conflict and the work-family balance concept. One of the established theories is known as the Spill-over theory (SOT) (1994) and the other is the Positive-Negative Role Balance theory (1996). Research examined the conditions under which spill over between the work and the family system are positive or negative. If work-family interactions are rigidly structured in time and space, then spill over in terms of time, energy, and behavior is generally negative (Barnett, 1994; Williams and Alliger, 1994). Research also offers support for the notion that flexibility in work arrangements, which enables individuals to integrate and overlap work and family responsibilities in time and space, is associated with positive spill over and is instrumental in achieving a healthy work and family balance (Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg, 1998; Barnett and Hall, 2001).

This theory was further strengthened by Marks and MacDermid (1996) through specific ways to engage multiple roles; there are two ways of either positive or negative role balance. Positive role balance, in Marks and MacDermid’s theory (Barnett 1994) refers to the tendency to engage in every role with equally high effort, devotion, attention and care, whereas negative role balance refers to the tendency to engage in roles with apathy, cynicism, low effort and low attentiveness. Due to these behavioral and cognitive-affective tendencies, it is theorized that positive role balance will lead to role ease and that negative role balance will lead to role strain (Marks and MacDermid, 1996) – role ease and strain corresponding with role enhancement and conflict, respectively.
In the case of positive role balance, role conflict is either prevented or solved before acute problems of role management become chronic; this is achieved by addressing the demands of each role on time, with effort and attention. For example, avoiding unnecessary breaks, telephone calls and e-mails while working, prioritizing job responsibilities and updating one’s professional skills, may facilitate more efficient management of job responsibilities so that the employee’s work time does not impinge onto his or her family time. In contrast, for individuals for whom a negative role balance is typical, occasional incidents of role conflict are likely to accumulate due to their indifference towards role-related tasks and duties, creating an ongoing state of unfulfilled demands. For example, ignoring the emotional concerns of one’s spouse and avoiding private life responsibilities, such as taking care of one’s children or household chores may, over time, escalate into constant and daily disagreements, which can also negatively affect job performance due to the consequential worsening of mood and concentration.

In conclusion, the different views on WFB suggest that the phenomenon has at least three important aspects. First, it seems that WFB is unlikely to be a uni-dimensional construct but rather a conglomeration of multiple measurable constructs. Many scholars suggest that WFB consists of high rewards, resources and enhancement combined with low concerns, demands and conflict experienced by individuals across their life roles (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). Second, in addition to role-related resources and demands over which individuals may not always have control, WFB seems to stem also from individuals’ own actions and attitudes. It is assumed that acting with equal devotion and being equally satisfied with one’s life roles reflects a WFB that produces the ability to manage multiple roles successfully (Greenhauss and Beutel, 1985). Third, the achieved balance between work and non-work roles is expected...
to lead to satisfaction and well-being in life. Thus, this study will examine the first important aspect in relation to Malaysia.

**Documentation Method**


**C. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

**Women and related work policies in Malaysia**

Anyone joining the workforce is subjected to several conventions and declarations, for instance, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 1995, Malaysia signed and ratified this convention, including the International Labor Convention (ILO) which contains both civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. Besides these, the workforce in Malaysia is governed by several statutes of employment and labor laws such as the Employment Act 1956, Industrial Relations Act 1967, Minimum Wages Order 2012 and Minimum Retirement Age Bill 2012 (for private sector employees), Employees' Social Security Act, 1969, and Pensions Act, 1980. Malaysian Law also provides special protection for women in the workforce. For instance, Part VIII of the Employment Act 1956 specially highlights that women in the non-professional force are prohibited from night work as well as underground work. On the other hand, the women in the professional category are in a different scenario altogether, as
dictated by their professions and relevant statutes. Below are several provisions and policies related to WFB for protecting and governing women workforce affairs in Malaysia.

