



**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK-FAMILY BALANCE PRACTICES  
(WFBPS) IN THE MALAYSIAN OIL AND GAS WORKPLACE:  
EXPERIENCES AMONGST MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**By**

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**In The Name Of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful**

**'of knowledge, it is only a little that is communicated to you. 'Al-Israa (85)**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my original research. I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of Brunel University, London and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I further declare that all information in this thesis has been obtained and presented by academic rules and ethical conduct.

Noorhasyimah Ismail

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## **PUBLISHED WORKS**

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## ABSTRACT

Work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the workplace have caused growing interest amongst employees and employers in developing countries like Malaysia. Previous research has shown that the application of work-family balance interface (e.g. work-family integration) in the workplace has an impact on the role of manager, particularly at the micro level analysis. The study has four objectives, which are: (1) To explore how managers and executives in the O& G sector perceive the notion of WFBPs; (2) To identify the type of WFBPs introduced in the Malaysian O&G companies; (3) To compare the WFBPs in both government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies; and (4) To evaluate the role of a manager in implementing WFBPs in O&G companies. A qualitative method was employed in this study by using a face-to-face, semi-structured interview approach. The interview approach was used to explore the concept and dimensions of the understanding of WFBPs, as this is the appropriate approach to gain a viewpoint from an individual perspective. The empirical result of the investigation has recognised the significant themes of the implementation of WFBPs on the O&G employees' work-life balance. Firstly, it provided the WFBPs' notions of the integration, separation and integration-separation concept between work and family lives to the O&G workforces. Secondly, the study identified and examined the utility of the WFBPs that enables the comparison of formal and informal WFBPs for both government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies. Thirdly, the study evaluated the role of the manager in undertaking the WFBPs and factors that motivate the O&G workforces in the workplace. This study also revealed the impact on the individual and the organisation from the implementation of WFBPs. Hence, the study showed the interconnected manager roles in achieving the work-life balance whilst working with the O&G industry.

Keywords: work–family balance, work-family balance practices, manager, Malaysia, Oil and Gas

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

The demand for work and family integration in terms of roles and responsibilities has become normal amongst employee and employer, and such demand is consistent with the increasing number of women and men involved in the labour force both in developed (e.g. the UK) and developing (e.g. Malaysia) countries. There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of balancing or harmonising between work and family. The way to balance or harmonise both responsibilities has been shifted from traditional to dual-earner families (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Research in work and family has peaked amongst scholars, and there are various ideas from different sides and different concepts to achieve a balance between work and family inside or outside the workplace. The role played by the manager in instructing the work and family balance practices and its adaptation relies on their balancing success between work and family (Kumari, 2012).

The focal point of this study is to analyse the influence of work-family balance practices (WFBPs) on work-life balance experiences and feeling amongst executives and managers employed in oil and gas (O&G) companies. In order to analyse those practices amongst managers, there is a need to explore how managers utilise these practices in the workplace and how this action impacts to individual and organisation. According to Dulk et al. (2011), managerial attitudes and experiences are a key aspect of a manager's role in a workplace. Such actions played by a manager are a crucial role within organisations, specifically as an internal agent. One of the important issues is how a manager should mediate the rights of employees to utilise work-family policies (Dulk et al., 2011). There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving perceived managerial support. Powell and Mainiero (1999) argued that the support of the manager is important to the individual or employees in the organisation in implementing the work-family balance policies (for example, the arrangement programmes). Drawing on an extensive range of sources, some authors (e.g. Eby et al., 2005; Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Dulk et al., 2011; Ko et al., 2013) have set out different

ways of describing the managers' support and utilise those practices or programmes. These factors should all combine to create family-supportive workplace environments.

Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that the managerial provision is related to WFBPs and managers' ethical work. In their study, Baranik et al. (2010) found an approach to explain those factors in the theory of Perceived Organisational Support (POS). Also, there is a theory of Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) by Eisenberger et al. (2002) which can be used to test a supervisor's self-presentational behaviour. However, those theories apply to such behaviours or attitudes amongst supervisors that influence organisational outcomes or performance in a social exchange demand. There are theories such as the Role Balance theory by Marks and Macdermid (1996) and the Personal Resource Allocation (PRA) theory by Grawitch et al. (2010) discussed an interesting finding to be explored. Hence, this study is mainly looking to a factor that can be applied to identify the commitment between organisations and employees through the experiences of the managers and executives by the actual implementation in the workplace. On top of that, this study aims to focus on exploring how the experiences of actual undertaken WFBPs influence on work-family balance advantages and practices in Malaysian O&G workplace.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

