SMART

Journal of Business Management Studies

(A Professional, Refereed, International and Indexed Journal)

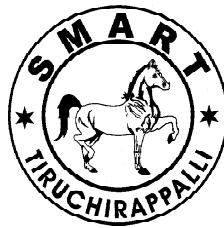**Professor MURUGESAN SELVAM, M.Com, MBA, Ph.D, D.Litt**
Founder - Publisher and Chief Editor

EXPLORING MALAYSIAN ACADEMICS' PERCEPTION ON WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) AS A FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Geetha Subramaniam*
Graduate School of Business, SEGi University, Malaysia
and
Adjunct Professor, Auckland Institute of Studies, New Zealand
geethamaniam@gmail.com

Jayalakshmy Ramachandran
Nottingham University Business School, University of Nottingham Malaysia
Jayalakshmy.rama@nottingham.edu.my

Lennora Putit
Faculty of Business and Management,
UniversitiTeknologi MARA, PuncakAlam, Selangor, Malaysia
lennora633@uitm.edu.my

and

Siti Halijjah Shariff
Arshad Ayub Graduate Business School
UniversitiTeknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor,Malaysia
sitihali@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

Flexible working arrangements have gained prominence in the last decade, due to its ability to provide employees' work-life balance and less stress, which are important for productivity. Although this work-place concept has been used in other industries, many Malaysian universities continue with the conventional work-place policies, with close monitoring. With the COVID-19 pandemic, Working from Home (WFH), a common form of flexible working arrangement, has become a new normal globally, transforming the entire workplace model, irrespective of business or industry. The objective of this study was to explore the perception of Malaysian academics on working from home, with regards to

* Corresponding Author

work-life balance and stress. Using a qualitative approach of focus group discussion, eight academics, from both public and private universities, were interviewed online. Findings revealed that WFH helps to improve work-life balance due to reduced stress for academics in Malaysia. This outcome will be useful in policymaking, where organizations are planning to change work policies to enhance employee productivity, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic experience. As knowledge workers' mind never switches off, a structured WFH policy can contribute to academics' well-being, which is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 3 (SDG 3).

1. Introduction

Flexible working arrangement (FWA), a type of work arrangement which revolves around flexibility of working time of employees, is a common practice in developed economies, with the objective of achieving work-life balance and productivity. (**Berg, et al, 2014**). In recent trends, more organisations have started offering FWAs, to help employees reduce stress. The Global Organization for Stress reported in 2020 that 60% of individuals, all over the world, experienced work-related stress. While researchers evidence that alternative working arrangements can reduce work-related stress, many organisations in developing countries still prefer the conventional style of working specific hours, due to the belief that attendance monitoring is positively related to productivity. In Malaysia, workplace flexibility is one of the contributing factors towards intention to become an academic (**Dasan, 2019**), where job autonomy is positively linked with work family-enhancement and explains why flexibility in work arrangement is seen as a favourable aspect in academia. One common type of FWA, implemented globally, is Work From Home (WFH). Malaysia was among the countries, that

was hit with COVID-19 pandemic and responded by announcing the Movement Control Order (MCO) in mid-March 2020. All academicians in the 20 public universities, and more than 85 private universities, were able to adapt themselves immediately to work from home with ease.

2. Review of Literature

Flexible working arrangements (FWA) is defined by the Georgetown University Law Centre, Workplace Flexibility (2010), as any *"one of a spectrum of work structures, that alters the time and/or place that work gets done on a regular basis"*. In the 1990's, various types of FWA like working part-time, compressed work weeks and time flexibility were introduced by employers to be cost-effective (**Dalton and Mesch, 1990; Purcell et al., 1999**), with other benefits such as talent retention as well as higher financial performance (**Stroup and Yoon, 2016**). Generally, institutions of higher learning face a dilemma when it comes to allowing staff work flexibility (**Paull, et al., 2009**), due to work commitment of the academics. Yet the development of technology and pedagogical ideas have made educators' job quite attractive in some countries (**Bajzikova**

