HRM interventions to address work-life balance issues in private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia

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Southern Cross University
HRM INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS WORK-LIFE BALANCE ISSUES IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN MALAYSIA

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This Thesis is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

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DECLARATION

I certify that the substance of this Thesis has not been already submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or degrees. I certify that to the best of my knowledge any help received in preparing this work, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this Thesis.

______________________________
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although this three year doctoral journey was mine, to walk with determination and tenacity, I am thankful that I was never alone.

Firstly, I come before the Lord Jesus Christ, my God and my Saviour, with humble and grateful thanksgiving. You ordered my life according to Your plan and direction. I am truly blessed, because apart from You, I can do nothing (Proverbs 3:5-6).

To my beloved mother, Mrs Anne Ponnampalam, I honour you, for being my “prayer warrior”. It was your vigilant prayers that held me up through this demanding period. To my late beloved father, Mr S Ponnampalam, I honour you, for inspiring me to be the best that I can. To my dear husband, Siva, what can I say, but how much I appreciate the way you cheerfully took on so many of my chores, to give me the “balance” to focus on my priorities.

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To my children, my siblings, my second mother, Aunt Devi, my care group, friends and colleagues, thank you, for your prayers, encouragement and understanding, during this doctoral journey, when I was often unavailable, to spend time with you, to focus on this degree. Thank you for being part of my life and I am indeed looking forward on catching up, for all our lost time together.
ABSTRACT

The 24/7 economy has triggered a long hour work culture and this is constraining the ability of the workforce to maintain a healthy work life balance (WLB).

In the private higher education (PHEI) sector, the growing student numbers and increased industry rivalry are pressurizing faculty members to accept higher program delivery workloads without compromising on teaching quality. While this compels them to reconcile work and personal demands, they have not benefited from appropriate human resource management (HRM) interventions. There are also inadequate “family friendly” legislative provisions in Malaysian employment law. Accordingly, this research investigated the WLB issues affecting the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia, and the role of the HRM function to effectively address such issues.

The research adopted a two stage mixed methodology. The first, qualitative and exploratory, involved the collection and analysis of data from a literature review, focus groups and individual interviews. The descriptive second stage permitted the generalization of findings. In line with the research objectives, the findings: (i) extended the body of knowledge on WLB issues in Malaysia (ii) led to recommendations for consideration by the PHEIs. (iii) and contributed to new theory development and recommendations for follow up research.

Keywords: Work Life Balance (WLB), Human Resource Management (HRM), Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs), mixed methodology, recommendations, theory development
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIPD</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPIA</td>
<td>Code of Practice for Institutional Audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Corporate Leadership Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESRI</td>
<td>Environmental Systems Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
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<td>HRIS</td>
<td>Human Resource Information Systems</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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| IPPTN   | Institute Penyelidikan Pendidikan Tinggi Negara  
          *(Bahasa Malaysia language)* |
| JNCHES  | Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff |
| MQA     | Malaysian Qualifications Agency |
| NaHERI  | National Higher Education Research Institute |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PHEI    | Private Higher Educational Institutions |
| SSM     | Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia  
          *(In the Bahasa Malaysia language)*  
          The Companies Commission of Malaysia  
          *(English Translation)* |
| UNICEF  | United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund |
| UCEA    | University Council for Educational Administration |
| USA     | United States of America |
| UK      | United Kingdom |
| WLB     | Work life balance |
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Title Page**

Declaration .............................................................................................................ii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................. iii
Abstract .................................................................................................................... iv
Acronyms and Abbreviations ................................................................................. v
Table of Contents .................................................................................................. vi
List of Tables ............................................................................................................ xiii
List of Figures ......................................................................................................... xv

## Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Background to the Research .............................................................................. 2
1.3 The Research Problem ...................................................................................... 5
1.3.1 The Research Questions ............................................................................... 5
1.3.2 The Research Objectives ............................................................................. 6
1.4 Research Justification ...................................................................................... 7
1.5 Unit of Analysis ............................................................................................... 8
1.6 Research Methodology ................................................................................... 8
1.6.1 The Research Design .................................................................................... 9
1.6.2 The Research Dimensions ........................................................................ 10
1.6.3 Sampling Design ........................................................................................ 10
1.6.4 Target population ....................................................................................... 11
1.6.5 The Data Collection Instruments ................................................................ 11
1.6.6 Data Analysis Techniques .......................................................................... 12
1.7 Limitations of the Research ........................................................................... 12
1.8 Ethical Issues ................................................................................................... 13
1.9 Structure of the Thesis .................................................................................... 13
1.10 Chapter Conclusions ...................................................................................... 15
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Chapter Objectives

2.1.2 The Chapter Structure

2.2 Conceptual Overview of WLB

2.2.1 The Pace of Modern Life

2.2.2 Implications of work life balance

2.2.3 Types of work life balance options

2.2.3.1 Flexible work contracts

2.2.3.2 Flexible Work Options

2.2.3.3 Childcare & Dependant Relative Care Benefits

2.2.4 Benefits of providing WLB options

2.2.4.1 Benefits of flexible work options

2.2.4.2 Benefits of family and childcare provisions

2.2.5 Implementing WLB Initiatives

2.2.5.1 Implementing formal provisions

2.2.5.2 Implementing informal provisions

2.2.6 Problems associated with provision of WLB Initiatives

2.2.6.1 Career advancement limitations

2.2.6.2 Disadvantages of Flexible Work Options

2.2.6.3 Limitations of Childcare and Dependent Care Provisions

2.2.6.4 The varying experience of WLB perception

2.2.7 Work Life Balance Issues within Malaysia

2.2.8 Work Life Balance Recommendations

2.3 Conceptual Overview of HRM Function

2.3.1 The HRM-Firm Performance Relationship

2.3.1.1 Systems Based Approach

2.3.1.2 Strategic Based Approach

2.3.2. Contemporary Challenges for the HRM function

2.3.2.1 Developing Strategic Intent

2.3.2.2 Talent Management practices

2.3.2.3 Confronting the Knowledge Economy

2.3.2.4 Strategic alignment of HRM Objectives
2.3.2.5. Boundary Spanning role of HRM…………………………..45
2.3.2.6. Using the HR Scorecard ……………………………………….46
2.3.2.7 Building Social Capital………………………………………………46
2.3.3 Role of the HRM function to address WLB issues…………………..47
  2.3.3.1 Reconcilation of HRM Initiatives ……………………………...….48
  2.3.3.2 Allowing employee choices…………………………………….…..49
  2.3.3.3 Use of human resource information systems ……………….……50
2.3.4 HRM Evaluation - WLB provisions……………………………………50
2.3.5 Limitations Within the HRM function………………………………51
  2.3.5.1 Limited business related roles …………………………………....51
  2.3.5.2 Role Paradoxes……………………………………………………..52
  2.3.5.3 Unclear linkages with performance constructs……………….…….53
  2.3.5.4. Ineffective communication on employee benefits……………..…..54
  2.3.5.5 Integration with other organization systems……………………54
2.4 The Private Higher Educational Institutions……………………………….55
  2.4.1. Challenges faced by PHEI in Malaysia……………………………….55
  2.4.2 Challenges faced by Academic Workforce in Malaysian PHEI …...…57
  2.4.3 The Role of the HRM Function in Malaysian PHEI…………………58
    2.4.3.1 HRM Function in universities within developed nations……….…..59
    2.4.3.2. WLB Support Offered by the HRM Function ………………….….62
2.5 Identifying Gaps within existing literature…………………………….…..63
  2.5.1 WLB concept impacting WLB perception within academia……...…..64
  2.5.2 Existing WLB provisions in PHEI within Malaysia…………………....65
  2.5.3 The role of the HRM function within PHEI…………………………....65
  2.5.4 Faculty level context for better WLB of the academic workforce….…..66
2.6 Conclusions………………………………………………………………...68

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction……………………………………………………………….69
  3.1.1 Chapter Structure……………………………………………………….69
  3.1.2 Chapter Objectives…………………………………………………..71
3.2 Research Paradigm…………………………………………………………71
  3.2.1 Ontology & Epistemology……………………………………………71
  3.2.2. Positivist Paradigm………………………………………………….72
Chapter Four: Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction .................................................. 109
4.1.1 Chapter Structure .............................................. 109

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis ........................................ 110
4.2.1 Qualitative Analytical Procedures .......................... 111
4.2.2 Focus Group & Interview Sessions ......................... 112
4.2.2.1 Summary of main themes emerging from the main RQs .................................................. 112
4.2.2.2 Summary of main themes emerging from personal interview ............................................. 116

4.3 Refining the Theoretical Framework ........................... 141
4.3.2 Crafting the Research Propositions ....................... 142

4.4 Quantitative Data Analysis ...................................... 143
4.4.1 Descriptive Demographic Data ............................. 133
4.4.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis ............................... 147
4.4.2.1 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 1 .......... 148
4.4.2.2. Combined Survey responses on Proposition 2 ......................... 149
4.4.2.3 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 3 ..................... 151
4.4.2.4 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 4 ..................... 153
4.4.3 Reliability Analysis .................................................. 154
4.4.4 Inferential Statistics .................................................. 154
4.4.5 Pearson Correlation .................................................. 154
4.4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis ....................................... 157
4.5 Chapter Conclusion ....................................................... 160

Chapter Five: Research Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Introduction ........................................................................ 162
5.1.1 Chapter Structure ....................................................... 162
5.2 Conclusions on Research Propositions ............................... 164
5.2.1 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 1 ................. 164
5.2.1.1 Literature Review .................................................. 164
5.2.1.2 Findings from focus group sessions and personal interview .... 165
5.2.1.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 1 ........... 166
5.2.1.4 Conclusions on Proposition 1 .................................... 166
5.2.2 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 2 ............... 167
5.2.2.1 Literature Review .................................................. 167
5.2.2.2 Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews ... 168
5.2.2.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 2 ........... 169
5.2.2.4 Conclusions on Proposition 2 .................................... 170
5.2.3 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 3 ............... 170
5.2.3.1 Literature Review .................................................. 170
5.2.3.2 Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews ... 171
5.2.3.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys - Proposition 3 ............ 172
5.2.3.4 Conclusions on Proposition 3 .................................... 173
5.2.4 Summarised Findings on Proposition 4 .............................. 173
5.2.4.1 Literature Review .................................................. 173
5.2.4.2 Findings from focus group/personal interviews .................... 175
5.2.4.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 4 ............ 175
5.2.4.4 Conclusions on Proposition 4 .................................... 176
5.3 Conclusions on Hypothesis ................................................. 176
5.4 Conclusions about Research Problem........................................177
5.5 Theory Development...............................................................178
5.6 Recommendations - Regulatory & Institutional ......................180
  5.6.1 Implications for Regulatory Policy......................................180
  5.6.2 Recommendations for PHEI policy & practice......................183
5.7 Limitations within the Research.............................................185
5.8 Implications for Future Research..........................................185
5.9 Conclusions on research......................................................186

List of Appendices
Appendix 1..................................................................................210
Appendix 2..................................................................................211
Appendix 3..................................................................................214
Appendix 5..................................................................................215
Appendix 6..................................................................................261
Appendix 7..................................................................................220
LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 2 Literature Review
Table 2.1: Ulrich’s Framework of the Roles of HRM…………………………….41
Table 2.2: Job Classification for the Differentiated Workforce ………………43

Chapter Three: Research Methodology
Table 3.1: Structure of Chapter Three .........................................................78
Table 3.2: Chosen Business Research Paradigms ....................................72
Table 3.3: Main Purposes of Research.........................................................74
Table 3.4: Contributions of the qualitative and quantitative approaches……78
Table 3.5: Approaches to Mixed Methods Research.................................79
Table 3.6: Participant Profile....................................................................86
Table 3.7: Summary of Interview Participants........................................87
Table 3.8: Profile of Chosen Institutions....................................................87
Table 3.9: Qualitative Data Collection Methods........................................90
Table 3.10: Summary of advantages and disadvantages of the individual interviews...............................................................93
Table 3.11: Structured and unstructured Interviews: ................................94
Table 3.12: Comparative Analysis of Interview Types...............................95
Table 3.13: Five step model to manage semi-structured interviews..........96
Table 3.14: Questions for individual interviews........................................96
Table 3.15: Development of constructs to frame data collection process....100
Table 3.16: Five point Likert Scale.............................................................103

Chapter Four: Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis
Table 4.1: Issues arising from the initial conceptual framework and research questions.................................................................112
Table 4.2: Main research questions discussed at focus group ...........113
Table 4.3: Evaluating perceptions on level of work life balance........114
Table 4.4: Types of WLB programs currently available...................115
Table 4.5: Types of HRM interventions..................................................115
Table 4.6: Type of supportive work practices.......................................116
Table 4.7: Results of Reliability Test.......................................................154
Table 4.8: Pearson Correlation Summary……………………………………….156
Table 4.9: Result of Multivariate Analysis……………………………………..157
Table 4.10: Results of Analysis of Variances…………………………………….158
Table 4.11: Analysis of coefficients…………………………………………….159
Table 4.12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing ………………………………….159

Chapter Five: Research Conclusions and Implications

Table 5.1: Triangulated response patterns……………………………………….166
Table 5.2: Triangulated response patterns……………………………………….169
Table 5.3: Triangulated response patterns……………………………………….172
Table 5.4: Triangulated response patterns……………………………………….175
LISTS OF FIGURES

Chapter 1: Introduction
Figure 1.1: Structure of Chapter One………………………………………………1
Figure 1.2: Outline Structure of Research Methodology……………………….9

Chapter 2: Literature Review
Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework to guide the Literature Review……..16
Figure 2.2: Structure of Chapter Two……………………………………………18
Figure 2.3: Proposed model for work-family issues ……………………………23
Figure 2.4: Competing Model for WLB …………………………………………35
Figure 2.5: Understanding the People Performance Link……………………….48
Figure 2.6: Framework of Organizational Strategy, Strategic HRM, and Firm
Performance……………………………………………………………………49
Figure 2.7: Role of the HRM function within the Employee Relationship……..63
Figure 2.8: Theoretical Framework developed from the literature review……..67

Chapter Three: Research Methodology
Figure 3.1: Mixed Methods Design Matrix……………………………………81
Figure 3.2: Choice of appropriate research method…………………………….82
Figure 3.3: Relationship between inductive and deductive approaches………83
Figure 3.4: Research Design Components & study points…………………..84
Figure 3.5: Framework for Exploratory Research Design……………………85
Figure 3.6: Deductive Research Design Framework…………………………101

Chapter Four: Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis
Figure 4.1: Outline of Chapter Structure………………………………………..110
Figure 4.2: Refined Theoretical Framework……………………………………141
Figure 4.3: Profile of Marital Status………………………………………………144
Figure 4.4: Profile of Gender Distribution………………………………………144
Figure 4.5: Profile of Nationality…………………………………………………145
Figure 4.6: Profile of Age group…………………………………………………145
Figure 4.7: Profile of Years of service…………………………………………..146
Figure 4.8: Racial Composition………………………………………………………………………………………………146
Figure 4.9: Profile of Dependents……………………………………………………………………………………………….147
Figure 4.10: Profile of Employment Contract………………………………………………………………………………………….147
Figure 4.11: Combined survey response for Proposition 1 ……………………..148
Figure 4.12: Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 1……………………………..149
Figure 4.13: Combined survey response for Proposition 2………………….…….150
Figure 4.14: Combined mean response for Proposition 2 ……………………..151
Figure 4.15: Combined survey response for Proposition 3 ……………………...152
Figure 4.16: Combined mean response for Proposition 3 ……………………..152
Figure 4.17: Combined survey response for Proposition 4………………….……153
Figure 4.18: Combined mean response for Proposition 4………………….……154
Figure 4.19: Factors defining the relationship between HRM interventions and WLB issues of academic workforce………………….161

Chapter Five: Research Conclusions and Implications.
Figure 5.1: Structure of Chapter Five……………………………………………………………………………………………163
Figure 5.2: Factors defining the Work Life Balance Relationships………………..179
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter introduces an overview of the thesis on the “HRM interventions to address work life balance issues of the academic workforce in private higher educational institutions within Malaysia”. The Chapter is structured into ten sections as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Structure of Chapter One

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Background to research
1.3 Research Problem
1.4 Justification for the Research
1.5 Unit of Analysis
1.6 Research Methodology
1.7 Limitations of the research
1.8 Ethical Issues
1.9 Structure of the Thesis
1.10 Conclusions
Section 1.1 presents the introduction while Section 1.2 presents the background of the research in the sphere of work life balance that is gaining increasing significance within many traditional workplaces, inclusive of the private higher educational industry sector. Section 1.3 presents the research problem, research questions and research objectives that were arrived at from the findings of the preliminary literature review. Section 1.4 presents the justification for the commencement of the said research and the knowledge gaps that will be addressed. Section 1.5 explains the unit of analysis while Section 1.6 introduces the mixed methodology approach that was adopted within the research design and the manner of primary data collection and analysis. Section 1.7 addresses the limitations of the study in terms of scope of the research, which was constrained by time and resource factors. Section 1.8 presents the overview of the five Chapters within the thesis, while Section 1.9 presents the key terms used within the research and its definitions. Section 1.10 presents the conclusions for this Chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Work life balance (WLB) refers to the ability of employees to successfully integrate work and non work roles through the balancing of time, schedules and resources (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). Employees able to accomplish such balance within their lives had better access to a quality of work life and personal wellbeing. On the other hand, unsuccessful WLB was associated with lower job satisfaction, higher turnover, absenteeism and lower job performance (Allen, Herst, Bruch & Sutton, 2000).

Unlike traditional employment structures in the past, with single income families, defined working contracts and clear delineation between work and personal life, the dual income family, workforce diversity, work intensification, new time use patterns within the 24/7 economy, and the expectations of the new Generation Y workforce, viewed as having a different mindset from the previous generation, have blurred the boundaries between work and life (Perrons, et.al., 2006; Aminuddin, 2008; Snell &
Bolander, 2010). As family and work responsibility occupy a significant part of adult life, the evaluation of how each individual employee navigates between these roles, to reconcile its priorities, becomes an important consideration for employers to address. WLB practices are therefore gaining increasing popularity in the developed nations, as having a significant impact on staffing and productivity (Harrington & Ladge, 2009).

The growing demand for tertiary education in Malaysia, as elsewhere stems from the global demand for a well educated and highly qualified workforce, to support the rapid industrialisation within the manufacturing sector and the growth of the services industry (Edwards, Van Laar & Easton, 2009). The limited places for undergraduate and post graduate study options, within the public universities in Malaysia, has spurred government policy initiatives for the growth and development of the private higher education sector (Ismail & Murteza, 1996; Jantan et al., 2006). Growth was further propelled through institutional, collaborative arrangements that have been made, either with local or foreign universities, through the introduction of franchised and twinning programs that allow for credit transfers (Sohail, Jegatheesan & Nor Azlin, 2002).

The rapidly expanding private higher education (PHEI) industry sector in Malaysia, in turn places greater pressure on faculty members to be more productive without compromising on high quality standards (Ariokasamy, et al., 2009) and to accept an increased and more complex workload (Thomas & Davies, 2002). Work-life balance thus becomes an important concern of the strategic HRM function (Snell & Bolander, 2010). Where HR strategies are well aligned with employee needs, and are channelled through effective communication systems, the resultant increase in employee commitment levels, influences improved performance related behaviour and reduced labour turnover (Lehtonen, 2005; Rose & Kumar, 2006; Guest & Clinton, 2007; Perkins & White, 2009).

Friedman et. al., (1996) & Friedman & Galinsky, (1992) identified the importance of the HR function within universities, to introduce and implement a set of WLB initiatives, relating to flexible working arrangements, childcare provisions and other
‘family-friendly’ benefits. Kossek & Distelberg, (2009) identified structured human resource policies that support work-life balance, job designs and informal occupational and organizational culture as important areas of consideration. Harrington & Ladge, (2009) identified four critical areas of attention for the HR function which can be summarised as follows:-

- Influencing the organization’s leadership.
- Helping employees make the right career choices.
- Developing a set of formal HR policies and programs.
- Influencing social policy.

In most universities, however, senior academicians hold the position of head of faculty, who may not have the training and resources to support their managerial positions, leading to experiences of role dissonance or “caught in the middle syndrome” (UCEA, 2003; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006). Within many of the older universities, the role of the HRM function was a minor administrative, with a lower proportion of HR specialists, as compared to the newer ones (Guest & Clinton, 2007). In Kersley, et al., (2006) findings from a workplace employment relations survey identified performance appraisal as the main basis for the management of performance of academics. Leadership development, performance management and managing poor performance were identified as the least effectively managed areas of HRM practice (Abdullah, et al., 2009; Felder, 2009).

The strategic influence of the HR specialists was further limited by unclear bottom line expectations, and lack of information on how a university’s performance is benchmarked, within the educational sector, which in many ways, differs from that of the non-academic sectors (UCEA, 2003; Farndale and Hope-Hailey, 2004). Under such conditions it is inevitable that the HRM function in the higher education sector will be limited in its ability to introduce initiatives to address pertinent WLB issues. On the other hand, this same workforce, like that of any other professional service organisation, is a critical resource that contributes to survival and growth of a business, within an increasingly competitive world. It therefore follows that the ability to attract, to develop and to retain the most talented academics will become a key to a university’s success (Rowley, 1996; Ashton Centre of Human Resources, 2008).
1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A review of literature and past research provides the context and the theoretical basis to present a coherent argument that justifies the need for the proposed research on the “HRM interventions to address work life balance issues of the academic workforce in private higher educational institutions within Malaysia”. The reasons as stated above may contribute to explaining why unlike other sectors, the university sector reveals no strong positive association between measures of HRM activities and standard indicators of university performance (Farndale and Hope-Hailey, 2002).

Within the Malaysian business environment, few private organizations are proactively adopting a comprehensive set of HRM practices within their business (Chew, 2005; Rose & Kumar, 2006; Rowley & Abdul Rahman, 2008). Many WLB initiatives, commonly adopted by the universities within the developed nations, have yet to be introduced into the Malaysian environment although employee work life balance has become of greater significance (Maimunah & Roziah, 2006; Aminuddin, 2008; (Abdullah, et al., 2009).

Prior research in Malaysia has shown that the presence of child-care centres, within the multi-national manufacturing business corporations are better able to attract the female workforce, but there were no indications of a comprehensive set of WLB initiatives for other industrial sectors (Omar & Ahmad, 2009). Furthermore, existing research has identified barriers to the implementation of current WLB practices and highlighted important areas, for the evaluation and costing of WLB strategies within organizations (De Cieri, et al., 2002). Significant ramifications are therefore present and need to be considered in line with the introduction of the various forms of WLB initiatives, which this research aims to address.

1.3.1 The Research Questions

Research questions allow clear problem definition, as it identifies abstract concepts that can be operationally defined as constructs and variables, to assess the degree of association they hold, causal or otherwise (Perry 2001). Based on the findings of the
preliminary literature review, the following research questions, needed to address the aims of the research are listed as follows:-

**Research Question 1**
What is the nature of WLB difficulties, from work as well as non work related factors, faced by the academic workforce in the PHEI within Malaysia?

**Research Question 2**
How adequate and accessible are the existing formal and informal WLB provisions, present in the PHEI, within Malaysia?

**Research Question 3**
What is the nature of HRM interventions for the design, introduction and implementation of work life balance initiatives, in the PHEI within Malaysia?

**Research Question 4**
What is the cultural framework and environmental context that influences faculty work practices, to facilitate better work life balance experiences, for the academic workforce, in the PHEI within Malaysia?

1.3.2 The Research Objectives

The background to the research, within the context of the research problem, points to gaps in the existing body of knowledge on the research topic. The overarching aim of the research is therefore to consider the nature of academic job demands and the type of HRM interventions and faculty level work practices that impact work life balance outcomes for the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. Based on that premise, the following research objectives have been formulated:-

**Research Objective 1**
To identify the nature of WLB difficulties, from work as well as non work related factors, faced by the academic workforce in the PHEI within Malaysia.
Research Objective 2
To consider and evaluate the adequacy and accessibility of existing formal and informal WLB provisions, present in the PHEI within Malaysia.

Research Objective 3
To consider the nature of HRM interventions for the design, introduction and implementation of work life balance initiatives in the PHEI within Malaysia.

Research Objective 4
To consider and evaluate the cultural framework and environmental context that influences faculty work practices, to facilitate better work life balance experiences for the academic workforce, in the PHEI within Malaysia.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Many conventional employers expect employees to give top priority to their jobs, even if it is at the expense of their personal quality of life (De Cenzo & Robbins, 2007). The limited influence of the HRM function within many PHEI, the absence of legislative provisions and the low discretionary up take of work-life balance initiatives, within the Malaysian private sector, as presented in the earlier background review, justifies the need to conduct research in this field.

Recommendations have been made to the Malaysian corporate sector, for policy reforms, to remove the gender bias present in employment policies, and to recognize WLB as one, that is critical to both women and men. There is a call for WLB considerations as part of the national agenda (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007).

Despite the presence of a set of family friendly laws in certain nations, HRM initiatives for WLB policies are still limited in its effectiveness (De Cieri, et al, 2002) The situation is further exacerbated in Malaysia, where such legislative provisions are not in place, although certain public sector organizations have introduced WLB
initiatives on a voluntary basis (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007). Citing the abovementioned considerations for which existing literature at present remains silent, the research can be justified on the following grounds:

- To extend the existing body of knowledge on the type of WLB difficulties that is specifically related to the environment of the private higher education industry sector.
- To offer recommendations on job design and faculty work practices that help better address work life balance issues within the PHEI environment
- To offer recommendations on the nature of HRM interventions that influence policy implications and management practices, to create a workplace that facilitates better work life balance for its academic workforce.

### 1.5 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Units of analysis in social research can be individuals, groups or institutions and theoretical concepts are tailored to be applied on such units (Neumann, 2006). Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, (2001) state that the research objective determines the unit of analysis. Within this study, it covers the individual line managers, HR specialists and the academic workforce from the business and management faculties, within five private higher educational institutions, located in the Klang Valley in the state of Selangor, Malaysia.

### 1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature and methodology of a business research is guided by the research paradigm that is presented in the form of two main frameworks, mainly quantitative and qualitative paradigms (Neumann, 2006; Perry 1995). Time and resource constraints dictate the choice of a single methodology, appropriate to the research problem and research objectives. The researcher's area of study pertains to the work life balance issues experienced by the academic workforce in the PHEI and the type of HRM interventions needed to effectively address such issues at the workplace. Citing the views of Cameron & Miller (2007), a mixed methodology that allows
triangulation, is deemed appropriate as the study of the work life balance phenomena, holds several complexities and contradictions (Deery, 2008; Shanker & Bhatnagar, 2010). The methodology adopted for this research is presented in detail in Chapter Three, and outlined below in Figure 1.2

Figure 1.2 Outline Structure of Research Methodology

**STAGE ONE**

- Exploratory Research Dimensions
- Literature Review
- Initial Theoretical Framework
- Qualitative Data Collection through focus groups & personal interviews
- Qualitative Data Analysis using content analysis, narrative summaries and reflexivity
- Refined Theoretical Framework

**STAGE TWO**

- Descriptive Research Dimension
- Quantitative Data Collection using Questionnaire survey
- Quantitative Data Analysis using SPSS version 20 for descriptive statistics
- Refined Theoretical Model
- Pearson Correlation & Inferential statistics
- Finalised theoretical Model

Source: Developed for this research

1.6.1 The Research Design

This research design adopted a pragmatist philosophy incorporating both the qualitative and quantitative purist paradigms, integrating their common features, to reflect the strengths and cancel the weakness (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The
pluralist approach can address the conditions to arrive at superior research with high reliability, validity and trustworthiness.

1.6.2 The Research Dimensions

There are three main types of research which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory studies are directed towards theory building, where there is a gap in existing scholarship to determine the parameters of the research that gives greater structure to define the research problem (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Descriptive research on the other hand seeks to define a phenomenon more clearly while explanatory research aims to establish causal relationships between a set of defined variables. Following the recommendations of Cameron & Miller (2007), the research process will commence on an exploratory, inductive, methodology to better define the research problem and develop a WLB theoretical framework that can be tested using the deductive, quantitative approach, to assess if it can be generalised to a wider population.

1.6.3. Sampling Design

A sample chosen from the general population must ensure the right respondents are targeted (Cavanna, Delahaye and Sekaran, 2001). Sampling is used in research where a certain volume of items (sample size) is taken from the whole population, and measured and analysed. It is more pragmatic than doing a study on the entire population. The findings will then be inferred on the wider population.

Sampling design issues relate to:
- Defining target population and sampling frame.
- Decision on whether to have primary and secondary sampling units
- Choice of using probability or non-probability sampling.
- Ensuring the samples chosen are representative of its large population.
- Determining the sample size. Smaller sample sizes are feasible when the population elements are homogenous. (Cavanna, Delahaye and Sekaran, 2001).
1.6.4 Target population

The case study institutions chosen for this research, from which the target population were selected, present an investor profile with ownership largely held by large private corporations, operating as conglomerates, within diverse industries, unrelated to the education sector. They started business operations from the late seventies and early eighties onwards, as private colleges. The subsequent growth and expansion of the private education industry provided opportunities not just for increased student enrolments and expanded program offerings, but also opportunities to apply for upgrading of institution to Universities and University Colleges, to seek higher university rankings. These five institutions are reputed to hold the largest student enrolment numbers among PHEI in Malaysia (Malaysia Country Summary of Higher Education, 2009; National Higher Education Plan; Guidebook. PHEI Management Sector, 2010).

The targeted respondents for the focus groups and personal interviews were the academic workforce, faculty heads and, HR specialists, using convenience, non-probability sampling. However the faculty heads and HR specialists who were invited to attend the focus group sessions, declined with apologies, citing prior commitments. Two focus group sessions of five participants each, comprising only the academic workforce, were held. For the personal interviews, there were twenty participants, from the three main groups.

The target population for the questionnaire survey were the academic workforce within the five chosen institutions, chosen using convenience sampling methods for those whose email addresses were available and random sampling to distribute printed questionnaires to the rest, with the assistance of the management and staff within these institutions. These issues are presented in greater detail within Chapter Three.

1.6.5 The Data Collection Instruments

As shown in Figure 1.2, a total of four types of data collection methods were used. The literature review considered the three parent disciplines, namely, the nature of work life balance, the role of the HRM function and the environment of the PHEI,
proceeding next to the immediate discipline of considering the issues of WLB within the context of the PHEI, and the manner in which the strategic HRM function can effectively address such issues. The review identified the key research issues and the appropriate theoretical framework to guide the research, and craft the research questions.

The focus groups were used to consider the research questions, arrived at from the literature review, in order to expand the contents within the initial research framework, leading to the crafting of the questions to be subsequently used for the personal interview sessions. All participants were selected because of the relevance and richness of knowledge they possessed, in the field of study. Quantitative data for the deductive phase was collected through a questionnaire survey, which is “a method of gathering primary data based on communication with a representative sample of individuals” (Zikmund, 2003: 175).

1.6.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data from the focus group sessions and personal interviews and were “transcribed into a textual format to enable qualitative analysis” (Hair et al., 2007:291) Because of the interactive nature of data collection and analysis, the management of these data is of critical importance to minimize information overload. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires was analysed using the SPSS version 20 software, for descriptive statistics and displayed in the form of graphs, charts and inferential statistical techniques, to effectively communicate complex issues. A cross sectional analysis rather than a longitudinal analysis was undertaken in order to identify pertinent issues within a particular point of time.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The time and resource constraints, that hinder adopting a longitudinal approach, that may allow analysis of changes over time, are acknowledged. Also the exploratory phase of the research may yield a subjective interpretation of findings. In the light of the sensitivity of issues concerned, respondents may consider questions as intrusive
and an invasion of privacy, thereby giving evasive answers. Finally the use of convenience sampling in choice of respondents could limit the aims of imputing findings on a larger population.

1.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Measures to safeguard the rights of respondents will be presented in Information Sheets for the focus group and questionnaire survey, which covers issues relating to confidentiality, rights of withdrawal at any point of time and voluntary participation. Data collection proceeded only upon approval being given by the University. This research was conducted in compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Southern Cross University, Australia (Approval Number : ECN-11-066).

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis adopted a unified structure with five chapters, in line with the recommendations of Perry (2001).

Chapter One introduces an overview of the thesis on the “HRM interventions to address work life balance issues of the academic workforce in private higher educational Institutions within Malaysia”. It presents the research background, the research problem, research questions and research objectives that were arrived at from the findings of the preliminary literature review. It also presents the justification for the commencement of the said research and the knowledge gaps that will be addressed. The research methodology is then outlined, specifying the data collection instruments and data analysis techniques. The limitations, key terminology, research quality and ethical considerations, are addressed. The Chapter ends with the presentation of the thesis structure and chapter conclusions.

Chapter Two begins with the review of the parent and focus literature, on the pertinent theories relevant to the main disciplines of work life balance, human resource management and the higher education industry sector. The review
considered the nature of the problem and the key issues that were highlighted and addressed in previous studies to move towards developing a theoretical framework, that presents a systematic view of the phenomena in question, to facilitate the detection of gaps within existing literature that will guide and drive this particular research.

**Chapter Three** presents the research paradigm, research design, methodology & research plan to adopt (Kumar, 1998). The mixed methodology was identified as the most appropriate research design, incorporating both an initial exploratory and qualitative stage, followed next by the descriptive stage, where data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data collection instruments and data analysis techniques were discussed, together with the sampling design, sample size and sampling methods. Finally, research quality was addressed to ensure validity, reliability and trustworthiness, as well as ethical considerations.

**Chapter Four** begins with the analysis of the qualitative data collected from the focus groups and personal interviews. The findings from the focus groups allowed the expansion of the four main research questions, to identify the issues to be addressed within the subsequent personal interviews. This facilitated the crafting of the reflective statements, to arrive at the four research propositions and to provide the basis for the items to be included within the questionnaire survey. The analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire survey allowed the testing of the research propositions, using descriptive and inferential statistics to arrive at the final theoretical model.