This study sets out to explore work and family balance practices amongst managers and executives in Malaysia. The aim is to examine whether the role of managers, such as implementing work-family/life balance practices or programmes in the workplace affects their work-life balance in the workplace and enhance their understanding of striking a balance between work and family lives. Powell and Mainiero's (1999) analysis mentions various programmes that have been implemented by organisations. Such practices show they can only be effective with the support of managers. Managerial support has been recognised as having a direct relationship with an employee's outcomes in a company (Eby et al., 2005). However, there is a limit of empirical evidence to comprehensive reviews on managers' behaviours or attitudes in practicing work-family balance programmes or practices in Malaysia. Even though many organisations have been implementing these practices for a few years, they are still new and not very significant amongst Malaysians (Subramaniam, 2010). Therefore, the contribution of this study is to go beyond the work-family balance

concept by examining the working culture and ethics that reflect the relevance and approaches of the work-life balance activities from the practices, policies, and strategies in a Malaysian context.

Some of the authors (e.g. Lo, 2006; Ahmad, 2007; Rasdi et al., 2013) use Malaysian institutions, such as the public, manufacturing and private sectors in a research context to examine the work and family balance being implemented through the eyes of both employees and employers. However, discussion on the challenges and strategies of undertaken WFBPs amongst the labour force in a focus group of employees, particularly in the O&G companies are limited. For instance, the importance of the managerial role and their strategy in the implementation process are yet to be explored (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008). The urgency to study the WFBPs implementation by Malaysian managers is a recognised gap of this study. This study is examining Malaysian O&G industry in particular, as they are the spark the economic growth needed. There is evidence that one of the major issues in employees resources management of the O&G sectors is “the industry is generally being viewed negatively as an industry which fails to promote work-life balance, especially for women with families” (International Gas Union, 2012, p.10). Hence, Malaysian the O&G companies are used in this study to explore the practical effect of the WFBPs being adopted.

Moreover, this current study explores the challenges and strategies of WFBPs on the experiences of the employee’s work-life balance in the workplace. The influence of macro factors such as cultural, social and religious aspects of the Malaysian multi-cultural and ethnicity variation are explored and discussed. Also, the role of manager at an individual and organisational-level in implementing the WFBPs has created another element to look forward to having WFBPs in Malaysian workplaces. Thus, the next following section sharpens the research aim and objectives of the study.

### **1.3 Research Aim**

The important role of a manager in an organisation impacts implicitly and explicitly to individual and organisation performance. Thus, there is a need **to evaluate managers’ experience and attitude in understanding and implementing the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the Malaysian workplace**. In-depth, this research evaluated and examined the experience and attitude through the influences,

challenges, and strategy of the individual who has implemented the WFBPs in the work environment.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives and Questions**

This research has four main objectives (RO)

**RO1:** To explore how managers and executives in the O&G sector perceive the notion of WFBPs.

**RO2:** To identify the type of WFBPs introduced in the Malaysian O&G companies

**RO3:** To compare the WFBPs in both government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies.

**RO4:** To evaluate the role of a manager in implementing WFBPs in O&G companies.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the study seeks to answer the research questions (RQ) of:

**RQ1:** What perceptions do managers have of the WFBPs in the O&G workplace, and how the O&G managers experienced the WFBPs in the workplace?

**RQ2:** What are the types of WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian organisation?

**RQ3:** What is the arrangement of WFBPs in the government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies?

**RQ4:** What are the factors that influence on the work-life balance amongst implementers in the O&G workplace?

#### **1.5 Justification for the Study**

The work and family balance topic is not new amongst Malaysian labour force discussions since 2010. Yet, there are still limitations of the previous study on the impact of the related practices (such as the WFBPs) at a certain sector and level of the research context. According to Ahmad's (2007) study of family-friendly

employment policies in Malaysia, the discussion of the related practices was adopted at the initial stage of implementation and amongst the public and private Malaysian companies. Since then, in Malaysia campaigns for women's empowerment in the working labour force have gathered the scholars to exploit the work-family balance issues and increase awareness of important action to be taken at each organisational level (such as: Marican *et al.*, 2011). As a consequence, this study was to evaluate the undertaken practices amongst the WFBPs' implementer. Moreover, it is a predictable explanation of the work-life/family balance mutually benefits employees that foster a balance between their personal and professional lives (Daves, 2004). Hence, this is one of the relatively interesting work-family balance concepts within the multicultural organisation of the Malaysian human resource management programs and policy.