**A. Women under the Federal Constitution**

The State enacts laws which are meant to prevent any form of discrimination among citizens, with regard to the laws and policies of government, and to create positive opportunities for vulnerable groups to be able to participate in development processes. The importance of a relevant national and organizational setting and environment has been proven to be instrumental for successful WFB (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). In Malaysia; there are two sources of laws, written and unwritten. The written laws comprise the Federal Constitution, legislation enacted by Parliament and subsidiary legislation prepared under powers conferred by Parliament and State Assemblies. Unwritten laws consist of English common law which has been adapted to local circumstances, judicial decisions of the Federal Court, and local customary laws. Since Independence in 1957, Malaysian women's rights as citizens to participate in the political and administrative life of the nation have been recognized and guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, as the supreme law of the country. The relevant provision under Article 8, Clause 1, states as follows:

“All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law”.

Clause 2 further provides that:

"except as expressly authorized by this Constitution, there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the grounds only of religion, race, descent, or place or gender in any law or in the appointment to any office or employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of
any property or the establishment or carrying out of any trade, business, profession, vocation, or employment”.

The Federal Constitution thus contains specific protection against gender-based discrimination and this provision was incorporated in July 2001 in line with Malaysia’s commitment to CEDAW. Article 1 of CEDAW reads as follows (UNWOMEN, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm):

“for the purpose of the present Convention, the term “discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect of nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”.

The protection against discrimination in the workforce is further provided under the Constitution under Article 136 which provides that all persons of whatever race in the same grade of service in the Federation shall be treated impartially.

B. Women in Development Policies and Planning

The government in all sorts of instruments approves and encourages women’s participation. The progress in the advancement of the cause of women in Malaysia should be viewed within the context of the overall framework of national development policies, plans, and objectives. This is because efforts and plans to improve the status of women are integrated and incorporated into the various long-term sectoral planning and the National Five-Year
Development Plan. The relevant policies are the New Economic Policy (1971-1990); the National Policy for Women 1989, the contents of which were incorporated in The Sixth Malaysia Plan (6MP,1991-95); The National Development Policy (1991-2000), Vision 2020; and several Islamic approaches including the cultivation of Islamic values; Islam Hadhari and currently Wasatiyyah. As an Islamic country that safeguards women affairs, Malaysia is cited in the The Declaration of the Women’s Decade (1975-85) by the United Nations, which added impetus to ongoing efforts to integrate and expand the role of women in the development process (Kim 2011).

The 6MP emphasized the formulation of the National Action Plan, which was to integrate women in the institutional process for planning, implementation, and monitoring. The 6MP states, “The government recognizes that specific strategies must necessarily be formulated to effectively incorporate women in the process of development. Towards this end, concerted efforts will be made to progressively reduce existing constraints and facilitate the assimilation of women into the mainstream of social and economic activities."

The primary objectives of the National Women Policy under the 6MP are (KPWKM, 2005):

(i) To ensure equitable sharing in the acquisition of resources, information, opportunities and benefits of development for men and women. The objectives of equality and justice must be made the essence of development policies which must be people-oriented so that women, who constitute half of the nation’s population, can contribute and realize their potential to the optimum; and

(ii) To integrate women in all sectors of development in accordance with their capabilities and needs in order to enhance their quality of life, eradicate poverty,
ignorance and illiteracy, and ensure a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous nation.

From the budgetary aspect, the Malaysian government has shown its support by allocating funds and setting up organizations. The government made bold allocations of funds especially from the Third Malaysia Plan (3MP) for the development of women, primarily in their roles and functions as housewives, mothers, and supplementary income earners. In the latest provision under the Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP), a total of 65.6 billion ringgit is allocated to enhance the contribution of women in national development (B. HARIAN NEWS, October 2014). These funds were channeled through organizations such as the National Family Planning and Development Board or the ministry dealing with social welfare. For this purpose, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Affairs set several objectives for its programs as follows:

First: To rigorously implement the Women Directors Program for achieving 30 per cent participation of women in the decision-making group. The government plans to train 125 women directors to fill vacancies on the boards of directors of private and government-linked companies.