**Chapter Five** presents the conclusions in respect of each research proposition, through the triangulation of data from the qualitative and quantitative stages. The recommendations and implications for future policy and practice are then discussed. The Chapter concludes with limitations and recommendations for future research.
1.10 CONCLUSIONS

This Chapter presented the background to this research, elaborating on the research problem, the research questions, the research objectives. The justification of the research for policy and practice and addressing gaps was then presented. An overall outline of the research methodology was presented including the data collection instruments and the data analysis procedures. The limitations of the research were briefly discussed and the Chapter concluded with a presentation on the thesis structure. The next Chapter details the literature review to identify the key research issues and the knowledge gaps within current literature.
CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The earlier Chapter introduced the research pertaining to HRM interventions to address work life balance issues in Private Higher Educational Institutions. This Chapter begins with a conceptual framework, shown in Figure 2.1, that guides the review of the parent and focus literature, on the pertinent theories relevant to the main disciplines of work life balance, human resource management and the higher education industry sector. The review will consider the nature of the problem and the key issues that were highlighted and addressed in previous studies and thenceforth move towards developing a theoretical framework, that presents a systematic view of the phenomena in question, to facilitate the detection of gaps within existing literature that will guide and drive this particular research (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001; Neumann 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework to guide the Literature Review

Source: Developed for the research
2.1.1 Chapter Objectives

A review of pertinent literature is aimed at meeting objectives that in turn will facilitate the choice of the research design (Perry, 2001; Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). Such objectives are listed as follows:

a) Preliminary information gathering on the relevant disciplines.

b) To obtain a more precise view of the nature and significance of the research problem.

c) To consider the key issues identified and addressed within past research.

d) To develop an appropriate theoretical framework to guide the research.

e) To identify the gaps in existing knowledge, within the defined theoretical framework relevant to the research problem.

f) To develop the research questions and propositions that may be testable subsequently.

2.1.2 The Chapter Structure

This chapter is divided into six main sections. The first two sections address the parent disciplines of work-life balance and the role of the HRM function by reviewing the theoretical framework that inform the study of firstly, work-life balance at the workplace and secondly, the role of the human resource management function. The next three sections address the immediate disciplines of HRM interventions, on WLB initiatives, within the private higher educational institutions, firstly in other developed nations, and then finally embarking on an in-depth analysis of such HRM interventions of WLB initiatives, in the private higher educational institutions, within Malaysia alone, and the challenges and issues that must be addressed, currently and
in the future. The final section presents the chapter summary of the main issues discussed leading to the theoretical framework to guide the research.

**Figure 2.2: Structure of Chapter Two**

Source: Developed for this research
2.2 CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance (WLB) is a concept used in the workplace for employers to acknowledge and reconcile the conflicting demands of their employees, to meet both personal demands and work responsibilities, and to maintain a healthy balance between these two, such that employees are equally satisfied with both work and non-work roles, and harmony is created in a holistic manner within the individual’s life (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003; Clutterbuck, 2003; Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004; Kawaguchi, 2007).

The long work hour culture, new time use patterns in the 24/7 economy, with fluid boundaries between work and non-work time, are making it increasingly difficult for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and life (Fanning, 2003; Perrons, et. al., 2006). Current literature identifies several WLB theories, which analyse and present concepts of the changing composition of work and family life (Naithani, 2010). The ‘interdependance of work’ (Kanter, 1977), the ‘spill over theory’ (Staines, 1980), and the “work-family conflict theory” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) highlight the competing demands on the individual from family and work commitments.

Byrne (2005) presented eight components in the ‘balanced wheel life’ which are work, finances, spiritual, hobbies, self, social relationships, family and health. Every individual aims to achieve a balance amongst these components, even if not given equal weight of importance. The diverse meanings of WLB implying ‘work’, ‘life’ and ‘balance’ thus presents ambiguity in its conceptualization (Deery, 2008). There is also ambiguity on where the locus of intervention should lie, be it with the individual, the family, the employer or the community at large (Shanker & Bhatnagar, 2010).

The emphasis of much WLB research has been on the demands of work rather than those of non work. Research is therefore limited in its understanding of life apart from work (Guest, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2003). Nevertheless it was reported from the findings of the annual CIPD (Ashton Centre of Human Resources, 2008) surveys, conducted
within the UK, that greater imbalance was reported from those holding managerial jobs, working long hours, those with dependent children, and more from women as compared to men. Despite these factors, a family friendly workplace culture, where employees enjoy autonomy and involvement is reported to reduce perception of imbalance (Denison, 1996; Guest, 2002).

2.2.1 The Pace of Modern Life

Demographic trends in developed nations see a wider percentage of aging family members who need care, from a proportionally smaller younger generation. Statistics reveal that almost 40% of employees in the USA, are likely to take some time off, to care for elderly relatives. The phenomena of the ‘sandwich generation’ where both men and women, are obliged to take on care giving roles to both elderly dependents and children, places daily pressures to balance competing demands from a multiplicity of roles (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011). Apart from the loss of productive hours, there is a toll on employee’s health and stress levels, with having to juggle the demands of work and home, with its consequent negative impact, both at home and at work (Hall & Richter, 1988; Hewlett, 2002; Snell & Bolander, 2010).

With the greater proportion of women and single parents in the workforce being a norm rather than an exception, finding appropriate childcare is a national concern across the globe both in developed and developing nations (Hakim, 2003). In 1981, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No.156) to address concerns of work-life conflict, as part of the national and social agenda. However the extent to which such issues are integrated into national policies is limited (Hein & Cassirer, 2010).

A study on women with high powered careers in the legal profession, revealed their difficulty, in reconciling career needs with that of family and life quality, which in turn, may explain the under representation of women at upper managerial levels, although holding equivalent competencies and qualifications, as their male counterparts (Mastri, 2007; Kawaguchi, 2007). Although work life balance has been seen in the past as mainly a concern for working mothers, its presence is now
pervasive among all other categories of the workforce as well (Clutterbuck, 2003; Bird, 2006).

The presence of mobile telecommunications support, and its expectation for faster response, irrespective of time of the day and place, has the potential to exacerbate rather than accommodate the work-life balance of employees. Long working hours, commonly associated with workplace stress, require coping mechanisms, which in turn, are dependent on the level of autonomy, to make the necessary adjustments and to juggle time constraints and prioritise commitments, thus bringing such issues within the ambits of employee work-life balance (Klun, 2008; Shortland, 2005).

Greater labour mobility arising from the search for better job prospects means the loss of extended family support from grandparents and non-working family members. Dual career couples and single parents will need the services of domestic helpers, professional child-minders and paid childcare services, which can prove financially challenging for low and middle-income parents. These individuals may opt to work at different times, or request for reduced working hours (with reduced income as well). Some may even concede for low quality care, or no care, that may affect the physical and psychological well being of both children and parents. There are wider socio-economic implications, arising from such factors, as national development is dependent on the well being of a gainfully employed society (Lewis, Rapoport & Gambles, 2003).

In most industrialized nations, work-life policies have greater visibility in the political agenda, in response to socio-economic changes, like the increasing role of women at the workplace, and the needs of the emerging generation Y, for work life balance. Research has indicated that more than 80% of workers give first priority to their ability to balance work-life interface and 45 percent of college students in the US, state that the most important criteria in choice of their first job, is the possibility to balance their work and personal demands (Du Brin, 2007: 289).

Within the developing nations in Asia, work-life balance issues of employees are mainly regarded as a personal matter that employees have to address, within their
individual capacity. There is the apprehension that allowing such issues into the management agenda, within the workplace, may result in ramifications that are difficult to address. This reason may well explain, the limited progress towards better work-life balance, for employees within the Asian region. Men having family centred caring roles may find themselves in the same difficult position as their female counterparts (Eikhof, Warhurst & Haunschild, 2007; Kalliath & Brough, 2008; Stone 2009). A general consensus among human resources practitioners is the view that companies reward employees, who put in work, beyond their contractual ‘nine to five’, working hours. Organizations may also view work and personal life as having competing priorities that cannot be accommodated, since it arrives as a zero sum game of win-lose situations (Friedman, et.al., 1996, Altback & Umakoshi, 2008). Hostile attitudes against family friendly policies may also stem from employees, without family responsibilities, who perceive limited access to existing work-life balance privileges (Stone, 2009).

2.2.2 Implications of work life balance within the organization context

The diversity on the range of models to conceptualise work life balance relationships will invariability dictate that a particular choice need be taken, and most research to explore such issues within the workplace, mainly focus on the spillover or conflict models (Staines, 1980; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In this context, work life conflict is presented, as the inability of an employee to balance work and life demands, thereby resulting in outcomes like reduced job satisfaction, lower organization commitment and higher turnover intentions (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011).

Bird (2006) emphasized the two dimensional approach in work life balance which are the systems approach, emphasizing the WLB role of the organization and the individual approach, emphasizing how each employee should attempt to balance their lives and also avail themselves of existing WLB provisions. Such provisions can be classified under the features of time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance. Time balance refers to the time allocated to work and non work respectively. Involvement balance pertains to the degree of involvement in either spheres and satisfaction balance pertains to the level of satisfaction experienced by each individual (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003).
Employers should therefore seek new approaches in WLB programs to enable all employees, (not just those with caring roles) to allow work life boundaries that are more permeable, to positively fit their diverse circumstances (Fagan, Hegdewish & Ollinger, 2006; Perrons, et al 2006). Family friendly policies like childcare provision, employee assistance, flexible work schedules, home working arrangements, job sharing & part time work, etc, would go a long way, in helping employees juggle their dual commitments, more effectively (Drew, Murphy & Humphreys, 2002; Fanning, 2003; Fagan, Hegdewish & Ollinger, 2006; Perrons et.al., 2006).

Several theoretical positions have been suggested on the rationale for providing WLB provisions (Osterman, 1995; Byrne, 2005). In summarising the overall contributions from each of these theories, it appears that an organization’s adoption of WLB initiatives is contingent upon the normative pressures of the society in which it operates, the situational factors it faces, the way it chooses to adapt and the level of commitment it intends to elicit from its workforce (Deery, 2008). This view is depicted within the model presented below

Figure 2.3: Proposed model for work-family issues impacting WLB initiatives

Source: Adapted from Mulvaney et al. (2006) cited in Deery (2008)
2.2.3 Types of work life balance options

WLB initiatives can come in the form of time based strategies, for more control over time schedules, information based strategies, on how to effectively utilise existing provisions, money based strategies like vouchers or childcare subsidy, direct services like lactation rooms and on-site childcare, or work life balance friendly cultural practices, which are underpinned by supportive systems and management styles (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). In a broad sense, this incorporates formal provisions like flexible work options that give scheduling flexibility, on-site childcare and childcare referral systems to assist parental roles, elder care arrangements, and all other forms of employee assistance programs that offer financial and emotional support (Perrons, et al., 2006; Naithani, 2010; Porter & Ayman, 2010). Informal provisions are also seen to be equally important like supportive leadership and organization culture (Anderson, Coffrey & Byerly, 2002; Lappiere & Allen, 2006). The type of formal WLB options, are presented under the following classifications below.

2.2.3.1 Flexible work contracts

These can be summarised under the following categories:-

- Temporary workers provided by employment agencies for a predetermined time frame. Despite the fast access to labour resource and costs savings, the drawback is the lack of long term commitment from such workers.
- Part time employees who work fewer hours than full time staff.
- Job sharing, that allows the splitting of one full time job, into two part time ones. It enables retention of competent staff with WLB issues who can thus structure their working day, around their non work commitments.
- Contract workers who may be professionals with specialised skills, who see it as a more feasible option to having a full time professional job position (Visser & Willliams, 2006)
2.2.3.2 Flexible Work Options within full time employment

Such options are available to full time employees, to organize their work routines, to meet WLB needs, without compromising their work quality. Arrangements that allow workers to control timing and work schedule choices have the potential to greatly reduce work life conflict (Russel, O’Connell & McGinnity, 2007; Porter & Ayman, 2010; Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011). These are discussed under the following categories.

- The annual hour option, where working time is defined by the number of hours worked over a year. It also benefits employers, in that they can move work from off peak seasons to peak seasons, thereby reducing the number of claims for overtime premiums.

- Compressed hours option where total agreed hours for work, are set for a shorter work week, like four days in a week or nine days in a fortnight. Staff concerned, can work longer hours on certain days, to compensate for other days of shorter working hours, or off days. Again this flexibility may be of advantage to both employer and employee, reducing commuting frequency for employees and offering extended hours of customer service facilities for employers (Russel, O’Connell & McGinnity, 2007; Visser & Williams, 2006). It was identified as having a more significant impact on WLB satisfaction as compared to flexi hours (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011).

- Flexitime option, where an employee has some measure of choice, on varying working time and hours, depending on their particular needs. However core time cannot be compromised, nor can total agreed hours be reduced. It allows extended work hours, to serve customers, who may only find the time after work, and give employees the flexibility to juggle work and family time, to meet their multiple demands at home and work (Sang, Ison & Dainty, 2009).

- Homeworking or teleworking option involves working from a remote workstation, away from the workplace, and using internet communication technology to connect to the workplace. Recruitment advantages accrue to
employers, for access to skilled and talented staff, who might otherwise be unavailable, like young mothers with childcare demands and those with some physical handicap, or commuting problems. Several matters have to be worked out, like the provision of office equipment at the home, where the workstation is located, communication access, training, performance monitoring and health and safety assessments (Cullen et. al., 2003)

- Job-sharing option where two or more persons jointly share task functions to cover the demands within a full time job. It enables employees to remain within a job position and yet enjoy part time privileges. For employers, it aids the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce. However the challenge here is to find the right job share partners, so that work quality within the job, as a whole, is not compromised (Booth, 2010).

- Part-time working options where the job contract stipulates working hours that are less than that within a normal full time job. Many employees in the UK choose this option, to combine work and family responsibilities (UCEA, 2003).

- Staggered work hours option that allow different employees to have different start and finish times, to facilitate shift working methods and to allow services beyond fixed hours for employers, and arrangement of personal schedules, for banking, paying bills, etc during office hours, for employees. (JNCHES, 2003)

- Term-time/part-year working options, which are available within educational institutions in the United Kingdom, to allow academic workforce to take unpaid leave of absence during school term breaks. It offers the advantage of recruiting and retaining staff, with school going children, and opportunity to save on staff costs, when staff choose to take unpaid leave during term breaks (UCEA, 2003).
• Career breaks scheme options that allow employees to take time off to deal with personal commitments, to avoid the possibility of having to resign instead. Policy guidelines must stipulate the duration of the break, and whether the same position or a comparable one is offered after the break, with implications on pay and working conditions (JNCHES, 2003).

### 2.2.3.3. Childcare & Dependant Relative Care Benefits.

Young children should be placed in an environment where their physical, safety and psychological needs are met at all times. The common practice among many parents, of allowing their adolescent and teenage children to become “latchkey kids” after school hours, without the proper level of adult supervision, increases the likelihood of them being exposed to negative influences (Omar & Ahmad, 2009; Hein & Cassirer, 2010). In response to such situations, employer initiated childcare /day care arrangements, include facilities for the care of babies, toddlers and preschoolers or after school care for school going children, inclusive of school holidays, or even emergency care, in the event of unavailability of the appointed care person (Kossek, Colquitt & Noe, 2001; UCEA, 2003). The choice of arrangement made depends on the type of care required without undue restrictions on arrangements. Even the allocation of a room at the workplace, where children are occupied, in a constructive manner, while waiting for parents to log off from work, can be a cheap and effective solution (UCEA, 2003).

#### 2.2.4 Benefits of providing Work Life Balance options

Proactive organisations have introduced WLB initiatives, for the many benefits it yields, like better employee recruitment & retention, improved organisation citizenship behaviour, reduced stress levels and job satisfaction (Wang & Verma, 2009). The rationale lies in the assumption that if a competent workforce is recruited and retained, there should be a consequential effect on business profitability (Mabey, Salaman & Storey, 1998; Kreitner & Kiniki, 2007). The presence of work-life conflicts may have negative consequences, not just at work but at the home as well.
Where legislative provisions to address WLB are minimal, the role of the firm, in introducing family friendly initiatives, becomes significant (Russel, O’Connell & McGinnity, 2007).

2.2.4.1 Benefits of flexible work options

Flexible working arrangements is one way to address better WLB (De Cieri et al., 2002; Russel, O’Connell & McGinnity, 2007). A range of flexible work options and WLB initiatives, available to all employees at Nationwide, a building society within the United Kingdom, have yielded positive outcomes in high staff retention and increase in female workforce. A survey conducted among employees, confirmed the increase in the level of satisfaction of employees, after the introduction of these initiatives. The level of commitment demonstrated by the firm, won many accolades and awards, to earn the firm a corporate image as an “employer of choice” (Pollit, 2003).

Porter & Ayman, (2010) noted a positive relationship between flexible work options, employee productivity and reduction of work-life conflict. Some organizational outcomes associated with work-life balance are organizational citizenship behaviours, with strong affective and normative commitment towards the company (Grzywaez & Carlson, 2007; Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan, 2008). The Social Exchange Theory holds the view that WLB programs that are seen to invest meaningfully into the lives of employees, facilitates their reciprocation with organization citizenship behaviour, thereby improving the quality of the employment relationship (Lambert, 2000).

2.2.4.2 Benefits of family and childcare provisions

Omar & Ahmad, (2009) cited child care provisions and options to work from home, when needed, as resulting in greater employee commitment. The 2007 Women’s Summit, hosted by the Ministry of Women, Family & Community in Malaysia, also reflected the same view, in recommending WLB initiatives. In less developed nations, where education is not compulsory at schools, young girls may be deprived of an education, to stay home to mind their younger siblings. Stories of abuse of young
children from child-minders, or children coming to harm, when left without care, by their working parents, are common throughout the world. Availability of quality childcare for preschoolers, will not only reduce the occurrence of such incidences, but will assist in the physical and mental development of such children (Kossek & Nichol, 1992).

Facilitating the dual income family, will lead to reduced welfare expenditure, higher tax revenues, and the growth and development of human capital as well as public investment, for the well being of society. The consequent increased demand for childcare services itself, opens new market opportunities, in childcare services. Statistical studies show that, for every hundred additional jobs open to women, ten new jobs are created in the childcare services market segment. Dual incomes for the family means, more funds available, for food and other essential items, and better opportunities, to invest in the future well being, of the children and break the vicious circle of inter-generational poverty. It is thus in the interest of governments to develop the right infrastructure to promote effective childcare, to increase the disposable income of the population (Hein & Cassirer, 2010)

2.2.5 Implementing Work Life Balance Initiatives

The overall effectiveness on any WLB program implemented will be determined by the employee awareness level concerning the program content and the degree to which such programs were actually utilized by these employees. Therefore both program awareness and program consumption must be there. The 2008 Employment Value Proposition Survey undertaken by the Corporate Leadership Council identified six categories that contribute to the overall effectiveness of WLB programs. (Westerfield, 2011). These categories are listed as follows:-

a) Accessibility
b) Alignment
c) Communication
d) Promotion
e) Ease of implementation
f) Visibility of utilization.
Despite the presence of formalized WLB provisions, the terms and conditions associated with its availability, must allow **reasonable access**. To ensure its overall utility, the design factors must ensure **alignment** with the work environment, organization design and the level of workforce diversity, in order to ensure that the needs of the different stakeholders are addressed. Timely and accurate **communication** of the right type and volume of information, should be undertaken to deliver sufficient awareness of the said WLB programs.

Such programs must be **promoted** by the top management and at every level of line management, for employees to perceive supervisor support for utilization of such programs. To most employees, control over their WLB options, is critical to their willingness to commit to using these options. They must have the confidence that such programs will offer better support to their work-life circumstances with adequate **ease of implementation**. The level of employee participation within such programs is dependent upon the level of convenience associated with its utilization. To further encourage utilization, **visibility of utilization** by existing peers is seen to be important, as most individuals are more likely to follow consumption patterns of their peers (Parchman & Miller, 2003).

In the UK, and several other Western nations, legislative provisions support employees’ request for flexible work options. Employers are compelled to consider such requests, and should such requests be denied, valid reasons must be given by employers (JNCHES, 2003). However, within many other nations, inclusive of Malaysia, WLB provisions, viewed as desirable, may not be within the purview of legislation, and any such provisions, if available, come under the category of employee welfare instead (Aminuddin, 2005). Effectiveness of WLB implementation therefore require both formal and informal processes, that provide the necessary level of pertinent information to help employees make informed decisions that address their specific needs (Kossek, *et.al.*, 2011).
2.2.5.1 Implementing formal provisions

In Nationwide, UK, a new process was introduced as a “flexible-working toolkit” produced, to guide line managers and employees, to arrive at effective formal arrangements on flexible-working, that suits their individual needs. Special home-worker user groups were formed, to oversee the home-working process. Such processes lead to an increased uptake of home-working options. Female workers, who comprised almost three-quarters of the workforce numbers, had a 32 percent uptake on the flexible work options. The involvement of the trade union was also invited, within the exercise (Pollit, 2003). The top management spearheaded such initiatives, through downward dissemination of information, on pertinent work-life balance and parenting issues, through articles, in-house magazines and the intranet. Upward feedback was received through employee suggestion schemes, intranet sites and its in-house magazine, *Nationwide Live* (Martins, *et al.*, 2002; Pollit, 2003).

Such initiatives encourage employees to avail themselves of WLB policies without mixed reservations, or fearing negative consequences (Julien, Somerville & Kulp, 2011). Formal policies developed, to guide flexible work options, must ensure equity to all staff, without any group being treated less favourably than others. It should be simple enough to allow for administrative efficiency and absence of ambiguity (De Cieri *et al.*, 2002; Russel, O’Connell & McGinnity, 2007). Measures can be taken to assess the extent of employee demands for such options, availability of the relevant resources and the tactics that employees themselves should adopt to effectively address their work and non work demands (Sturges, 2008). Outcomes from WLB initiatives like reduced turnover, absenteeism and improved productivity may provide the business case to introduce more WLB initiatives (Drew, Murphy & Humphreys, 2002).

2.2.5.2 Implementing informal provisions

Not to be overlooked is to recognize the informal dynamics within WLB initiatives manifested in the form of supervisor support and supportive family responsive cultural practices (Thomson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999). Supervisors who recognize
the permeable boundaries between work and non-work, and offer emotional support and tangible assistance, are better able to help employees navigate both family and work demands, in a way that enhances personal well being (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011). Organization support within a family responsive culture, builds employee perception that their work-family concerns are being addressed, within the workplace, through the provision of direct and indirect work family resources (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Allen, 2001; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Employees are less likely to fear negative perceptions, regarding their non-work obligations, within supportive work environment that facilitates work quality, advice, recognition and understanding towards obligations (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011; Kossek, et al., 2011). The workplace culture thereby holds equal importance as the provision of a bundle of formal WLB provisions.

2.2.6 Problems associated with provision of Work Life Balance Initiatives

Many employers would be keen to assess, the observable and measurable outcomes, from WLB programs, to evaluate the business case, justifying such initiatives (Eikhof, Warhurst & Haunschild, 2007; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Despite the lip service given to WLB initiatives by many employers at the workplace, most solutions offered show lack of consistency and equity in implementation, with unclear communication from management, on how employees can effectively utilise the WLB benefits available (De Cieri, et al., 2002).

2.2.6.1 Career advancement limitations

By availing themselves of WLB options, employees may find themselves transferred to job positions where existing skills and competencies cannot be fully exploited. Rigidity in organizational structures may also, inhibit opportunities for employees, particularly women, who need to balance work and family responsibilities (Maimunah & Roziah, 2006; Mastri, 2007). Women, who begin their careers on an equal footing with their male colleagues, may opt out of the quest, to reach the higher rungs of management hierarchy, because of
rigid work policies, that inhibit their family commitments. The move to requests for flexible work options may cause them to be viewed, as less committed or ambitious (Perrons et al., 2006; Mastri, 2007; Naithani, 2010). Within an unsupportive culture, employees may perceive a request for WLB options, as a stumbling block to career advancement. Promotion prospects and access to well deserved rewards may be also be restricted (Kodz et al., 2002). Gender bias may be propagated within WLB options where flexible arrangements are perceived to benefit mainly women (Saunderson, 2002).

2.2.6.2 Disadvantages of Flexible Work Options

Not all flexible working options are useful in supporting WLB. Temporal jobs, though allowing numerical flexibility arrangements, may mean financial uncertainty for the employee (Rose, et.al, 2006). Some flexible work options require employees to work during odd hours, thus exacerbating rather than reducing work-life conflict (Hyman & Summers, 2007). Effects from different types of flexible practices may also vary. Temporal flexibility causes non-routine working patterns that have greater potential to intrude into family time. Home working may increase rather than reduce work life conflict, when employees are faced with the constant pressure to get work done and yet cannot ignore pressing chores to be done (Desrochers, Hilton & Larwood, 2005; Peters & van der Lippe, 2007). Part time arrangements that are done on an ad hoc basis to cope with demand fluctuations, may aggravate rather than reduce work-life conflict (Hyman & Summers, 2007).

The availability of flexible options, by itself, may not guarantee its efficacy in meeting the WLB needs of the staff. Operational flexibility, with autonomy on how staff worked, was more welcomed than temporal flexibility, which gave workers control over when they worked. Thus the importance of a friendly work climate and supportive supervision cannot be undermined. The workplace culture may therefore be a far more important influencing factor on work life balance satisfaction than a set of HR policy bundles (Clark et al., 2000; Guest, 2002; Anderson, Coffrey & Byerly, 2002; Lappiere & Allen, 2006).
Another major concern shared by employees, is that, with such flexible options being available for full time employees, decisions for developing childcare services at the workplace may be ignored or overlooked. Many women are also wary of the negative implications associated with such options, like the trade off with career advancement or re-entry opportunities, after a long leave of absence (Visser & Willams, 2006).

Despite the availability of relevant technology and facilities, for flexible workplace features, the mindset of many employers have not changed in their belief that work can only be adequately performed, under the watchful eye of the supervisor, at the workplace and that work quality is dependent on the quantum of time spent at work (Jones, 2003; Deery, 2008). An unsupportive informal workplace culture will influence the way WLB policies are implemented, where the physical presence of the employee, at the workplace is perceived as an indicator of high performance (Eikhof, Warhust & Haunschild, 2007).

### 2.2.6.3 Limitations of Childcare and Dependent Care Provisions

Most government initiatives for holiday and after school programs are directed mainly at those from lower income groups, aimed mainly at reducing the incidence of teenage delinquency problems. Parents from the higher income levels may not have access to such programs. Arrangements with community services, for school holiday camps, emergency childcare situations or even care for elderly dependent relatives would prove a boon to many employees, low income or otherwise (Hein C & Cassirer, 2010). Parents also have several concerns like unaffordable child care charges, or rigid operational hours where children must be collected by a certain time, irregardless of the work schedules of parents. Research findings indicate a preference among working parents for a child-minder or a nanny, as giving more convenience and flexibility than that of a childcare centre (Doherty & Manfredi; 2006; Felder, 2009).

The quality of care is an issue in most childcare centres, for good nutrition, cleanliness, safety and mental stimulation and development of the children (OECD, 2001). Trained and motivated specialist personnel may be scarce in supply or expensive. Rumours or reports of accidents, or mistreatment in any day care centre, will discourage parents from using their services (OECD, 2001). The Singapore
government encourages the use of child minders for children up to 18 months of age, for more personalized care, and less risk of being exposed to illness (Ministry of Community Development and Sports, Singapore, 2004).

2.2.6.4 The varying experience of WLB perception across different cultures

The impact of varying national cultures delivers limitations in generalising the findings on WLB effectiveness across national boundaries (Shanker & Bhatnagar, 2010). An individual’s belief system, ethnic or otherwise, influences perception of work life balance differently and the degree of family involvement or work involvement they espouse (Bryne, 2005; Poelmans, et al., 2008). Effort will be focused into the domain that has greater centrality. Thus where work holds a central place in the life of an individual, high work volume is less likely to cause perception of work life imbalance. The reverse also holds, where a not too heavy workload may cause perception of imbalance, to an individual who places greater centrality of focus on the non work spheres of his or her life (Shanker & Bhatnagar, 2010).

The WLB discourse therefore has two distinct threads, which is how individuals manage their perception of balance and the WLB initiatives provided by the workplace. This view is presented in the Figure 2.4 below. Thus to date there is no generalised set of conceptually based scales to measure perception of work life balance (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

**Figure 2.4: Competing Model for WLB and emotional consonance/dissonance**

![Competing Model for WLB and emotional consonance/dissonance](source)

*Source: Adapted from Shanker & Bhatnagar (2010)*
2.2.7 Work Life Balance Issues within Malaysia

Malaysia is a collectivist society, comprising three main races of Malay, Chinese and Indian, with a strong orientation to socially accepted norms and family values, such as respect for the elderly, and acceptance of ethnic and religious differences (Rowley & Abdul-Rahman, 2007; Selvarajah & Meyer, 2008; Hashim, 2010). It was a norm among the workforce, to expect their immediate superior to demonstrate some concern about their personal well being, and any work/family issues they face. Failure to demonstrate such concerns to an acceptable degree provides a case for employee discontent. (Mellahi & Wood, 2004; Nik Muhammad, et al., 2009).

Childcare had never been a traditional concern of the trade union or employers in the past. The common assumption was that parents should work out their childcare responsibilities on their own. Where government assistance and support was given, it was for welfare assistance to poor families (Omar & Ahmad, 2009; Hein & Cassirer, 2010). Unlike government institutions in countries, like Australia, Singapore, the UK and the EU, who provide directives and incentives to encourage greater WLB support from employers, such regulatory practices are limited, within Malaysia (UCEA, 2003; Aminuddin, 2005; SSM-UNICEF: Best Business Practice Circular 1/2010).

Existing provisions for childcare, in Malaysian workplaces, are centred more frequently around the public rather than the private sector. Where such provisions are available in the private sector, it is restricted mainly to the manufacturing and not the service sector. The time schedules offered for childcare services may also not fit the work schedules of the parents who have need for such services (Omar & Ahmad, 2009; Ibrahim, 2006).

Women’s groups were the first, to champion for changes in public and corporate policies, towards gender equity and flexibility (Maimunah & Roziah, 2006). Collaborative partnerships were formed in Malaysia, between corporations and women’s organizations, like the Malaysian National Council of Women’s Organizations. The 2007 Women’s Summit, under the Malaysian Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development, addressed the issue of family friendly
workplaces and work-life balance, for women, as part of corporate social responsibility and the national agenda, with the provision of tax incentives, to encourage more participation from profit oriented corporations.

Despite the growing publicity given by women’s advocacy groups and the mass media, highlighting the inadequacy of family friendly initiatives and childcare facilities, the uptake of WLB initiatives, especially in the private sector has been limited and sporadic (Ibrahim, 2006; Azizan & Ganeson, 2006; Loh, 2006; Omar & Ahmad, 2009). While a greater interest in workplace childcare is demonstrated, by stakeholders groups, a unified coherent body of knowledge about what needs to be done is lacking (Omar & Ahmad, 2009).

Within the Malaysian, context, best practice standards could be established, for policies that include more flexible work options, job sharing, part time working, career break schemes, home-working and childcare facilities at the workplace, both for single parents and dual career families (Azizan & Ganeson, 2006; Ministry of Community Development Youth, & Sports, Singapore, 2008; Tai, 2006). Despite the role of the mass media to create greater awareness of WLB issues, little recognition and public acknowledgement has been given to employer organizations, who do support work-life balance policies, and are able to demonstrate the business case for such policies to other organizations (Women’s Summit, 2007; Omar & Ahmad, 2009).

2.2.8 Work Life Balance Recommendations

In addressing the ramifications surrounding work life balance issues at the workplace, several factors need due consideration. A reconfiguration of the employment relationship that embraces job design, management expectations, organization structure and culture, needs to be in place, to encourage both parties to come to a mutual understanding on this matter (Visser & Williams, 2006). Corporations that support work-life balance and meet best practice standards, should receive the recognition as ‘employers of choice’ and given awards as incentives to promote and reinforce such practices (Pollit, 2003; Dunne & Teg, 2007).
Women’s preference for more family-friendly working practices in the child bearing and child rearing years, will mean that career peaks are only achieved late in life. Many qualified and talented women, with wide industrial and professional expertise may take career breaks for reasons of work-life conflict, just as they are becoming well established in their jobs. Greater accommodation of the fluctuating career requirements of such women could greatly assist not just in their recruitment and retention but also in their willingness to take on demanding managerial roles later in their careers (Eisenberger, et al., 2002; Doherty, 2004; Cabrera 2009).

Introducing new approaches in people management, that move away from archaic management styles and incorporate effective work life balance options, may be a critical factor to attract, develop and motivate talented employees, to leverage on their ability to meet change and innovation imperatives (Jackson, Hitt & DeNisi, 2004; Straker, 2009).

### 2.3 CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE HRM FUNCTION

The HRM function seeks the productive management and strategic integration, of the parties to the employment relationship, to enable both strategic business objectives and the personal needs of the workforce to be met. It therefore holds a position, to create sustainable competitive advantage and deliver greater performance and organization value, for the customers and shareholders alike (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2007; Stone, 2009). The HRM function influences the employment relationship, through the psychological contract, and the beliefs held about mutual obligations and entitlements from both parties. Most Strategic HRM practices operate within the context of organisation culture that can significantly influence the psychological contract (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001).

HRM interventions concern organization development techniques, aimed at how to attract, reward and develop competent people within the organization. Such
interventions are driven by the belief that better integration of the needs of the employees with that of the organization practices will facilitate greater organization effectiveness (Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2007). They also incorporate performance management initiatives as well as those associated with assisting and developing employees. As such work life balance becomes an important issue within the ambits of HRM interventions, holding an equal degree of significance as other forms of HRM interventions, like training & development, performance management and rewards (Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2007).

2.3.1 The HRM-Firm Performance Relationship

The HRM–firm performance relationship can be presented from two main perspectives, being the systems and strategic perspectives. The systems approach adopts a macro focus, by considering the overall configuration of HRM practices instead of individual HRM practices and its impact on firm performance. The strategic-based approach however uses three generic typologies, namely strategic fit, the contingency perspective and the resource based perspective to assess the role of the HRM function (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

2.3.1.1 Systems Based Approach

The competitive business environment of today requires rapid response to market demands, through entrepreneurship, innovation, and quality improvement to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Lewis, Goodman & Fandt, 2001; Becker, Huselid & Beatty, 2009). The increasing practice of using the virtual workspace, with people, working within geographically dispersed teams, and the flexible working practices it inevitably requires, because of differences in time zones, will provide some of the key competitive differentiators for successful businesses performance. Such trends, new technologies, and markets, require continuous innovation, learning & development, in attracting and retaining talented and motivated people (Cheese, 2010). HR related decisions are therefore critical, to deliver greater effectiveness in meeting business goals (Bartlett & Goshal, 2002; Snell & Bolander, 2010).
Empirical studies on High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) propose the need for such systems to be configured, to exploit the synergies from a strategically aligned bundle of HR practices, to improve competency, commitment and involvement of the workforce (Armstrong & Brown, 2001; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). This implies the relationship between business growth within a HRM context and framework, where employee potential is nurtured and developed (Stone, 2009; Snell & Bolander, 2010). In a nutshell, the HR policies and practices must facilitate the building of high performance work systems, through addressing employee concerns in conjunction with business imperatives (Batra, 2009).