Given that this study was conducted in the Malaysian oil and gas (O&G) industry, a comparable working environment but in a different sector setting between government-owned and privately-owned companies, the unique Malaysian cultural and institutional environment provides another distinctive research setting in comparison to other developing countries. Furthermore, in the present context of work-life balance role in the socio-economic development in the O&G sector, further studies on implication of the WFBPs on the managerial role enhances the understanding of how this might directly or indirectly influence the working performance in the organisation. In his study, Poelmans *et al.*, (2008) showed that the construct of work-life balance consists of the management and balance of work responsibilities and non-work responsibilities. A comprehensive review of work-family balance in relation to managers in the workplace is a contribution of this current study and beneficial to organisations, individuals and policy-makers and expands the existing work-family balance knowledge. Thus, this study demonstrates the unusual combination of the nature of the O&G job (onshore and offshore) and individual attitudes and behaviour which provide an interesting background to explore the drivers for the implementation of WFBPs amongst workforces.



## **1.6 Research Framework**

This study is directed by the role theory by Marks and Macdermid (1996) and added developments on the theory to comprehend the important objectives of this study. Role balance theory explains how a person is able to enjoy every part of life across the entire role system and achieve life balance (Marks and Macdermid, 1996). Role balance theory was chosen as a conceptual framework for this study because it has an array of advantages for conceptualising balancing acts of the individual role performed (Whitehead, 2003). Also, the used of the work-life/family balance practices indicated by Avgar, Givan and Liu's (2011) study proved the salient role played by the individual and organisation to the role system. However, the multiple roles challenges in competing demands between inside and outside workplace have increased, and it is important to employees in recent years. The implementing of organisational practices to facilitate the needs of the balancing life in the workplace now expand beyond the work and non-work life sphere which are closely related to the role system (A.Milkie and Peltola, 1999; Ryan and Kossek, 2008; Baranik, Roling and Eby, 2010). This ideal role system of a person and the balancing act amongst individuals in the workplace shifted into action taken through the managerial role in responding to related responsibilities, strategy and interests of the work-family balance implementation. Thus, by using the data collected amongst Malaysian O&G employees, a conceptual model of the WFBPs role balance was developed. The model explains the implication of the managerial role regarding the implementing action of the WFBPs in the workplace.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

A qualitative approach was used in this research to explore the experiences and explain the understanding through ethical behaviour of the study's respondents (Smircich and Morgan, 1980), who were amongst managers of two O&G companies. The qualitative approach recognised and evaluated employee participants' meaning and real-life experience (Silverman, 2014). This study employed the qualitative research by using the semi-structured interviews by selecting two companies of the public and private sectors. This is to provide comprehensive understanding of the organisational practices, on managerial role, as well as the challenges and strategy used in practices' implementation. The qualitative research interview is the most

flexible methods available to examine broader issues of research areas (King, 2004). The interviewees were selected amongst managers who had experience of the challenges of implementation and introduction of these new practices using the strategy of snowballing sampling.

## **1.8 Thesis Structure and Content**

This thesis is structured in following way:

**Chapter 1** gives a brief introduction to the background and fundamental understanding of the research, the aims, and the objectives. This is followed by the research questions, methodology chosen, and provides the research structure section.

**Chapter 2** discusses conceptualisation of work and family from previous scholars mainly on the various concepts of the work and family understanding arena; whilst **Chapter 3 and 4** critically reviews the literature on management of the WFBPs and its implementation in the Malaysian context accordingly, which are used as the theoretical foundation for the study.

**Chapter 5** outlines the research framework used in the study. This is to share the research model guided by the selected theories and concept in the work-family/life area.

**Chapter 6** outlines the methodological research employed in the study. This is to answer the research questions by explaining the foundation of choice from the research philosophy, research design, research process, and ethical considerations of this study. This is followed by the qualitative data analysis of the research.

**Chapter 7 and 8** present the findings of the study portrayal on data from the interviews. These two chapters divided between two sectors of public and private case study that focus on answering the research questions. Whilst **Chapter 7** concerns the Company A findings which explicates the WFBPs amongst government-owned company's employees, **Chapter 8** concerns Company B, the privately-owned company's employees.

**Chapter 9** discusses the findings in more detail and presents a comprehensive analysis of the WFBPs implementation experiences and feeling amongst managers and executives, particularly in the Malaysian government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies. There is also a discussion on the four main themes of each studied sector that presents the influences of the undertaken WFBPs on a multiple role of the manager in the O&G workplace.