et. al., 2013).In United Kingdom, a typical 9-5 working hour arrangement is no longer considered conducive to support academics in performing their task (**Sang et. al., 2015**). In France too, academics reported that high autonomy in teaching and research activities has boosted their motivation (**Inigo and Raufaste, 2019**).In Malaysia, **Subramaniam et. al., (2018**) found that a rigid working environment could be a cause for labour exit and unhappiness at the workplace and this, in turn, affects the productivity and well-being of the workers. Being knowledge workers, academic work with non-tangible elements requires them to consistently think, to avoid losing valuable ideas (**Sang et al., 2015**). Academics' work is that of multi-tasking since it not only involves educating students but also extends to administrative roles research related activities as well as external engagement (**Husin et. al., 2018**), leading to a more challenging and intensified job scope (**Curie and Eveline, 2011**). The various roles, played by an individual in academia, makes it difficult for him/her to switch-off, thereby affecting their well-being (**Lewis, 2016**). This leads to two crucial issues, which arise from FWA and WFH; namely, work-life balance and stress.

2.1 Work-Life Balance

The concept of work-life balance has gained much attention from many organisations and employees, due to the shifting of family patterns and the increase of dual-income earners (**Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014**). Work-life balance can be obtained, with a balance between the demands of employees' work lives and personal lives (**Jackson and Fransman, 2018**). **Mohan, et al.** (2010), claim that work-life affecting an individual, particularly females, irrespective of their academic positions (**Helavci, 2019**), is often related to child-care.

Work-life balance may be challenging for academics to maintain because academic work can be perceived as 'open-ended', as it requires research and teaching preparation also. In a few countries, university policies do not allow employees to achieve the balance and employees feel the pressure due to a tilted work-related role. Academics eventually are under pressure, to demonstrate productivity through quantifiable data, such as the number of publications and even find themselves working from home during non-labour hours, thus affecting the work life balance. Despite the challenges faced by academics in Malaysia, it was evidenced a decade ago that academics demonstrated less propensity to leave the organization due to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (**Noor, 2011**). However, a different trend is witnessed in recent times, to which academics' work has become so extremely demanding and challenging that employees are forced to work during weekends as well as extended hours. This alarming trend intrudes into their family time and hence creates negative impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (**Khairunneezam, et al, 2017**).

2.2 Stress

The American Institute of Stress has evidenced that 20% of Americans face stress as a result of juggling work and personal life (2021). In Malaysia, it was noted that Malaysian employees are more over-worked, stressed and lead unhealthy lifestyle and they are least productive in comparison to some of their immediate neighbours like Singapore or Hong Kong (**The New Straits Time, 2019**). This is also true in the case of academics. Stress among academicians is an indication that the academic environment does not provide an enjoyable working environment that academicians used to experience (**Makhbul et. al., 2013**). This has

resulted in health issues and over-all wellbeing, thereby influencing the teacher's contribution towards the student learning experience (**Bel, et al., 2012**) and in worst cases, can disturb the students' intellectual and social abilities (**Ahsan et. Al., 2009**). The work of academics is often highly salient to their personal identity, which leads to increased responsiveness to the demands of their work setting. This is because professional success and rewards are essential to them. This is worsened with the non-work demand that might intensify the situation, especially in the form of work-life conflict. In Malaysia, employees attached to research universities have suffered increased stress level because of various demands on publication quality, teaching quality as well as creating visibility of the lecturers to the outside world (**Makhbul and Khairuddin, 2013**). **Noramalina, et al., (2016)** evidence that almost 61% of academics faced either moderate or severe stress, resulting from prolonged working hours, increased workload and responsibilities.