Second: To improve opportunities for women to return to work through the 1Malaysia program that focuses on Housewife Support and encouragement for skills training of housewives; and

Third: To encourage Professional Career Women to return to the labour market through a new program called Talent Corp.
In an effort to mainstream gender into national development, women’s empowerment is given special mention in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). As women account for 49.1% of the population, they are recognized as a primary force in contributing to the economy. Realizing this fact, the Government has set a target to increase the participation of women in the labor force from 46.1% in 2010 to 55.0% in 2015 (http://www.pmo.gov.my, 4th Annual Young Corporate Malaysians Summit).

D. WOMEN & FAMILY FRIENDLY WORK POLICIES IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia is a developing country. Statistics issued by the Department of Statistics in 2010 showed that the total population of men and women was 28,908.8 million. Of this, 14,712.6 million were men and 14,196.2 women (Statistics, http://www.kpwkm.gov.my). More than half of university first degree holders in Malaysia are women. Women’s contribution to employment and the economy in Malaysia is an undeniable fact. Even at the lower levels and in minor roles, their contribution is significant. Extensive research has determined that companies with more women do better especially in terms of sales performance at more than 50 percent. Thus, without women in workplaces, Malaysia would not be able to achieve its goal of becoming a high income country by the year 2020. At the same time, the importance of work-family balance has been given prominence since the Sixth Malaysia Plan and even more from the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010). The successful implementation of these policies could contribute towards higher organizational commitment, reduced turnover intention, and lower level of absenteeism in the workplaces (Hamid & Mohd. Amin, 2014).

Furthermore, under the Economic Transformation Program, women are recognized as potential human capital to be leveraged on to increase productivity. Various measures have been outlined to promote greater participation of women in economic activities and which at
the same time are beneficial for WFB. These include the following suggestions (BERNAMA NEWS, April 2015):

(i) Implement workplace policies to allow greater flexibility in working hours and the provision of child-care support;

(ii) Introduce policies that require all ministries and agencies to ensure gender issues are part and parcel of their policy design. In other words, all programs must incorporate the gender element; and

(iii) Encourage private sector firms to place more women executives in decision making positions. Women’s special capacity for recognizing talent and building a culture to sustain teamwork, contributes significantly to higher productivity.

Besides this, there are five women and family friendly related work policies that can support WFB in various forms in Malaysia. They include;

1. LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Annual leave, emergency leave, unpaid leave, maternity and paternity leave are allocated under the Malaysia Policy. Examples of some of the provisions are listed below:

For Maternity Leave Facilities, Public Service Circular, Number 14 of 2010 provides;

`In line with the Government's intention of caring for the welfare of officers,feasibility and ease regulations on maternity leave are determined as follows:

1. For an officer who is eligible for maternity leave, Full Pay maternity leave for as long as 300 days during her tenure;
2. The employee is given the flexibility to determine her own maternity leave from 60 days to 90 days for each birth; and

3. Maternity leave commences on the date of delivery of the officer. However, an employee may choose to use maternity leave earlier than the date of delivery at any time within 14 days of the expected date of childbirth.

For Regulation of Consent for not attending work in case of emergency, Public Service Circular, No. 1 of 1986 provides:

“An officer absent from work due to general emergency shall submit a certificate as in Appendix ' A ' as soon as the officer in charge and the Head of the Department are satisfied and confirm that a general emergency has occurred which caused the officer to be absent from duty. In considering the recommendation of the officer for general emergency leave, the Head of Department may obtain information and confirmation of the emergency incident, or that a specific command actually has occurred, from the following sources:

- District Officer or headman,
- Police officials,
- Department of Information,
- Department of Social Welfare,
- Mass broadcast media.”
Employees have the right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with emergencies involving a 'dependant'. This includes spouses, partners, children, parents, or anyone living in the household as a member of the family. A dependant may also be anyone who reasonably relies on the employee for help in an emergency. The right does not include an entitlement to pay. The enactment of the Part Time Regulations in 2010 (INTAN, http://intansabah.intan.my) enable more women, as one of the latent workforces in the labor market, to take part time jobs and be eligible for incentives such as insurance and other rights such as annual leave, sick leave and rest day as well as overtime pay.