2.3.1.2 Strategic Based Approach

The ‘strategic fit’ approach proposes the need for horizontal alignment of HRM practices, to complement each other, and at the same time, to support the organization’s competitive strategy (Miles & Snow, 1994). Such HR practices aspire to elicit the right employee behaviour and develop the right bundle of skills that are instrumental in the strategic implementation process. The contingency perspective includes other contextual variables like industry factors, firm size, or product offerings, in shaping the HRM policies and practices, to gain competitive advantage (MacDuffie, 1995). The resource based perspective focuses on the discretionary behaviour of the firm’s employees to provide a unique source of sustainable, competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate (Boxall, 1996; Becker & Gerhart, 1996). This approach is proposed by Ulrich, (1997) who defines four roles for HRM function as follows:-

- a strategic partner, aligning HR operations to business strategy
- a change agent, to facilitate business driven transformation
- an employee champion, who seeks to align the interest of the workforce with that of the organization for a better psychological contract
- an administrative expert, with systems in place to support processes and operations in staffing, training, etc.
By using Ulrich’s relatively simple model, organisations get a clear picture of the roles that are performed or perceived as performed by the HR function (Lehtonen, 2005).

**Table 2.1 Ulrich’s Framework of the roles of Human Resources Management.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future/strategic focus</th>
<th>Business and Organisational Process Focus</th>
<th>People Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day-to-day/operational focus</td>
<td>Strategic partner</td>
<td>Change agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative expert</td>
<td>Employee champion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Lehtonen T.J. (2005)*

Line managers are expected to play important roles within the human resource function, and within the competence based framework (Lehtonen, 2005). The automation and outsourcing of routine HR activities, and the greater involvement of line managers in implementing HR practices, allows the HR function to reinvent itself, to a greater strategic and policy initiating focus, in tailoring HR strategies to organisational goals, using the best fit rather than the best practice approach (Lemmergard, 2009).

### 2.3.2. Contemporary Challenges for the HRM function

New technology and global capital, are no longer constraining factors, and have lost their strategic resources position, held in the past, to talented people with knowledge creation competencies. Unlike capital that diminishes when shared out, knowledge increases, thereby achieving value creation and not value appropriation, as seen within the zero-sum concept (Bartlett & Goshal, 2002). The HRM function today are expected to proactively address existing and new threats, and to exploit the opportunities arising from accelerating technological, political, social, economic and competitive challenges (Gomez-Mejia, *et al.*, 2007). The HRM function must rise up to developing effective leadership styles, communication systems, and reengineering of the work processes, to create the changes needed to address the challenges it faces (Snell & Bolander, 2010). This involves adopting the initiatives that are discussed below.
2.3.2.1 Developing Strategic Intent

Articulated core values and vision statements can be a means, to move employees away from a conscript mindset, to one of a business partner who delivers employee growth, to gain competitive advantage (Bartlett & Goshal, 2002; Stone, 2009). IBM China/Hong Kong seeks to recruit people with a mindset aligned to its core values, to build a corporate culture of high performance, committed to achieving a distinctive competitive advantage (Stone, 2009).

2.3.2.2 Talent Management practices

Effective HR talent management strategies focus on the profit and value chains, derived from its best customers. The HR function therefore manages the workforce like a business portfolio, with disproportionate investments in the jobs that create the most wealth (Deery, 2008; Becker, Huselid & Beatty, 2009; Cheese, 2010). By having a differentiated workforce, a bigger proportion of investment is spent on employees who have the strategic capabilities, specific employee competencies and behaviour needed to deliver such strategic capabilities. This approach pre-empts critical resources of time and money from being diverted to low performers, in non-strategic roles, at the expense of high performers in strategic roles (Cheese, 2010). A classification such of jobs is presented below in Table 2.2 (Becker, Huselid & Beatty, 2009 : 52) where “A” jobs positions have the most impact on one or more of the firm’s strategic capabilities as compared to “B” and “C” jobs. These positions, can exist at almost any level within the organization and but many a time, senior positions have been identified as strategic, at the expense of entry-level, customer-interfacing positions.

The process of improving the performance of employees in the firm’s most critical roles can begin by ensuring that “A” job positions are held by “A” players (those having the strategic competencies for the job). Likewise, the same applies to “B” and “C” jobs. Some comments from top management illustrate this point.
“Merely identifying strategic positions is not enough. You must assure a disproportionate representation of top talent in these strategic positions through recruitment, selection, development and rewards, as well as let them know how much we value them so we can retain them.”—Ray Carson, senior HR vice president, Wyeth Healthcare (Becker, Huselid & Beatty 2009: 55)

**Table 2.2 : Job Classification for the Differentiated Workforce**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining Characteristic</th>
<th>“A” position Strategic</th>
<th>“B” position Support</th>
<th>“C” position Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope of authority</td>
<td>Has direct strategic impact with high performance variability among jobholders</td>
<td>Has an indirect strategic impact through supporting strategic positions. And exhibits little performance variability among jobholders</td>
<td>May be required for the firm to function but has little strategic impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need for Autonomous decision Making.</td>
<td>Specific processes or procedures typically must be followed.</td>
<td>Little discretion in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary determinant of compensation</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Job level</td>
<td>Market price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on value creation</td>
<td>Creates value by substantially enhancing revenue or reducing costs</td>
<td>Supports value creating positions</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of mistakes</td>
<td>Very costly, Its absence may cause missed revenue opportunities are a Greater loss to the firm.</td>
<td>May be very costly and has the potential to destroy value</td>
<td>Not necessarily costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of hiring wrong person</td>
<td>Significant expense in lost training investment and revenue generating opportunities.</td>
<td>Fairly easily remedied through hiring of replacement</td>
<td>Easily remedied Through hiring of Replacement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Becker, Huselid & Beatty, (2009)

Adopting this viewpoint within talent management practices makes traditional job analysis approaches redundant. A different approach based on future value creation and strategic job worth is needed. The priority for efficiency and standardization
concerns, may however compel introducing bureaucratic HR processes, at the expense of delivering strategic value for competitiveness (Cheese 2010).

2.3.2.3. Confronting the Knowledge Economy

In the knowledge economy, intellectual capital is a critical resource to deliver value to the business (Lewis, Goodman & Fandt, 2001; Drucker, 2002). The demands expected from knowledge workers are high, with long working hours, time pressures, ability to network within projects and different teams to embrace change, risks, flexibility and adaptability. Their needs and expectations must be accommodated within the design of HR policies and practices, to utilize their skills, abilities and learning progress (Lange, 2007). The hallmarks of good HR practice are seen within the building of a culture of continuous learning, sharing of knowledge, collaboration, teamwork and productivity improvements (Purcell, et al., 2003; Khandekar & Sharma, 2006; Stone 2009). Such practices are summarized as follows:-

- Retention and succession strategies, to manage and develop talent, to reduce turnover of talented staff, and to ensure sustainable succession (Stone, 2009).

- Meeting the complex and rapidly changing demands in training and development, by exploiting new opportunities in e-learning methods, like computer based training, audiovisual equipment, multimedia training and web-based training (Reddington, Williamson & Withers, 2005).

- Management development that build creative and analytical information management and decision making skills (Bartlett & Goshal, 2002).

- Meeting the different set of work aspirations and motivations of the technologically competent and globally connected Generation Y, who will comprise the future workforce. They are highly marketable, geographically and functionally mobile, and expect to work in a supportive environment that nurtures trust, self-direction, autonomy and teamwork. They leverage on their intellectual capital and hold the collective power to refute top down directives
imposed on them, should they view such directives in a different light from that of the decision makers (Drucker, 2002, De-Saa-Perez & Garcia Falcon, 2002; Ruben, 2003; Ascente, 2010).

Despite the assertion mentioned above, the presence of traditional autocratic practices that stifle worker autonomy, adaptability and innovation are still in existence (Kanter, 1977). One option managers can use is to have a ‘dual career ladder’ to provide professionals the opportunity to advance along a career path that gives similar status and rewards to that of those in management positions, without sacrificing their professional autonomy (Ascente, 2010).

2.3.2.4. Strategic alignment of HRM Objectives

HRM objectives also need to be aligned to business imperatives for cost containment through improved staff utilisation and productivity, without undermining the need for improved customer services and product quality. Important issues like external environmental changes, social responsibility and ethical practices cannot afford to be overlooked (De Cenzo & Robbins, 2007). An appropriate analytical HRM framework will prove useful in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths in the broader environment that allow more informed and purposeful HRM policies and practices to be introduced, implemented and evaluated on its outcomes. Such a tool could be the HR scorecard (Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, 2001). This topic is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.3.2.6.

2.3.2.5. Boundary spanning role of HRM

The growing popularity of collaborative arrangements, to access needed resources within the knowledge economy, across functional, geographic and cultural boundaries limits traditional HRM style practices, to support new business development. The HRM function that adopts boundary spanning activities, both within and external to the organization, will stimulate insights and learning that help identify new opportunities and threats (Hassan & Yaqub, 2010). With the spread of intelligent
information and communication systems, more of the HR roles are likely to be performed by the line managers without the intervention of the HR executive. With the role as administrative expert being significantly reduced, HR can become central to business competitiveness (Lemmergard, 2009)

2.3.2.6. Using the HR Scorecard

The HR scorecard is a tool that can be used to allow managers to assess the strategic alignment of their work systems, through the internal and external linkages to fit high performance work systems together. When HR practices, work systems and management processes work in a synergistic and complementary manner, high performance work systems can become a reality. An assessment of the degree of internal fit between the different HR practices can determine their ability to mutually complement one another, to achieve HR goals like employee retention, teamwork and strategy focused performance and high talent staffing level. The external linkage allows these HR related components, working synergistically, to support organization strategies and competitive challenges. Without this approach, there is a strong possibility of a lack of fit that cancels out whatever benefits that would have accrued, from those particular HR components (Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, 2001; Kaplan, 2007).

2.3.2.7 Building Social Capital

HRM practices must be aligned with personal values that are high in distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus, for positive employee attitudes and responses to emerge, at individual, group and organizational level. Distinctiveness requires high visibility, clarity, legitimacy and relevance of the HRM system. Consistency of HRM systems facilitates instrumentality and validates the HRM message, thus avoiding cognitive dissonance. Consensus results when there is agreement among all the participants within the HRM process, on the fairness and acceptability of the HRM system. This becomes the social capital where individual members, groups and the organization as a whole work together with a strong sense of shared vision and mutual trust
2.3.3 Role of the HRM function to address work life balance issues

Unlike a decade ago, many employers are offering WLB options as employment incentives, to attract applications from the Generation Y workforce, to whom having life-balance in both work and non-work interests, forms part of their expectations, at the workplace. Extensive empirical literature propose that better deployment and use of the right calibre of human resources should correlate with higher business performance (Rowley, 1996; Rose, et al., 2006; Perkins & White, 2008; Zhou, et al., 2009).

Legislative interventions in Europe, UK and the US were also introduced to address social concerns of WLB and compliance is mandatory from employers. In the UK “family-friendly” legislation like the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Employment Relations Act 1999, the Employment Act 2002 and, the Work and Families Act 2006, direct work-life issues, like maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay, and flexible working (JNCHES, 2008). The role of the HRM function, within these nations and elsewhere, however needs to introduce HR policies and practices that go beyond compliance to legislative requirements, to meeting ethical and social concerns pertaining to their workforce. Business pressures must be reconciled with moral conscience, within the design and implementation of HR policies and practices that go beyond a caring role, which will in turn lead to reaping economic benefits that come from having a healthy and productive workforce, who enjoy a sense of organisational wellbeing and personal work life balance (Gomez-Meija, Balkin & Cardin, 2007).

Current HRM trends to recognize the expectations of millennial workers who value work life flexibility and options, also reveal the limited research, in the form of workplace support linkages, either from supervisors or organizational sources to address WLB issues (Kossek & Distenberg, 2009). Thus any HRM interventions to introduce formal WLB provisions, must not overlook the importance of informal workplace support, from supervisor as well as the organization climate itself (Allen,
2001; Hammer et al., 2009). The importance of HR interventions in selecting, training and developing supervisors to provide positive workplace social support to address job related as well as WLB issues, cannot be undermined. With the growing numbers of the Generation X and Generation Y employees, who are expecting a well balanced life, increased attention to organization and supervisor support will serve to deliver greater HRM effectiveness, in meeting organizational challenges (Kossek, Lewis & Hammer, 2010).

### 2.3.3.1 Reconciliation of HRM initiatives with Work Life Balance (WLB) needs

Purcell et al, (2003:7), embarking on a CIPD study to “open the black box” presented a model that identified eleven important HR practices that feed into outcomes of “ability & skill”, “motivation & incentive”, and “opportunity to participate”. These mutually reinforcing practices are listed as training & development performance appraisal, job challenge/job autonomy, recruitment & selection, team working, involvement, communication, pay satisfaction, career opportunity, job security and work-life balance. This relationship is presented in Figure 2.5, below:

**Figure 2.5: Understanding the People Performance Link**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMO</th>
<th>Organisation Commitment</th>
<th>Discretionary Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability &amp; Skill</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Performance Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Incentives</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Participate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from: Purcell, et al., (2003)
Job design, employee participation, involvement and communication, equal opportunities, family friendly policies and anti-harassment practices are also associated with higher work and life satisfaction (Guest, 2002). Many elements within managerial jobs are discretionary, and how they exercise such behaviour will in turn, affect the way employees reciprocate to workplace demands (Purcell, et. al., 2003). The resulting enhancement of the psychological contract, and the improvement of the employment relationship, will yield greater job satisfaction, reduced employee turnover, absenteeism and increased employee commitment, which then translates into higher productivity and innovation. WLB policies can therefore become differentiators, within HRM interventions, to gain the position an employer of choice (Clutterbuck, 2003; Shortland, 2005). This view is further supported by the framework linking organization strategy, strategic HRM and Firm Performance, as presented in Figure 2.6 below:

Figure 2.6: Framework of Organizational Strategy, Strategic HRM, and Firm Performance

Source: Adapted from Bae and Lawler, (1999), cited in Rose & Kumar, (2009)

2.3.3.2 Allowing employee choices

Employees address WLB conflict issues by looking for flexible work options that yield the best return for them. Increasingly, work-life balance is viewed as an essential component of the employment package, and, as such, HR initiatives in WLB can act as a differentiator, in employees’ decisions on choice of employer (Dex & Smith, 2002). No single demographic segment must however have an unfair advantage over another, to avoid feelings of inequity over entitlement for such benefits. Such segments could include men, singles and childless persons. Instead
WLB policies must have the flexibility to match the need of the different life circumstances of the workforce, such that a certain level of benefit can be enjoyed by all, on an equitable basis (Shortland, 2005). HRM systems and practices, also cannot neglect the cultural context of the workforce, within a cross cultural situation, upon whom such systems apply in a uniform manner, irrespective of diversity in value systems (Aumann & Ostroff, 2006; Wheeler, Halbesleben & Buckley, 2008).

2.3.3.3 Use of human resource information systems

Flexible benefits are difficult to administer, and depend on timely, meaningful and accurate information, that allows employees to evaluate the worth of the benefits, in the light of their circumstances (Armstrong & Brown, 2001). Men and childless persons may appreciate flexible work options while those with children, may prefer job sharing, extended maternity leave or childcare facilities. The use of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), through computerized application software, will prove useful to resolve such difficulties. Its automation features, can release the HR specialists not only from the routine, time consuming paperwork involved, but also provides the decision support for HR specialist to make effective decisions, pertaining to any complex HR related issues, and costs/benefits analysis of flexible benefits options. These systems hold the level of sophistication today, of even being able to track the contribution of virtual teams operating from remote work stations and ensure accurate compensation & rewards computations (Gomez-Meija, Balkin & Cardy, 2007).

2.3.4 HRM Evaluation of the Effectiveness of WLB provisions

The ramifications from the introduction of WLB initiatives cannot be undermined, and must be carefully evaluated, before introducing it to the workforce (Shortland, 2005). From the financial perspective, a valid HRM concern could be the increase in staff and administrative costs. Suitable performance indices must therefore be in place, to collect data to track recruitment, turnover, absenteeism and employee
satisfaction and wellness to evaluate the value offered through WLB initiatives (Pollit, 2003; Rose & Kumar, 2006).

The challenge of the HRM function, in relation to WLB interventions, is to design and implement a benefits program that meets the above goals and at the same time, ensuring employees are provided clear information on the features and worth of the benefits options. (Perkins & White, 2009)

Benefits that enhance WLB can contribute to HR goals by being able to

- Recruit and retain the right calibre and numbers of staff.
- Adhere to legislative requirements for WLB.
- Maintain cost effectiveness in the face of escalating costs of other benefits.
- Demonstrate ethical and moral corporate philosophy.

Within the industrialized nations like the UK, US, Europe and Australia, there is documentation and codified information available, about workplace initiatives, both at industrial and corporate level (Dex, 2003; Hogarth, Hasluck & Pierre, 2000).

Dual career couples with work family conflict are more likely to exhibit tardiness and high absenteeism levels at work. A study conducted with over 212 faculty members at 23 universities in the US, indicated that where supervisors support academic staff, in balancing their work life demands and also promote organization justice, stress levels are very much reduced (DuBrin, 2007: 290).

2.3.5 Limitations within the HRM function

HR managers’ ability to contribute strategically is contingent on expertise in operational matters and their capacity to operate as HR generalists rather than HR specialists (Truss et al., 2002; Schuler & Jackson, 2005).

2.3.5.1 Limited business related roles

In practice, the HR executives mainly set the policies, while the line managers ensure its implementation. It is much easier for line managers to show financial progress than for the HR executive to demonstrate the value of an increase in employee satisfaction
On the other hand, research has linked poor performance with poor HRM practices (Bartlett & Goshal, 2002; Purcell et al., 2003). Findings within such research had revealed that most HR managers do not have a sound grasp of the business imperatives, performing mainly informational and administrative roles, with little quantifiable evidence to support their contribution to organization success. Moreover, within lean operations management practices, less business savvy HR specialists, are increasingly being sidelined by line management, with many components of HR activities being outsourced. Not many organizations include HR professionals as part of the top management team, and getting their contributions and involvement at every level, may be quite a struggle (Lemmergard, 2009).

Even where HR specialists do have a hand in the design of policies targeted at achieving high employee performance, the actual implementation at the hands of the line manager, who may have other conflicting priorities, could negate any intended positive outcomes from such policies. The existence of HR policies and practices that are inconsistent with business strategy, or are implemented on a piecemeal basis, are also evident (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Empirical research confirms a positive relationship with organization performance where ‘high performance’ HRM policies and practices are integrated with business strategies. However, findings relate more to individual and piecemeal HR management practices rather than an integrated, strategic approach to HR management (Becker, Huselid & Beatty, 2009).

### 2.3.5.2 Role Paradoxes

Ulrich’s model of the four HR roles does not consider factors like culture, size, complexity, and industry and thus, the effectiveness in the delivery of such roles, is difficult to measure and evaluate (Lemmergard, 2009). Critical evaluations of the four HR roles within Ulrich’s model, highlights paradoxes arising from the conflicting interests that may arise, between these roles. Firstly, the role of the strategic partner requires collaboration with top management, which may at times conflict with the role of employee champion (Truss et al., 2002). On the other hand, it may the line managers, in their operational capacity, who intervene to protect their staff against
uncaring HR policies (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Lemmergard 2009). It is also common for HR managers to be excluded from the strategic decision-making processes, and relegated to implementation issues, where the potential of conflict with line managers is ever present (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2007: Du Brin, 2007).

Though the four roles are meant to operate in tandem, it appears that HR specialists operate more as administrative experts through policy initiatives, while line managers act as change agents, through implementation of such policies. Ulrich (1997), states that the in-house HR function spends only 20% of its time performing its roles as strategic partner, employee champion and consultant. 80% of its time is taken up with administrative issues. With the increasing automation and outsourcing of the HR function, the role of administrative expert may be heavily reduced, and line managers need not refer to HR executives for specialized advice (Lemmergard, 2009).

In contrast, stronger collaboration between the HR executive and the line manager is seen in the role of change agent, to develop mutually agreeable HR policies and practices that have a better chance of implementation. Thus it lies on the part of HRM function to clarify the context for the performance of the four roles defined in Ulrich, (1997).

2.3.5.3 Unclear linkages with performance related constructs

Although multi-level relationships between HRM practices, employee responses and firm performance are implied, the nature of the linkages are unclear (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Despite the preponderance of academic literature linking HRM practices to improved firm performance, relationships between these two constructs show little consistency and significance. There is also a lack of a clear definition of the performance construct (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Rogers & Wright, 2003). The psychological climate at individual level and the organization climate at firm level are important mediating variables in the HRM–firm performance relationship (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo, 1990; Denison, 1996; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Thus the form of the HRM systems in place are critical in shaping organization climate perceptions, but little knowledge is available, on how HR systems can be streamlined
and implemented to match the unique context of the firm (Boxall, 1996; Bowen & Ostroff 2004).

Another issue limiting HRM influence in performance, is the ‘black box’ problem that was mentioned in Purcell et al., (2003:2), indicating a lack of clarity in the way HR policies were linked to performance. Evidence of rising absenteeism, labour turnover, and conflict, are easy to detect and to be linked to poor HRM practices. On the other hand, it is difficult to obtain causal evidence of specific HRM practices, associated with high organizational performance (Morley et al., 2006).

2.3.5.4. Ineffective communication on employee benefits

HR policies in the choice of voluntary employee benefits (VEB) can also fall short of its intended purposes, when poor VEB communication processes result in low employee uptake of such benefits, or there is a mismatch between what is offered and want is needed and valued by the different employee segments (Tropman, 2001). The reason for this could be the efficiency driven, ‘information push’ approach, commonly adopted by employers, using one-way channels like the company intranet, benefits handbooks, or print outs in pay slips. The low interactive level within such systems may cause feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity in employees, when they attempt to evaluate for themselves, the implications of taking up such offers. Steps for effective benefits communications, using a wider array of communications channels, involving both employee and line manager, may build the confidence in employees to take up the VEB offers from employers (Dessler, 2005; Pegg, 2009).

2.3.5.5 Integration with other organization systems

HRM interventions addressing WLB initiatives would deliver a value proposition to employer organisation and in the long run provide a competitive advantage in the recruitment, retention, development and engagement of a highly competent workforce. However such interventions will involve organisation change issues identified within the defined problem. Interventions aimed at addressing one kind of issue, will have repercussions, favourable or otherwise, on other pertinent issues.
Thus greater integration and coherence of WLB planning to other aspects of organisation life must be present, for overall benefit to all stakeholders concerned (Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2007).

2.4 THE PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (PHEI) WITHIN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian Government has linked economic development with educational advancement and Malaysia has now become a regional centre for higher education, not just to meet the needs of a local student population but also that of international students from many nations, far and wide (Morshidi, 2006; Nga & Tan, 2010). Nik Muhammad et al. (2009) highlighted the move of the government to allocate a significant portion of the nation’s financial resources to develop the educational infrastructure and exploit the evolution of a market sensitive but global educational system. Such a nation building initiative deserves a rewarding return for the nation, in terms of global competitive advantage, through research and innovation.

2.4.1. Challenges faced by PHEI in Malaysia

The private higher education industry in Malaysia is characterised by diversity in its size, structure and ownership attributes. Foreign universities like Monash University and the University of Nottingham, too, have started branch campuses within the country (National Higher Education Plan; Guidebook. PHEI Management Sector, MOHE, 2010). Competition for student enrolment brings a strong market orientation towards building institutional image and reputation, meeting the needs and expectations of the customer and emphasizing a services marketing approach for strong relationships with customers (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; Young, 2002; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Ariokasamy, et al., 2009).

The private ownership structure of such institutions, explains to a certain extent, the limited access to sufficient funding and resources, when compared against that of public universities and colleges (Young, 2002; Jantan, et al., 2006; Ariokasamy, et
Management are obliged to meet shareholder expectations, for profitability targets and as such, notions of knowledge creation and building intellectual capital can be easily undermined. This becomes a constraining factor, to pursue strategies that offer more technical and science-based programs. Nevertheless, the demand for education in the field of social sciences, which requires less capital expenditure investment, is an opportunity that such institutions are quick to exploit (Young, 2002; Jantan, et al., 2006; Ariokasamy, et al., 2009).

Regulatory amendments in the field of education allow private universities to award, their own degrees, be it undergraduate or postgraduate, provided the defined quality standards are adhered with. The same applies to foreign universities, through collaborative partnerships with local institutions, to award their own degree qualifications to students, enrolled in Malaysian institutions. (COPIA, 2008; NaHERI, 2004).

In the light of such developments, within the expanding supply of private higher education options, to a growing number of students, both local and international, the quality of academic and administrative workforce becomes a critical concern of the relevant regulatory bodies. The role of such bodies is to oversee initiatives within private educational institutions, to improve the quality of the academic workforce, and to ensure that the talents and potential in the student population is fully nurtured and developed. The well-being and career development of the academic workforce, becomes one of strategic concern, for their employer institutions (COPIA, 2008; NaHERI, 2004).

The National Accreditation Board, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA), were established to regulate all aspects of activities related tertiary education (Sohail, Jegatheesan & Nor Azlin, 2002; Jantan, et al., 2006). Quality control is maintained within these institutions, under the purview of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, which provides the accreditation to verify the quality of the educational programs offered within these institutions (Malaysia: Country Summary of Higher Education, 2009). Studies are conducted to examine academic career issues, career development, ability
to teach and conduct research and the well being of academic staff (Sohail, Rajadurai & Rahman, 2003; Maimunah and Roziah, 2006; COPIA, 2008). Malaysian universities, like that of their counterparts in other nations, place a high emphasis on both teaching and research, as both disciplines have an equally important role to play, in producing and transferring knowledge (Ismail & Murteza, 1996; COPIA, 2008). In this aspect, the quality of the leadership within these institutions and the nature of decisions they make, to create an environment of collaboration and embracing of diversity, innovation and self development, is needed to enhance both research and teaching quality (Kamogawa, 2003, Nik Muhammad, et al., 2009).

2.4.2 Challenges faced by Academic Workforce in PHEI within Malaysia

Expectations within the education industry, for the academic workforce, to hold the requisite educational qualifications and competencies, has significant implications for recruitment and retention strategies within the private higher educational institutions (Ariokasamy, et al, 2009). Academic work practices increasingly involve greater complexity and higher workload, without compromising on quality standards (Karia & Ahmad, 2000; Thomas & Davies, 2002; Leong & Sohail, 2003; Jantan, et al., 2006). The growing student numbers, academic work intensification, industrializing of the learning environment, and the consequent long working hours, are creating work life conflict issues, for employees, to meet work and personal demands adequately (Saunderson, 2002). Academics will face many obstacles, to manage both job demands and non work commitments (Baruch & Hall, 2004).

Work-life balance thus becomes an important concern of the strategic HRM function, in Malaysia, as elsewhere, not just within the role of employee champion, but also within the other three roles of strategic partner, change agent and administrative experts (Ulrich, 1997). Apart from the strategic intent within the leadership, there must be effective administrative processes in place to ensure that change interventions, when introduced, do meet its intended objectives (Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2007).
With increasing globalization and the borderless marketplace, international collaborative partnerships between educational institutions, in different parts of the world, including Malaysia have become a norm. This presents multidimensional career opportunities for academics, to enhance their career mobility. The wide range of career opportunities available to these academics, both in Malaysia and overseas has implications for the HRM function, for gaining competitive advantage in the recruitment and retention of such a workforce. (Snell & Bolander, 2010; Aminuddin, 2008). The boundary spanning role of the HR function mentioned in Section 2.3.2.5, becomes a significant issue in this context.

At the core of staff motivation is the psychological contract between the PHEI, as an employer and each of its staff members, thus suggesting the importance of job design in attracting and motivating academics (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Guest & Conway, 2002; Guest & Clinton, 2007). Pay appeared to be significant only at entry level, and did not feature highly in retention issues. Financial incentives linked to performance, also have little motivational impact in the higher educational sector (Archer, 2005). The issue of intrinsic factors within academic jobs and the manner in which it relates to the job and individual satisfaction of the academic staff are critical issues for both the HR function, working in tandem with the line management, to consider.

2.4.3 The Role of the HRM Function in PHEI within Malaysia

From the Asian context, the strategic role of the HR function within PHEI is further undermined than that of its Western counterparts. Most family owned Chinese companies, adopt employment practices that are influenced by the background and management style of the owners, rather than by recommended HR best practice. The history and ownership profile of many of the PHEI in Malaysia reflect a scenario of a business that operates as part of a conglomerate, involved in many industry sectors, unrelated to the field of academia. Such ownership features reflect traditional personnel practices focused on work simplification and methodology, for higher work productivity, even at the expense of meeting esteem and self actualization needs of the workforce (Stone, 2009). Only a few private business organizations in Malaysia, are
proactively adopting a comprehensive set of HRM practices for their business with culturally aligned HRM systems and practices (Sendut, 1991; Mellahi & Wood 2004; Chew, 2005; Zain, Ishak & Ghani, 2009).

Nevertheless the progressive development of Malaysian society has spurred a paradigm shift in the way employers view their workforce, as being the assets whose value is to be enhanced (Chew, 2005; Rowley & Abdul Rahman, 2008; Abdullah, Ahsan & Alam, 2009). Leadership development, performance management and managing poor performance were identified as the least effectively managed areas of HRM practice (Abdullah, Ahsan & Alam, 2009; Felder, 2009). The National Higher Education Plan states that the right HR strategies must be in place for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified academic staff, with capacities for curriculum design, teaching, research and educational management (Malaysia: Country Summary of Higher Education, 2009; Nga 2010).

A comprehensive evaluation of the HR function in PHEI within Malaysia should firstly begin with how the HRM role is carried out in the HEI within the developed nations, whose model of the ideal academic life is emulated among many other nations, inclusive of Malaysia.

2.4.3.1 HRM Function in universities within developed nations

Within the developed nations, the universities and colleges are mainly public sector entities. Nevertheless the academicians in these institutions share many WLB issues similar to that of their counterparts in the Malaysian PHEI. New pressures are being faced by academics because of downsizing and government funding cuts. Within Australian universities, on-line international teaching and research that draws additional funding are further expectations placed on academics (Brown, 2007; Briggs, 2009; Dickson-Swift, et al., 2009). In the USA, full-time academics work in excess of fifty work hours per week (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; O’Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). In New Zealand (NZ) academics were expected to put in at least ten
hours of overtime outside normal full-time hours (Houston, et al., 2006; Bell, et al., 2012).

Flexi-time, working from home occasionally and compressed working hours were mainly the preferred options of academicians, to give the balance to pursue other non interests ((Guetzkow, Atkin, & Fritzell, 2010). Most of these universities have developed a wide range of WLB initiatives, in response to the compelling evidence of its effectiveness in academic recruitment and retention (Smith & Waltman, 2006). Current legislative provisions, issue directives to employers to extend increased support to working parents and those with dependents Equal employment opportunity regulations acknowledge increasing representation of women in the workforce and the dual role they face, by expanding maternity rights, flexible working arrangements and childcare facilities without overlooking the needs of men in care giving roles (Guetzkow, Atkin, & Fritzell, 2010.) Ethicality issues pertaining to work-life balance also considers aspects like opportunity for self development and training, improved quality of life, greater involvement in serving the community and reduced traffic and pollution (Smith & Waltman, 2006).

Several of the Universities in the UK have initiated interventions to deliver effective WLB policies and practices. Staff involved in these interventions were from different age groups, with different jobs, length of service, degree of seniority and different personal backgrounds and needs, including those with and without children and dependents (Manfredi & Holliday, 2004). The Trade Unions in Germany, Sweden and the UK have also called for more initiatives to build a workplace culture that promotes better work life balance for the academicians (Guetzkow, Atkin, & Fritzell, 2010). Nevertheless, one common source of grievance in this aspect was the overall lack of knowledge of existing policies and practices, to support work-life balance and the perceived inconsistency in its interpretation and implementation (Manfredi & Holliday, 2004).

The role of the HRM function, in public universities, in England, was traditionally an administrative one, with little association between HRM initiatives and university performance (Guest & Clinton, 2007; Kersley, et al, 2006). HR strategies are
generally supported by the vice-chancellors and top management, but the same does not apply for the line and middle managers (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Archer, 2005). In most universities, it is a common practice to appoint a senior academician, to hold the position of head of faculty. However this same person may have little inclination to adopt the role of a full-time manager who gives high priority to applying HRM initiatives. Less senior academicians, given middle management positions, also experience role dissonance, inadequate training and resources to support their managerial positions (UCEA, 2003; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006). From Kersley, et al. (2006) findings from a workplace employment relations survey identified performance appraisal as the main basis for the management of performance of academics.

Findings from The Human Resource Management and University Performance Report, in the UK conducted by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, however reveal no positive correlation between HR driven initiatives and university performance. HR specialists identified the lack of understanding by the academic heads, in their capacity as line managers, as the reasons for the poor implementation of the chosen strategies (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Guest & Clinton, 2007). They bemoan their limited influence over the academically oriented line managers, whose perception of their academic status takes priority over their managerial positions.

Thus the strategic influence of HR specialists is limited, through lack of involvement in strategic decision making, unclear boundaries of authority and responsibility, lack of information on university’s performance benchmarking practices and absence of bottom line expectations (UCEA, 2003; Farndale and Hope-Hailey, 2004). A greater acknowledgement of the role of the HR function, as a business partner or change agent, will give more credibility and influence to address pertinent workforce related issues (Boxall, 1996; Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, 2001).

However, despite the above factors, the higher educational environment within the UK, where universities and college have access to public sector funding, reveals a fairly low staff turnover, with almost 96% of staff having positive feelings about the educational sector as a whole. The view is that academic life as worthwhile, giving
the degree of autonomy and intellectual challenge in their work, and the level of work-life balance they needed (Archer, 2005; JNCHES, 2008). Academics in England also agreed that their job characteristics did allow some measure of work-life balance (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006).