The final chapter, **Chapter 10** draws the conclusion that includes the contributions of the study, limitations, and propositions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF WFBPS

#### 2.1 Introduction

In order to explore the work-family relationship to the implication of the practices, there is a need to introduce the Work-Family Balance Spheres that have been broadly and conceptually defined by previous scholars. This chapter has divided into four sections. It starts with the origin of work and family from a conceptual background of the work-family area. The second section will continue to review the understanding of terms of work and family from the conceptual background of work and family area. The third section will briefly discuss the relationship between work and family from the traditional model concepts and perspectives. It will review relevant literature, and in light of the literature discuss the area of the relationship between work life and family life in the workplace. The fourth section will review the arguments from the earlier discussion amongst scholars about the availability practices and the way it utilised in the workplace. Thus, the concluding section gives a summary of the chapter.

#### 2.2 Origin of work-life balance

The research on work-life balance has existed since the 1930s. It continuously strives to find a work-family balance for people who need to develop both their work and family lives. Of particular interest among these studies are the ones relating to the multiple roles played by women when managing their family life and professional life (Rantanen *et al.*, 2011; Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014). Many parents who work full-time faced difficulties in balancing work and family, which result in overload and conflict due to their multiple roles (Hansen, 1991). One of the salient characteristics was the involvement of women in the labour market, which came about during the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this, there was still insufficient understanding and enforcement of work-family balance practices (such as family-friendly practices) in the workplace right up to the late 1980s (Rapoport & Bailyn, 2002).

The early examples of research into work-life balance include the challenges faced by government policymakers, employers, social service providers, educators, and the families themselves that are discussed by Foundation (1989). This research covered the trends of women's involvement in the labour market and how it affected women regarding the competing demands of work and family life. Employers have endeavoured to make systematic structural changes in their organisations to fulfil the requirement of creating a culture which promotes work-life balance (Clark, 2001; Powell, Francesco and Ling, 2009; Murray and Syed, 2010; Leaderonomics, 2015; Adame, Capliure and Miquel, 2016). Thus, the discussion goes forward to creating such policies to achieve work-life balance practices.

According to Lockwood (2003), work-life balance gives two ways of perspectives. Firstly, from the employee's viewpoint, which is refers to the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. Secondly from the employer's perspective, i.e. the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs. Despite unclear terminology used amongst scholars to explain the term 'work-family balance', previous literature was reviewed. This was to gain an in-depth understanding of how these terms influence the understanding of the multiple roles and dual position of managers (inter-organisational or inter-individual level) amongst men and women in the workplace. Therefore, the next section in this chapter will clarify a broad range of terms used for 'work-family balance' or 'work-life balance' to investigate the relationship between work and family.

### **2.3 The Conceptualisation of Work and Family**

A growing body of literature recognises the importance of a balance between work and family (Bourhis and Mekkaoui, 2010; Brummelhuis and Lippe, 2010; Beham *et al.*, 2012). The traditional concept of 'male breadwinner and female caregiver or homemaker' has changed, shifting our understanding of work-family balance from the context of a traditional, single-earner family to that of one with dual earners (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). In 1976, a study by Rapoport and Rapoport discussed the term 'single-earner', i.e. referring to one person who earns in a family who has changed to 'dual-earner families'. This trend continues with the development of gender roles and family structures (Burnett *et al.*, 2010). The term 'dual-earner families' is also known as 'dual-career families', which describes families in which both heads of the

household (husband and wife) pursue active careers and family lives (Eby *et al.*, 2005).

The influence of dual-career families has not only sharpened the understanding of work-family balance concepts of work differences outside the home, but it has also broadened different perspectives about it amongst men and women in the workplace. A variety of well-documented family and labour changes have had an unequalled impact on at least a portion of most families' routines. One such example is the prevalence of dual-career occupations, and women working before marriage, with the possibility of dropping out of the labour market because of either marriage or particularly, parenthood (Hansen, 1991). Previous studies have reported on the implications of women's participation in the workforce. There are countries which have implied that the majority of women are responsible for family duties and they are aware of how this would impact negatively on their career path and progression (Jogulu and Wood, 2011). However, the traditional gender role construction can be considered unsuitable for women's careers in management. It has been suggested that the work-family relationship, from both conflict and supportive viewpoints, requires further research (Husu *et al.*, 2011; Zaman, Anis-ul-Haque and Nawaz, 2014).