The question of whether WFH or FWA has helped in reducing stress, has received mixed views. On one hand, it is reported that employees, who were tied to formal flexi-work arrangements, had reported improved health and lower stress (**Grzywacz, et al., 2008**) while there are claims that flexibility in terms of work from home, had increased work pressure and work-life conflict, leading to increase in the employees' stress levels (**Russell, O'Connell &McGinnity, 2009**).However, it will be critical to research on the extent to which academics perceive WFH may affect their work-life balance and stress in Malaysia as a move forward in workplace flexibility.

3. Statement of Problem

The Malaysian higher learning institutions (HLIs) have grown over the past few decades, making significant strides and risen in global recognition on key dimensions. Additionally, these universities are competing, within different rankings, ranging from QS world ranking to the regional rating agencies like Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA), that focuses on research contributions.With such an accelerated growth within the academic profession as well as sudden transition to new normal, it is very timely to investigate the potential acceptance of WFH as a form of FWAs amongst the academic fraternity in Malaysia and hence the motivation for this study.

4. Need of the Study

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the world to a new WFH norm, forcing even the most conventional people to embrace technology fully and accept alternative working arrangements. The fast-growing technology and changing lifestyle, that valued more self-indulgence (**Himawan et al., 2020**), indicated that the change in work arrangements in Malaysia might be more about "when" than "if". With such an accelerated growth within the academic profession as well as a sudden transition to new normal, it is very timely to explore the potential acceptance of WFH amongst the academic fraternity in Malaysia. Can WFH contribute to work-life balance and reduce stress which are pertinent for the well-being and happiness?

5. Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to gain a better insight into the academicians' view of WFH as a form of FWA, focusing on its impact on work–life balance and stress. This study focusses on WFH, which was implemented by all Malaysian universities, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The qualitative study covers eight academics' views, from both the public and private universities in Malaysia, in September 2020.

6. Hypotheses of the Study

As this is a qualitative study, there is no hypothesis testing. The two research questions are:

H-1: Does WFH among academics have an effect on WLB?

H-2: Does WFH among academics have an effect on stress level?

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Sample Selection

To answer the two research questions, the key emergent issues relating to WFH and its outcome on WLB and stress level, have been explored in this paper. The focus group discussion, with eight participants, were carefully selected, using purposive sampling to ensure representativeness across age, gender, faculty, work flexibility and type of university (**Table-1**).

7.2. Sources of Data

Primary data were based on the eight participants' responses, during focus group discussion. Further interviews were also conducted to clarify some responses.

7.3 Period of study

A three-hour focus group discussion was done in September 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to explore the working arrangement of WFH among academics, in both public and private universities in Malaysia.

7.4 Tools used in the Study

This is a qualitative study where data were captured via focus group discussion and follow-up interviews. All data were keyed into NVIVO 12 software. As it was conducted during COVID-19 pandemic and all universities were working online, the focus group discussion was done via online platform, using Google Meets.

8. Data Analysis

The focus group discussion probed themes in terms of WFH, focusing specifically on work-life balance and stress based on the daily experience of the academic staff. However, during the discussion, other themes such as well-being, happiness and productivity also emerged, but they are not discussed in this paper. The transcribed data were analysed by using thematic analysis, an approach for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes. All participants were assured of their anonymity and it was reiterated that the objective of the study was to understand their experiences while WFH during the pandemic. The purpose of this paper was not to draw generalizations but rather to understand the experiences of academics, working in different working environments, using the data collected.

8.1 Demographic Profile of Participants

Four of the participants were in their 30's, two in their 40's and 50's respectively and one in 60's. Three of the participants were Indians and the rest were Malays. Four participants were from private universities while the others were from public universities. There were three males and five females, with two participants who had extra caring duties at home **(Table-1)**.

9. Findings of the Study

This research explored how WFH impacted academics' work-life balance and stress.