2.4.3.2. Work Life Balance Support Offered by the HRM Function in PHEI Within Malaysia

HRM initiatives, for WLB uptake in the Malaysian private sector, are limited. Few formal arrangements for the provision of such facilities or benefits are available, to assist parents and those with elderly and other dependents (Parasuraman, 2004; Aminuddin, 2005). In the UK, staff within the higher educational institutions can be members of the relevant unions, who provide the channel to propagate WLB initiatives (JNCHES, 2008). Within Malaysia, such facilities are unavailable to the academic workforce in PHEI. The Malaysian labor relations remains mainly non-confrontational (Ariffin, 1997; Rowley & Abdul Rahman, 2008; Turner, 2006; Parasuraman & Schwimbersky, 2005). Nevertheless, business imperatives are valid reasons to drive WLB initiatives in Malaysia (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Abdullah et al., 2009).

In view of the challenges faced by the PHEI within Malaysia, mentioned in the previous sections 2.4.1 & 2.4.2, HRM interventions to introduce a set of formalised WLB options, would prove useful, in facilitating employee commitment levels (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Consequent managerial practices that reflect awareness of such interventions are further needed for such employee commitment to support improved organisation performance (Rose & Kumar, 2006).

The following framework adapted from Guest & Conway (2004) in Fig: 2.7 reflects the role of the HRM function, working in conjunction with cultural elements within the faculty that define the work practices, the academic job experiences and the existing policies and practices that meet employee expectations for work life satisfaction.
Figure 2.7: Role of the HRM function within the Employee Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation Culture</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Organization Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM Initiated Practices</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Expectations</td>
<td>Delivery of the deal</td>
<td>Organization Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Guest & Conway, (2004)

2.5 IDENTIFYING GAPS WITHIN EXISTING LITERATURE

From the above review, it was seen that much scholarship is available in the field of work life balance and the impact of the present pace of working life, in both developed and developing nations, on the ability of employees to achieve a state of balance, between their work and life. The significance of the HRM function, in managing all HR related activities, to channel their combined efforts and contributions, towards achieving high organization performance, has been highlighted, within much literature and research. Similarly, the challenges faced by the academia within the higher education industrial sector, public and private alike, has been the subject of much scholarly effort. Four issues that were pertinent to this research emerged from the literature and these are presented as follows:

- The conceptual definition of the term ‘work life balance’ within the purview of the academic environment and the type of factors that are perceived to significantly impact the employee perception of work life balance satisfaction.
- The nature of existing WLB provisions that are commonly available to employees within the Malaysian workplace, and specifically within the private higher educational environment and the adequacy and accessibility of such provisions in the view of the workforce.
• The role of the HRM function within the higher educational environment and the manner of interventions that it adopts to address the work life balance of its academic workforce
• The cultural framework and environmental context that influences faculty work practices to facilitate better work life balance experiences for the academic workforce.

2.5.1 WLB concept and Factors impacting WLB perception within academia

Managing the home/work interface is one critical area for striking such a balance, where assistance may need to be given to employees to manage the conflict that can arise from the juggling of competing work and family demands (Hall & Richter, 1988) This assistance has to be extended not just to women, but also to men, in their roles as fathers and partners in relationships. Others include caregivers of elderly relatives and the disabled, and also those who need the time and space to pursue interests, leisure activities and other forms of commitment (Clutterbuck, 2003; Dex & Smith, 2002)

The increasing significance of work life balance among the academic workforce in Malaysia, has led to more studies within these fields (Mohd Noor, Stanton & Young, 2009; Mohd Noor, 2011). However such studies pertained mainly to the public rather than the private institutions. There is also limited literature on the way in which the academic workforce would conceptualise their view of work life balance, the nature of the domestic support systems they encounter, and the intrinsic factors within academic jobs that may contribute towards blurring of boundaries between work and life. This research gap leads to Research Q1 stated below.

RQ1: What is the nature of WLB difficulties, from work as well as non work related factors, faced by the academic workforce in the PHEI within Malaysia?
2.5.2 Existing WLB provisions in PHEI within Malaysia

There is much scholarship regarding the knowledge based economy, where formal HRD programs and financial reward systems alone cannot guarantee success, but the quality of the social and human capital, and employee discretionary behaviour are of equal importance. The academic workforce, being the knowledge workers, give a high priority to WLB and would welcome options like telecommuting, flexible scheduling, and work sharing (Ascente, 2010). Flexible benefits offer choices that allow better matching to personal needs. On-site childcare is commonly used as a recruitment tool to attract high calibre workforce. Women may prefer childcare benefits at the expense of extra paid vacation whereas singles with no family commitments may opt for extra paid vacation (Gomez-Meija, Balkin & Cardin, 2007).

Literature highlights that within the higher education environment in nations like the UK and elsewhere, family friendly provisions are within the purview of legislative requirements and thus a set of formalised WLB policies must be made available to the workforce with formal channels for information on the manner in which such provisions can be availed by the workforce. The same situation does not apply in Malaysia and therefore there is a singular lack of awareness among the workforce in the higher educational institutions on the presence and accessibility of formal WLB provisions. Little is also known concerning the informal practices, addressing work life balance issues, commonly used within such institutions. This research gap leads to Research Q2 stated below.

**RQ2: How adequate and accessible are the existing formal and informal WLB provisions, present in the PHEI, within Malaysia?**

2.5.3 The role of the HRM function within PHEI

Much scholarship has discussed the role of the HRM function to lead strategic initiatives for improving organizational performance through people and the role of HR policy initiatives to strike a balance between ‘hard’ economic and ‘soft’ human resource concerns. Greater diversity in workforce demography will result in greater
diversity in employee needs and expectations. HRM practices must recognize the implications of such diversity, within the Malaysian workforce demography, currently tempered significantly by global convergence and influence from other cultures, western and otherwise (Mellahi & Wood 2004; Zain, Ishak & Ghani, 2009). These challenges represent areas where HR strategies in place at the institution may not fully support employee needs, and therefore possibly diminish commitment levels.

Many issues that relate specifically to the private higher educational institutions in Malaysia, in the face of its phenomenal growth, remain mainly unexplored. Although much literature discusses the HRM strategies within similar institutions in Western nations, the national and socio political differences that reflect the unique Malaysian context may limit the extent to which findings from these literature be generalized into the Malaysian situation. This situation presents a gap in existing knowledge on the role of the HRM function and the nature of HRM interventions that exist within the PHEI within Malaysia. This research gap leads to Research Q3 stated below.

**RQ 3: What is the nature of HRM interventions for the design, introduction and implementation of work life balance initiatives within PHEI organisations?**

### 2.5.4 Faculty level context for better WLB of the academic workforce.

Literature supports the view that certain employees can deliver sustainable competitive advantage because they are rare and inimitable as they hold tacit knowledge that is difficult to duplicate. It is also commonly acknowledged that academics employed in higher education institutions are a key resource and their motivation is central to determining the quality of the student experience. High level of institutional achievement requires exceptional levels of staff commitment (Jackson et al, 2004; Jackson & Schuler, 2001; Ulrich, 1997; DeSaa’-Perez & Garcia’-Falcon, 2002).

A UK survey done on career motivation of higher education, indicated that academics are drawn by psychological contract factors like ‘intellectual challenge’ and
‘autonomy to do research’ (Guest & Conway, 2002). Also supportive supervision and culture are vital to generate high organization commitment levels from employees (Julien et. al., 2011). However little scholarship is present to define the cultural context and climate within the faculty that influences work practices, to deliver high motivation and commitment levels from the academic workforce in the PHEI within Malaysia. This research gap leads to Research Q4 stated below.

RQ4:

**What is the cultural framework and environmental context that influences faculty work practices, to facilitate better work life balance experiences for the academic workforce?**

Figure 2.8 presents the following theoretical model, incorporating the abovementioned issues and developed to guide the research.

**Figure 2.8: Theoretical Framework developed from the literature review**

![Diagram of Theoretical Framework](image-url)

Source: Developed for this research
2.6 CONCLUSION

This Chapter reviewed the literature on the background and focus theories related to the three pertinent disciplines of work life balance, the role of the human resource management function and the environment of the private higher educational industry. A positive perception by employees on the nature of the employment relationship will result in strong organisation citizenship behaviour, which in turn brings higher productivity and lower turnover/wastage rates (Shortland, 2005; Perkins & White, 2009). Thus work life balance issues of employees were recognised as valid and relevant within the workplace, and therefore an important concern of both the HRM function in its specialist capacity and that of the line manager in the strategic partnership role shared with the HRM function. The study then proceeded to consider the higher educational environment, focusing specifically on the private higher educational context within Malaysia, with the purpose of identifying HRM initiated models, for designing and implementing WLB programs that can better assist in the work life balance of its academic workforce. The outcome of this Section led to the selection of an appropriate theoretical model that facilitated the identification of gaps in existing knowledge and the development of the appropriate research questions for the qualitative and exploratory stage of the research. The next Chapter discusses the research methodology and design.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
Chapter Two reviewed the literature pertinent to the three parent disciplines, namely the phenomena of work life balance (WLB), the role of the human resource management (HRM) function and the environmental influences operating within the private higher educational industry (PHEI) in Malaysia. Next, the literature examined, within the immediate discipline, the types and levels of human resource interventions on WLB initiatives within the PHEI in Malaysia. The examination of the literature highlighted the relevance and significance of the research problem and the key issues that lead to the framing of the broad research questions presented in Chapter Two.

Knowledge of the whole social research process must be gained before embarking on a research project, through extensive reading of available literature, to better clarify and define the purpose of the research (Zikmund, 2003; Neumann, 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2007). Chapter Three presents the research methodology, describing the steps taken to address the stated research questions.

3.1.1 Chapter Structure
Chapter Three is structured according to the framework in Table 3.1. This chapter is divided into eleven main sections. Section 3.1 presents the introduction to deliver the chapter structure and chapter objectives. Section 3.2 discusses the theoretical paradigms directing the research. Section 3.3 discusses the main purposes of the research. Section 3.4 addresses the research methodology choices while Section 3.5 presents the justification of research methodology. Section 3.6 presents the research design with the dimensions of the research and the appropriate data collection instruments, within the inductive and deductive design processes. Section 3.7 presents the exploratory stage of the research, while Section 3.8 presents the second stage, which is the descriptive stage of the research. Section 3.9 evaluates the processes to enhance the quality of the research by addressing issues of validity and reliability of findings. Section 3.10 discusses the ethical considerations within social research. Finally Section 3.11 presents the concluding thoughts on the research methodology process.
Table 3.1: Structure of Chapter Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>Chapter Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Chapter Objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM</td>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Ontology &amp; Epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>Positivist Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>Constructivist Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.4</td>
<td>Pragmatist Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE</td>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Exploratory Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Descriptive research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Explanatory Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Research Methodology Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>Quantitative Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4.4</td>
<td>Comparative Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4.5</td>
<td>Mixed Methods research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>Pragmatism paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>Exploratory &amp; Descriptive purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5.3</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Research Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 RESEARCH PLAN</td>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>Outline Research Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6.2</td>
<td>Critical Study Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6.3</td>
<td>The inductive / deductive design processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 STAGE ONE: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>Inductive Research Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.7.2</td>
<td>Presentation of Research methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 STAGE TWO: DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>3.9.1</td>
<td>Defining variables and constructs within research propositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.9.2</td>
<td>Deductive Research Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.9.3</td>
<td>Sampling Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.9.4</td>
<td>Data Collection Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 RESEARCH QUALITY</td>
<td>3.6.3</td>
<td>Issues of validity and reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6.4</td>
<td>Trustworthiness &amp; authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES</td>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>Ethics procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.7.2</td>
<td>Eliciting informed consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11 CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.2 Chapter Objectives
It is critical for social research methods to be organized, systematic, critical, objective, and supported with the relevant data, for investigation into issues that are directed towards gaining new knowledge about the social world (Sekaran, 2010; Neumann, 2006).

The objectives of this chapter is to present an overview of the purpose of the research, research paradigm, research design, research methodology & research plan to adopt (Kumar, 1998). An appropriate research design is discussed, that guides and directs the manner and structure for the data collection and analysis, to most effectively address the aims of the research (Zikmund, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2007). This involves the appropriate research methodology for gathering of valid evidence, data collection instruments, the sample size of respondents, sampling and measurement techniques and data analysis processes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Neumann, 2006). Research quality and ethical issues in business research, are in line with the requirements mandated by the University.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM
Research paradigms or schools of thought, influence beliefs about the nature of the research design and the methodological principals to adopt, that direct the systematic processes used for the collection, documentation and analysis of research data, to best meet the objectives and purposes of the research (Cavana, et al., 2001; Zikmund, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

3.2.1 Ontology & Epistemology
Research paradigms evolve from the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions, made in research, to influence the choice of research approach to adopt (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2007; Zikmund, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The ontology defines the fundamental reality that is the researcher’s “world view” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105) and this influences the epistemology, or the nature of the relationship between the researcher and reality and the view of “what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study” (Saunders et.al, 2009: 121)

For the purposes of this research, only the positivist, constructivist and pragmatic paradigms (Cavana et al., 2001) are presented below, in Table 3.2
### Table 3.2: Chosen Business Research Paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>Discover the single reality that can allow prediction and control of events</td>
<td>To understand social contexts and interactions in a meaningful way</td>
<td>To match research method to the research questions and research purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>Presence of a single universal reality</td>
<td>Multiple realities shaped by diverse socio-cultural values</td>
<td>Real world oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>Independence and objectivity of the researcher</td>
<td>Immersion of researcher into the lives of subjects</td>
<td>Pluralist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>Objective &amp; Value free findings</td>
<td>Subjective and value laden</td>
<td>Values included and made explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning</strong></td>
<td>Deductive, logical</td>
<td>Inductive, reflexive</td>
<td>Deductive and inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Structured, replicable, quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative flexible, creative, using serendipity</td>
<td>Triangulation through qualitative and quantitative techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Experiments, surveys, Structured Questionnaire</td>
<td>Ethnography, participant observation, action research Focus group, qualitative interviews, case studies and conversational analysis</td>
<td>Mix models-interviews, testing, observation &amp; experiments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran, (2001)

#### 3.2.2. Positivist Paradigm

Within the positivist paradigm, the ontology promotes a view of the presence of a single reality, that is replicable and can be precisely measured and tested in an objective and value free manner, through the use of natural sciences. The epistemology posits the independence and objectivity of the researcher, who does not affect the subject of the research nor is affected by it (Easterby, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002; Kumar, 1998; Saunders, et.al. 2009). It applies deductive reasoning, within a structured methodology, to analyse causal relationships, for value free testing of theory and confirmation or refutation, of a set of propositions or hypothesis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Cameron & Miller, 2010).

#### 3.2.3. Constructivist Paradigm

Within this paradigm, an understanding of the nature and the context of social interactions, and perception of the reality experienced by participants, allows a richer definition of the research problem. It holds the ontology that people experience reality, physical or social, in different ways (Cavana et al, 2001). The epistemology
or the researcher is to identify what is meaningful to each individual being, by becoming immersed into their social world. As such, greater awareness of their individual lived experiences facilitates interpretation for research purposes (Neumann, 2006). Knowledge is founded on the participants’ beliefs, within a particular context. In constructivism, the research aims for thick rich descriptions of what is observed, that enlarge understandings of a multiple reality. Values are embedded within the findings as an ‘enthusiastic participant’ and research quality is evaluated on the richness of description (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Bryman & Bell, 2007: 402).

3.2.4 Pragmatist Paradigm

This paradigm is based on the ontology that social phenomena is complex, and thus reality has to be distinguished from perceptions of reality, within the research process. Its epistemology requires the investigation of different dimensions, within a phenomenon and for the triangulation of different perceptions of reality, to dovetail towards a single reality (Molina-Azorin, 2007). The methodology requires the use of complementary research methods, adopting both inductive and deductive attributes, at different phases or stages of the research process to allow cross checking of findings and conclusions to provide a more complete, integrated picture of the phenomena investigated. (Zikmund 2003; Yin 2003; Bryman & Bell 2007).

3.3. RESEARCH PURPOSE

Research studies fall mainly under the following three generic categories which are exploratory, descriptive or explanatory in nature (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Zikmund, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2007). The attributes within each category are presented below in Table. 3.3
Table 3.3: Main Purposes of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRIBUTES</th>
<th>EXPLORATORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIVE</th>
<th>EXPLANATORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of uncertainty</td>
<td>Highly ambiguous</td>
<td>Partially defined</td>
<td>Clearly defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key research Statement</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Research Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When conducted</td>
<td>As an initial study to gain better understanding the problem or issue at hand.</td>
<td>As an extension of exploratory research or a precursor to explanatory research</td>
<td>To explain causal relationships between defined variables and arrive at hypothesis that can be tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Approach</td>
<td>Creative, broad and flexible approaches that are inductive in nature, to capture the subjective knowledge and experiences, that lead to better indication of issues of significance</td>
<td>Think systematically about defined issues and present reports in terms of frequencies, mean and standard deviations, that can provide the basis for rational decision making</td>
<td>Structured approach supporting a general principal leading to greater methodological rigour, through larger sample sizes, and development of more sophisticated measuring instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Findings</td>
<td>Leads to the development of research questions aimed at generating further theories for empirical testing</td>
<td>Provide precise description and arrive at results that are based on statistical testing</td>
<td>Provide precise answers to explain the “why” that can further extend theory to new issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Zikmund, 1997; Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001; Neumann, 2006; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009,)

3.3.1. Exploratory research

Exploratory studies are directed towards theory building when little is known about a current situation and gaps are seen within existing scholarship. It directs the defining of research parameters and allows greater structure in presenting the research problem (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Carson et al., 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Zikmund, 2003). The purpose of exploratory research is directed mainly at embracing
serendipity, to capture the subjective experiences of respondents and to gain rich insights and perceptions, leading to constructions of patterns and phenomena that reflect a multiple reality. This allows theory building for subsequent empirical testing (Cavana, et al., 2001; Neumann, 2006; Saunders et al., 2009; Cameron & Miller, 2010).

3.3.2. Descriptive Research

Descriptive research seeks to define a phenomenon more clearly, to better describe the relevant variables within a particular situation being studied, for a more accurate picture of how things currently are. It attempts to answer the “who, what, when and how” of a sample under study (Zikmund, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

With the use of descriptive statistics and statistical analysis, a set of data that is collected, can be presented, in terms of frequencies, mean, standard deviation, etc., to allow for a more systematic analysis and evaluation about a given situation. The systematic nature of the information that is generated can support rational decision making, concerning the issues in question (Cavana, et al., 2001). However it is unable to establish causal relationships between defined variables (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

3.3.3. Explanatory Research

While exploratory and descriptive research are aimed at constructing conceptual and theoretical frameworks, explanatory research is used once these concepts are defined clearly, to establish causal relationships between a set of defined concepts and variables. It aims to provide an explanation on the “why” for the occurrence of something, together with empirical evidence to support the explanation (Cavana, et al., 2001; Neumann, 2006).

Unlike exploratory and descriptive research which occurs under a natural setting with minimum interference by the researcher, explanatory research requires more controllable settings where variables can be manipulated, to study the effects of such manipulation on other dependent variables. (Cavana, et al., 2001; Saunders, et al., 2009).
3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research paradigm and research purposes underpin the nature of the research methodology (Zikmund 2003). The mixed methods approach is another emerging methodological approach for social and business research, which in essence, is the combination of the qualitative/quantitative approach or vice versa (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Saunders, et. al., 2009; Cameron & Miller, 2010).

3.4.1. Research Methodology Options

The choice of methodology should correlate to the issues and problems addressed and the type of information that is required, in order to offer feasible solutions for such issues and problems. The most widely discussed methodologies within scholarly works in research are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodology (Cooper & Schindler, 2003; Neumann, 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.4.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research involves a systematic inquiry within a social setting, where words are preferred to numbers, to describe and arrive at relevant, integrated and meaningful information with regard to a certain phenomena (Zikmund, 2003, Bryman & Bell, 2007). Human behaviour is viewed as coloured by personal values, subjectivity and bias. Experiences and perceptions of the respondents therefore cannot be presented in a complete and integrated manner, using quantitative methods (Cavana et al., 2001; Neumann, 2006).

Within the qualitative processes, patterns and understanding regarding the phenomena, need to be discerned, and therefore recorded in a range of narrative formats (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hair et al., 2007). The in-depth, insightful nature of this approach facilitates the capture of different perspectives, of the lived experiences, within complex social situations, to deliver information richness, for new theory development (Ghauri, 2004; Neumann, 2006).
The qualitative research usually begins with observations and interactive communication processes, moving towards the development of general patterns and themes, for the evolution of theory. Theory is generated inductively, within the data collection and analysis process (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Data collection methods apply case studies, ethnography, participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, language based approaches like discourse, conversation and textual analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 404).

A purely qualitative approach however, is limited in its validity and reliability for several reasons. Firstly, the small sample sizes limit the ability to generalize findings to a wider population. Without the presence of universally accepted structured procedures, with reliance only on the skills and ingenuity of the individual researcher, the processes cannot be replicable. Lack of transparency may lead to subjective findings, skewed towards personal views, values and biases of the researcher (Carson et al., 2001; Berg, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.4.3 Quantitative research

Quantitative research designs require a set of universally accepted methodology, within defined social settings. Through logical reasoning and testing of propositions and hypothesis, accurate prediction of human behavioral outcomes is attained. The researcher remains unbiased and detached, from the single reality to be confirmed. The high degree of structure, transparency and control over the variables measured, reduce incidence of subjectivity and researcher bias (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002; Zikmund, 2003; Neuman, 2006). The constructs are quantifiable to increase validity, reliability, objectivity and accuracy of findings. Larger sample sizes allow findings to be better generalized to a wider population (Ticelhurst, & Veal, 2000). The most commonly adopted techniques in social sciences are observation, experimentation and survey techniques (Zikmund, 2003; Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006; Hair et al., 2007; Sekaran, 2010). Despite its many advantages, a purely quantitative approach, is overly reliant on structured instruments and procedures and lacks the flexibility to access the rich subjective experiences and
perceptions of the respondents, within the social environment (Cavana et al., 2001; Zikmund, 2003).

3.4.4 Comparative Analysis
The relative attributes of both qualitative and quantitative approaches are presented in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Contributions of the qualitative and quantitative approaches

| COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| QUANTITATIVE                                                 | QUALITATIVE                   |
| Numbers                                                      | Words                         |
| Emphasize view of participants                               | Emphasize view of researcher   |
| Objective relationship with researcher                       | Subjective relationship with researcher |
| Theory testing                                               | Theory building & emerging    |
| Structured                                                   | Unstructured                  |
| Generalization                                               | Contextual understanding      |
| Hard reliable data                                           | Rich thick data               |
| Macro                                                        | Micro                         |
| Behaviour                                                    | Meaning                       |
| Artificial setting                                           | Natural setting               |

Source: Adapted from Bryman & Bell, (2007).

3.4.5 Mixed Methods Research
Mixed methodology research designs are presented as either mixed methods or mixed models. It adopts both qualitative and quantitative research, to be done either concurrently or sequentially. It allows greater opportunity for data access than the mono method approach (Zikmund, 2003; Yin, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Mixed methods involve mixing both purist methods, within a single study, while mixed models use both methods within a larger research program (Mertens, 2005; Cameron & Miller, 2007). Critics of mixed methods, quote the paradigm incompatibility thesis (Johnson &
Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Advocates of mixed methods research however, highlight the similarities shared within both the purist approaches, to construct arguments from data captured, in a rigorous and scholarly manner, to reduce incidence of bias, for increased validity and trustworthiness of findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Despite the diverse stance over the mixed methods approach, it has gained increasing popularity in the field of social research, for the many advantages it is seen to offer. The pragmatic, pluralist position it offers, helps to bridge the divide, across differing paradigms, to mutually complement the data collection processes and to triangulate findings. Its application of both induction and deduction, within the knowledge generating process, and abduction to explain logically the findings and results, offers greater scope and creativity to the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Cameron & Miller, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Hammersly, (1996), cited in Bryman & Bell, (2007), presented a set of approaches to mixed methods research, described in Table 3.5 below, for greater rigor in the research processes.

**Table 3.5: Approaches to Mixed Methods Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation</th>
<th>Corroboration of findings between both qualitative and quantitative methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation/development</td>
<td>One research strategy aids or supports the research strategy of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity</td>
<td>Both research strategies are used to integrate different aspects of the investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Discovering contradiction that may require reframing the initial research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>Different inquiry components allow expansion of research scope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**3.5 JUSTIFICATION OF CHOSEN RESEARCH DESIGN**

Based on the dimensions of the research as described in the previous sections, this section will present the research dimension and research design choices that were made for this research, and the reasons to justify such choices (Berg, 2004).
3.5.1 Pragmatism Paradigm

The research problem is firstly defined by the complexity and multiple realities surrounding the phenomena of work life balance, within a diverse range of social settings. For this reason, the constructivist paradigm is adopted, to reflect on socially constructed meanings of workplace dynamics and the different perceptions that people may have towards common issues (Wood et al., 2010). On the other hand, some measure of the positivist paradigm also has relevance to addressing the research problem, to arrive at reality, through logical reasoning and transparent and replicable processes that pave the way for further studies aiming for greater precisions and causal relationships, within the same field of study. Based on the preceding discussions, the pragmatist paradigm, which places the research problem as central to the choice of an appropriate research design, applies complementary research processes, as the appropriate platform to embark on the research, embracing a pluralist viewpoint, rather than a single purist philosophical inclination (Zikmund 2003; Yin 2003; Bryman & Bell 2007).

3.5.2 Exploratory, Descriptive & Explanatory Purposes

The gaps in the review of the literature in Chapter Two, highlighted the situation within the Malaysian employment environment, where the concept of work life balance is too broadly defined, and relatively new and ambiguous, in its meanings and implications within the work environment. Exploratory research was initially used to refine the research problem, to formulate the specific research objectives and questions and to arrive at a refined theoretical model and the development of testable propositions (Cavana et. al., 2001; Cameron & Miller, 2007; Neumann, 2006). Descriptive research was used consequently to describe in greater detail and in quantitative terms, the constructs and variables relevant within the academic environment, in the form of descriptive statistics, to present findings, within structured objective formats, for more structured decision making purposes. The refined conceptual model arrived at from the qualitative data analysis allowed the development of testable hypotheses. Explanatory research, using statistical models, explained observations and inferences, allowed greater precision of findings on the
3.5.3 Mixed Method Research Design

The mixed methods research design refers to decisions made, that address the purposes of the study, the study setting, the extent of researcher control over the investigation processes, the time horizon for the study and the level of analysis (Cavana, et al., 2000). Guided by the realism research paradigm and the exploratory, descriptive and explanatory purposes of the research, the mixed methodology was used, to enhance the methodological rigor of the research processes and its trustworthiness (Zikmund, 2003; Yin, 2003(a); Bryman & Bell, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Qualitative research had a more dominant status than quantitative, and was used at the initial stage, followed by the quantitative research. However, both purist methods reflect the strengths and cancel the limitations, inherent within each other (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Cameron & Miller, 2007).

The mixed method design matrix in Figure 3.1 guides the concurrent/sequential timing decision and the dominant status/equal status paradigm emphasis for the qualitative and quantitative approaches. (Morgan, 1998 cited in Bryman & Bell, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)

Figure 3.1: Mixed Methods Design Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Order</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Concurrent</th>
<th>Sequential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Status</td>
<td>QUAL + QUAN</td>
<td>QUAL → QUAN</td>
<td>QUAN → QUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm Emphasis Decision</td>
<td>QUAL + quan</td>
<td>QUAL → quan</td>
<td>quan → QUAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Status</td>
<td>QUAN + qual</td>
<td>QUAN → qual</td>
<td>quan → QUAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: "qual" stands for qualitative, "quan" stands for quantitative, "=" stands for concurrent, "→" stands for sequential, capital letters denote high priority or weight, and lower case letters denote lower priority or weight.*

Source: Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)
3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN & DIMENSIONS

Being a mixed method research the first stage will be an inductive research design to meet the initial exploratory purposes of the research. The next stage will follow a deductive research design, to meet the descriptive and explanatory purposes of the research.

3.6.1 Outline Research Plan

Figure 3.2 presents the outline of the research plan within the two stages, presented below.

**Figure 3.2: Choice of appropriate research method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To search for more knowledge</th>
<th>To provide precise description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1:</strong> Exploratory/Qualitative</td>
<td><strong>Stage 2:</strong> Descriptive &amp; Explanatory/Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literature Review</td>
<td>- Structured Questionnaire Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focus groups</td>
<td>- Descriptive Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individual Interview</td>
<td>- Inferential Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Cavana, *et al.*, (2001: 115)

3.6.2 The Inductive/Deductive Processes

The factors influencing the qualitative design processes are the level of saturation needed in the data collection process, the ideal sample size needed, the level of theoretical underpinning needed, the level of variability within the target population that needs to be captured and the scope of the research objectives (Bryman, 2012). Within the exploratory research processes, the inductive approach *leads to* better understanding and explanation about a particular phenomenon, to develop a set of concepts, revealing new or different perspectives (Flick, 2008). The design for each research project is unique and left to the discretion of the researcher on what works best (Watt, 2007).
Within this research, it facilitated the development of a clearer picture of the work life balance phenomena and the distinct features of work life balance issues within the Malaysian private higher education environment, that reflect both similarities as well as differences, when compared to that of similar institutions from other nations like the United Kingdom, Australia, the USA, Canada, and others, where this phenomena is given greater attention and acknowledgement (Guest, 2002).

The deductive approach on the other hand leads from the general to the specific. Theoretical concepts and propositions, that have been developed inductively, can be subjected to greater empirical scrutiny, through the use of deductive reasoning processes, thereby moving the research to a deeper and more specific level (Zigmund, 2003). It can be used to ascertain the level of significance of the work life phenomena and the exact nature of the problematic issues within the private higher educational institutions in Malaysia, which in turn may influence future policy interventions within such institutions. The relationship between the inductive and deductive approaches is presented below in Figure 3.3

**Figure 3.3: Relationship between inductive and deductive approaches**

- **Theoretical Framework**
  - Concepts
    - Pattern
    - Observation
  - Propositions and hypothesis
    - Empirical
    - Confirmation

### 3.6.3 Critical Study Points

Figure 3.4 presents the components within the research design, and the critical dimensions to consider within the design.

**Figure 3.4: Research Design Components & study points**

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{√} & \text{Yes} \\
\text{X} & \text{No}
\end{array}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Population</th>
<th>Purpose of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Setting</th>
<th>Types of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Contrived</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Contrived</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Time Horizon</th>
<th>Extent of researcher interference</th>
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<td>Cross Sectional</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal</td>
<td>Manipulation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Design</th>
<th>Measurement and Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>Operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Probability</td>
<td>definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(measure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative data collection</th>
<th>Qualitative data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey questionnaire</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Designs</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Cavana Delahaye & Sekaran, (2001: 107)
3.7. STAGE ONE: EXPLORATORY INDUCTIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Figure 3.5 presents the framework for the first stage of the research design, which is the exploratory stage.

**Figure 3.5: Framework for Exploratory Research Design**

Applying the methodological principals that have been reviewed, this section will present the steps adopted by the researcher within the exploratory phase of the research.

3.7.1 Sampling Design

Sampling design relates to the following issues on choice of probability or non-probability sampling, sampling frame, and sample size (Zikmund, 2003).

3.7.1.1. Sampling Methods

Two major sampling techniques, used in social research are probability and non-probability sampling (Plowright, 2011). In exploratory qualitative studies,
generalization is not as critical as other factors and non-probability sampling can be adopted (Cavana et. al., 2001). Sampling decisions are determined by the study population defined within the research objectives. Convenience sampling was used, for better access to participants and to obtain information from the relevant groups, who shared both similar and different characteristics. Judgement sampling was used, to access ‘experts’ with relevant knowledge and snowball sampling was used to access hard to find subjects. Strata sampling was not used as it would have required knowledge of the total number of academic staff within each institution and such information was not available (Cavana et. al., 2001).

3.7.1.2 Sampling Frame/ Target Population
A sampling frame, which is the “listing of all the units in the population from which the sample is to be selected” (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 182) comprised the academic workforce, the heads of departments and the HR specialist, within the defined institutions. The demographic diversity of the participants, in terms of nationality, ethnicity, gender, age groups, years of teaching or technical background, was not taken into consideration, in determining the sampling frame. A participant profile was constructed to increase the validity and consistency of the participant selection process, for each of the three groups of participants, as shown in Table 3.6

Table 3.6: Participant Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Academic Workforce</td>
<td>Lecturers from a range of faculty within each PHEI, who are responsible for curriculum design and delivery of teaching and assessment and embarking on research and self development initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>The person responsible and accountable for setting and advancing the academic strategy of the faculty in line with the institutions strategic plans through the exercise of leadership, authority and empower of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>HR Specialists</td>
<td>Holding executive and managerial positions with authority to influence and direct policy matters with regard to managing the organization’s human resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: developed for this research
The purpose of drawing from all three groups was for the collection and detailed study of the viewpoints of the policymakers, the implementers and those governed by such policies and practices, for comparative and triangulation purposes (Cameron & Miller, 2007). The participant composition and profile is presented in Table 3.8 below.

**Table 3.7: Summary of Interview Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Institution 1</th>
<th>Institution 2</th>
<th>Institution 3</th>
<th>Institution 4</th>
<th>Institution 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Heads</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR managers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: developed for this research

The target population came from a total of five different institutions. These institutions were located within the Klang Valley, one of the most thriving and densely populated regions in Malaysia, holding the largest student enrolment numbers in the private higher education industry sector. The institutions in question held similar industry rankings, offering a similar range of programs, and having the status of either University or University College, as defined within the ambit of the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia. Student enrolment numbers were however different and although information on staff size was not available, the assumption was it would be proportional to student size.

The strong competitive forces within the private higher education sector, however presents a limiting factor, for access to the sites concerned, and the willingness of participants to share pertinent information that they fear may be proprietary, sensitive or confidential (Rosen, 1991 cited in Cavanaugh et al., 2001).

**Table 3.8: Profile of Chosen Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Institution Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution 1</td>
<td>Started operations in 1987 as a college, upgraded to University College status and then to University status within the last two years. It offers a range of diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with a sprawling campus in a well known suburb in Selangor. It has a student population of over 10,000. The academic staff are expected to be involved in ongoing research as well as teaching duties &amp; other academic duties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institution 2 | Started operations in 1978 as a college, upgraded to University College status and then to University status within the last one year. It offers a range of diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with a sprawling campus, in a well known suburb in Selangor. It has a student population of over 12,000. The academic staff are being encouraged to be involved in ongoing research apart from normal teaching workload and other academic duties.