The increasing number of dual-career families has come about because of the participation of women, particularly mothers, into the labour market (Bourhis and Mekkaoui, 2010). For example, the job market in the European Union (EU) has shown that more women are currently engaged in active employment (Khallash & Kruse, 2012). Women going out and securing jobs caused Changes in family structure. Such a change has led to the sharing of household responsibilities with men. At the same time, employment opportunities for men have been affected by the idea of an equal opportunity for both genders when job roles are competed for (Straub, 2007). However, as described by Aryee and Luk (1996), there are differences between men and women within the social system in how they balance their work and family identities. Therefore, they have argued that women can able to balance one quality with the other, whereas men can classify between work and family duty concurrently.

Based on the overview of some of the issues related to finding a balance between work and family, a more distinct way of developing the concept of work and family balance is required. Thus, the study continues to discuss the development of

this concept and the relationship between work and family for organisations, families and societies.

Both work and family demands are important factors in understanding the improvement in the quality of personal life both within and outside the workplace. Even though the term 'work' frequently used in the literature, to date there is no consensus about the exact definition of this term. The term '**work**' is understood to mean a significant source of income, financial security and standard of living. In the literature, this term is accepted and tends to be used in referring to job or activities that get paid (Moen and Sweet, 2004; Backett-Milburn *et al.*, 2008; Lee and Hong, 2011). Likewise, this definition is close to Williams and Nadin's (2012) who define work as paid activities which are registered with the state for tax, social security and other requirements according to the labour law and to explain the formal or informal economic activities involved. However, Ibrahim (2013) uses the term 'work' to refer to paid work without excluding the extra unpaid hours spent working and the time spent travelling to and from work. This definition by Ibrahim has been proven to be analytically related and considers the worker's activities of paid work and the rest of their personal life (e.g. unpaid extra hours and the travel time). In the present report, work was therefore defined regarding its broadest sense to refer to all paid activities at a workplace, with given working hours and unpaid time, including the time taken to travel to and from work.

Furthermore, in the literature, the role of family has been associated with family responsibilities which involve different needs and activities. The term '**family**' embodies a multitude of concepts. An earlier concept is given by Locke and Thomes in 1971 defines 'family' as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption. That means communicating with each other concerning the social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture. Hence, seeing the family as an institution is an essential requirement in every facet of life (Rika Fatimah *et al.*, 2008; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2014).

Along with many responsibilities in people's lives, it is important to consider other personal resources that influence a family's role, such as social life, religious requirements, exercise and sleep (Grawitch *et al.*, 2010). These factors are related to

family structures and the gender roles played by individuals. The participation of women in earning a livelihood for the family is either a benefits issue or not, depending on the ability to reduce the multiple role conflicts between work life and family life and vice versa (Morgan, 2009). Therefore, researchers have continued to investigate women's potential to participate in the work force (Arttachariya, 1997; Ahmad, 2009; Omar and Ahmad, 2009; Yusuf, 2012). The definition of 'family' in this study will not exclude other personal elements, such as social life, religious requirements, exercise and sleep, and will also include individual relationships (united by blood or adoption, marriage and other close interaction of social roles). Still, these relationships are not used to earn goods and services like work; they are essentially there to preserve the family and improve its well-being (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

#### **2.4 What are the relations between work and family? A glimpse at the conceptualise background**

As far as relations between work and family are concerned, a huge and growing body of literature has already dramatically investigated the connection (e.g. Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Swody and Powell, 2007). For instance, the dual loyalty amongst employee between commitment to an employer and another role is very common (Redman and Snape, 2016). To illustrate, Swody & Powell's (2007) study found that in practice, programmes related to both work and family has introduced as a bridge. In which it is to fulfil the needs of those two domains in the workplace; for instance, work-family programmes and able to anticipate workers' needs and concerns, such as dependent care subsidies. Also, in recent years, a few authors have begun to encourage the significant changes in structuring work and family roles. For instance, the increasing occurrences in women involved at the workplace, dual-earner families and family arrangements (e.g. Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011; Seierstad and Healy, 2012; Stock, Bauer and Bieling, 2013). Thus, this literature has exposed the understanding of being closely connected, rather than independent domains of human life (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

Furthermore, the relationship between work and family is significant to organisations as well as society. That is to say, several studies thus far have linked those two work and family elements (Lockwood, 2003; Beham *et al.*, 2012; Stock, Bauer and Bieling, 2013). An early example of research into their relationship



emphasised the use of the traditional perspective. In his review of the relationship between work and life outside work, Guest (2002) summarises five models from traditional perspectives. These five models are analysed based on Zedeck and Mosier (1990) and O'Driscoll's (1996) research. The first model is *segmentation*, which refers to the two distinct domains of work and non-work that are separate and have no influence on each other; the second model is *spillover*, which suggests the influence of one world on another, which will result in either a positive or negative result; the third model is *compensation*, which proposes that one can be improved by the lack of the other one; the fourth model is *instrumental*, which proposes the success of one sphere by the facilitating of another; and the fifth model is *conflict*, which explains the difficult choices to be made at the high level of all life sphere demands. Hence, Guest indicates that the five models are fundamentally descriptive, which means there is a need to incorporate an analysis of reasons and significance.