9.1 WFH and Work-Life Balance

This section looks at how academics' perceived work from home (WFH) had influenced their work-life balance (WLB) amidst COVID-19. Hayman's (2009) concept on work-life balance uses three dimensions, namely, *work-interference with personal life; personal life interference with work and work/personal life enhancement.* Using the

three themes, the interview excerpts were coded and presented as below:

Work-interference with personal life

Majority of participants emphasized how WFH provided them a greater control over their work schedule, which allowed them to look into the needs of their personal life such as tending to the children or doing house-hold chores while maintaining work productivity at the same time.

"Being a mom of four, with COVID- 19 in the country……and kids at home currently… I must say that we are flexible to do our work…. not in accordance with our [work] routine or schedule….. I can schedule a meeting or my video presentation later or I can do it late at night…"

Academics, like general employees, also aspire to achieve a balance between work-life and personal life.

Personal life interference with work

Among the responses, commonly provided by the academics, was how WFH helped them through the emotional and psychological burden in trying to juggle personal life and work-life.

For instance, an academic, who had to commute long distance to work, highlighted how he could *"choose to WFH when permitted to effectively execute some of his domestic responsibility resulting in…..reduced emotional and psychological stress"*.

"I always need to travel long distances….. it becomes a great challenge ….when I have to leave the kids behind with the babysitter, I don't have anybody to look after them…in fact when I had someone who is sick in the family…that used to be rather very stressful for me".

"So to me, I believe it's more on emotional and psychological support that I have from the university because my university is very flexi and they allow us to WFH….."

Commented, another academic, whose university practices WFH…

"The positive effect of WFH is a lot.. So with this system, it really makes our lives easier because we only have to travel when we need to…for class, meeting etc.."

With WFH policy, academics can handle better both the emotional and the psychological burden, especially among dual career families.

Work/personal life enhancement.

WFH or FWAs also appears appealing to certain academics, who desire work flexibility due to household responsibilities. One of the academics, exclaimed how when he was first choosen for an academic post, he preferred to join a university, that was willing to offer FWAs so that he could cope with his child. Having FWAs, as part of the work policy, enhances the work/personal life as it significantly improves the quality of both.

He claimed that during the pandemic,

"with a special child….a son with autism….I need to have some flexibility…and alsoWFH was …so convenient. Because my wife, is a lecturer too, …so it allows us to take turns…to take care of the child..We plan in such a way that I do most of my work late at night after my kid has gone to sleep."

"WFH or FWA allows me to come to the office a little bit late…this [FWA] allows me to keep on working and remain productive as well.. I make sure my publication output is high, my research is good and I am able to meet all the KPIs"

Academics, with caring duties, especially with children below six years old, have described how WFH or FWAs had helped them manage caring duties and work requirements more effectively, as shown by **Helvaci (2017**), who found that work-life balance does have a significant effect on an individual, irrespective of their academic positions.

9.2 FWAs and Stress

Although WFH could provide academics a sense of fulfilment in terms of work-life balance, well-being, happiness and productivity, this may have mixed impact on the academics, in terms of stress, as discussed in this section.

Physical Stress

Physical stress is a negative physical symptom, that can result from long working hours, due to the unintended merging of home and work. This is especially true in the scenario where both caring duties and working duties demand to be taken care at the same time.

> *" I am working more hours now...I feel.....we are much more tired.. even [at] night we are working...so from my [point of] view I feel it a little bit tiring because it [work] is like never ending.."*

Said another participant,

> *"I found that it's kind of fatigue as well because I ....am not able to focus on my work activities ...unlike if we are in the office physically...to prepare the presentation, lectures etc. I might say that I will take longer time as compared to physical class or working at the office".*

In this regard, **Darabi et. al., (2017**) found that if demands were being made to overpower their capability to cope with them, it becomes stressful.The stress here occurs when the academic has no autonomy over when, where, and how he/she does the work. This stirs the stress and leads to serious mental and physical problems, that negatively influence the academic's well-being.