Institution 3 | This institution started operations in 1983 as a college, upgraded to University College status and then to University status. It offers a range of diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within a sprawling campus in the well known suburb within Selangor. It has a student population of over 9,000. The academic staff are involved in ongoing research as well as teaching duties and other academic duties.

Institution 4 | This institution started operations in 1981 as a college, upgraded to University College status. It offers a range of diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within a sizeable campus in the well known suburb within Selangor. It has a student population of over 4000. The academic staff are involved mainly in teaching and academic duties.

Institution 5 | This institution started operations in 1980 as a college, upgraded to University College status. It offers a range of diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within a city campus in the well known suburb within Selangor. It has a student population of over 3000. The academic staff are involved mainly in teaching and academic duties.

Source: Developed for this research

3.7.1.3. Sample Size

Within a qualitative research the size of the sample is not as critical as the processes used for participant selection. Even with a small sample size, the used of mixed methods can help to strengthen the study (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). For an interview based qualitative study, a sample size of between twenty and thirty participants is recommended (Bryman, 2012:425). Other qualitative theorist suggest anything from twelve to sixty, with thirty as the mean, depending the availability of researcher time and access to participants (Adler & Adler, 1987).

The researcher initially wrote to the human resource division within selected institutions to seek permission to conduct interviews with those defined within the
sample frame. When no written response was forthcoming, the HR managers were contacted by phone. The general reply was that there might be a conflict of interest as the research was conducted under a doctoral program in collaborative partnership with a competitor institution. Under such circumstances, access to the staff in question could not be officially endorsed. However the management also expressed their view that there would be no official objection on their side, should any of their staff be contacted and interviewed within their individual capacity, as long as consent was voluntary and obtained under no duress, anonymity of both persons and institutions was guaranteed, and all processes were conducted under strict compliance with the ethical protocols.

The next option, within the imposed constraints, was then to use the help of existing personal networks with academic staff, from the relevant institutions, to solicit their participation at a personal level. Ethical procedures for informed consent for qualitative interviews, and information sheets were included. This channel thus became the alternative and viable option used, to proceed with the qualitative data collection process. Participants, with whom contact was established, agreed to be interviewed, with some also agreeing to participate in the focus group discussions, under the condition that no electronic recording devises were to be used, for the sake of anonymity on all counts.

In total twenty persons indicated their willingness to participate in the individual interviews and of these, ten positive responses were received from the academic workforce, for the focus group sessions. Morgan (1998a) cited in Cavana et al. (2001) suggested an ideal group size of six to ten for each focus group. However, this was not possible as the logistics of getting ten individuals to come together at the same time and place proved unattainable. Two groups of five persons each were therefore organized for the focus groups.

Three HR managers indicated their willingness to be individually interviewed and appointments were duly made with each. Likewise the researcher was able to make appointments for individual interview sessions with four departmental heads from three separate institutions. The HR specialists and faculty heads, approached to attend
the focus group sessions, declined with apologies, citing work pressures. Focus group participants therefore comprised ten members of the academic workforce, who were placed in two different groups. Although the numbers were small, it was acceptable. (Kruger, 1994 cited in Cavana et al., 2003)

3.7.2 Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods, as presented in Table 3.9 are commonly accepted instruments for the collection of primary data, for qualitative research. A theoretical review of the data collection instruments, however justified the choice of the literature review, focus groups and individual interviews, as appropriate for collection of qualitative data within this research. The case study approach, although discussed as a possible qualitative data collection option was however was not seen as appropriate to the situation, due to issues of limited access to sufficient detailed information pertaining to the institutions concerned.

Table 3.9: Qualitative Data Collection Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTION PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Literature Review</td>
<td>To arrive at inter-textual coherence and identification of gaps and controversies in the existing literature, to refine research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Case Studies</td>
<td>To conduct a in-depth study on fewer participants than a survey, within a natural setting, with limited researcher control over choices over those to be studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Focus Groups</td>
<td>To bring together a group of individuals at one time, with relevant experiences and knowledge on the issues in question, such that through the dynamics of group interaction, new and innovative ways can be used to construct collective meanings and knowledge regarding these issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Individual Interviews</td>
<td>To seek out the mind of each individual, which is a rich source of data on the themes in their life and viewpoints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for the research
3.7.2.1. Literature Review

A literature review involves the review and documentation of published and unpublished academic based sources of secondary data from books, journals, magazines, conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations, government publications, annual reports and corporate websites, etc. When conducted in a comprehensive and integrated manner, it provides the foundation for theory building and the identification of gaps within existing literature. This aids the development of the research problem and construction of a conceptual framework in a cogent and logical manner (Cavana, et al., 2001). The Malaysian cum Asian culture was seen to guide a collective orientation, with reluctance to offer radical or controversial views, within the group context (Hofstede, 2001). The social context highlighted within the literature, guided the choice of data collection instruments.

3.7.2.2 Case Study

Case studies are useful instruments to collect in-depth information and detailed data from a relatively smaller group of participants than in a survey. This method was not used within this research although participants from the five institutions were chosen, as sufficient in depth information to profile the respective institutions was not available.

3.7.2.3 Focus Groups

The focus group allows discussions between people from diverse backgrounds, on a specific topic or issue, faster extraction of “richer data” (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Cavana et al., 2001: 510). Group sessions ideally require electronic recording devices, to help keep track of discussion. In this case, participants requested that no recording devices be used, maintain confidentiality of their views. This issue was not seen as critical in the data collection process as the lack of audibility, often present within such devices, may limit their effectiveness in data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Pressures for conformity, or idiosyncratic behavior of group members may
compromise validity and reliability of collective viewpoints, when inconsistencies are
detected between collective and personal views of group members (Cavana et al.,
2001; Stokes & Begin, 2006). The presence of ‘sleepers’ may mean that some views
may not be aired, such that findings may display some measure of skewness
(Waddel, Cummings & Worley, 2011).
An ideal group size is between five to fifteen members but the presence of ‘no show’
may mean numbers may even fall to as low as three (Cavana et al., 2001; Bryman &
Bell, 2007). Sensitivity to the needs of the participants is essential and ethical
considerations require a written letter of invitation, explaining the purpose and
voluntary nature of the process (Bouma, 2000). The documentation relating to
informed consent are handed to potential participants before starting the data
collection process.

Within this research, the items within the questionnaire were initially pilot tested by
three of the group members and found to be suitable (Plowright, 2011). Appointments
were then arranged at a neutral place and informed consent forms executed
beforehand. From the onset of the discussion, the researcher, in the role of facilitator,
adopted a non-intrusive, group maintenance role while encouraging participants to
adopt task roles. Four open questions, seen in Table 3.14 were presented for
discussion. Writing materials were provided to organize individual thoughts and
butcher paper was used to drill down and record statements, to summarize findings.
The sessions lasted for about an hour to reach saturation. The complexities of
transcribing the conversations of several persons within the same span of time,
without, electronic recording, was acknowledged (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.7.2.4 Personal Interviews

Personal interviews permit interactive information exchange and extensive probing
between the researcher and participant, for greater elucidation of pertinent details and
information richness. These interviews can be structured or unstructured, with a
choice in communication media. Interviewer’s skills are essential when non-
structured or semi structured interview styles are adopted. However there are also
disadvantages that may render it unsuitable in certain situations (Berg, 2004; Hair et al., 2007; Sekaran 2010). The same ethical guidelines regarding introduction and informed consent as mentioned in 3.7.1.4 for focus groups must be followed, before beginning the interviews.

For this research, a suitable venue and time was arranged, with each participant. Once again, participants expressed non acceptance for the presence of electronic recording devices, in view of the sensitive and confidential nature of the discussion. Nevertheless, Polsky, (1967) stated that use of such devices is not critical to the data collection process but rather the skills of the interviewer are essential. “Successful field research depends on the investigator’s ability to look at people, listen to them, talk with them rather than at them. It does not depend fundamentally on some impersonal apparatus, such as a camera or a tape recorder” (Polsky, 1998 [1967]:119.

Time and resource constraints, supported the use of converging interviewing, which had a greater degree of content and process structure, to facilitate the translation of qualitative data into an easily understood framework (Mason, 2002). On average each interview took approximately one hour to complete. Greater honesty and diverse viewpoints were offered in the absence of social pressure and detailed notes were taken during each interview without the use of recording devices (Patton, 1990; Hofstede, 2001, 2007). The researcher adopted a semi-structured approach, to guide the flow of the conversation within the research area but at the same time to allow free expression and sharing of viewpoints and perceptions. Personal interviews have their merits as well as disadvantages which are presented below in Table 3.10.

**Table 3.10: Summary of advantages and disadvantages of the individual interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High adaptability in obtaining different perspectives, for better understanding of the phenomena under investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High level of privacy offered to discuss personal issues, too embarrassing or sensitive to disclose within a group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Little pressure to conform to social norms by giving politically correct answers. Respondents may be influenced by the “response effect” which is the manner in which the interviewer asks questions.

4. More time allowed with each individual for deeper understanding of feelings and perceptions of the individual. Researcher has to be constantly vigilant to avoid the creeping in of interviewer bias and skewed findings.

Source: Developed for the research

Interviews may be highly structured, with closed questions, seeking a defined set of answers from respondent, or they may be unstructured, starting with open, general questions that allow the respondent to lead the way in how they choose to respond to queries. Table 3.11 presents a comparative analysis of these two approaches. Individual interviews can use face-to-face, telephone or electronic communication media. (Opdenakker, 2006). A comparative analysis of each of these methods is presented in Table 3.12 below.

**Table 3.11: Structured and unstructured Interviews: A comparative Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW</th>
<th>STRUCTURED INTERVIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Interview</td>
<td>Indicate preliminary issues that guide further in depth study to define issues</td>
<td>For comparative analysis of similarities and differences in respondent responses to clearly defined issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviwer Role</td>
<td>Need to get those with high interviewer skills to manage the questioning, paraphrasing and summarising</td>
<td>Less need for high interviewer skills but careful planning needed in questionnaire design and construction to gather to type of information, relevant to research purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Role</td>
<td>High involvement and control over direction of process and subject content, to present own views and suggestions</td>
<td>Limited opportunity to discuss issues that researcher deems unimportant for the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of process</td>
<td>Time consuming and high potential to deviate from subject content</td>
<td>Fast and efficient means to discuss relevant issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Questions</td>
<td>Diverse, flexible and open ended</td>
<td>Standardised, predetermined &amp; close ended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Cavana, et al., (2001)
Table 3.12: Comparative Analysis of Interview Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Attributes</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Computer Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Speed</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Very Fast</td>
<td>Instantaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to participants</td>
<td>Limited and Confined</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for high quality Response</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of presenting Questions</td>
<td>Very versatile</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Modest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of Misunderstanding of question by respondent</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Anonymity offered to Respondent</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of call back or Follow up</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/ Cost Factors</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Zikmund (2003).

3.7.3 Interview Protocol

An interview protocol is used to direct the manner of questioning, to increase the validity, and reliability of the data collection instruments (Eisenhardt, 1989). Planning is needed to select topics and questions that not only build rapport but are directed towards getting the right information, through patient follow up of ideas and probing of responses to yield rich material (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.7.3.1 Pilot testing of interview questions

The Delphi method was seen as a suitable method to obtain feedback from those seen to have expert knowledge in the field being investigated, to critically evaluate the questionnaire design and content. From the feedback given on what the other experts had said, the group will converge towards the "correct" answer. In total five individuals, were involved and the feedback received facilitated the necessary amendments before the pilot testing process was conducted.

3.7.3.2 Interview Processes

Following execution of informed consent forms, a semi-structured interview style was adopted, commencing with open questions, for dialogue, to generate diversity in
responses. For further probing and better defining of answers and summarizing, a set of more structured questions were used (Mason, 2002). A five step model to manage the semi-structured interview is presented in Table 3.13

**Table 3.13: Five step model to manage semi-structured interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Explore current situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Consider possible alternatives for causes or opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regarding phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Identify its impact or effect on other related fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Capture respondents views and suggestions on preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solutions or scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Planning for future by gathering suggestions on actions and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resources needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Primary data was collected, through individual interview sessions, to seek their personal views, on issues, identified previously, within the focus group.

**3.7.3.3 Interview Questions**

In view of the key themes and discussion points that emerged from the focus groups, a total of twenty two interview questions, were framed, to expand the content within the four main research questions. The focus group and interview questions that were used are presented in Table 3.14

**Table 3.14 : Questions for individual interviews.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Main research Questions</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What are the factors that influence level of WLB satisfaction of jobholders?</td>
<td>What is your view of work life balance?</td>
<td>IQ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are there significant demands on your personal life that can encroach on work demands? How comfortable were you to discuss such issues with your superior or HR manager?</td>
<td>IQ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have any kind of domestic support system to help you manage your non work responsibilities?</td>
<td>IQ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have your work demands encroached on your personal life to cause work life conflict?</td>
<td>IQ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are the types of HRM interventions that attempt to enhance the level of WLB satisfaction of its academic workforce?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you given sufficient reduction in teaching workload, to allow for more time for research projects and further studies?</td>
<td>IQ 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there formal provisions to allow time off if you need to address domestic difficulties?</td>
<td>IQ 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there flexi time available? What are its features?</td>
<td>IQ 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is compressed work hours offered within your institution? Can you explain?</td>
<td>IQ 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you consulted about flexible working arrangements in general</td>
<td>IQ 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there provision of crèche, day care and place for breast feeding mothers? How do you view such provisions?</td>
<td>IQ 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe what you know about Employee &amp; Family Assistance Programs within your organizations.</td>
<td>IQ 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there sabbaticals for long service staff?</td>
<td>IQ 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3</th>
<th>What are the HRM interventions that aim to enhance level of WLB satisfaction of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In your view does the HRM function play a strategic role in staff policy formulation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the HRM function inform all staff on existing WLB policies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has the HRM function offered you a high level of informal support for any the work life balance issues in the past?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is it the HRM function or your line manager that you go to addresses WLB issues? Why and why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In your opinion do existing WLB policies support staff retention?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ4</th>
<th>What are the types of supportive work practices at faculty level that influence level of WLB satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you receive strong social support by HOD/supervisor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is formal recognition given for your additional work hours outside classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a culture of collegiality &amp; openness that allows more freedom in employee expression within your organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there training seminars on time management skills?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research
3.7.4 CRAFTING THE RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

From the inductive theory process within the exploratory stage, with the use of qualitative data collection methods, theoretical generalizations arising through the process of collecting, reflecting, and interpreting empirical phenomena, will lead the way to the crafting of refined and more exact theoretical conceptual models and research propositions (Neumann, 2006).

“A proposition is a theoretical statement that specifies the relationship between two or more concepts…” (Neumann, 2006 pg.58). It is constructed as statements of observable phenomena, about the nature of such relationships that can allow some form of judgement on their degree of truthfulness (Neumann, 2006; Cooper & Schindler, 2006)

The deductive approach can take the research another step further to test the truthfulness of the proposition, by evaluating it against empirical evidence. When a proposition is formulated for empirical testing, it becomes a hypothesis. Descriptive and explanatory studies allow the development of a set of hypotheses that facilitate the crystallization of concepts about likely relationships that can be tested for statistical significance (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

3.8 DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH: STAGE TWO

Descriptive research aims to specify the characteristics of a particular target population by obtaining data from a sample of that population (Saunders et al. 2009). By seeking to find answers to questions of “who, what, when, where and how” variances in phenomena can be summarized in numerical format and quantifiable charts and graphs, thereby leading to findings and conclusions, that can be generalised to the wider population (Quinlan, 2011).

Within the context of the present research, the aim is to describe the nature and extent of work life balance difficulties and the nature of the human resource management interventions that are in place to address such issues. Quantitative techniques in the
form of statistical analysis can also lead identify evidence regarding cause-and-effect relationships between variables through hypothesis testing

3.8.1 Defining Variables and Constructs within the Research Propositions

Concepts are abstract ideas presented in words or symbolic forms. A construct defines the concept, thereby becoming the “building blocks of a theoretical model that is under construction” (EDU 03263, 2010, p.14). Concepts and constructs need to be operationally defined and categorised, in the form of variables that can be measured, to allow further empirical scrutiny (Cavana, et al., 2001).

Concepts and constructs facilitate the development of a proposition which is “a theoretical statement that specifies the relationship between two or more concepts” (Neumann, 2006: 58). The nature of the propositions constructed will in turn determine the type of data to be collected, thereby providing the guidelines to frame the data collection processes. Guided by the literature, four constructs and three to five indicators for each variable are presented in Table 3.15 (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

From the outcome of the qualitative data analysis process, it was seen that the critical factors that may or may not favour perceived work life balance among lecturers, were mainly present, within the spheres of work and not outside of work. The centrality of work appeared to override the centrality of family and personal domain, for a variety of reasons, outlined within the findings of the exploratory qualitative phase of the research. As such, the survey items included within the questionnaire focused on constructs to measure work related factors within the work life balance survey.
### Table 3.15: Development of constructs to frame data collection process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Conceptual definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic factors within academic jobs</td>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>Heavy work load of academic staff encroaches into their personal time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work scheduling</td>
<td>Evening and weekend class schedules disrupt personal routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual leave</td>
<td>Academic staff have limited discretion in utilising annual leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research projects</td>
<td>Staff doing research are not given reduced workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB provisions</td>
<td>Flexi-hours</td>
<td>Flexi-time is available for academic staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compressed work hours</td>
<td>Compressed work hours is available, for those pursuing post graduate studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff Engagement</td>
<td>Staff are consulted about flexible working arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplace nurseries</td>
<td>Workplace nurseries and facilities for breast feeding mothers are available at the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discretionary time off</td>
<td>Discretionary time off is given to staff to cope with domestic problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of HRM interventions in WLB issues</td>
<td>Strategic role</td>
<td>The HRM function holds a strategic role in addressing work life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication role</td>
<td>The HRM function communicates WLB policies to staff in a comprehensive manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal support</td>
<td>The HRM function offers a high level of informal and discretionary support on WLB issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Line manager role in WLB</td>
<td>Most of the WLB decisions are delegated to line manager by HR function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective WLB policies</td>
<td>Provided a set of WLB policies to support staff retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty work practices within the defined culture &amp; climate</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>There are adequate facilities to enable quality teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive role of line manager</td>
<td>The view that strong social support given to staff by HOD/supervisor will reduce work life balance difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Formal recognition and acknowledgement of staff contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty Culture &amp; climate</td>
<td>A culture of collegiality &amp; openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills training</td>
<td>In house training to enhance personal competency skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for the research*
3.8.2 DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Using deductive reasoning processes, the methodology framework is presented below to guide the research

**Figure 3.6: Deductive Research Design Framework**

![Deductive Research Design Framework Diagram](source)

Source: Developed for the research

3.8.2.1 Data Collection Methods

Three popular methods to gather high volumes of quantitative data from large sample sizes are the survey research methods. The three main methods are the telephone survey, structured interview and the self administered survey (Neumann, 2006).

Despite the many advantages of using telephone surveys, it is not possible to obtain telephone contact numbers of all academic staff within the said institutions. This option was therefore not considered.

The structured interview method uses printed interview schedules, with identical close ended questions and interview stimulus, administered to each respondent. Its
interactive nature allows interviewer to have greater control over the number of participant responses. However the time taken to administer and access to participants, at their convenience can present a challenge (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This method of data collection was also therefore not adopted.

This survey method is considered one of the most efficient ways to access a large sample frame and large group of respondents, within a relatively short span of time (Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2003). A well designed questionnaire facilitates data analysis and testing of concepts. The sampling frame conditions will determine the nature of access to respondents (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The most common methods to distribute the questionnaires are through the internet, by postal services, facsimile or personally as part of an intercept survey.

3.8.2.2 Questionnaire Design

A well designed questionnaire, in quantitative analysis, will facilitate ease of completion, and higher response rates, to collect data that is valid and reliable. The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study, with a note of thanks to respondents for their participation. Sensitive and loaded questions were avoided.

The wording of the questions must aim to elicit clear answers, significant and relevant to research questions or propositions, in order to facilitate its analysis using statistical methods (Sekaran 2010). It is important to assess the language proficiency of respondents to ensure that words and phrases used will address their level of understanding (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). Taking the above factors into consideration, a four page questionnaire was drafted with a total of thirty items, which the participants were invited to respond to. One item that was compulsory pertained to acknowledgement of respondent understanding of questions. Eight items pertained to demographic data and the rest of the twenty one items pertained to level of attitude responses of agreement or disagreement to survey statements. A copy of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix 2.
The presentation, phrasing and arrangement of questions must be orderly, with logical flow to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding and to facilitate the measurement of constructs and variables within a quantitative format. For questions that measure attitudes in social studies, respondents must be given the opportunity to indicate their level of agreement, disagreement or neutrality regarding an issue that is asked. The time taken for questionnaire completion, to take not more than twenty minutes, is critical in deciding the number of items to include within the questionnaire (Zikmund, 2003; Neuman, 2006).

3.8.2.3 Scale Measurement

In questionnaire survey research, scales of measurement are important to measure the levels of a particular construct. The most commonly used types of scales of measurement are nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scales. Nominal scales were used within the questionnaire to measure demographic factors like gender, marital status, age groups and years of working to permit frequency tables of responses from the various constructs to be measured. Interval scales that can compute the mean and standard deviations and conduct correlation studies, were used to measure attitude responses of participants (Sekaran, 2010).

As participants were required to select the category that was most likely to reflect their attitude, rating scales were more appropriate than ranking scales (Sekaran, 2010). Although there are several attitude rating scales available, the Likert scale (See Table 3.16) was chosen as most appropriate to allow respondents to express their attitude in a defined and guided format, and if need be to adopt a neutral stance where they had no opinion to express.

Table 3.16: Five point Likert Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8.2.4 Pilot Testing

Before commencing on the field survey, pilot testing on a small sample of targeted respondents is critical to obtain feedback on the relevance, clarity, validity and reliability of the survey instrument. Twenty participants within the sample frame were selected and the completed questionnaires were analysed, using SPSS 20 to assess the reliability levels and the internal consistency of the survey items. Also the feedback received from participants guided the amendments to the original format to arrive at the finalized survey questionnaire.

3.8.3 Sampling Design

A cross sectional survey is an effective means of gathering primary data, from a representative target population, for a descriptive research (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000; Zikmund, 2003). The use of samples is more pragmatic than doing a study on the entire population. A sample must ensure the right respondents are targeted to allow findings to be inferred on the wider population. As such, decisions regarding sampling frame, sampling methods and sample sizes to take, must be given the due care and consideration (Cavanna, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001; Cooper & Schindler, 2003; Sekaran, 2010). To reduce the potential of errors from data source, participants were profiled to ensure that the representative sample was selected (Cooper & Schindler 2003).

3.8.3.1 Sampling Frame

Most of the institutions had advised that staff should be accessed within their personal capacity. Being a specifically defined target population, specific contact points were needed. Staff email addresses of one institution were extracted from official websites and one institution did furnish the email contacts of staff, upon request. The other three institutions were willing to allow the distribution of printed questionnaires to staff, with instruction to drop completed forms into a designated and slotted box, placed at the reception counter by the researcher. Staff from these institutions, who were part of the researcher’s social network, also encouraged colleagues to participate in the survey.
3.8.3.2 Sampling Methods

Within most deductive research design, probability sampling is used, to ensure that samples chosen are representative of the target population, for findings to be generalized to the population (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Probability sampling techniques, within large sample sizes, ensure that respondents are statistically representative of the target population, thereby eliminating the potential for bias in sample selection (Sekaran, 2010). Nevertheless, the limited accessibility to the target population, became a mitigating factor, not to conduct sampling strictly according to the “canons of probability sampling” (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 197). A convenience and snowball sampling technique, was chosen as a more feasible option, to deliver a higher response rate. In this respect, it was noted, that the representativeness of the sample may be compromised, should there be some element of differences between those who did participate, and those who did not, within the target population (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.8.3.3 Sample Size

For quantitative research, large sample sizes are critical to address issues of validity and reliability. The right sample size however is determined by the degree of precision needed in inferring findings from the sample to the wider population, the extent of homogeneity within the population and the time and cost constraints in obtaining the samples.

A total of 400 questionnaires were sent to the academic staff employed within the same five institutions, from which the interview and focus groups participants were selected from. Questionnaires in digital form were sent to participants whose email addresses were known, together with the information sheets, to meet the need for informed consent. To further expand the field of potential respondents, printed questionnaires were delivered to the HR department of the institutions concerned, for subsequent distribution and collection. The chosen sample size was based on a probability estimate of a 50% response rate (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Roscoe, 1975) A total of 225 questionnaires were returned and from these only 214 questionnaires
were considered acceptable, and without missing values. The response rate was therefore 53% from the total sample frame.

3.9 RESEARCH QUALITY

This section considers the steps that had to be addressed in order to minimize the possibility of errors or biases that would compromise the quality of the research. (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.9.1. Addressing Research Quality at Exploratory Stage

The limitations of the qualitative approach in terms of validity, reliability, trustworthiness and authenticity had to be addressed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 cited in Bryman & Bell, 2003). However, the rigorous literature search that led to the building of research questions, the detailed justification of the choice of methodology and the choice of the appropriate sample participants, were steps taken to increase the trustworthiness of the whole qualitative process. A record of the qualitative data collection and analysis processes were also kept, for ‘audit trail’ purposes. Interview participants were approached at a later date after the data collection activities to review narratives and interpretations to confirm accuracy of the findings.

Communicative, pragmatic and transgressive validity criteria were considered within the research together with reliability criteria like interpretative awareness and procedures for truthful interpretation (Saunders et. al., 2009).

Care was taken to avoid subject error, or deviating away from the qualifying question, subject bias by getting politically correct answers, observer error, through misinterpretation of body language and observer bias through allowing personal prejudice and preference to cloud findings (Saunders et al., 2009).
3.9.2 Addressing Research Quality at Descriptive and Exploratory Stage

Goodness of measures, allows research instruments, to measure the variables they are supposed to measure, to meet validity criteria requirements.) The measurements should also deliver consistent and stable readings of the variables to meet reliability criteria requirements. Validity and reliability are important criteria within the quantitative research process. Issues of face validity, criterion validity and construct validity were addressed through methodological rigor guided by the authorities within the research process. (Saunders, et. al., 2009; Cavana, et. al., 2001; Bryman & Bell, 2007)

Reliability in research refers to the degree to which the research process can be replicated, such that consistent results are obtained to confirm the accuracy and precision of the measurement process (Cooper & Schindler, 1998). The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to test reliability and internal consistency of measures.

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

Being of a social nature, the research processes were guided by the provisions of the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans”. Ethics approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Graduate Research College, Southern Cross University before the primary data collection process could begin. The ethics approval number was ECN-11-066. A copy of the relevant documentation pertaining to Invitation for Interview, Survey letter and Information Sheets are attached as Appendices One to Five.

Accordingly measures to safeguard the rights of respondents in the focus group, individual interviews and questionnaire survey were taken and the following issues were addressed.

- Voluntary Participation without the use of financial incentives and the option to withdraw at any time, without having to provide any reason (Neuman 2006).
- Informed Consent was obtained through presenting a comprehensive set of information on the purposes of the research in the form of information sheets.
- Confidentiality and Anonymity of participant’s identity and contact details was guaranteed with assurance that it would be adhered to at all times.
• Integrity and accuracy of data and information was considered and safeguarded at all times within the research

3.11 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter highlights the research methodology used to obtain and analyse information that can provide answers that meet the research objectives, which to understand the nature of HRM interventions to address work-life balance issues in PHEI in Malaysia.

Stage one involved an exploratory research, applying inductive, qualitative techniques, to provide greater insight into the research problem and arrive at a refined theoretical framework with testable propositions. Stage two commenced with using the refined theoretical framework for further descriptive analysis to present greater clarity of the pertinent issues in explaining the work life balance phenomena under investigation. The descriptive research for this study involved primary data collection through survey questionnaire instrument. The quantitative data was generated in the forms of reliability coefficients, frequencies, mean, standard deviations and correlation and regression coefficient, used within the hypotheses testing process, to explain the relationship between variables. The final outcome for this study would be the generalisation of the findings. The next chapter will present the analysis of the research data from both the qualitative and quantitative stages.
CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.1) INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three presented the research methodology and design as a mixed methodology for the purpose of addressing the research topic which is *HRM interventions to address work life balance issues in private higher educational institutions within Malaysia*. The initial exploratory stage focused on an inductive, qualitative approach to gather data from focus groups and individual interviews, relevant to addressing the defined research questions. The second descriptive stage applied quantitative methods, to collect data that would be used for quantitative analysis.

This Chapter aims firstly, to use qualitative data analysis techniques to arrive at a refined theoretical model and a set of research propositions. The next phase of the data analysis process will apply quantitative techniques to further describe and evaluate the refined model and its related propositions (Punch, 2009)

4.1.1 Chapter Structure

Chapter Four is structured according to the framework in Table 4.1. This chapter is divided into five main sections. Section 4.1 presents the introduction and chapter overview. Section 4.2 discusses the qualitative data analysis process while Section 4.3 presents the refined theoretical model and the crafting of the research propositions. Section 4.5 presents the quantitative data analysis process while Section 4.6 presents the findings and conclusions, arrived at through the triangulation of both methodologies.
Source: Developed for this research

4.2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The value laden content within the data collected, are important to justify the knowledge production process. Qualitative approaches require data analysis to be done concurrently, within the data collection activities, accompanied by clear explanations, to ensure methodological rigour, systemization and transparency, to allow verifiable conclusions, from the study (Saunders et al., 2009). All interview questions, as well as participant responses were of equal importance. The
researcher adopted an insider perspective, using reflexive and cyclical process, to detect patterns and themes. Throughout the data analysis, triangulation and confirmatory audit allowed the exploring of diverse views of participants (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Neumann, 2006; Hair et al, 2007; Roulston, 2010).

In this aspect, the personal details and circumstances of the researcher are pertinent. The author is married and a mother of three, with a supportive husband and mother, available to help in domestic matters. She held a job position, initially as a chartered secretary, with job demands that curtailed a significant amount of family time. A career change after several years, into the field of academia, within the PHEI in Malaysia, promised not just the opportunity of shaping the minds of the future generation, but also the expectation that work life conflict would become a thing of the past. The gradual realization that such conflict still persisted albeit from a different set of job demands, stirred a curiosity to discover if the work life balance phenomena, well acknowledged by those in the professional, managerial and administrative fields, was also in existence within the field of academia. It therefore has to be acknowledged that the personal attributes and circumstances of the researcher would have to a certain extent, colored the manner of interpretation of responses of participants, both within the individual interview and the focus groups. Nevertheless the researcher was vigilant not allow personal experiences to compromise the objectivity or rigor of the qualitative data analysis (Saunders et al, 2007).

4.2.1 Qualitative Analytical Procedures

Computer assisted analysis processes, were not considered, as the nature of research required knowledge generation through reflexivity, critical thinking, evaluative and intuitive skills rather than a systematic retrieval and analysis of stored data (Coffrey & Atkinson, 1996; Roulston, 2010). The data collection process was guided by the theoretical framework to direct the research, and arrive at the relevant constructs in question (Neumann, 2006). These are categorized and coded as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Issues arising from the initial conceptual framework and research
4.2.2 Focus Group & Interview Sessions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, to define the limits of the research, and to determine the appropriate sample frame, only staff and faculty heads from the business, management and accountancy faculties were chosen. The rational for the restricted choice of faculty, was to acknowledge, the diversity of program objectives and content, within different disciplines, which would therefore affect the nature and scope of teaching methodologies, in the said institutions. Within the chosen faculties, most of the teaching was done either in lecture halls or tutorial rooms, without the need to conduct field work, perform experiments in a laboratory, or hold workshops within a simulated environment.

4.2.2.1. Summary of main themes emerging from the focus group sessions

As previously explained, only the academic workforce were present at the focus group sessions. Participants were presented with the four main research questions, framed as open questions, at focus group sessions, addressing the aims of the research. These questions are presented in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work life balance concepts under study</th>
<th>Main Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors that influence level of WLB satisfaction of jobholders</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of WLB provisions currently available to academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of HRM interventions to enhance level of WLB satisfaction of employees</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of supportive work practices at faculty level that influence level of WLB satisfaction</td>
<td>RQ4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4.2: Main research questions discussed at focus group
### Code for Main Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code for Main Research Question</th>
<th>Research Question presented to the focus groups as open questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What are the factors that will influence your level of WLB satisfaction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are the types of WLB provisions currently available at your institution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>What are the types of HRM interventions that attempt to enhance the level of WLB satisfaction of its academic workforce?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>What are the work practices offered at faculty level, that support better work life balance for its academic workforce?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research

“Concept formation is an integral part of data analysis and begins during data collection” (Neuman, 2006:460). All verbal and non verbal expressions of respondents were carefully documented to discover emerging patterns, themes and concepts (Cavana et al., 2001). Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. Open coding was used to condense raw data into categories, based on similarities of themes and concepts. Axial coding examined relationships between concepts for linkages leading to building the theoretical frameworks (Neuman, 2006). Selective coding allowed evaluation of preliminary data and codes in the way it supported the themes and concepts developed (Saunders et al., 2007).

The researcher had obtained permission for the use of a small meeting room at her workplace that provided the right environment for interactive and free flowing discussion. The processes as previously mentioned in Chapter Three, Section 3.7.2.3, pages 91 and 92 were carried out at both sessions. Except for the fact that the gender representation was skewed with seven female participants as compared to three male participants, the demographic diversity of the target respondents in terms of race, marital status, dependents and age group was well balanced. All participants held full time employment contracts.

In response to RQ1, all participants acknowledged the presence of work related causes for perception of work life imbalance, although at different levels of intensity, and using different coping strategies. Table 4.3 presents several strands that emerged on the participants’ evaluation of work life balance. The responses to RQ2 highlighted the variances in the type of workplace support that employees expect to assist them in achieving better work life balance and what they were currently receiving. Table 4.4
presented the points that were raised. The responses to RQ3 on the types of HRM intervention revealed what participants expected from the HRM function to support their work life balance issues and staff retention. These were presented in Table 4.5. The responses to RQ4 highlighted the components that participants viewed as necessary to build a supportive working environment that would facilitate better work life balance. These were presented in Table 4.6.

The level of agreement among focus group participants, regarding viewpoints from these themes appeared mixed, to a certain extent, therefore justifying further investigation through the individual interviews. Data was displayed, as overall responses, in narrative and table formats (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The main themes that emerged from these sessions are listed under each of the four main research questions and shown in Tables 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5, and Table 4.6.