For the amount of annual leave given to the Public servants, the Public Service Circular Number 14 of 2008 provides:

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<th>Rate of Leave ( Today ) Group / Grade Equivalent Less SSM</th>
<th>Rate of Annual Leave</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Less than 10 Years’ Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 31-54</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 21-30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1-20</td>
<td>20</td>
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Source: Public Service Circular Number 14 Of 2008

2. CHILDCARE/ DAYCARE POLICY

Incentives are provided to encourage the establishment of childcare centers at the workplace in the public sector and in the community. Employers in the private sector that
set-up a specific building for a childcare center are also given tax exemption of 10 per cent of the total cost for a period of ten years.

Fees Subsidy for Children At Work Public Sector, Service Circular Number 4, 2007:

The Government, through the 2014 Budget speech, has agreed to increase the eligibility of monthly household income of civil servants from RM3,000.00 to RM5,000.00 for the purpose of providing fee subsidy for childcare centers at the workplace of the public sector. Fee subsidies for childcare centers were enjoyed by civil servants provided through Circular No. 4 of 2007 and Circular No. 13 of 2008.

3. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Providing opportunities for flexible work arrangements - such as flextime, compressed workweek, part-time, job share and telecommuting - can create a more productive and effective work environment and help workers, especially caregivers, to experience less stress than those without such arrangements. In Malaysia, flextime is applied for civil servants where the employee can choose starting and ending hours based on the time provided, but usually must be at work during a core period when all employees are present. This can be referred to in Execution Time Work At All Unrated Federal Government Agencies, Service Circular Number 2 Year 2007.

The system works in three Stages (WP) with the period of time the offices of Government agencies are opened as in Table 1 below:
Table 1: Duration of Office Hours

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>State Office Hours Period (Day)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Perlis, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Johor, Pahang, Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory (Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya)</td>
<td>Monday to Thursday</td>
<td>9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu</td>
<td>Monday to Thursday</td>
<td>9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>7 hours 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>7 hours 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Malaysia is not implementing a flexible week that gives a variation on the standard working day and working week, such as fewer but longer days or shorter days in a six-day week. (Treasury Circular (SPP) Number 1, Year 2014, Dated February 18, 2014 and Circular of the Ministry Of Finance Malaysia: SPP Procedure No. 1/2014 through the System of E-Procument, Dated March 12, 2014)
4. THE PROVISION OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UP-SKILLING AND RE-SKILLING

This provision is to equip women with the necessary skills and technology know-how. It is also to diversify their economic activities instead of concentrating on certain sectors such as manufacturing. In response to the economic crisis, the Ministry of Human Resources has organized various skills training and entrepreneur development programs for retrenched workers including women.

Training structure that will be implemented across all classification schemes and services will be through the following five stages:

i. **Pre-Placement Training** is carried out for newly appointed permanent civil servants but not for positions in the Ministry/Department respectively. This exercise excludes members who have attended courses pre-specified in the scheme in the public service;

ii. **Basic Level Training** applies to all civil servants who have served for three years from the beginning of the appointment;

iii. **Intermediate Level Training** involves the development of competencies and improving the competence of members who have served between three and ten years;

iv. **Advanced Level Training** is conducted for members who have served for more than ten years and is aimed at strengthening competence; and

v. **Rating Transition Training** is carried out for members who will leave the service within a period of two years before retirement (Training of Human Resources Public Sector, Service Circular Number 6, 2005. Recruitment Policies And Procedures Daily Time Employees, Service Circular Number 3, Year 2011.)
5. A NATIONAL PLAN WITH PRIORITY FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