This study will focus on determining an understanding of the concrete enforcement of the work-family balance practices instead. Therefore, the next section will explain another possible relationship which occurs between the work and family domains, and how the WFBPs arrived within the organisational environment.

## **2.5 Beyond the Work-Family Relationship**

A study by Yuile et al. (2012, p54) defines the term 'work-life balance' as "a state in which a range of needs are met by allocating time to both work and life roles according to a combination of individual priorities and the demands of work and life". The broad use of the term 'work-family balance' is sometimes equated with 'work-life balance' in the workplace. Moreover, different collocations in the previous literature, such as work-family integration, work-family conflict, work-family programmes/practices, work-family enrichment have all been used to describe the work and family relations (Healy, 2004; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Buonocore and Russo, 2013). Thus, the studies presented provide a work-family linking structure.

A great deal of previous research into work-family balance focuses on outcomes and its approaches. In particular, several recent studies investigating work and family balance have been carried out on different diverse perspectives, with the emphasis on practical working life that influences ways in which employees or

employers understand how to balance work and family life in the workplace (Backett-Milburn *et al.*, 2008; Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Jiang and Men, 2017). The practical working life perspective from a different societal level, such as from the individual and organisational level, could be seen in the form of actual application of practices or programmes held in the workplace. For instance, a study by Crompton and Lyonette (2014) discusses the introduction of work and family policies within European employees (e.g. Finland) to result in lowering the increasing impact of work-life conflict. According to Munn (2013), the work-life balance (i.e. individuals approach) is only piece of the work-life system, thus, only such system enable to demonstrate the connection between work-life balance, meaningful work and organisational culture instead. The other pieces of the work-life system include work-life initiatives (i.e. organisation approach) and work-life policy (i.e. government approach).

In light of much new knowledge about the relationship of work and family, the following section is a brief report discussing the ‘work-family integration’, ‘work-family balance’ and ‘work-family conflict’, and how these work-family domains relationships have been conceptualised.

### **2.5.1 The Integration of Work and Family**

As in the previous discussion, work and family are from different domains or systems. It is possible that the integration of both domains will lead to conflict within some organisations. For instance, this conflict has had various effects on employees, leading to gender inequality, low job satisfaction and poor job performance in the workplace (Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996; Noor, 2002). The integration term refers to the relations of work and family in the work environment that might result in an imbalance between both work and family (Gatrell *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, Poelmans *et al.* (2005) argue that the conflict between work and family will happen and cannot be avoided. The conflicts arising from the imbalanced integration of work and family demands have a great influence on work and family life (Hansen, 1991). For instance, Hansen illustrates that the integration term is contributing to the positive approach of demonstrating the *spillover* concept between the work and non-work domain. In addition to this work and family conflict, there are other aspects which impact particularly on family roles, such as social life, religious requirements, exercise and sleep (Grawitch *et al.*, 2010).

Other than the impact of integration of work and family at the workplace, Rapoport et al., (2002) suggest that creating a relationship between life and work through the 'dual agenda' concept is a tool for organisational improvement. In other words, it is designed to help effectiveness and focuses on achieving quality in working people's lives. In addition, this dual agenda concept is thought to be the basic intersection between gender equality in the workplace, and work organisations becoming more 'family-friendly'. Creating a workplace which is gender-equitable, balanced and flexible is not only considered to have a dual agenda, but also includes the inter-individual differences in individual and organisational needs, goals and purposes (Poelmans *et al.*, 2008). That is, this argument explains the need for creating balance or harmony between work and family. Hence, the interconnection between the work and family concept has formed the 'work-family balance' theory.

### **2.5.2 Work and Family Balance**

The broad use of term 'work-family balance' is common amongst scholars in work and family areas, including by organisations or in public discussion in an attempt to be 'family-friendly' (Fagnani, 2004; Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011). Work-family balance, whether legislative or managerial, often depends on employees' practices and employers' discretion (e.g. see Budd & Mumford, 2006). The worker that takes preference over their work tasks means the employees will have more choice about what they do and when, so this would be more family friendly. However, criticism of the work-life balance is the argument about the accuracy of using them as the subjective quality of life measurement (Pichler, 2009). That is, the objection to some studies that using work-family balance as an indicator in identifying family well-being, such as a study into the positive or negative diversity within different group, society and country in a plural society (Noor *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the introduction of work-family balance has a different definition depending on different perspectives.

Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that work-family balance refers to the ability to harmonise one's work, family and personal life (Poelmans *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, Professor Poelmans argues that the current understanding of a practical and theoretical work-family balance is to achieve the balance in organisations. The diction of work and family balance has become an important feature of much current employers and policy makers debate

(Rubery and Urwin, 2011). It has been demonstrated that a career achievement within individual satisfaction at workplace or personal life responsibilities can be challenging and can affect factors within each role (Foundation, 1989; Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011). The ability to strike a balance between workplace desires and personal life desires is a key subject discussed amongst personnel and companies worldwide (Beham *et al.*, 2012; Stock, Bauer and Bieling, 2013). However, the theory does not fully explain the construct of 'balance'. For instance, Sturges and Guest (2004) examine the time balance amongst graduates that considered tolerating with extra working hours and their relationship with the work and family lives. It results in unsatisfactory either by time balance, involvement balance or satisfaction balance. Meanwhile, the search of the literature revealed few studies which insisted that balance is not considered a linking mechanism between work and family (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw, 2003). Balance is believed to be achieved by the player or couple who manage to align dual earning and caring responsibilities by excluding emotional strains along the way to achieve it (Crompton & Lyonette, 2014).

In order to emphasise some key principles towards the achievement of harmonising between work and family needs, the following definition is considered for what it excludes. Felstead *et al.* (2002) conceptualise work-family balance as a sensitive choice and self-sufficiency with respect to the aspects of engagement by doing work at home. Although these results differ from some published studies, it focuses on the way in which workers shift the restrictions of work and non-work at home. In addition, the definition given is to clarify the option to work at home by companies in which persons are accountable for the quality of their own productivity (Felstead *et al.*, 2002).

The uncondusive working environment either in an organisation or at home has shifted the employment and the reality of today's workforce. This tends to overlook the fact that the employers might consider work-family balance (Lewis, 1996). Consequently, the other interpretation of work-family balance is given by Greenhaus *et al.* (2003) that urges an individual to be able to expand engagement and satisfaction equally to both his and her work and family roles. This definition includes an understanding of two equality components of the work-family balance, namely inputs and outcomes. Each component is represented as having a positive or negative

balance by being equally high or low in levels of time, attention and involvement. Moreover, the following definition is useful because work-family balance has been broadened to include the cross-appearance of resources. Clark (2001) explains that with a minimum of role conflict, an individual can accomplish satisfaction and good functioning either at home or in the workplace. The term 'role conflict' is used by other scholars to describe imbalance of multi-roles played by men or women either in the workplace or at home.

The following section focuses on studies prompted by the work-family conflict concept that demonstrates the experience of work and family relations, in which pressures arise from one role being incompatible with another.

### **2.5.3 Work and Family Conflict**

Abendroth and Dulk (2011) draw our attention by explaining that the imbalance between work and family/personal life amongst employees has an impact on productivity in the workplace. It could be that higher job satisfaction is a result of more emotional support being available in the organisation. However, there is an inconsistency with this argument. Clark (2001) traced the performance of workers with minimal role conflict as being a result of satisfaction at work or at home. This inconsistency may be due to employees' characteristics or different family activities that influence individuals' ability to balance work and family (Clark, 2001; Baral and Bhargava, 2010). Such individual ability is generally assumed to play a role in the success of work-family balance practices.

There is some evidence that work-family conflict may add to the difficulties associated with balancing work and family (Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996). The literature emphasises the importance of strategies or techniques for managing stress and resolving conflict by moderating factors or variables. Early examples of research into mechanisms of moderating stress include supportive supervisors, husbands' participation in household tasks, and reducing time spent doing housework amongst employed women (Hansen, 1991). According to Luk and Shaffer (2005), the time commitment and work role expectations were family domain experiences of work domain interference with family (WIF) and whereas the parental demands are the family domain antecedents of family interference with work (FIW). However, there is

an inconsistency with this argument. In reflecting only on aspects of work that interfere with carrying out family-associated duties and vice versa, Netemeyer et al. (1996) state that the content areas of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales proved to be negatively related to life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction and relationship agreement. For the purpose of the present study, this broad topic area on work-family conflict is briefly discussed to give another picture of the work-family interface. Thus, the following chapter will look to understand the actions that work towards achieving work and family integration in the workplace.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the investigation some of the existing literature on the term Work-Family Balance. The review began with a glance at the origin of the work-life balance. The chapter then scrutinised the conceptualisation and relationship background, as well as a general review of the work-family relationships or interface in the work-life balance area in the workplace. Clearly, the conceptualisation of the work-life balance and its understanding are important factors that reflected in the increasing introduction, implementation and policy-making in the workplace. However, studies on the practicality or actuality of the theories in the management and organisational behaviour as reviewed are still relatively low. There is a need for a more in-depth study to explore the insights of the WFBPs. Thus, this chapter is aiming to provide the general understanding of the WFBPs introduction, and in the following chapter that follows, it continues to present the implementation and development of the WFBPs perspective.