**Research Question 1**

*What are the factors, that influence work life balance, for the academic staff in private higher educational institutions within Malaysia?*

The following themes emerged and were identified as relevant, at both the focus group sessions.

**Table 4.3: Evaluating perceptions on level of work life balance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Categories</th>
<th>Code for Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The different perceptions participants held, on the concept of work life balance</td>
<td>IQ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The demands within the personal life of participants</td>
<td>IQ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of domestic support systems that assist coping strategies</td>
<td>IQ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of conflict between work demands and personal life demands and the manner in which such issues are addressed</td>
<td>IQ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in workload to support for research initiatives and further studies</td>
<td>IQ5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for this research*

**Research Question 2**
What are the types of WLB provisions currently available within your institution?

The following themes emerged and were identified as relevant, at both the focus group sessions.

Table 4.4: Types of WLB programs currently available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Categories</th>
<th>Code for Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal provisions, for time off, to address non work demands</td>
<td>IQ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diverse nature and availability of flexible work options</td>
<td>IQ 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions regarding compressed work hours, and those eligible to apply.</td>
<td>IQ 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manner of consultation between the management and staff, on flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>IQ 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The issues on the provision of day care and a lactation room</td>
<td>IQ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of employee &amp; family assistance programs</td>
<td>IQ 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals for long service staff</td>
<td>IQ 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research

Research Question 3

What are the types of HRM interventions, that attempt to enhance work life balance quality of its academic workforce?

The following themes emerged and were identified as relevant, at both the focus group sessions.

Table 4.5: Types of HRM interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Categories</th>
<th>Code for Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff perceptions, on the strategic role of the HRM function, in staff policy formulation</td>
<td>IQ 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication effectiveness between the staff and the HRM function, on formal or informal work life balance policies</td>
<td>IQ 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of formal and informal support, from the HRM function, on work life balance issues.</td>
<td>IQ 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of discretion, delegated to the line manager, by the HRM function on work life balance issues</td>
<td>IQ 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The effectiveness of work life balance policies, to support staff retention

Source: Developed for this research

Research Question 4

What are the type of supportive work practices, offered at faculty level that lead to better work life balance?

The following themes emerged and identified as relevant, at both focus group sessions.

Table 4.6: Type of supportive work practices, offered at faculty level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Categories</th>
<th>Code for Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of facilities, for quality teaching processes.</td>
<td>IQ 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of social support and interaction, from faculty heads</td>
<td>IQ 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manner of formal recognition of additional work contribution, outside designated teaching load.</td>
<td>IQ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A culture of collegiality and openness, experienced by staff, at faculty level.</td>
<td>IQ 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of training seminars, on time management and personal Development</td>
<td>IQ 22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this research

4.2.2.2. Summary of main themes emerging from the personal interview sessions

As mentioned in Chapter Three, a pre-qualification exercise was done, to ensure that the twenty chosen participants were appropriate for the sample frame. In line with the qualitative analysis procedures which were outlined in Section 4.2, the responses of the interview participants were transcribed, interpreted and summarized, until the point of saturation was reached. Both confirmatory and contrasting evidence, from sources independent of each other, were used, to validate the search for truth. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Neumann, 2006; Hair et. al., 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Although the viewpoints of participants were recorded collectively at the focus group sessions, these same persons, when interviewed individually, with a set of questions framed with greater precision, were more candid and ingenuous in their response.
Greater elaboration of personal experiences and events were offered, to the issues previously discussed. The individual interviews, revealed the extent of disagreements, previously submerged within the focus groups. Inconsistencies between personal views and group consensus were revealed. Different responses arising from personal factors, job functions and institutional practices were detected. The views of the participants for each of the interview questions are restated below to arrive at an overall response statement for each of the interview questions.

As the qualitative inquiry was emergent, and exploratory to capture new ideas and insights during the personal interview sessions, the resulting “thick descriptions” required the researcher to use reflexivity, to capture not just explicit messages but also a reflection of feelings and viewpoints, to better understand its impact on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, to be weaved into the knowledge creation process. As such “reflective statements” were included at the conclusion of each summary gathered from the personal interviews, to facilitate such knowledge creation processes (Cavana et al., 2001).

Data Analysis for Research Question 1: (RQ1)

What are the types of WLB difficulties currently faced by academic staff in private higher educational institutions within Malaysia?

The following interview questions, IQ1, IQ2, IQ3, IQ4, IQ5, IQ6, IQ7 & IQ8 were used for obtaining answers for Research Question 1

Interview Question 1 (IQ1)

What is your view of work life balance?

Response

Work life balance (WLB) was seen as important by all participants, regardless of gender, marital status, age, or presence of dependents. Various reasons were cited, ranging from dual career families, coping with being a single parent, long working hours, commuting, need for quality of life, giving attention to dependents, studies, social activities, etc.
One participant, in his mid twenties, stated, “I don’t understand why work life balance is something seen as relevant only to parenting responsibilities. Sometimes caring for our elders is more demanding, leaving out the expenses involved. Besides having kids is an option and caring for one’s aged parents is not. We singles are also entitled to equal access to work life balance provisions, even if we do not choose marriage and raising families but spend time on what is meaningful in our life, like travelling, pursuing hobbies, etc.” Another male participant mentioned that “Accommodating work life balance provisions will divert resources disproportionately mainly to parents which would then be unfair to those who are single or childless”.

Two participants, from the over forty age groups, considered WLB as not significant within Malaysia, being more of a Western concept that had legal clout in the developed nations, mainly through legislative provisions. The same circumstances, they said, did not apply in Malaysia. They mentioned that they would welcome initiatives in this aspect, but were doubtful on whether Malaysian society took this concept seriously. All the respondents understood the meaning of work life balance and appreciated its value at the workplace.

**Reflective Statement 1**

*These views are supported by literature (Friedman, et. al., 1996; Kossek, Lewis & Hammer, 2010), that work life balance is an important factor to all individuals, in achieving quality working life, irrespective of diverse demographic profiles, commitments or interests.*

**Interview Question 2 (IQ2)**

*Are there significant demands on your personal life that can encroach on work demands? How comfortable were you to discuss such issues with your superior or HR manager?*

**Response**
A new mother admitted that caring for her young infant, after her two month long maternity leave was exhausting. Two participants mentioned ill parents, to whom they wished to devote more time. Staff with kids cited insufficient time, for parenting needs, with one father wishing he had more time for tennis with his “chums”. Another mother felt that after work hours, before bedtime, gave her insufficient time to supervise her children’s schoolwork, and feared her kids would lag behind academically, within their highly competitive school environment. Yet another cited stress, brought about by a series of unreliable domestic help. All participants however acknowledged these issues as an inevitable part of working life that were manageable, and unlikely to encroach on work demands, to trigger WLB conflict. They would also not feel comfortable about bringing such issues to their supervisors, preferring instead to find solutions within their personal capacity.

The HR managers were mainly of the view that participants must first attempt to resolve personal difficulties, impacting work demands, on their own, before bringing it to the attention of their managers, at the workplace. Approaching the HR function, would have to be the last resort, where some level of formal adjustments, temporary or otherwise, may have to be made, within their job contracts. From their past experience however, it appeared that most staff, are unwilling to resort to such extreme measures, for fear of jeopardizing their job security, career progression or earnings level.

One HR manager said, “I was approached by expectant mother asking why she had to give extra classes to finish the syllabus and why we could not get a part time staff to replace her. Her existing work load was not heavy and so it was about willingness rather than ability. As she had no medical condition other than her pregnancy, she was advised to give the extra classes for the sake of the students before leaving for her confinement. She complied without suffering any negative health consequences”

**Reflective Statement 2**

These views are supported by literature (Bryne, 2005; Poelmans, et.al., 2008) that the work life balance concept cannot be clearly defined and relates to the level of satisfaction with both family and work roles.

**Interview Question 3 (IQ3)**
Do you have any kind of domestic support system to help you manage your non work responsibilities?

Response
Participants who were married cited strong support from their working spouses, despite experiencing the common issues relevant to dual income families. One however, was a divorced mother, who received inadequate child support from her former husband. Children were cared for by child-minders, (professional and otherwise), parents who lived nearby, or out of town, whom they visited on weekends. One participant mentioned her need to work full time, being a source of financial support for her parents, who had no old age pension. They in turn, looked after her children, for the day. Two single persons, who had dependent elders living with them, mentioned employing maids, although maids themselves could sometimes be problematic. All participants agreed that their earnings level was sufficient, to afford domestic and childcare services.

A few said that they had no need for domestic support. There were no parents with “latchkey kids”, below twelve years of age, although one confessed that he and his wife were forced, to adopt this practice for a while, until childcare issues were resolved. One single parent, with a teenage son, left on his own at home after school, did not see this situation as a problem as he was doing well at school. Another participant though, commented that, “as Malaysian society advances economically, the workforce will face similar situations, as in developed nations, like lack of adequate family support, expensive childcare, etc. As it stands, interests groups are already lobbying the government, to compel employers to introduce work life balance provisions. Only then, will we see significant changes at the workplace”
All participants agreed that their existing domestic status quo was not a compelling factor, to either to resign, or change the terms of their contract.

Reflective Statement 3
This view supports literature that childcare and elder care are important issues to consider across diverse boundaries and cultures, in relation to work life conflict (Omar & Ahmad, 2009).
Interview Question 4 (IQ4)

Have your work demands encroached on your personal to cause work life conflict? If so please explain and provide examples.

Response

1. Changing class schedules, extending to evening & weekend classes.
Several participants mentioned the changing class schedules each new semester, extending class time to evenings and weekends, disrupted their after work routine. One participant from Institution 1 stated that as she had made it clear within her job contract that she could not work evenings and weekends, and her requests were complied. Another participant stated, “Our routine at work is in a constant state of flux so we must always work around our work schedule and not the other way around. A request from one staff about changes will mean a whole lot of juggling in the master plan and others will be affected including students. So, very often they will not cooperate unless we push it, which we usually don’t.” This view was shared by a little more than half of the participants.

2. Insufficient time within normal working hours to effectively address job demands.
Most participants agreed that work taken home to complete was the alternative to staying back after normal work hours and did to a certain extent encroach upon non work demands to cause work life conflict. Participants within the five different institutions, all stated that job functions and expectations from a lecturer were diverse and onerous. Apart from the teaching workload, they had invigilation duties, lesson plan preparations, coursework/ exam questions to set, answer scripts to mark, not to mention the pastoral care and counseling extended to students and at times being on duty for road shows, open days and convocation ceremonies. Class sizes could vary rising to about a hundred and fifty students, making class management a formidable task, not to mention the extra assignments and exam scripts to mark. All agreed that though formally assigned teaching hours are recognized, as a measure of lecturer workload, little consideration is given towards
class size and the accompanying pressures it entails. Views varied however, on how much of their personal time was taken, to meet work demands, but there appeared to be a strong correlation to class size and teaching workload.

Participants from Institution 1 generally agreed on time sufficiency for both teaching and research, citing an average teaching load of ten to twelve hours per week, with high level of discretion to decide on student counseling times. The same did not apply for participants from institution 2 and 5 who indicated insufficient time for teaching and research within normal working hours with an average of fifteen to twenty two teaching hours per week. The comment given by one was, “Seems like we are within a high pressure corporate world, with strong focus on bottom line. Teaching is supposed to be more altruistic and aimed at creating a learning culture.”

Those from Institution 3 cited their pressures stemming from the need to produce tangible research output, despite having insufficient time, within normal hours. Staff from institution 4 held varied views, having flexi hours with an average teaching time of eighteen hours, but not being pressured to do research. When questioned about their personal inclination in doing research, the response was that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors were absent to drive such inclinations.

3. Little discretion in annual leave utilization

All participants agreed to teaching across several programs, with different semesters and intakes. A wider range of study programs was used as a business strategy, to attract greater student enrolment. Program terms breaks, meant for students, were therefore unavailable to staff. Participants from Institutions 2, 3, 4 & 5 agreed that term breaks at faculty level were short and coinciding with a public holiday, when travel and accommodation was expensive. Others did mention that as long as prior notification was given, to arrange for replacement classes, staff were allowed to apply for their annual leave. Participants from Institution 1 had no issues with leave application, as there were longer term breaks, where they could use their annual leave. Two faculty heads interviewed agreed that, without significant reasons, they would be wary of approving leave applications of over ten days, during term time. The same would apply for attending conferences overseas, unless the applicant was invited to
present a paper. Student support cannot be compromised. Another faculty head however said she would be flexible depending on the situation. The HR managers again reiterated that this was an operational matter and not relevant at policy level. A policy of “forced leave” during the short term breaks was practiced in Institution 2 & 5, to utilize annual leave and to limit leave application during term time and the consequent class cancellation.

One married participant lamented her inability to plan school holidays with her family, because of the restriction in annual leave application, while another, who is single, expressed regret for being unable to book discounted travel tickets, in advance, for overseas travel.

Both HR managers and academic heads held similar views that leave application issues can be addressed at faculty level, when sufficient notice is given, to make the necessary adjustments and requests are justifiable. Any other approach will open the floodgates, for all types of requests and accusations of unfairness and inconsistency. They were however, unable to commit on the types of factors that define the term “justifiable”.

Faculty heads were in agreement that teamwork, trust and mutual support were critical for smooth work flow at faculty level. They all upheld an open door policy, and staff were advised that any personal or work related problems they may have, that created work life conflict, could be resolved into some form of mutually acceptable agreement. As mentioned by one faculty head, “Spending more time at the workplace, is no guarantee of quality work, from my staff. It is their satisfaction and enablement that is the key factor.”

**Reflective Statement 4:**

These views support literature on the increasingly demands on the academic role with consequent role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict which can become significant triggers that influence perceived work life balance satisfaction. The unique features of academic roles within the Malaysian context are however unclear and thus merits further study. Common areas identified are insufficient time under normal working hours, the growing student numbers that may require class schedules to be
extended to evenings and weekends, and the lack of discretion in personal leave application. Lack of satisfaction in these areas may even trigger intention to leave (Mohd Noor, 2011).

**Interview Question 5 (IQ 5)**

*Are you given sufficient reduction in teaching workload to allow for more time for research projects and further studies?*

**Response**

Participants from institutions 1, 2, & 3 were desirous to conduct research and produce quality output papers, worthy of publication. Participants from Institution 2, & 3, expressed dissatisfaction with heavy teaching workloads averaging eighteen to twenty two hours, per week, allowing insufficient time for research. Participants from Institution 1 were satisfied with workload of about ten to twelve hours, per week, giving sufficient time for research. One participant from Institution 3 mentioned being informally promised a teaching load of about twelve hours, per week as incentive to produce research papers. She was instead loaded with an average of 18 hours, leading her to contemplate changing jobs, in the near future. Participants from Institution 4 & 5 were allowed the choice to focus on teaching & research or teaching alone. For a reduced teaching load, they had to show proof of research undertaken, defined within their key performance indices. One staff from institution 2 mentioned “We are exhorted to do our best to attend to students outside classes. How can we be available to them when our teaching loads are so heavy? At the same time targets for research output are included as performance expectations. To me it is a hopeless situation!”

**Reflective Statement 5**

The views are supported by literature that academics have a knowledge creation role to play within industrial partnerships (Deery, 2008) and are expected to be continually involved in research and publications. The implications of such expectations placed on the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia, appears to be a significant factor that can lead to work life balance difficulties.
Data Analysis for Research Question 2 (RQ2)

What are the types of WLB programs currently available within your institution?

The following interview questions, IQ6, IQ7, IQ8, IQ9, were used for obtaining answers for Research Question 2:

Interview Question 6 (IQ 6)

Is there flexi time available? Can you describe its features?

Response

One HR manager mentioned that flexible options were available to compensate staff who worked outside normal working hours, while another cited flexibility was needed, to engage academic staff critical to institutional success. One faculty head from Institution 5 felt that competitive pressures and a strong management control orientation, led to the undermining of flexibility requests from staff. This view was supported by the HR manager from the same institution. Flexi-hours were available within institution 1 and 4, staff being free to leave, once scheduled duties were over. Fixed working hours were implemented within Institutions 2, 3 & 5, but all faculty heads mentioned being authorised, within certain limits, to decide on time flexibility requests. At Institution 5 all staff were given the options to choose staggered working hours schemes, to extend operational hours beyond the stipulated 8 hours. Staff from Institutions 2 & 5, were issued monthly attendance and punctuality reports. One HR manager however acknowledged that flexibility expectations would become more prevalent, in the future, as most academic staff came from the Generation X and Y age groups, who demanded work life quality. It appears that policies regarding flexible work options vary at institutional level. Most options are restricted only to time flexibility, within the same day or week and mainly to encourage staff to accept working hours beyond normal time.

Reflective Statement 6

There is limited availability of flexi-time work options, for academic staff, in most PHEI within Malaysia, for a variety of reasons, but not for better work life balance. Such reasons appear to relate more to recruitment and retention of a professional workforce, many of whom were from the Generation X and Y groups, within a tight
labor market. It appears that the negative outcomes from flexible work options identified within the literature do not manifest within these institutions. The reasons could be that such flexibility options are addressed at an operational and discretionary level, thus offering greater fit with the ad hoc day to day needs of the workforce as compared to crystallized formal flexible options that may not deliver such leeway to employees. Greater discretion given to the line manager in decisions regarding flexible work arrangements, but in line with adequate information support through the HRIS would greatly facilitate better work life balance.

**Interview Question 7 (IQ 7)**

*Is compressed hours offered within your institutions?*

**Response**

All participants at institutions 1, 2 & 3 agreed that such provisions were available, upon formal application by staff but only for study and research purposes, and not for better work life balance. Weekly teaching workloads would still remain the same. Contractual staff could include it within their employment terms and conditions, for whatever reasons. Participants at institutions 4 and 5 stated lack of awareness of such options, within their institutions.

**Reflective Statement 7:**

*Full time academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia can formally apply for compressed work week, only for reasons of conducting research and further study and not for better work life balance. Also the lack of adequate information meant that only a limited segment of academic workforce could avail themselves of this benefit. More emphasis should be given to this WLB option, which has been identified within literature as being more positively associated with better work life balance as compared to flexi-hours (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011).*
Interview Question 8 (IQ 8)

*Are you consulted about flexible working arrangements in general?*

**Response**

One faculty head made a wry comment that consulting staff about flexibility options may help reduce the volume of medical leave applications. Another had reservations that it may lead to abuse of freedom with staff being unavailable to students outside classroom sessions. His view was that “most PHEI adopt bureaucratic management styles, with emphasis placed on efficiency and smooth administrative workflow. It would be problematic to engage staff in decisions on flexible work options. We need uniformity and consistency for all staff.”

The general agreement of participants from institutions with fixed working hours, was that a limited form of consultation on flexibility was negotiated at faculty meetings on an ad hoc basis, to accommodate mainly institution needs but allowing some trade-off with staff in the process. To quote one participant, “Technological innovations allow more innovative and creative options, like e-learning & mentoring support, that delivers both superior performance and greater autonomy and discretion to employees, to better manage their work-life boundaries. The academic work force have the intellectual capability to provide input into managerial decision making and this factor has been largely ignored at the senior management level in our institutions.” This supports the view that staff would prefer a greater degree of consultation on flexible options.

**Reflective Statement 8:**

Academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia are only consulted about flexible work option to limited extent, and in an informal, ad hoc manner. The role of the HR function in disseminating adequate information, on flexible work options, using formal communication channels, will allow more informed choices to be made by the employees that can contribute significantly to better work life balance. The HRIS can play a significant role in this matter, with interactive access by the academic workforce.
**Interview Question 9 (IQ 9)**

*Is there provision of creche, day care and place for breast feeding mothers? How do you view such provisions?*

**Response**

Most of the married participants, and those with dependent children, agreed that there were no such provisions, although some who were single stated a lack of awareness.

All welcomed it as a good idea as such a facility may prove a boon for parents. To quote the words of one parent, “After all, we have the classrooms and can enlist the help of students to organize games and activities, to keep them occupied during the long school holidays. It will help reduce commuting time, for parents who can also drop in during free time to supervise children’s school work. Meals are not a problem, with canteens available. Parents will be happy to pay for their services and participate as well in between classes. Private institutions today have enough funds to invest in staff and work life balance is a reality that management cannot ignore.”

However upon further probing, he expressed uncertainty on his own uptake of such facilities, citing unforeseen issues that may arise. Besides, he said, the present childminder was reliable and trustworthy and it may not be worth the risk of disrupting the existing status quo. His view was supported by others who felt that their commitment to using such facilities would need careful consideration. Nevertheless, they mentioned existing newspaper reports, about restrictions on foreign maids and more stringent control on childcare, which would make finding quality childcare more expensive and difficult in the future.

Another participant who had recently returned from her maternity leave spoke about her difficulties, without a designated private room for expression of breast milk. Faculty heads also welcomed the prospect with the comment that, “This will even encourage the employees to put in extra hours at work if they know their kids are within the premises, are safely cared for and easily accessible to them.”

Two HR managers also expressed reservations, on the feasibility of such options, with existing space and security constraints, investments costs, training of providers, let alone the rules and regulations covering daycare at the workplace, imposed by the
authorities. They were unsure on its sustainability, and if the initial uptake of such facilities would be large enough to justify the set up costs involved. Another HR manager was open to such options if there was a genuine need. He did mention the availability of these facilities within the public universities and that it may be worthwhile for private universities to emulate such policies. To quote his words “The private sector always follows the initiatives started in the public sector. So why not follow in childcare facilities as well?”

**Reflective Statement 9:**
Workplace nurseries and baby friendly facilities are appreciated by many academic staff in PHEI in Malaysia, but they will need more information before deciding to use such facilities. The increasing trend within the public universities, both within Malaysia and elsewhere should be adequate incentive to drive the PHEI within Malaysia in the same direction, to meet the needs of those who would value such benefits. Although such calls to provide workplace nurseries and childcare provisions at the workplace has been a constant agenda at the Women’s Summit conferences in Malaysia, such calls have not been considered by the PHEI, as a means to allow the academic staff to have better work life balance.

**Interview Question 10 (IQ 10)**

*Describe what you know about employee & Family Assistance Programs within your work organization.*

**Response**
Most were in agreement over the discretionary employee benefits given like hospitalization, life insurance, discounts on tuition for immediate family members, etc on top of statutory benefits. Scholarships are also available in Institutions 1, 2 & 3 for post graduate programs together with research grants and reimbursements of expenses for presenting papers at local and international conferences. Long services awards, with cash, gifts and certificates are offered during official company functions. Share options schemes are also in place as most of the institutions are public listed organizations. There was a general feeling that better provisions for family assistance would be welcomed. The HR managers and faculty heads however had no comment.
Reflective Statement 10:
There are several employee and family assistance provisions for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia, but under the category of employee welfare or benefits used for recruitment advantages rather than work life balance. Although several such benefits are given in addition to the statutory benefits, their relevance to work life balance is limited. Thus more family friendly benefits would prove useful to support better work life balance. (Hein & Cassirer, 2010)

Interview Question 11 (IQ 11)
Are there sabbaticals for long service staff?
Response
Only participants from Institution 1 were aware of sabbaticals although they had not personally availed themselves of it. Participants from Institution 2, 3, 4 & 5 were unsure, as there was no formal announcement as such. All agreed that sabbaticals were important to acknowledge long service contributions and free time for research, like common practice at the public universities in Malaysia.

Reflective Statement 11:
There is limited information on sabbatical provision to academic workforce in PHEI, within Malaysia. Although its presence is acknowledged, none of the twenty participants, including the more senior staff, have considered applying for sabbatical leave. The reason is lack of sufficient information considering their entitlements to such provisions.

Interview Question 12 (IQ 12)
Are there formal provisions to allow time off when you face family and domestic difficulties?
Response
All respondents agreed on absence of any formal provisions. One participant mentioned bringing his child to work during school holidays, when the child minder was indisposed. No objection was raised by the manager, but under the condition that this practice was an exception and not a norm, and work was not disrupted. A play
room or designated play area would have proven very useful, he said, to make the whole process less stressful for the staff and their kids.

One participant from Institution 3 mentioned her difficulty in accompanying her father to hospital, when he was undergoing treatment for cancer, as it was near exams and classes could not be cancelled and rescheduled. Nevertheless her faculty head was very supportive and assigned some classes to a part time lecturer, with some flexibility for her to leave the workplace, when classes were not on and to return to officially log off. A participant from Institution 2 spoke about her insulin dependent mother, who needed emergency medical attention, but she had a scheduled morning class. Her faculty head advised that it was too late to cancel classes and she had to make alternative arrangements. She was hurt, that a life threatening crisis was undermined, for fear of student complaints.

All faculty heads expressed their inclination to support staff having to deal with family difficulties, on an informal basis, provided timely notification was given. Requests from staff, for teaching schedule changes are also given the same consideration.

All three HR managers agreed that annual leave and unpaid leave provisions were available for staff to cope with personal difficulties. Any operational issues arising, outside such provisions, would be addressed at the discretion of their respective faculty heads. Some measure of work life conflicts of the staff were being addressed on an informal, ad hoc discretionary basis that may lack fairness and consistency. Managerial decision outcomes were also dependent on timely notification which at times be not possible.

**Reflective Statement 12:**

There are no formal provisions in place, for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia, for time off to address personal difficulties, but there are informal, ad hoc provisions, given at the discretion of the faculty head or supervisor. It is seen that the level of support offered from faculty heads and the workplace culture will contribute significantly to the ability of the employee to cope with such occasions where non work factors have intruded into the sphere of work. Failure to address such staff needs in an effective and timely manner will trigger the potential for work life imbalance and emotional dissonance leading to intention to leave.
Data Analysis for Research Question 3

What are the types of HRM interventions, that attempt to enhance work life balance quality of its academic workforce

The following interview questions, IQ13, IQ14, IQ15, IQ16 & IQ17, were used for obtaining answers for Research Question 2

Interview Question 13(IQ 13)

In your view does the HRM function play a strategic role in staff policy formulation?

Response

Three participants viewed the HR function as performing merely administrative functions to comply with legislative requirements and implementing staff related policies, decided at corporate level. Other participants however agreed on the strategic role of the HR function and their advisory capacity to top management.

As stated by one participant “The HRM function has a critical role in championing employee needs, to allow all staff to be able to reconcile work and non work demands through work life balance initiatives. They can present it as a business case, not just for staff welfare but to attract and retain the right workforce.”

Faculty heads claimed a shared strategic role, with the HR function, in making critical staff related decision. The HR function while acknowledging their strategic and employee related roles confessed, the role dissonance experienced, when faced with the profit driven focus at corporate level. One HR manager did mention proposing initiatives, at corporate level, aimed at transformation of corporate performance of institution, with academic staff, as key participants. This related to the institution being upgraded, by the Ministry of Higher Education, from a University College to a University. These initiatives were aimed at giving academic staff more time, flexible work arrangements, sabbaticals and resources, for research and further study.
Reflective Statement 13:  
The HRM function appears to perform mainly administrative roles, and some strategic roles in an advisory capacity in PHEI within Malaysia. This supports current literature as a common occurrence within most institutions of higher learning, elsewhere in other nations as well (Brewster & Holt Larsen, 2000; Guest & Clinton, 2007). There is some level of role dissonance faced by HR specialists, as employee champions. However, together with line managers, they do take up the role of strategic partner and employee champions, to a limited extent. Within the modern workplace, the importance of the HRM function for the effective utilization of the workforce is commonly acknowledged. There should therefore be no impediment from the top management of the PHEI within Malaysia, should the HRM initiate new interventions at a strategic level to address work life balance issues of their most important resource, namely the academic workforce.

Interview Question 14 (IQ 14)  
**Does the HRM function inform all staff on existing WLB policies?**

Response  
The general consensus among all participants was that WLB policies pertained mainly to compressed work week, sabbaticals and flexi hours, within a limited number of institutions. However there was no formal information given to staff on how they could claim such entitlements, and each application for such entitlements would be processed on based on the unique context of the situation. On matters concerning staff policies, like employee welfare, leave applications, company sponsored social events, dinners and training programs etc, the HR function, provides regular and comprehensive information on an official basis. One long serving staff from institution 5 commented, “We are sometimes embarrassed to approach the HR function for personal requests as we are unclear on what were are formally entitled to and do not want to display our ignorance before them.”

Reflective Statement 14:  
Although the HRM function provides formal channels for comprehensive information on staff policies, only informal channels are used in the area of work life balance
provisions for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. Greater visibility should be given on the informational roles of the HRM function in the area of work life balance provisions. However, as the organization is liable for whatever information is offered within formal channels, specific HRM interventions should be undertaken, to come up with a set of policies and practices, implemented through both formal and informal means in a coherent and integrated manner that is also inclusive of the other business and operational needs within the organization.

Interview Question 15 (IQ 15)

Has the HRM function offered you a high level of informal support for any the work life balance issues in the past? What about others you know about?

Response

One participant, from institution 2, which implemented electronic attendance recording mentioned that “This practice was derogatory for academics who were the knowledge workers delivering intellectual capital and not manual operatives.” The rest of the participants also held the view that the HRM function as not intuitive enough, to acknowledge the special role of academia, to deliver superior teaching and research quality, thereby raising institutional repute.

Another participant stated the absence of employee surveys in their institution that seek feedback on employee views and needs, though they were exceptionally diligent with student surveys. This was an indication of, the inadequate level of support accorded to the academics, as compared to that given to students. Yet others were unsure, as they there were no incidences where they looked for informal support from the HR function. Mainly such expectations were towards their faculty heads.

On another note, one participant did mention that she had received informal support from the HR function, when there was a disagreement with her superior. HR had agreed to intervene, to advice on a mutually acceptable solution. She praised the discretion and concern demonstrated by the HR manager. But for their intervention, she would have “resigned and left in a huff.”

The HR managers and faculty heads, agreed that the task of offering informal support to staff was delegated to faculty heads, and that informal support by the HR function, although indirect, was given. On top of that one HR managers said that “they all
practiced ‘open door policies’ and would accommodate any staff situation, with the utmost discretion. “

**Reflective Statement 15:**

*In the absence of formal policies on WLB issue, the HRM function, works jointly with line managers, to offer a high level of informal support, on WLB issues, to academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia. The level of delegation accorded by the HRM function to line managers, to be the gatekeepers in work life balance decisions shows the informal support of the HRM function, within the PHEI in Malaysia. Such actions should however be supported by the recruitment, training and development of faculty heads with strong people management skills, for effective decision choices, within this area. The informal support offered by the HRM function on WLB issues, through the line management should be reinforced by formal HR strategies to develop managerial competencies.*

**Interview Question 16 (IQ 16)**

*Is it the HRM function or your line manager that you go to address WLB issues?*

**Why and why not?**

**Response**

For work life balance issues, it was agreed among participants that the first line of reference must be the line manager and only if issues prove difficult to resolve, will the manager solicit the involvement of the HR function. Participants from three institutions agreed that, it was HR policy, for staff to comply with the chain of command, authority structure, while those from the other two were unsure as within their organization, the HR function was quite approachable and practiced as open door policy. Besides they were always accessible via email. All faculty managers and HR managers agreed on the view that the HR function works in unison, with line managers, in all staff related matters, including issues like illness, pay revision and extension of employment contract.
One male staff mentioned that, “Both the faculty heads and the HR function are more willing to listen to legitimate time off requests from parents but when I asked for time off for mission work I was told that my reasons were not pressing enough.” Another female staff said, “My faculty head is not as supportive regarding work life balance as compared to several of the other faculty heads. Thus WLB decisions should come from the HR function and not left to the sole discretion of the faculty heads.”

**Reflective Statement 16:**
Most of the WLB decisions of academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia are delegated by the HRM function to line managers, but there is allowance for staff to approach the HRM function directly, if the situation merits such an action. The presence of both options to the academic staff provides greater opportunity for the academic staff to approach management to address their work life balance issues.

**Interview Question 17 (IQ 17)**

*In your opinion, do existing WLB provisions support staff retention?*

**Response**
Participants commonly agreed that their decision to remain was based on factors like pay, staff welfare benefits, recognition, some measure of job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships. Several participants from Institution 2, 3 and 4 did mention that time flexibility and compressed work week, although offered in a limited form, on an ad hoc piecemeal basis, was an important factor, at that point of time when it was needed. Otherwise the management would have been viewed as uncaring and inhumane, thus giving valid reasons for resignation. Nevertheless they mentioned colleagues who had left or converted to part time teaching, with substantial decrease in earning power. They felt that, had a bundle of formalized WLB options been in place, to address work life conflict issues, these same staff may have been retained.

Most staff were unwilling to gain flexibility, at the expense of reduced earnings level, although a minority claimed that more time and convenience was a fair trade off for money, although they were unclear on the quantum to determine what was fair.

One faculty head stated that a wider range of WLB options like career break schemes, to encourage new mothers to return after childbirth, workplace nurseries,
elder care, study break, would encourage retention but it may also increase the complexity of administrative arrangements. All HR managers however claimed that mainly resignations arose from reasons not related to work life conflicts but better pay, prospects and opportunity to work nearer to home. The view of the majority thus seemed to be that it was pay and relationships at work and not WLB options that were the common denominator, to influence staff retention decisions.

**Reflective Statement 17:**

*The available WLB provisions in PHEI within Malaysia play a limited and supportive role in retention of its academic staff, in conjunction with other more significant factors like pay, benefits, job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships. Research studies have confirmed the positive correlation between work life imbalance and turnover intention (Mohd. Noor, 2011)*

**Data Analysis for Research Question 4**

**What are the type of supportive work practices, offered at faculty level that lead to better work life balance?**

The following interview questions, IQ18, IQ19, IQ20, IQ21 & IQ22, were used for obtaining answers for Research Question 4

**Interview Question 18 (IQ 18)**

*Is there provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching?*

The general view of all staff was that teaching facilities were adequate with the right resources, technological support and learning portal. All institutions subscribed to well known electronic websites for access to journals, electronic books, statistical data, etc. Computer and projectors were used, to avoid the need to print and distribute lecture notes, which was seen as a great convenience. Also regulatory bodies like the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) would conduct audits to ensure that such facilities were in place. Faculty heads stated that they were given an adequate budget to ensure provision of teaching support.

However some participants complained about the large, classrooms and lecture halls that one participant said, “*Subscribed to the Taylorist regime, and the insidious emphasis on the need to churn out large scale student numbers.*” Also there were
instances of equipment and systems malfunction that would disrupt classes. Nevertheless such instances were infrequent.