The early childhood development programme for children aged four and below, namely “Care and early education programs for children” (PERMATA), aimed at nurturing and producing the country’s future ‘gems’, came under the purview of the Ministry Of Education in 2011 to improve co-ordination and integration with the formal education system. PERMATA focuses on children from households with monthly income below RM1,500. After the successful PERMATA pilot programme launched in 2007, a total of 181 PERMATA centres will be established throughout the country during the Plan period with an allocation of RM36 million (Wikipedia; Org, Permata_Negara)

CONCLUSION

Achieving work-family balance is much dependent on managing conflict between work and family roles. Work family conflict (WFC) is an issue of needs to be resolved due to its negative outcomes such as absenteeism, stress and job dissatisfaction (Mahpul and Abdullah 2011). They found that younger formal workers, especially Chinese and Indians who tend to work long hours and need to travel, are stressed the most (Mahpul and Abdullah 2011). Past studies have shown that the conflict of the family interfering with work is related negatively to work performance and attitude. In addition, conflict between work and family, regardless of direction, was found to be related to higher turnover intention, care related absence and lower commitment to organizations and work (Aziz 2011).
Women play a primary and traditional role of looking after the family, especially their children and aging parents in Malaysia. Juggling work and family is not easy especially if the support system is not strong, such as lack of family-friendly policies either at the workplace or in the community.

The risk of marriage failure is also high in Malaysia and women face a higher setback of economic consequences compared to men should this happen. Data from the Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia stated that 57,014 local workers were retrenched from October 2008 to October 2011. Out of this number, 48.3% (27,520) were female workers in spite of women accounting for only 36.1% of the total labor force. Thus, many of them tend to opt out from formal employment when they are young. However, it is not easy to come back and join the workforce when they are older due to their knowledge and skills being out of date. The rate of retention of Malaysian women in the workplace, especially in middle management, is only 11 percent, compared to 20 percent for Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan (NST, Aug. 2013). Latest research by Rozita (2014) showed that Malaysian employees are still struggling to find a balance between work and family life. Moreover, the absence of child care centres at the workplace, inequitable distribution of work and the inequitable division of care tasks between women and men in the household have left women with a disproportionate double burden at home and in the workplace. This results in work–life imbalance, stress and stress-related sickliness, overwork, workplace absenteeism, less knowledge of children’s experience, and child neglect (Azlina 2010)

Of 942 respondents who participated in a survey conducted in May 2014 on employees of Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) in Malaysia, 36% said they were unable to control stress and 58% wanted to stop working in the next 3 months to find a better job (MyRujukan
Of 1000 career women surveyed, 55% percent were found to suffer from more than one form of health problem such as diabetes, knee pain, migraine, body aches, insomnia, dizziness, back pain, depression, frequent colds and fever, numbness in certain parts of the body and high blood pressure. In addition, 40% said their weight had increased due to the tendency to eat when they are stressed and 32% had blurred vision due to the use of computers. Overall, only 10% of women claimed they were healthy, 71% felt they were quite healthy, 16% agreed that they were not quite healthy, and 3% said that they were not fit. (My Rujukan, 2014) This data showed that there was room for further studies on the effectiveness of current policies for WFB in Malaysia.

Thus, review from this study found that there are five related WFB policies in Malaysia. They include Leave Entitlements; Childcare/Daycare Policy; Flexible Work arrangements; Provision of Training Opportunities and A National Plan with Priority for Disadvantage Children. Although there are many work-family friendly policies in Malaysia, this study also showed that current work-life practices in Malaysia fall short in a number of ways. They include a shortfall in sustainable people management arising through job sharing and part-time employment. There is also still an absence of flexibility in working hours and work arrangements such as teleworking, (Aziz Azelin 2011; Wee and Pervaiz 2014). As indicated by Russell (1997), although flexible time and place programs have been adopted at many companies, they may not be fully utilized by employees. Consequently, it is found that 63 percent of Malaysian workers, especially women, are not spending enough time with their family due to long working hours and heavy workload (NST, Oct.17, 2013).
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For a Journal:


For a Book:


For a Thesis:

For a Conference/Paperwork:


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