Mental Stress

Mental Stress or Psychological Strain can result from increased distraction, which leads to reduced focus on performing work-related tasks. As mentioned by a participant earlier, this sometimes takes place in a flexi-place setting, where the work environment might not be conducive, as obtained in the office or the university. Several academics have encountered this issue, during WFH, during the pandemic.

"Sometimes it becomes *stressful* for me …. *We don't feel very focus in terms of what we are currently doing[office activities], it will have* negative impact, it will lead you to.. *stressful* [situation]".

However, as **Vega et. al., (2015**) argues that, WFH generally is associated with greater positive effect even though there exists a lower negative effect.

As academicians are consistently required to do many other tasks such as meetings, consultations and supervision, WFH will facilitate their ability to do their tasks, anywhere and everywhere.

For example, clamed an academic,

> *"Our procedure is that we have to clock-in and clock out.*
>
> *Basically, this limits employeesatisfaction because we are required to come to the office"...immaterial of whether we have class or not...*

When prompted, another academic illustrated howWFH affects the academics positively due to better time management.

"WFH makes the [academics] happier, less stressed compared to when they have to have to run to the machine ...to thumbprint. on time"

This sentiment was also reflected by another young academic, who was experiencing WFH for the first time..

"I am happy because I don't need to follow the regulation of the management which requires me to 'thumb in' and 'thumb out' so we can work at anyplace and anytime..."

Thus, having control over the working environment and positive perception of the organization, lead to the academics feeling happy.

However, WFH becomes a double-edged sword as it blurs the line between work and leisure (**Atkinson and Hall, 2011**), where academics end up needing to respond to their employers, associates or students 24/7. The blur line between work and leisure emerges more during WFH for academics. In the context of intense academia, work-pace and deadlines encompass academic personal space and time.The major concern of the blurring of work and home boundary, frequently derived from WFH (**Chandola et al., 2019**), found two dimensions of stress, as also voiced by the participants, revolving around physical stress and mental stress. However, whether WFH and FWAs are linked to stress, are specific to the type of flexibility.

10. Suggestions

As the MCO still continues, in different intensities, in the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has taught the academic world that online, digitalization, Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 and social media are more than just buzz words. They are critical strategies, that one needs to have for employment sustainability, especially among knowledge workers. WFH is seen to be the future of academics in Malaysia and the readiness among all institutions of higher learning to adapt to this new world of work, shows evidence. A more concerted effort is needed to make it a level playing field for the stakeholders. Thus, process and procedures, including standard operating procedures, will have to be amended to embrace the new working lifestyle that came 'unannounced'. The major contributions of this paper are as follows: Firstly, it triggers the idea of WFH as an alternative working arrangement, which is not a norm for many academics in Malaysia. Secondly, the growing health concerns, resulting from work-related stress levels, can be addressed to a large extent. Thirdly, Malaysia's vision 2030 documents still identify many sectors as 'low' in adoption of high technology, but WFH will eventually lead to usage of more technology. Finally, WFH can remove some barriers for the women in the workforce, allowing for better well-being and contribute towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 3 (SDG 3).

11. Conclusion

In essence, the main objective of this study was to capture the Malaysian academics' perception about WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic. The exploratory nature of the study wanted to understand how academics in Malaysia perceived WFH, as a form of FWA, in terms of work-life balance and stress. Interesting conclusions from the focus group discussions emerged in this study. Firstly, in answering **RQ 1**, academicians in Malaysia were found to value WFH as a contributor to work-life balance. Secondly, in answering **RQ 2**, WFH generated mixed responses, in terms of stress as a result of the blurring of boundary, evident especially among academics, who were not able to practice effective time management. Finally, a cost-benefit analysis, among the eight academics revealed that the benefits outweighed the cost and WFH should be implemented, in a

more structured way, with blended learning and revised KPIs.

12. Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to the perception of academics on WFH, as a mode of flexible working arrangement, in terms of work-life balance and stress levels. Besides, it was carried out during COVID 19 pandemic, which caused stress, due to challenges that the family faced upon being confined to the house.