**Reflective Statement 18:**

*It appeared that most institutions had in place well managed and adequate facilities to enable quality teaching of academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. This supports the view of Nik Muhammad et.al., (2009) on the high emphasis that Malaysian institutions place on teaching quality, with quality audits being regularly conducted by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (COPIA, 2008). The relationship to work life balance however is indirect in that while work pressures are facilitated, it leads to better personal time and stress management.*

**Interview Question 19 (IQ 19)**

**Do you receive strong social support from HOD/supervisor?**

**Response**

Most participants agreed that faculty heads were supportive, tactful and willing to listen to their views. One mentioned the relaxed and friendly atmosphere during faculty meetings, with refreshments and faculty sponsored lunches, every quarter, with sharing of jokes between the head and staff. Nevertheless most faculty heads had a very tight schedule and though willing to listen to problems, were mainly focused on work related issues. The faculty heads stated their commitment towards supporting staff, as teamwork and mutual understanding went a long way in forging relationships and increasing staff ownership of high faculty performance. HR managers agreed that training was given to faculty heads on leadership, teambuilding and motivation skills to increase their people management skills.

**Reflective Statement 19:**

*It appeared that most academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia are in agreement on the strong social support received from their respective faculty heads. Again this is reflective of the collective oriented Malaysian culture on the greater good for the majority. Literature also emphasizes the importance of such support from the line manager to contribute towards better work life balance (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011).*
Interview Question 20 (IQ 20)

*Is formal recognition given for your additional work effort, outside of designated classroom sessions?*

One participant mentioned being very touched at a staff meeting, when his faculty head praised the way he would stay back to counsel and coach students but at the same time, reminding him that family time was also important. Almost all institutions have student feedback processes, to capture and measure the level of support given to students by their lecturers, both in and out of class. Official designations like “lecturer advisor” are given to staff involved in the various student clubs and activities. Also incentives are offered to staff for research publications, presentations at conferences, and industrial support. These criteria are factored into performance appraisal systems, to increase motivation and organization citizenship behavior.

**Reflective Statement 20:**

*Formal recognition is given, for additional effort outside of classroom sessions, to academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia that increases motivation and organisation citizenship behavior. Rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic are universally recognized in the field of social sciences as contributing towards greater motivation levels, and feelings of well being (Wood, et al., 2010). Such outcomes are positively associated with perception of work-life balance satisfaction.*

Interview Question 21 (IQ 21)

*Is there a culture of collegiality & openness that allows more freedom in employee expression within your organization?*

All participants agreed that social gatherings are organized by the HR function on a regular basis, to celebrate the main communal festivals in Malaysia, where management would mingle informally with the workforce, to promote an atmosphere of trust, appreciation, acceptance and tolerance of one another, despite the demographic diversity of the workforce. Faculty heads and HR managers mentioned little restriction placed on the duration of lunch breaks, unless classes or meetings were scheduled. Most staff would have regular lunch partners and at times eat at restaurants away from the campus.
However staff from all the five institutions, lamented on the lack of staff feedback channels, like suggestion schemes and management evaluation forms, that offered anonymity. These would discourage the reporting of complaints or grievances, which in turn would curtail freedom of expression.

**Reflective Statement 21:**

There is a culture of collegiality and openness that allows more freedom of expression for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. Literature supports the view that a family friendly and supportive environment facilitates better WLB satisfaction for the academic workforce.

**Interview Question 22 (IQ 22)**

*Are there training seminars on time management skills?*

Participants in all institutions agreed that training was provided to enhance work related technical skills, personal competencies and self development. Staff were expected to attend such courses. Annual appraisal systems included training requests, with time management, being one of the courses offered. The HR managers mentioned that training on time management skills was incorporated, within other programs to enable better work management, thereby indirectly contributing to better time management and work life balance.

**Reflective Statement 22:** Training on personal competency skills are available for academic workforce within most PHEI in Malaysia that allows more efficient work practices and better time management, thus leading to reduced work pressure and better work life balance satisfaction.
4.3 REFINING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The qualitative data analysis lead to the development of a refined theoretical model from the views expressed at the focus groups and the personal interview sessions. This is shown in Figure 4.2 below.

**Figure 4.2: Refined Theoretical Framework**

- **Intrinsic job factors**
  1. Normal work loading
  2. Evening & weekend classes
  3. Annual leave utilization.
  4. Workload reduction to support WLB

- **Available WLB Provisions**
  1. Flexi-time
  2. Compressed work week
  3. Consultation on flexible work option
  4. Employee and family assistance
  5. Workplace nurseries

- **HRM Interventions**
  1. HRM strategic role
  2. HRM communication
  3. HRM informal support
  4. HRM delegation to line manager

- **Faculty work Practices**
  1. Adequate teaching facilities
  2. Social support from HOD
  3. Recognition of extra effort
  4. Culture of collegiality

**Source:** Developed for the research
4.3.1 Crafting the Research Propositions

“The qualitative analysis of the responses from interview questions, and the views that were captured from the responses, shown in Figure 4.2 led to the crafting of the four research propositions. Responses from IQ1, IQ2, and IQ3 affirmed the complexities in defining the WLB phenomena. However, responses to IQ4 and IQ5 reflected the “spill-over effect” of academic roles and job demands to trigger WLB difficulties. Thus Proposition 1 was crafted to assess the level of truthfulness in the view that intrinsic factors within academic jobs have the potential to trigger work life balance difficulties.

Responses from IQ6, IQ7, IQ8, IQ9, IQ10, IQ11, and IQ12 presented a view on the inadequacy of existing institutional provisions of flexible options, child care, family assistance, sabbaticals, and time off to accommodate the WLB issues of the academic staff. Proposition 2 was crafted to assess the level of truthfulness in the view that the work life balance provisions currently available within the PHEI in Malaysia are limited in its ability to address their work life balance.

Responses from IQ13, IQ14, IQ15, IQ16, and IQ17 highlighted the view that the HRM function, although holding a position to play a strategic role in initiating formal WLB provisions, opted instead to adopt an informal approach, mainly through delegation of WLB requests of the academic staff to the faculty heads. Proposition 3 was crafted to assess the level of truthfulness in the view that the role of the HRM function, in collaboration with line management, can play a significant role to address work life balance difficulties of the academic workforce at PHEI within Malaysia.

Responses to IQ18, IQ19, IQ20, IQ2, and IQ22 present the view on the positive contribution of the faculty to facilitate work life balance issues of its academic staff. Proposition 4 was crafted to assess the level of truthfulness in the view that the work practices at faculty level reflect a supportive culture that facilitates better work life balance of academic workforce at PHEI within Malaysia.

Propositions are defined as statements about concepts that have been observed as phenomena and can be subjected to testing, to assess the level of truthfulness within such statements (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). It is possible to use empirical evidence or data to test such statements (Zikmund, 2003). Guided by the principals of
qualitative research conducted with methodological rigor, the four research questions that were subjected to empirical scrutiny were translated into the following four propositions.

P1: The intrinsic factors within academic jobs have the potential to trigger work life balance difficulties.

P2: The work life balance provisions currently available for academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia are limited in its ability to address their work life balance issues.

P3: The HRM function, in collaboration with line management, can play a significant role to address work life balance difficulties of the academic workforce at PHEI within Malaysia.

P4: The work practices at faculty level reflect a supportive culture that facilitates better work life balance of academic workforce of PHEI within Malaysia.

4.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire survey (Appendix 2) generated 214 responses and all respondents acknowledged an understanding of the subject concerned. Descriptive statistics was used to explain the demographic data obtained from the respondents and the combined survey response and combined mean responses for each of the four propositions. Reliability measures were used to ensure the consistency of the items measured. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was computed to evaluate the relationship between the variables. To further test relationships between the variables multiple regression, was then used.

4.4.1 Descriptive Demographic Data

The responses from the demographic profile of respondents yielded rich insights.
Marital Status
There are slightly more married respondents at 51%, as compared to singles at 44% and divorced at 5%. Thus WLB issues associated generally with the needs of married couples is seen as significant.

Figure 4.3: Profile of Marital Status

Gender
57% of the respondents are female as compared to 43% males, showing a slightly larger female workforce among academics in PHEI in Malaysia. However the figures could be due a higher response rate from women as WLB has mainly been seen, in the past as a women related issue.

Figure 4.4: Profile of Gender Distribution

Nationality
91% of respondents are of Malaysian nationality with only 9% being non-Malaysians. The recruitment strategy is in compliance with national employment policy, to recruit non Malaysians only when there is an insufficient pool of qualified Malaysians to meet existing labor market demands. This situation may only be relevant for qualified
staff within the business and management programs and not within other academic fields.

**Figure 4.5: Profile of Nationality**

![Nationality Pie Chart]

**Age Distribution**

Over 73% of the respondents are below the age of forty, 14% above 40 years and only 10% above the age of fifty, showing the strong presence of a Generation X and Y workforce. It appears that the private universities are recruiting a younger generation of qualified academic workforce, within the business and management faculties.

**Figure 4.6: Profile of Age group**

![Age Group Pie Chart]

**Years of Service**

Over 55% of respondents have less than five years of service, with 45% of respondents having years of service between five years to twenty years or more. This is reflective of the relatively young PHEI industry in Malaysia that has experienced a high growth rate within the past ten years, as a result of national policy reforms to attract a larger local and international student population.
Figure 4.7: Profile of Years of Service

Racial Composition
Malaysians of Chinese descent make up approximately 43% of the target population, followed by the Malays at 30% and Indians at about 20%. This could be an indication of the relatively higher educational level of the mainly urbanized Chinese population.

Figure 4.8: Racial Composition

Dependents
Those without dependents comprise 43%, while those with elderly dependents, 26% in contrast to those with children at 23%. 7% have both elderly and child dependents with only 1% having handicapped dependents. A cross tabulation between marital status and dependents shows that only 40% of married respondents have children and 36% of singles have elderly dependents. This shows that eldercare, has high significance in WLB provisions and that married couples may choose to start a family later in their marriage.
Type of Employment Contract

82% of respondents have full time contracts as compared to 8% part time and 10% as contract staff. This shows the strong preference of most academic workforce for full time employment contracts, even at the expense of alternative and flexible work options

4.4.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistics summarises and describes the data collected from the questionnaire survey. Findings are presented from the combined survey responses, and mean scores for the overall statements, derived from the refined conceptual model.
The combined survey responses show the percentage of respondents who responded with an “agreed, neutral or disagreed” to the statements for each of the twenty items within the questionnaire. The mean or central tendency of the data describes the nature of the response to the survey questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 360).

4.4.2.1 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 1.
The summarised findings from the survey questions are presented as frequency of responses and mean responses to the four questions related to Proposition 1.

Analysis of frequency percentage responses to Proposition 1
The majority disagreed on the following questionnaire items 10,11, 12 & 13 which are time sufficiency within normal hours for job demands (40% disagreed 29% are neutral and only 31% agreed), non allocation of evening & weekend classes (48% disagreed with the statement, 34% were neutral and only 18% agreed), discretion on annual leave utilization (36% disagreed, 29% were neutral and 35% agreed) and insufficient reduction in workload for research/studies (60% disagreed, 19% were neutral and 21% agreed).

Figure 4.11: Combined survey response for Proposition 1 on Job Features

Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 1
The mean value of 2.86 showed disagreement of time sufficiency. The mean value of 2.62 showed disagreement on non allocation of evening classes. The mean value of 2.93 showed disagreement on availability of discretion for leave application. The mean value of 2.45 showed disagreement on work reduction to support research. The
average mean for the job demands construct is 2.75, thus supporting the view that the job demands bring high work pressure leading to work life balance difficulties.

**Figure 4.12: Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 1**

![Graph showing mean responses to Proposition 1]

It is seen that the survey responses support Proposition 1 that intrinsic factors within academic jobs have a significant influence to trigger WLB difficulties for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia.

**4.4.2.2. Combined Survey responses on Proposition 2.**

The summarised findings from the survey questions are presented as frequency of Responses, and mean responses to the four questions related to Proposition 2.

**Analysis of frequency percentage responses to Proposition 2**

The majority agreed on the following questionnaire items 14, 15, 16 & 19. These are availability of flexitime (35% disagree while 26% are neutral and 37% agree) availability of compressed work week (22% disagree while 32% are neutral and 46% agree), staff engagement/consultation about flexible working (19% disagree while 32% are neutral and 49% agree), sabbaticals for long service staff (28% disagree while 38% are neutral and 34% agree).

The majority disagreed on the following questionnaire items 17, 18 & 20, which are provision of creche / day care centre & lactation rooms (40% disagree, while 33% are neutral and 27% agree), adequate Employee & Family Assistance Programs (56% disagree, while 21% are neutral and 23% agree), and formal provisions for time off
for staff facing temporary domestic difficulties (54% disagreed, 20% are neutral and 26% agree).

**Figure 4.13: Combined survey response for Proposition 2 on Work Life Balance Provisions**

Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 2
The mean value of 3.05 showed agreement on provision of flexitime, mean value of 3.30 showed agreement for compressed work week, mean value of 3.35 showed agreement for staff consultation and mean value of 3.05 showed agreement for availability of sabbaticals.

The mean value of 2.75 showed disagreement on provision of childcare & lactation room, mean value of 2.45 showed disagreement on provision of Employee & Family Assistance and mean value of 2.51 showed disagreement for time off provision for family difficulties. The average mean of 2.92 showed an overall disagreement on availability of WLB provisions.
Figure 4.14: Combined mean response for Proposition 2 on WLB Provisions

Proposition 2 is therefore supported that the work life balance provisions, offered informally and on an ad hoc basis, is inadequate to meet the WLB needs of the academic workforce.

4.4.2.3 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 3.
The summarised findings from the survey questions are presented as frequency of responses and mean responses to the four questions related to Proposition 3.

Analysis of frequency percentage responses to Proposition 3
The majority agreed on the following questionnaire items 21, 22, 23 & 24, which are that the HRM function plays a strategic role in staff related matters (10% disagreed while 36% were neutral and 54% agreed), the HRM function takes steps to inform all staff on existing WLB policies in a comprehensive manner (22% disagreed while 34% are neutral and 44% agree), the HRM function are perceived to offer high level of informal support for the work life balance of staff (34% disagreed while 34% were neutral and 32% agreed) the WLB decisions encountered are delegated to line manager by HR function (11% disagreed while 43% were neutral and 46% agreed).
Figure 4.15: Combined survey response for Proposition 3 on HRM Interventions

Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 3
Mean value of 3.54 showed agreement of the strategic role of the HRM function, the mean value of 3.24 showed agreement of the informational role of the HRM function, the mean value of 3.37 showed agreement of the HRM delegated role of line manager and the mean value of 3.08 showed agreement for the view that existing WLB policies support retention. The mean value of 2.99 showed disagreement of the informal support offered by the HRM function. The average mean value of 3.24 showed an overall agreement on the significant role of the HRM function to address WLB issues.

Figure 4.16: Combined mean response for Proposition 3 on HRM Interventions

Proposition 3 on the significant role of the HRM function to address WLB experiences of the academic staff is therefore supported
4.4.2.4 Combined Survey responses on Proposition 4.

The summarised findings from the survey questions are presented as frequency of responses and mean responses to the four questions related to Proposition 4.

**Analysis of frequency percentage responses to Proposition 4**

The majority showed agreement on the following questionnaire items 26, 27, 28, 29 & which are provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching (21% disagreed while 18% was neutral and 60% agreed), strong social support given to staff by HOD/supervisor (11% disagreed while 22% were neutral and 67% agree), formal recognition of additional work hours outside classroom (25% disagreed while 37% were neutral and 38% agree), a culture of collegiality & openness of employee expression is present (12% disagreed while 30% were neutral and 58% agreed), and skills training and time management skills (10% disagreed, 22% were neutral and 68% agreed).

**Figure 4.17: Combined survey response for Proposition 4 on Faculty climate & culture**

![Combined survey response for Proposition 4 on Faculty climate & culture](image)

**Analysis of mean responses to Proposition 4**

The mean value of 3.44 showed agreement to adequacy of teaching facilities, the mean value of 3.73 showed agreement to strong support given by HOD/supervisor, the mean value of 3.15 showed agreement to formal recognition of additional work effort, the mean value of 3.52 showed agreement to a culture of collegiality & openness, and the mean value of 3.69 showed agreement to provision of time management training. The average mean of 3.51 showed an overall agreement on
the faculty climate & culture as supportive to help address WLB issues of the academic workforce.

Figure 4.18: Combined mean response for Proposition 4 on Faculty work practices

Proposition 4 is supported that the faculty climate and culture play a significant role to influence the work life balance experiences of the academic workforce of PHEI within Malaysia.

4.4.3 Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach’s Alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the measures from the questionnaire to ensure minimising of errors in research. There are different views about alpha values and values above 0.60 are considered acceptable (Hair et. al., 2007), above 0.70 adequate, above 0.80 excellent and above 0.90 as needing further investigation. Table 4.11 below shows the four constructs within the study which are the Intrinsic job factors, WLB Provisions, HRM Interventions and Faculty Culture & Climate.

Table 4.7: Results of Reliability Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Alpha Coefficient</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Job Factors</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the initial reading of 0.599 for intrinsic job factors, the internal consistency of the four items to deliver reliability in the responses was not acceptable. When item 2 on evening & weekend class was removed, the alpha level increased to 0.615, which was then considered acceptable. The removal of another item within the construct would have reduced the alpha level. The new construct Intrinsic job factors (a) with three items, was then used for further analysis. The most reliable construct is HRM intervention with an alpha coefficient of 0.797 followed by Faculty culture & climate at 0.764, Intrinsic job factors (a) at 0.615 and WLB provisions at 0.603. The alpha reading for WLB provisions and Intrinsic job factors was acceptable while that for HRM Interventions and Faculty culture & climate was good. Thus all measures adopted have internal consistency and stability.

### 4.4.4 Inferential Statistics

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion on the statistical analysis starting with reliability analysis to determine the consistency of the items measured.

#### 4.4.4.1 Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation coefficient analysis reveals magnitude and direction of relationships and can be used for hypothesis testing. It was therefore used, within this research to test the possibility of relationships that exist between the four variables of Intrinsic job factors, WLB Provisions, HRM interventions and Faculty climate & culture, defined within the four research propositions that were developed. The results of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient are shown in Table 4.7. The strength of the relationship between the defined variables is based on the Pearson correlation coefficient better known as r-value with ±0.50, ±0.30 and ±0.10 considered as strong.
moderate and weak respectively (Weinberg & Abramowitz, 2002, p.136). For any relationship to be deemed significant, the p value must be less than 0.05. The correlation coefficient can be either positive or negative, depending on the direction in which the relationship moves.

The correlation findings, shown in Table 4.8 indicates the high positive correlation between WLB Provisions and HRM Intervention ($r= 0.512$, $p>0.05$) moderate positive correlation between WLB Provisions and Faculty climate & culture ($r= 0.352$, $p<0.01$) and lastly moderately weak positive correlation between WLB Provisions and Intrinsic job factors, ($r= 0.242$, $p<0.01$). The results also show a moderate positive relationship between HRM Interventions and Faculty climate & culture ($r= 0.471$, $p<0.01$). All the relationships are significant at $p<0.01$.

### Table 4.8: Pearson Correlation Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WLB provisions</th>
<th>HRM intervention</th>
<th>Faculty work practices</th>
<th>Intrinsic job factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WLB provisions</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.512**</td>
<td>.352**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM intervention</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.512**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.471**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
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<td>N</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty climate &amp; culture</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.352**</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Job Factors</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>.103</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>.202</td>
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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

From this model, a set of hypothesis can be constructed, with WLB provisions as the dependent variable and HRM interventions, Intrinsic Job Factors and Faculty Climate & Culture as the independent variables.
**Hypothesis 1:**
There is a relationship between WLB provisions and intrinsic job factors at (p≤ 0.01)

**Hypothesis 2:**
There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and HRM Interventions at (p≤ 0.01)

**Hypothesis 3:**
There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and faculty climate & culture at (p≤ 0.05)

### 4.4.4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis was used to define the linear relationship between the WLB Provisions, as the dependent variable and intrinsic job factors, HRM interventions and faculty work practices as the independent variables. From Table 4.9, it is seen that the value of R is 0.560 showing an overall positive linear relationship between WLB Provisions and the other three independent variables.

The R² is the portion in the total variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variables. The R² value of 0.313 indicates an average linear relationship and 31% of the variations in the dependent of WLB provisions is explained by the combined influence of the three independent variables of intrinsic job factors, HRM interventions and faculty climate and culture. The findings therefore suggest that there are many other factors that have a significant combined impact of 69% on the WLB provisions, within the research. These aspects have been excluded from this study and therefore further exploratory studies are therefore justifiable to consider the types of factors and the attributes it holds that may influence the nature of WLB provisions that are accessible to the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia.

**Table 4.9: Result of Multivariate Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.560a</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.304</td>
<td>.50229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsicjobfactors, Facultyclimate&culture HRMinterventions

b. Dependent Variable: WLBprovisions
The ANOVA results in Table 4.10, shows a p value of 0.00, indicating that overall, the model is significant and that intrinsic job factors, HRM interventions and Faculty climate & culture have significantly influenced the nature of WLB provisions. The higher F-value of 31.954 is more favourable to the R value

Table 4.10: Results of Analysis of Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>24.186</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.062</td>
<td>31.954</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>52.982</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77.167</td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: WLBprovisions
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsicjobfactors, Facultyclimate&culture, HRMintervention

The coefficient Table 4.11 explains the relationship between WLB provisions and the three independent variables though the linear regression equation, which is presented in Table 4.12.

The beta value of = 0.426 (p≤ 0.01) shows a moderate positive relationship between HRM intervention and WLB provisions. The beta value of +0.190 ( p≤ 0.01) indicates a weak positive relationship between WLB provisions and intrinsic job factors, The beta value of +0.14 indicates a weak positive relationship between WLB Provisions and faculty climate and culture (p≤ 0.05). It therefore appears that within the three independent variables affecting the variation in WLB provisions, the HRM intervention variable has the highest impact, followed next by intrinsic job factors and finally by faculty climate & culture.

Therefore, the multiple regression analysis is presented as follows

WLB provisions = 0.786 + 0.426 (HRM Intervention) + 0.140 (Faculty climate & culture + 0.190 (Intrinsic job factors)
Table: 4.11 Analysis of coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>3.369</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRMintervention</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>6.546</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facultyclimate&amp;culture</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>2.166</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsicjobfactors</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>3.311</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: WLBprovisions

Table 4.12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inferential test</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Strength of the relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>H1 There is a relationship between WLB provisions and intrinsic job factors</td>
<td>moderately weak positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correlation</td>
<td>H2 There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and HRM Interventions</td>
<td>strong positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H3 There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and faculty climate &amp; culture</td>
<td>moderately strong positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H4 There is a relationship between HRM Interventions and faculty climate &amp; culture</td>
<td>moderately strong positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>H1 There is a relationship between WLB provisions and intrinsic job factors</td>
<td>weak positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regression</td>
<td>H2 There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and HRM Interventions</td>
<td>strong positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H3 There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and faculty climate &amp; culture</td>
<td>Weak positive relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for the research
4.5 CONCLUSION

A qualitative approach adopted at the initial exploratory stage, allowed the analysis of the data generated from the focus group sessions and personal interviews into structured and narrative format that facilitated the development of a refined theoretical model and the crafting of four research propositions, pertinent to answering the four main research questions.

The second stage, allowed the quantitative analysis of the data drawn from the questionnaire survey to generate a new theoretical model that identified the relationship between the four research propositions as well the development of hypothesis that was subjected to empirical scrutiny. The outcome of the research findings led to a more precise definition of the relationship between the variables of intrinsic job factors, WLB provisions, HRM interventions and faculty work practices, such that findings could be generalized to the wider target population, within the private higher education environment. The finalised theoretical framework that was arrived at from this research is presented below in Figure 4.19.
Figure 4.19 : Factors defining the relationship between HRM interventions and work life balance issues of academic workforce

Source: Developed for the research
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research commenced as an exploratory qualitative study to examine the nature of HRM interventions to address the work life balance issues of its academic workforce. The review of literature explored the types of factors that would influence the WLB satisfaction of the workforce, first in general, and then relating specifically to the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. The role of the HRM function was evaluated, on their effectiveness to adequately address such issues, at both the strategic and operational level, through the nature of WLB provisions made accessible to these workforce.

The previous chapter presented the firstly the qualitative data analysis and findings that facilitated the development of a refined theoretical model and the crafting of four research propositions. The next stage adopted a quantitative approach, the outcome of which led to a more precise definition of the relationship between the variables of intrinsic job factors, WLB provisions, HRM interventions and faculty climate and culture, such that findings could be generalized to the wider target population, within the private higher education. This chapter provides the overall conclusions of the study, address the research questions and objectives and considering policy implication and opportunities for future research.

5.1.1. Chapter Structure

Chapter Five presents the research conclusions and implications. There are seven sections as seen in Figure 5.1. Section 5.1 presents the introduction while Section 5.2 presents the conclusions on the research propositions and Section 5.3 presents the conclusions on the research problem. Section 5.4 presents the research contributions. Section 5.5 presents the policy implications. Section 5.6 discusses the inherent limitations within the research and recommendations for future research. Section 5.7 presents the summary and conclusions.
Figure 5.1: Structure of Chapter Five

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Conclusions about Research Proposition
- 5.3 Conclusions about Research Problem
- 5.4 Research Contributions
- 5.5 Policy Implications
- 5.6 Limitations
- 5.7 Summary & Conclusions

Source: Developed for the research
5.2 CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

This section presents the conclusions drawn from the findings in the previous chapter, relating to each of the four research propositions. The discussion considers the pertinent literature and the gaps in current literature on the research areas in questions. The findings, arrived through analysis of primary data from the focus groups, personal interviews and the questionnaire survey, discussed in the previous Chapter Four, are then used to arrive at conclusions that aim to address such gaps that were reported. The intended purpose of triangulation of findings from both the qualitative and quantitative disciplines is to meet the requirements of methodological rigour and canons of validity and reliability.

5.2.1 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 1 which states that

“The intrinsic factors within academic jobs play a major role to trigger work life balance difficulties for the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia.

5.2.1.1 Literature Review

The literature review revealed the trends and pace of modern life that has made work life balance an issue that more visible and complex. Difficulty in successfully navigating between work and non work demands, to achieve a sense of balance within both spheres of life, is common across diverse demographic boundaries. Greater imbalance was however reported from those holding managerial jobs, working long hours, those with dependent children, and more among women than men (Guest, 2001; Clutterbuck, 2003). Within the academic environment, the work intensification to meet the increasing challenges in turn also contributes to work life conflict issues as the academic workforce strive to balance family, work, and personal interests (Saunderson, 2002, Ariokasamy, et al., 2009). The concept of what constitutes work life balance is also culture bound, thereby delivering limitations in generalising the WLB needs and perceptions of what constitutes balance within the Malaysian context (Shanker & Bhatnagar, 2010).
The knowledge gaps within the literature, pertaining to the research area, are listed as follows:-

- The lack of clarity on the nature of work life balance experiences specific to the academic workforce.
- The ambiguity on whether work life balance difficulties (if any) they face stem mainly from work related or non work related factors.
- The type of strategies commonly used by most of the academic workforce to navigate between their work and non work demands.

5.2.1.2. Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews leading to Proposition 1

It was seen that the findings were supported by existing literature. Most employees acknowledged the importance of work life balance, although some were uncertain on the extent to which the spheres of personal life emanate into the work environment. The majority of participants who were from the Generation X and Generation Y, age groups had high expectations from their employers, to give due consideration to their work life balance. The immediate and extended family and social networks of the employees can be an important resource for organizations, as they can assist in better work life balance, and therefore should be viewed as beneficial to work rather than as a source of work life conflict (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). The current academic environment reflects a similar situation to that within other institutions, on the work intensification and greater demands placed on a the academic role with consequent role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict which can become significant triggers that influence perceived work life imbalance.

The findings were also able to address the gaps in existing literature in that the work life balance difficulties of participants stemmed mainly from work related rather than non work related factors. Most participants had strong domestic support and social networks systems that greatly assisted in reducing emotional strain, associated with navigating between the spheres of work and personal life. However, a common theme was the intrinsic factors within academic jobs that encroached on a regular basis, into the non work domains of the employees’ life, thereby triggering the potential to experience work life imbalance. One of such factors pertained to insufficient time.
within normal working hours, to complete not just teaching workload but the extra tasks, responsibilities and duties embedded within academic jobs and from additional expectations from competitive pressures. Thus work had to be taken home or staff had to stay back after work to complete such tasks. Another factor identified was the changing class schedules for each new semester, extending to evening & weekend classes that as a consequence would encroach on a regular basis on the non work and family routines of the participants. Other factors pertained to the limited discretion in annual leave utilization, and the requirement of academics to embark on research and publications, without being given sufficient reduction in teaching workload.

5.2.1.3. Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 1
Table 5.1 presents the responses from the questionnaire survey which mainly disagreed with the survey questions on time sufficiency, unscheduled evening & weekends classes, leave discretion and work reduction for research. The average mean response for the intrinsic job factors construct is 2.75, thus supporting Proposition 1.

Table 5.1: Triangulated response patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripted Survey Questions</th>
<th>Focus group &amp; Personal Interviews</th>
<th>Descriptive data analysis</th>
<th>Response Mean</th>
<th>Support for Proposition 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time sufficiency to meet job demands within normal working hours</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff are not expected to take classes scheduled in the evening or weekends</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff have discretion in utilizing designated annual leave for family holidays</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff embarking on research projects or pursuing further studies are given sufficient reduction in their academic workload or time off from work</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average response mean on intrinsic job factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for the research

5.2.1.4 Conclusions on Proposition 1
Based on the triangulated findings, Proposition 1 is supported and it can be concluded that most academic workforce cited several intrinsic factors within academic jobs, as encroaching on a regular basis, into the non work domains of their
life, thereby triggering the potential to experience work life imbalance. These factors mainly pertained to insufficient time within normal working hours, to complete the diverse range of academic tasks and duties, the scheduling of classes beyond normal working hours, the limited discretion in annual leave utilization, and the research related expectations that were not supported by reduced teaching workload. However the situation was mitigated to a certain extent by the domestic support and social networks systems they had, which assisted in reducing the accompanying emotional strain they faced. The triangulated findings revealed mainly dissatisfaction with the academic job design factors for the abovementioned reasons, which calls for the necessary remedial action to be taken by the pertinent parties.

5.2.2 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 2 which states that
The WLB provisions made available to academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia are mainly ad hoc and reactive in nature and therefore inadequate to address the WLB needs the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia.

5.2.2.1 Literature Review
Typical formal WLB provisions include flexible work options, on-site childcare or childcare referral systems and elder care arrangements, and employee assistance programs that offer financial and emotional support (Perrons et al, 2006; Naithani, 2010; Porter & Ayman, 2010). Such initiatives are able to facilitate better employee recruitment & retention, improved organisation citizenship behaviour, reduced stress levels and job satisfaction which in turn enhance greater potential for business profitability (Mabey, Salaman & Storey, 1998). However when there is lack of consistency and equity in implementation, coupled with unclear communication how to effectively utilize a set of formal WLB provisions, employees may still experience WLB difficulties (De Cieri et al., 2002).
Within the higher education sectors, several studies were undertaken in nations like the UK and the USA to assess the effectiveness of formal WLB provisions within the academic setting (Nuter, 2011). Although literature reveals the presence of formalized WLB provisions within the workplace in most developed nations, the same cannot be said for the Malaysian workplace. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the limited
legislative provisions on family friendly and work life balance issues means that the choice of offering WLB provisions remains within the absolute discretion of management. Nevertheless some studies have been undertaken, within public institutions of higher learning, in Malaysia, to assess the work life balance issues on employee intention to leave. Within the PHEI environment, however few studies have been undertaken in relation to the subject matter in question. Knowledge gaps within the literature, pertaining to the research area, were highlighted under the following categories:-

- Lack of clarity and consistency on the type of formal and informal WLB provisions that were available
- The communication channels commonly used to inform employees on how they can access and utilize such WLB provisions.
- The effectiveness of such provisions (if any) to address the pertinent WLB issues concerned.

5.2.2.2. Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews leading to Proposition 2

It was seen that the findings were supported by existing literature. Higher education institutions do have some measure of flexible work options, at different levels of frequency and diverse arrangements. However these were mainly offered on a discretionary level, at the prerogative of management. The limitations associated with such WLB provisions to adequately address the WLB concerns of their workforce, were mainly caused by the lack of information support, uncaring management attitudes and the negative perceptions from managers and those without dependents with regard to family-friendly policies (Bardoel, 2003). Strong managerial support is needed for effective implementation of such policies.

The findings were also able to address the gaps in existing literature in that there is limited availability of formally sanctioned flexi-time work options, compressed work week, sabbaticals, employee and family assistance provisions, consultation about flexible work options, for academic staff, in most PHEI within Malaysia. Much of such provisions come under the label of employee welfare, in compliance either to
legislative requirements or for better employee recruitment and retentions. The WLB provisions that were mainly offered, related to scheduling flexibility, to compensate staff for accepting work schedules outside of normal working hours or for shift working purposes, to facilitate the institutions operational processes. There was no strategic intent for addressing work life balance issues. Flexible work options, compressed work week and sabbaticals are offered on a limited, at hoc, discretionary and piecemeal basis. Workplace nurseries and baby friendly facilities are not available in PHEI within Malaysia. Also many of those who do appreciate the provisions of such childcare facilities will need more information before committing to the use of such facilities.

5.2.2.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 2

Table 5.2 presents the responses from the questionnaire survey which weakly agreed with availability of flexi time, compressed work week, staff consultation, and sabbaticals and disagreed on crèche, family assistance and formal provisions for time off. The average mean response for the WLB provisions construct is 2.92, thus supporting Proposition 2.

Table 5.2: Triangulated response patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripted Survey Questions</th>
<th>Focus group &amp; Personal Interviews</th>
<th>Descriptive data analysis</th>
<th>Respons eMean</th>
<th>Support for Proposition 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexi time to compensate for extra hours worked on certain days</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Weakly Agree</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed work week – to a minimum of 4 days per week for those pursuing post graduate studies</td>
<td>Mixed view</td>
<td>Weakly Agree</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff engagement/consultation about flexible working arrangements in general</td>
<td>Mixed view</td>
<td>Weakly Agree</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creche/day care centre &amp; place for breastfeeding mothers at work</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee &amp; Family Assistance Programs</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals for long service staff</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Weakly Agree</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are formal provisions to allow time off for staff who may face difficulties</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Response mean for WLB Provisions construct</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.92</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Supported</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for the research
5.2.2.4 Conclusions on Proposition 2
Based on the triangulated findings Proposition 2 is supported, on the absence of formalised WLB options, but the presence of related provisions offered under the category of employee welfare. Flexible work options, compressed work week and sabbaticals are offered on an informal, ad hoc, discretionary and piecemeal basis to accommodate scheduling flexibility, to compensate staff for accepting work schedules outside of normal working hours or to facilitate the institutions operational processes. Childcare facilities are not available in the PHEI within Malaysia. It is seen that staff are mainly dissatisfied with the existing provisions and thus remedial action is justifiable to increase satisfaction levels.

5.2.3 Summarised Findings on Research Proposition 3 which states that
The HRM function, in collaboration with line management, can play a significant role to influence work life balance experiences of the academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia

5.2.3.1 Literature Review
The HRM function in the diverse roles it plays as strategic partner, employee champion, administrative expert and change agent, holds the position to create strategic competitive advantage, through effective management of the employment relationship and the psychological contract (De Cenzo & Robbins, 2007; Stone, 2009). Line managers have an equally important role within the field of human resource management and in conjunction with the HRM function, need to develop effective leadership styles and re-engineered work processes, to address the challenges it faces (Snell & Bolander, 2010).
Despite the presence of several factors that may limit the effectiveness of the HRM function in meeting its many demands, technological innovations and the host of HRM related literature, has placed at its disposal, a range of tools and techniques to enhance its effectiveness. In this aspect, work life balance becomes a significant area that merits the attention of the HRM function, within its policy interventions, information support and training initiatives. Within the academic environment, the HRM function was seen to be one of the factors associated with family friendly, WLB provisions and workplace culture.
However the strategic focus of the HRM function was at the same time, upon a set of broader institutional concerns, and linked with expressions of similar commitments by the institution’s leadership structure (Friedman, et al., 1996)

The knowledge gaps within the existing literature were highlighted in the following areas:-

- The strategic role of the HRM function, in formal staff policy formulation in the PHEI within Malaysia
- The manner in which information on WLB provisions is communicated to the staff concerned, who may have need of such provisions.
- The manner of informal support, accorded to academic workforce, when the situation arises.
- The level of authority that is delegated to the line managers and the manner in which such authority is exercised, to address the WLB issues of the academic workforce.
- The effectiveness of such policies in delivering perceived WLB satisfaction and staff retention.

5.2.3.2. Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews leading to Proposition 3

It was seen that the findings were supported by existing literature. The active involvement of the HRM function is vital for understanding the WLB needs, developing appropriate interventions at policy level, and initiating training programs for better supervisory support, personal competencies and time management. Despite the HRM trends to recognize the importance of WLB initiatives, other workplace support linkages, from other organizational sources need to be addressed. The employee related concerns of the HRM function, are mediated by the level of commitment, demonstrated by the institution’s leadership. Within the constraints of competitive pressures and a profit led orientation, issues of work life balance may not receive its due consideration. Informal WLB provisions like supervisor support and organization culture that are sanctioned by the HRM functions are of equal importance to formal ones (Anderson, Coffrey & Byerly, 2002; Lapierre & Allen, 2006).
The findings were also able to address the gaps in existing literature in that the HRM function was seen to perform mainly administrative roles and some strategic roles in an advisory capacity. There was some level of role dissonance as employee champions. Together with line managers, they do take up the role of strategic partner and employee champions, to a limited extent. While formal channels are present to provide comprehensive information on a range of staff policies, only informal channels, are used to deliver information that as is seen as piecemeal, fragmented and disjointed, thereby creating ambiguity in comprehending the availability of WLB provisions. In the absence of formal policies on WLB issues, the HRM function, delegates a certain level of authority to the faculty heads, to offer informal support, on WLB issues, to the academic staff within their faculty. Despite the delegated authority to line managers on WLB issues in PHEI, there is allowance for staff to approach the HRM function directly, provided the faculty is unable to address such concerns to their satisfaction. The existing WLB provisions play a limited and supportive role in retention of its academic staff, in conjunction with other more significant factors like pay, benefits, job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships.

5.2.3.3. Findings from questionnaire surveys leading to Proposition 3

Table 5.3 presents the responses from the questionnaire survey which agreed with the strategic role of HRM, informational role, delegation to line managers and disagreed on the informal support given and weakly agreed ability to support staff retention. The average mean response for the HRM intervention construct is 3.24 showing an overall agreement with Proposition 3.

Table 5.3: Triangulated response patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripted Survey Questions</th>
<th>Focus group &amp; Personal Interviews</th>
<th>Descriptive data analysis</th>
<th>Response Mean</th>
<th>Support for Proposition 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The HRM function plays a strategic role in policy formulation of all staff related matters</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The HRM function takes steps to inform all staff on existing WLB policies in a comprehensive manner</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The HRM function are perceived to offer high level of informal support for the work life balance of staff if situation arises</td>
<td>Mixed view</td>
<td>Weakly Disagree</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.3.4 Conclusions on Proposition 3

Based on the triangulated findings Proposition 3 is supported. The HRM function is seen as having a strategic role in all staff policy matters. However much of staff related matters are delegated to the discretionary authority of line manager who acts as the gatekeeper for the HR function to ensure that only matters that cannot be resolved at faculty level are brought to the attention of the HR function. The moderate levels of agreement on the significance of the HRM function to deliver WLB satisfaction does suggest that more HRM interventions in this area would prove useful to increase employee WLB satisfaction levels.

5.2.4 Summarised Findings on Proposition 4 which states that

Work practices at faculty level reflect a supportive culture that facilitates better work life balance of academic workforce of PHEI within Malaysia,

5.2.4.1 Literature Review

The informal dynamics through supervisor support and cultural practices that recognize the permeable boundaries between work and non-work are better able to help employees navigate both family and work demands, and builds employee perception that their work-family concerns are being addressed, within the workplace (Thomson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; Thompson & Prottas, 2006; Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011). Employees who are inclined to request for access to WLB provisions are therefore less likely to fear negative perceptions regarding their work commitment (Kossek et.al., 2011). The workplace culture is seen to thereby hold equal importance as the provision of a bundle of formal WLB provisions. Operational flexibility, given on an informal basis was seen to offer greater work life balance, without loss of work quality, as compared to temporal flexibility, given on a
formal basis. Nevertheless, the ad hoc, discretionary basis underpinning such practices will require a supportive work climate and supervision. The workplace culture, where employees enjoy autonomy and involvement, can better support impact on work life balance satisfaction (Clark, 2000; Guest, 2001; Anderson, Coffrey & Byerly, 2002; Lappiere & Alten, 2006).

Faculty heads, even if not having direct ownership or accountability for WLB interventions, are in a position to vocalize the WLB needs of their academic workforce. However, the mindset of many employers, are entrenched within the view that work can only be adequately performed, under the watchful eye of the supervisor (Deery, 2008).

Within the Malaysian context, supervisors are expected to demonstrate the collective orientation of concern for the family related issues faced by the workforce (Mellahi & Wood, 2004; Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). The limited nature of formal WLB provisions, within the private sectors, amplifies the role of the faculty to exercise discretion and sensitivity in addressing employees WLB issues (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Abdullah et al., 2009).

The gaps within the existing literature were highlighted in the following areas:-

- The types of teaching and academic support offered to staff that leads to better job satisfaction and work life balance.
- The level of social support accorded by the faculty heads/supervisors
- The nature of recognition given to the academic staff for work efforts
- The level of collegiality and trust within the workplace culture
- The level of satisfaction with the personal competency training given to academic staff.
5.2.4.2 Findings from focus group sessions and personal interviews leading to Proposition 4

It was seen that the findings were supported by existing literature. Those supervisors who recognize the permeable boundaries between work and non-work are better able to help employees navigate both family and work demands. The formal recognition of additional effort outside of class room sessions, increases motivation and organisation citizenship behaviour, that leads to better perception of WLB satisfaction. Training to improve personal competencies has resulted in better time management and better work life balance. A supportive work climate that facilitates improved performance leads to better work life balance.

The findings were also able to address the gaps in existing literature to show that there are adequate facilities in place to enable quality teaching of academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia with strong social support from their respective faculty heads. Formal recognition is given through extrinsic rewards like high performance appraisal ratings and informal praise and approval. There is also mainly a strong culture of collegiality and openness that allows more freedom of expression for academic workforce in PHEI within Malaysia. They are seen to be satisfied with the personal competency training they receive.

5.2.4.3 Findings from questionnaire surveys on Proposition 4

Table 5.4 presents the responses from the questionnaire survey which agreed with the provision of adequate facilities, social support of supervisor, formal recognition of additional effort and in house training to enhance personal development skills. The average mean response for the faculty climate and culture construct is 3.51 showing an overall agreement with Proposition 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripted Survey Questions</th>
<th>Focus group &amp; Personal Interviews</th>
<th>Descriptive data analysis</th>
<th>Response Mean</th>
<th>Support for Proposition 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong social support given to staff by HOD/supervisor</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal recognition of additional work hours outside classroom</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A culture of collegiality &amp; openness that allows more freedom in employee expression</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In house training seminars to enhance personal development skills</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average mean response to faculty climate &amp; culture</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for the research

5.2.4.4 Conclusions on Proposition 4

Based on the triangulated findings Proposition 4 is supported that supportive organisation climate and culture, influencing work practices at faculty level, can play a significant role for better work life balance among the academic workforce of PHEI within Malaysia. The academic staff are mainly satisfied with the teaching facilities, the social support from their respective faculty heads, the nature of recognition they receive, the social environment and training support within their faculty. Nevertheless, the moderate levels of agreement on its contribution to WLB satisfaction do suggest that more interventions in this area would prove useful.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS ON HYPOTHESIS TESTING

a) Using both Pearson Correlation and multiple regression analysis, the following hypothesis are supported.

Hypothesis 1

H1: There is a relationship between WLB provisions and intrinsic job factors.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and HRM Interventions.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There is a relationship between WLB Provisions and faculty climate & culture.
b) Using only Pearson Correlation the following hypothesis was supported.

**Hypothesis 4**

**H4:** There is a relationship between HRM Interventions and faculty climate & culture.

### 5.4 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT RESEARCH PROBLEM

This section discusses the overall research problem that was developed in Chapter One and stated as “The HRM interventions to address work-life balance issues of the academic workforce within private higher educational institutions within Malaysia.” It was seen that the existing body of knowledge was relatively silent on several key issues pertaining to the work life balance issues experienced by the academic workforce within private higher educational institutions within Malaysia, thereby highlighting gaps within existing knowledge within the defined area of research. The outcome of the data analysis led to findings that can be concluded regarding the research problem. The research findings enabled such knowledge gaps to be bridged and to once again reaffirm the relevance of the research problem.

Proposition 1 was supported that the academic mainly disagreed on the work related factors as supportive of work life balance (average mean= 2.75). It was found that several intrinsic factors within academic jobs in the form of heavy academic workloads, scheduling of classes to evenings and weekends, limited discretion in annual leave application, and insufficient time to conduct research and further study, had a major role to trigger work life balance difficulties among the academic workforce. The ‘spill over theory’ in this aspect was relevant, but citing work related factors that had encroached into the non work sphere of life for the academic workforce.

Proposition 2 is supported that the academic workforce are dissatisfied (average mean = 2.92) with the existing WLB provisions. They perceive such provisions as being unable to address the work related WLB difficulties they face because of the lack of
formal structure. They are considered to be mainly piecemeal, ad hoc, reactive in nature, informal and offered at the discretion of the management. The absence of formal procedures, with the right communication channels for delivering pertinent information, results in perceptions of uncertainty and inconsistency, on the availability of WLB provisions workforce to address the WLB difficulties highlighted in Proposition 1.

Proposition 3 is supported and it can be concluded that the HRM function, in collaboration with line management, can play a significant role to address work life balance issues pertinent to the academic workforce in question. The relatively low level of agreement (average mean = 3.24) suggests that more interventions are expected from the same HRM function, for the academic workforce to address the inadequacy of the WLB provisions mentioned in Proposition 2.

Proposition 4 is supported that the organisation climate and culture influencing quality work practices at faculty level can play a significant role for better work life balance among the academic workforce. The relatively low level of agreement (average mean = 3.51) suggest the need for greater effort to be taken by the faculty heads and supervisors in facilitating an even higher level of supportive culture and climate, than what is currently present, to effectively address the inadequacy of the WLB provisions mentioned in Proposition 2.

5.5 THEORY DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.4, a mixed methodology design was deemed appropriate, with the exploratory and qualitative stage having greater dominance, as several knowledge gaps were found to be present within the research field. As such the interpretive paradigm was adopted to yield useful insights for theory building and development in the sphere of work life balance issues (Perry, 2001).

A key objective of the exploratory stage was to refine the initial WLB theoretical framework, developed from the literature review, on the basis of the views expressed
by the participants of the focus group sessions and personal interviews. The findings allowed the refinement of the initial framework, to take into consideration the intrinsic factors within academic jobs, the nature of HRM interventions, the types of WLB provisions that were available and the nature of faculty climate and culture, which as a whole had a significant impact on the work life balance perceptions of the academic workforce.

The refined model was tested, through the use of a questionnaire survey, whereby the data that was collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, followed by inferential statistics. With the use of Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, the relationships between the four variables that emerged from the exploratory stage, namely the intrinsic job factors, HRM interventions, WLB provisions and faculty climate and culture, were examined and the findings revealed the following results, as presented within the new conceptual model presented in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2 Factors defining the Work Life Balance Relationships**

![Diagram](source: Developed for the research)

- a) The variable WLB provisions is the dependent variable within the refined WLB model for the PHEI within Malaysia
- b) The HRM intervention is the independent variable with a high direct significance on the dependent variable of WLB provisions
- c) The intrinsic job factor is the independent variable with a high direct significance on the dependent variable of WLB provisions
d) The faculty climate and culture is the independent variable with a high direct significance on the dependent variable of WLB provision

This further confirms the findings within Proposition 2 on the reactive, ad hoc and informal nature of WLB provisions. The relationship between WLB provisions is dependent on variations within intrinsic job factors.

Where greater job strain is experienced by the workforce, more WLB provisions are made available, by HRM interventions and faculty level supports on an informal piecemeal basis. Within institutions where the HRM function takes on a more significant role, more WLB provisions are released. Where greater faculty support is extended, a greater degree of WLB provisions are offered. A greater integration of a full portfolio of formally sanctioned WLB provisions, would allow greater strategic intent and integration, to align such policies to the overall HR strategic framework to support corporate and business objectives (Rose & Kumar, 2009).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGULATORY & INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

This section applies the findings within this research to offer recommendations that support the efforts of the Malaysian private higher educational sector to better address the work life balance needs of the academic workforce. As these recommendations are for consideration both by the regulatory policy makers, within the private higher education sector as well as the private higher educational institutions, this Section has two parts. The first relates to public policies and the second offers recommendations for consideration by the private higher educational institutions within Malaysia.

5.6.1 Implications for Regulatory Policy
The social environment in Malaysia is different from that of developed nations where work life balance practices have a legal and cultural mandate. National and socio
cultural differences will mean that the context that defines work life balance issues will differ (Hofstede, 2007). Malaysia is unique in the sense that its national identity, from the start, was recognized as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society (Ayudurai, et al., 2002; Rowley & Abdul-Rahman, 2007). Maintaining harmony, within a collective ideology, has dominated political, economic and social policies (Mellahi & Wood 2004).

The Malaysian national culture reflects Hofstede’s definition of high power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance and low individualism (Hofstede, 2007). Islamic and Confucian work ethics, have a major role to play, in shaping the national culture, like obedience to management prerogative, dedication to work and regard for cooperation and consultation among workforce.

Also the Malaysian society of extended family relationships, affordable domestic help, and professional childcare services, provides to a certain extent, sufficient resources to the employee to meet their childcare, elder care and other domestic concerns. For those within the higher income level, their earnings level is sufficient for them to afford adequate childcare services or to hire foreign maids, a common feature within Malaysian society. Nevertheless, with the greater restrictions on the hiring of foreign maids and more stringent requirements from those offering professional childcare, the existing status quo may not remain as such, in the unforeseeable future.

In view of the abovementioned reasons, the Malaysian workforce mainly have the tendency to conform to the expectations of those seen to be holding the greater balance of power, within the employment relationship. Thus there would be no radical initiatives taken by any single individual or collective effort by a single group of individuals, to compel management of the PHEI, to initiate changes at strategic level, even if such changes would deliver the benefits needed to meet their needs.

The study conducted by NaHERI (2004), in Malaysia highlighted the concern of the Ministry of Higher Education on the shortage of qualified academic workforce within the PHEI, with only 6% of the workforce holding doctoral level qualification and 27% percent holding a Masters degree. Despite such dismal record on academic staff quality, many PHEI were reluctant to take the necessary steps to assist their workforce
in upgrading their academic qualifications because of the high workforce mobility between rival institutions.

The report recommended the initiation of collaborative efforts between the PHEI and regulatory bodies like the MOHE and the Ministry of Human Resource to organise doctoral training programs and to hold regular dialogues to consider fiscal incentive schemes made available to the education sector. Also the report commented on the tendency of the PHEI to generally meet minimal regulatory obligations in order to continue securing accreditation for their study programs. Thus the intervention of the regulatory bodies was indeed necessary to spearhead such initiatives.

The quality driven focus within the higher education sector well recognises the importance of a highly competent and motivated workforce to support the national policy goal of developing Malaysia as a regional educational hub.

In view of the abovementioned rationale, the following recommendations are deemed useful to consider within future policy implications by the regulatory bodies within Malaysia:

1. Work life balance issues of the workforce are a significant area of concern that needs to be incorporated within the recommended collaborative initiatives, to reap a greater return on the efforts invested by the authorities concerned.

2. Regulatory bodies within the privatised education sector may consider it worthwhile to emulate the practices adopted by the developed nations to introduce “family friendly” legislative reforms into the Malaysian PHEI using the models applied by the higher educational institutions in the developed nations.

3. A list of best practice organizations and resources can be obtained from findings of organizations like the Corporate Leadership Council in the UK, the American Council on Education or the Alfred P. Sloan Faculty Career Flexibility Program and made available to the said institutions.
4. Other areas that merit review would be to introduce regulatory provisions addressing academic workload, time based support extended to academic staff for research and further study, and flexible work options incorporated within formal WLB provisions, but giving a certain level of discretion for employees to choose the package most appropriate to meet their specific WLB needs.

5.6.2 Recommendations for PHEI policy & practice

The findings revealed the absence of formal WLB provisions within the five institutions under study and benefits like employee & family assistance related more to employee welfare rather than work life balance. On the other hand several positive features were seen like strong teaching, supervision and social support, within the individualistic nature of academic jobs, to ameliorate to a certain extent, the intrinsic job factors identified with the potential to trigger work life conflict.

Despite the general consensus on the strategic role of the HRM, to champion employee needs, the view was that there was little inclination or opportunity for the HR function to do so. Instead their main focus was on administrative and implementation issues, emphasising uniformity and consistency, with little consideration for the diversity of individual workforce needs. Much of the WLB issues delegated to the line manager were operational and reactive, with no proactive initiatives on long term strategic solutions. WLB initiatives were not given due strategic recognition that could help in the attraction and retention of a high calibre workforce.

Within the professional services industry, employees need to experience job satisfaction, flexibility and empowerment, to support business performance. The literature identified the importance of employee commitment as a lever to facilitate greater organization effectiveness. Further understanding of how high commitment levels can be elicited from the workforce will allow the requisite action by the institutional leadership, though the HR function, to design, develop and implement the type of strategies that enhance employee commitment. Employees with better WLB will be more engaged in their work and contribute more productively towards
organisation performance (Naithani, 2010). This will serve not just to give the PHEI better access to a highly competitive labour market, but also to better address its social obligations to its workforce.

In view of the abovementioned rationale, the following recommendations are deemed useful to the PHEI within Malaysia:

1. The institutional leadership should reflect a more visible recognition of the professional role of the HR function, to offer counsel to the management structure on staff related policies, employee relations, ethics, corporate governance, and employee needs and to highlight their role as the employee advocate, working towards promoting employee satisfaction and retention, to enhance the work environment (Bohlander & Snell, 2004).

2. A formalized system should be in place to initiate dialogue between staff, line management and the HR function to consider pertinent WLB issues of strategic significance, to allow greater structure and formalisation into the WLB provisions made available to the workforce, and to give employees greater control over WLB provisions choices.

3. New HRM interventions should be introduced, bringing intrinsic components into the traditional rewards package. Such factors could include a supportive organization climate, leadership, performance facilitation, and WLB provisions, perceived to be of value, to the workforce.

4. The HR function should have a full portfolio of such WLB provisions, perceived to be of value, and its accompanying implications presented clearly to employees through the formal communication channels and employee handbooks, for better awareness leading to greater utilisation of these provisions (Pegg, 2009).
5. Malaysian PHEI may even consider it worthwhile to share experiences with international branch campuses, like Monash University or Nottingham University, who also offer collaborative, transnational, higher education (TNHE) programs with local Malaysian partners. The need to integrate teaching and learning strategies across national boundaries may also have implications regarding the manner in which staff related practices are conducted within Malaysian shores (NaHERI, 2005).

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

Within the course of this research, some limitations were encountered. Firstly, the sampling methodology, employed convenience sampling, for the focus group, and personal interview, which would have compromised the ability to generalize findings on the wider population. The same conditions applied to the questionnaire survey. In the light of time and resource constraints, the truly random approach was not feasible. Although the necessary steps were pursued to increase the trustworthiness of the research, the approaches mentioned may have resulted in some element of researcher bias and undermined the trustworthiness of the findings.

Secondly, the scope of the research was only limited to the academic environment within the business and management faculty, which is only one of the many faculties, offering a wide range of diploma, undergraduate and post graduate programs. Hence findings may be skewed, thus limiting the ability to generalize findings to the wider population of academic staff in the PHEI within Malaysia. Thirdly, within the quantitative analysis techniques, only correlation and multiple regression analysis were conducted. Structural equation modeling techniques would have improved findings revealing the nature of relationships among the variables defined within the four research propositions.

5.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research considered the “HRM interventions to address work life balance issues of the academic workforce within PHEI in Malaysia.” The research area, which
encompassed the Malaysian environment, required a certain degree of inductive theory building, in the light of several gaps within the current body of knowledge. The exploratory nature of the study provides opportunities for further research on areas related to work life balance for academics within the higher educational sector. This final section for the thesis offers suggestions for further research, presented below:

a) Increasing the scale of the research incorporating a greater number of participating institutions, and larger samples sizes to confirm the validity of the theoretical models generated. Such findings could offer greater insights relating to the WLB model that was generated.

b) Extending the scope of the studies to other faculties, where a different set of intrinsic job factors may present themselves. Although employees may experience job related factors differently, within the different faculties, they will all be exposed to the same set of staff related policies and practices and therefore the responses from a varied group of participants would provide useful insights. The study could also be replicated to similar institutions, operating within the other states in Malaysia, where many of such institutions have a significant presence.

c) To embark on collaborative research efforts, for comparative studies, with the public HEI within Malaysia, where several studies on work life balance have been initiated. These would reveal useful insights on the differences between the public and private sector environment and its subsequent impact on the employment relationship, within the academic environment.

5.9 CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH

Work life balance is no longer viewed in the Asian context as the exclusive enclave of the Western, individualistic cultures, but one that has increasing relevance within the collective Asian workplace. With the significant position that Malaysia holds in the
Asian region, as an industrial and educational hub, this research will be seen to be pertinent, not just for the knowledge creation process but for the practical relevance it holds within the lives of much of the Asian working population.

This final Chapter summarized the conclusions pertaining to the four research propositions and the manner of relationships between these variables. The conclusions arrived at, lead to new theory development. Recommendations which were based on the research findings were offered for consideration by the regulatory bodies as well as the HRM functions within the PHEI within Malaysia. The limitations that emerged during the course of the research were acknowledged, which in turn presented opportunities for further research.

The research has also been one of self discovery for the researcher, not just from the wealth of explicit knowledge that was available but also from the insights acquired from the processes of juggling priorities, managing interactions with respondents and disciplining one’s mental processes to write with discernment and parsimony. In the researcher’s role as an academician and a professional, the intrinsic rewards gained has made this thesis project a truly meaningful enterprise.
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APPENDIX 1

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Invitation to Participate in the Questionnaire Survey

“HRM interventions to address Work Life Balance issues in Private Higher Educational Institutions within Malaysia”

Dear Sir/Madam

I would be truly appreciative of your kindness in participating in this questionnaire survey on the abovementioned subject. This survey should take no more than 20 minutes of your time and consist of 21 core statements which require your view on your level of agreement or disagreement with these statements.

Before you decide whether or not to take part, however, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information.

The research aims at considering the nature of Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions within in Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEI) in Malaysia to address the issues of work-life balance (WLB) of the academic workforce to arrive at policies that acknowledge and reconcile the conflicting work-life demands of their employees and to attain better work life balance.

There will not be any risks involved and any costs will only pertain to the time involved in participating in the survey. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material.

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Southern Cross University. The approval number is ECN-11-066

I would appreciate your response within two (2) weeks of this invitation. The survey will be closed at 30th June 2012.

Should you require any further information, please free to contact me at perema_k@hotmail.com

Thanking you in advance for your time and participation.

Kind Regards

Perema Kumari (Researcher)
APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF ACADEMIC WORKFORCE IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (PHEI) WITHIN IN MALAYSIA

Please read the following 30 items carefully and tick the appropriate box. It is mandatory to answer item 1

1. I have read and understood all the information presented in the information sheet
   Yes
   No

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

2. Marital status
   Married
   Single
   Divorced

3. Nationality
   Malaysian
   Non Malaysian

4. Gender
   Male
   Female

5. Years of service in the industry
   <5 yrs
   <10 yrs
   <15 yrs
   <20 yrs

6. Age Group
   ≥20yrs
   ≥30yrs
   ≥40yrs
   ≥50yrs

7. Type of employment contract
   Full time
   Part time
   Contractual
   Other

8. Race
   Malay
   Chinese
   Indian
   Other

9. Dependents
   Children
   Elderly
   Handicapped
   None

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by ticking on the appropriate box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Related Features within academic jobs</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 There is sufficient time to meet job demands within normal working hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Staff are not expected to take classes scheduled in the evening or weekends</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Staff have discretion in utilizing designated annual leave for family holidays despite lack of synchronization between term breaks and school holidays</td>
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<td>13 Staff embarking on research projects or</td>
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pursuing further studies are given sufficient reduction in their academic workload or time off from work.

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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>There are formal provisions to allow time off for staff who may face difficulties in managing their family and domestic responsibilities</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Flexi time to compensate for extra hours worked on certain days</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Compressed work hours – to a minimum of 4 days per week for those pursuing post graduate studies</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Staff engagement/consultation about flexible working arrangements in general</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Creche/day care centre &amp; lactation room at work</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Employee &amp; Family Assistance Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sabbaticals for long service staff</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The HRM function plays a strategic role in policy formulation of all staff related matters</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The HRM function takes steps to inform all staff on existing WLB policies in a comprehensive manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The HRM function are perceived to offer high level of informal support for the work life balance of staff if situation arises</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Most of the WLB decisions encountered are delegated to line manager by HR function</td>
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</table>
The following work practices are present within your organization.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Existing WLB policies support staff retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Strong social support given to staff by HOD/supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Formal recognition of additional work hours outside classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A culture of collegiality &amp; openness that allows more freedom in employee expression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>In house training seminars to enhance time management skills</td>
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APPENDIX THREE

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY: DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET

“HRM interventions to address work life balance issues in Private Higher Educational Institutions within Malaysia.”

This questionnaire consists of 30 questions which are presented as statements related to the research. Please read each statement very carefully and rate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements, by placing a tick or circle at the appropriate box.

My responsibility as a researcher is to ensure that all information collected is kept strictly confidential and your name will not be attached to data collected. In the final research the participating organisations will only be referred to as cases with numbers. The results of the research will be made available to interested parties in a final thesis format through the Southern Cross Library. I will also be pleased to share the findings with you upon your request.

Your responsibility as a participant is to decide on whether to participate or not and you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the University Expedited Research Ethics Committee, Southern Cross University. The approval number is ECN-11-066

Contact for Further Information
Name of Researcher : Perema Kumari S Ponnampalam
Tel: 03-77273903 (hse) 016-2459412 (H/P)
Name of Supervisor : Professor Dr Rohana Ariffin -

If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research or the researchers, the following procedure should occur. Write to the following:

The Ethics Complaints Officer
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au
All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.
APPENDIX FOUR

INVITATION TO ATTEND A FOCUS GROUP AND PERSONAL INTERVIEW SESSION

Dear Mr / Miss/ Ms

I am writing with reference to my doctoral thesis, as part of my doctoral degree at Southern Cross University, Australia. My thesis pertains to “HRM interventions to address Work Life Balance issues of the academic workforce in Private Higher Educational Institutions within Malaysia”

I was given your contact details by …….. who suggested that your knowledge and experience in relation to the research topic would be very beneficial in yielding the information pertinent to this research.

The aim of this research is to consider how the HR function will be able to assist the academic workforce better address work life balance issues.

I would be very grateful if you are able to participate in this research by firstly attending the focus session, for which the time and venue will be notified to you in advance and to further allow me to make an appointment with you for the personal interview.

My contact number is 016-2459412 and I would be glad to attend to you queries at your convenience.

Thank you and hoping to hear from you soon.

Yours truly,

Perema Kumari
APPENDIX FIVE

FOCUS GROUP & PERSONAL INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY: DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

“HRM interventions to address Work Life Balance issues in Private Higher Educational Institutions within Malaysia.”

The research aims at considering the nature of Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions within in Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEI) in Malaysia to address the issues of work-life balance (WLB) of the academic workforce to arrive at policies that acknowledge and reconcile the conflicting work-life demands of their employees and to attain better work life balance.

There will not be any risks involved and any costs will only pertain to the time involved in participating in the survey. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

My responsibility as a researcher is to ensure that all information collected is kept strictly confidential and your name will not be attached to data collected. In the final research the participating organisations will only be referred to as cases with numbers. The results of the research will be made available to interested parties in a final thesis format through the Southern Cross Library. I will also be pleased to share the findings with you upon your request.

Your responsibility as a participant is to decide on whether to participate or not and you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the University Expedited Research Ethics Committee, Southern Cross University. The approval number is ECN-11-066

Contact for Further Information

Name of Researcher: Perema Kumari S Ponnampalam
Tel: 03-77273903 (hse) 016-2459412 (H/P)
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Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.
## Overall Summary of Survey Responses Source:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripted Survey Questions</th>
<th>Outcome from descriptive data analysis</th>
<th>Statement outcome from qualitative data analysis</th>
<th>Comparison of findings and support for statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is insufficient time to meet job demands within normal working hours</td>
<td>Workload allocation Disagree 40 Neutral 29 Agree 31</td>
<td>Insufficient time under normal working hours, for academic workforce</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff are not expected to take classes scheduled in the evening or weekends</td>
<td>Disruption to after hours Disagree 48 Neutral 34 Agree 18</td>
<td>Changing class schedules extending to evening &amp; weekend classes.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff have discretion in utilizing designated annual leave for family holidays</td>
<td>Discretion in annual leave utilization Disagree 36 Neutral 29 Agree 35</td>
<td>Limited discretion in annual leave utilization</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff embarking on research projects or pursuing further studies are given sufficient reduction in their academic workload or time off from work</td>
<td>Support for research &amp; study Disagree 60 Neutral 19 Agree 21</td>
<td>Requirement to embark on research and publications, without sufficient work reduction</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROPOSITION 1

<p>| Flexi time to compensate for extra hours worked on certain days | Availability of flexi time Disagree 35 Neutral 26 Agree 39 | Limited flexi-time work options, for a variety of reasons, but not for better work life balance. | Unsure |
| Compressed work week – to a minimum of 4 days per week for those pursuing post graduate studies | Compressed work week Disagree 22 Neutral 32 Agree 46 | Compressed work week, only for conducting research/ further study and not for better work life balance. | Not supported |
| Staff engagement/consultation about flexible working arrangements in general | Consulting Staff Disagree 19 Neutral 32 Agree 49 | Academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia, are only consulted about flexible work option to limited extent, and in an informal, ad hoc manner. | Not supported |
| Creche /day care centre &amp; place for breastfeeding mothers at work | Childcare &amp; breastfeeding facilities Disagree 40 Neutral 33 Agree 27 | Childcare facilities are appreciated but they will need more information before deciding to use such facilities. | Supported |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition 2</th>
<th>The HRM function plays a strategic role in policy formulation of all staff related matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sabbaticals for long service staff</strong></td>
<td>Sabbaticals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>There are formal provisions to allow time off for staff who may face difficulties</strong></td>
<td>Time off for domestic matters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition 3</th>
<th>Provision of adequate facilities to enable quality teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong social support given to staff by HOD/supervisor</strong></td>
<td>Support from HOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee &amp; Family Assistance Programs</th>
<th>Family assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabbaticals</th>
<th>Disagree 28 Neutral 38 Agree 34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time off for domestic matters</td>
<td>Disagree 54 Neutral 20 Agree 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPOSITION 2</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Support from HOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family assistance</th>
<th>Disagree 56 Neutral 21 Agree 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several employee and family assistance provisions under the category of employee welfare rather than work life balance.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited information on sabbatical provision</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal provisions for time off but provisions for informal, ad hoc arrangements</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together with line managers, they do take up the role of strategic partner</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM function provides informal channels in the area of work life balance provisions</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM function, works jointly with line managers, to offer a high level of informal support, on WLB issues</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the WLB decisions of academic staff in PHEI within Malaysia, are delegated by the HRM function to line managers</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The available WLB provisions supportive of retention</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were adequate facilities in place to enable quality teaching</td>
<td>High Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff receive social support from their respective faculty heads.</td>
<td>High Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Formal recognition of additional work hours outside classroom</td>
<td>Formal recognition is given for additional effort outside of classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A culture of collegiality &amp; openness that allows more freedom in employee expression</td>
<td>There is a culture of collegiality and openness that allows more freedom of expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In house training seminars to enhance time management skills</td>
<td>Training on time management skills are available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROPOSITION 4**

Developed from survey data
### APPENDIX SEVEN:
Profile of the twenty interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Type of Contract</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Dependent Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 children 1 elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>1 elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2 children 1 elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 children 2 elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P16</td>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P17</td>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P18</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P19</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P20</td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>