13. Scope for Further Research

Further research should explore a larger sample of academics and how WFH may have an effect on well-being, happiness and productivity.

14. Acknowledgement

15. References

Atkinson, C., & Hall, L. (2011). Flexible working and happiness in the NHS. *Employee Relations Law Journal, 33*(2), 88–105.

Ahsan, N., Abdullah, Z., Fie, D. Y. G., & Alam, S. S. (2009). A study of job stress on job satisfaction among university staff in Malaysia: Empirical study. *European Journal Of Social Sciences, 8*(1), 121-131.

The American Institute of Stress. (2021, February 9). *Workplace Stress*. https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress

Bajzikova, L., Sajgalikova, H., Wojcak, E., & Polakova, M. (2013). Are flexible work arrangements attractive enough for knowledge-intensive businesses?.*Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 99*, 771-783.

Bell, A. S., Rajendran, D., & Theiler, S. (2012). Job stress, wellbeing, work-life balance and work-life conflict among Australian academics. E-Journal of Applied Psychology, 8(1).https://doi.org/10.7790/ejap.v8i1.320

Berg, P., Bosch, G., Charest, J. (2014). Working-Time Configurations: A Framework for Analyzing Diversity Across Countries. In: *Industrial &Labor Relations Review, 67*(3): 805-837.

Chandola, T., Booker, C. L., Kumari, M., & Benzeval, M. (2019). Are flexible work arrangements associated with lower levels of chronic stress-related biomarkers? A study of 6025 employees in the uk household longitudinal study. *Sociology, 53*(4), 779–799.

Dalton, D. R., &Mesch, D. J. (1990). The impact of ûexible scheduling on employee attendance and turnover. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 35*, 370–387

Darabi, M., Macaskill, A., & Reidy, L. (2017). Stress among UK academics: identifying who copes best. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 41*(3), 393–412.

Fox, M. F., Fonseca, C., & Bao, J. (2011). Work and family conflict in academic science: Patterns and predictors among women and men in research universities. *Social Studies of Science, 41*(5), 715–735.

Grzywacz, J. G., Carlson, D. S., & Shulkin, S. (2008). Schedule flexibility and stress: Linking formal flexible arrangements and perceived flexibility to employee health. *Community, Work and Family, 11*(2), 199-214.

Georgetown Law. (2010). *Workplace Flexibility*. https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/flexibility/

Dasan, J. (2019). Recruiting quality academics: the relationship of passion, role model, workplace flexibility, and career decision-making self-efficacy. *International Journal of Business Academics, 1(*1), 20-37 https://doi.org/10.30596/ijbe.v1i1.3441

Hasan, N. A. B. B., & Teng, L. S. (2017). Work-life balance and job satisfaction among

working adults in Malaysia: The role of gender and race as moderators. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 5*(1), 18-24.

Helvaci, M. A., Bakalim, O., Can, V., & Akkoyun, Ü. (2017). The work-life balance of academics. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education-October, 7*(4), 80-85

Hill, E., Hawkins, A., Ferris, M., & Weitzman, M. (2001). Finding an extra day a week: the positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance. *Family Relations, 50*(1), 49-58. Retrieved June 11, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/585774

Himawan, K., Fanggidae, J. P., & Helmi, J. (in press). The sociocultural barriers of work-from-home arrangement due to COVID-19 pandemic in Asia: Implications and future implementation. ***Advance. Preprint.***

Husin, N. A., Ghazali, A. S. M., Abdullah, N., & Hadi, M. I. B. A. (2017). Work-life balance of Malaysian lecturers. *Australian Academy of Business and Economics Review*, 4(1), 43-49

Jackson, L. T. B., & Fransman, E. I. (2018). Flexi work, financial well-being, work-life balance and their effects on subjective experiences of productivity and job satisfaction of females in an institution of higher learning. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, *21*(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v21i1.1487

Khairunneezam, M.N., Siti Suriani, O., Nurul Nadirah, A.H. (2017). Work-life balance satisfaction among academics in public higher educational sector. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, special issue – Islam and contemporary issues*, 7, 5-19

Makhbul, Z. M., & Khairuddin, S. M. H. S. (2013). Stress among Malaysian Academics: A conceptual study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 3*(1), 196.

Mohan, N., Prabha, N., &Mohanraj, P. (2010). Work life balance through flexi work arrangements: Empirical study on bank employees. *International Journal of Management, 1*(2), 53-61.

Noramalina, MZ, Huda, B. Z., &Hejar, A. R. (2016). Job stress and its determinants among academic staff in a university in Klang Valley, Malaysia. *International Journal of Public Health and Clinical Sciences, 3*(6), 125-136.

Noor, K. M. (2011). Work-life balance and intention to leave among academics in Malaysian public higher education institutions. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 2*(11).

Paull, M. J., Omari, M., &Sharafizad, F. Y. (2009). Flexible work arrangements in higher education : A tale of two groups. Proceedings of 23rd ANZAM Conference 2009. (pp. 1-13). Perth, Australia: Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd.

Purcell, K., Hogarth, T., &Simm, C. (1999). Whose flexibility? The costs and beneûts of non-standard working arangements and contractual relations. *York, UK: Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. 12

Russell, H., O'Connell, P. J., &McGinnity, F. (2009). The impact of flexible working arrangements on work–life conflict and work pressure in Ireland. *Gender, Work & Organization, 16*(1), 73-97.

Sang, K., Powell, A., Finkel, R., & Richards, J. (2015). Being an academic is not a 9-5 job": Long working hours and the "ideal worker" in UK academia. *Labour & Industry-A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work, 25*(3), 235–249.

Shagvaliyeva, S., &Yazdanifard, R. (2014). Impact of flexible working hours on work-life balance. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management, 04*(01), 20–23.

Stroup, C., & Yoon, J. (2016). What impact do flexible working arrangements (fwa) have on

employee performance and overall business results?.*Cornell ILR School, Digital Commons@ ILR*

Subramaniam, G., &Selvaratnam, D. P. (2010). Family friendly policies in Malaysia: Where are we? *International Journal of Business and Systems Research, 9*(1), 43.

Subramaniam,G., Maniam, B., Rasiah, R. & and Dzulkarnain, S (2018). Perception of Malaysian women in the labour market – Does one have to be present to be productive*?*. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology, 7*(4.29), 163-167

Subramaniam, G., Ramachandran, J., Putit, L & Raju, R. (2020) Environment-Behaviour Exploring Academics' Work-Life Balance and Stress Levels Using Flexible Working Arrangements *Proceedings Journal 5* (15), 469-47

The New Straits Times (2019) Survey: Malaysian employees are overworked, sleep deprived, unhealthy. NST Online. https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/11/539026/survey-malaysian-employees-are-overworked-sleep-deprived-unhealthy

Vega, R. P., Anderson, A. J., & Kaplan, S. A. (2014). A Within-Person Examination of the Effects of Telework. *Journal of Business and Psychology,* 30(2), 313–323. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-014-9359-4

Table-1: Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants

Age	Gender	Department	Degree of Flexibility	Type	Code
40's	Male	Business	3-Most Flexible	Private University	P1
40's	Female	Accounting	3-Most Flexible	Private University	P2
50's	Female	Economics	3-Most Flexible	Private University	P3
30's	Female	Engineering	1-Least Flexible	Private University	P4
50's	Female	Computer Science and Mathematic	3-Most Flexible	Public University	P5
30's	Female	Survey and Planning	3-Most flexible	Public University	P6
30's	Male	Hotel	2-Semi flexible	Public University	P7
30's	Male	Business	1-Least flexible	Public University	P8

Source : Primary Data computed using NVIVO 12 software