## CHAPTER 3

# WORK-FAMILY BALANCE PRACTICES (WFBPS) FROM THEORY TO PRACTICES

### 3.1 Introduction

Previously in chapter 2, the conceptual definitions of work, family, and work-family balance notions were discussed. One of the most fundamental topics that merits review in this field is understanding the conceptualisation of balancing or harmonising the work and family domains, as presented in previous research (e.g. Newman and Mathews, 1999). This topic has been explored in several studies investigating such aspects as the impact of practices in particular frameworks (Wood and Menezes, 2007; Beham *et al.*, 2012; Stock, Bauer and Bieling, 2013). Thus, in this study, the important factors associated with balancing both work and family in the workplace will be disclosed. Some of these factors include personal variables, individual personalities, line-manager attitudes, and macro-socioeconomic and cultural values (Poelmans *et al.*, 2003; McCarthy, Darcy and Grady, 2010; Dávila de León and Finkelstein, 2011; Omar, Mohd and Ariffin, 2015; Noraini M Noor, 2016). These factors are the most common influencers of work and family practices or programmes and have been identified based on the challenges faced by employees in the workplace.

This chapter introduces the phenomenon of work-family balance practices (WFBPs), with focus on its implementation amongst managers in the workplace. Although the term used in this study is WFBPs, this study is reviewing the literature of scholars who have used the term work-family balance and work-life balance. This section will begin with the conceptual discussion by looking at the drivers of WFBPs from the point of view of human resource scholars. This is followed by an illustration of WFBPs that operate in an organisation at multiple levels: the individual's level (micro level); the organisation's and trade unions' level (meso level); and the state's level (macro level). Thus, this study will describe and interpret the impact of the manager's role and WFBPs by looking at both the organisational and individual levels in detail. This chapter will conclude by demonstrating the emerging role of managers and their

perspective, to develop an understanding of the manager's role in the context of WFBPs.

### **3.2 The WFBPs development and implementation in the workplace**

There are number of factors that might be expected to affect individual behaviour and how the understanding of work-family balance concept is delivered in the workplace in order to carry out the actual practices. In this study, we refer to the concept work-family balance practices (WFBPs) by considering the actual actions and involvements of managers who undertake the WFBPs in the Malaysian organisations. This views is supported by Poelmans, Patel and Beham (2008) who write that work practices is refer to the "actual use of the policies or to non-policies-driven habits" that are established within the organisation. In addition, the term 'policies and practices' will be used interchangeably in the study as suggested by Kulik (2014), who refers to the term 'policies' as a company's goals to manage the human resources in the workplace, whereas the programmes or 'practices' refer to the set of official activities used in the organisation, and the execution of a company's programmes by lower level managers and workers.

An understanding of the work-family balance in performing practices or policies in the workplace is gained through study of the actual enforcement and subsequent employee satisfaction. Such practices or programmes have been introduced within organisations to create a family-friendly environment. Some examples of work-life balance practices include more flexible working times (e.g. permanent part time work, job sharing, compressed working week), childcare, leave arrangements (e.g. maternity and parental leave), and working from home (e.g. see Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011; Basile and Beauregard, 2016; Sulaiman, Liamputtong and Amir, 2017). Yet, these salient practices which are believed to indirectly affect the workplace, consequently boost the capability to workforces to associate working and personal resources (Bloom et al., 2011).

Earlier studies have shown that the imposition of policies and practices are associated with greater internal work motivation and higher growth (Morgan, 2009; Koubova and Buchko, 2013; Sulaiman *et al.*, 2014). The reason might be that the workplace is still relying on managerial decisions and the organisation's control.



However, there are managerial practices based upon the idea of bound to service agreement that will result in higher levels of job satisfaction or take part in decision-making (Bacharach, 1989). Moreover, Lewis (1996, p5) also defined the 'family-friendly organisation' as "the basis of the number of formal policies initiated to meet the needs of employees with family commitments". The impact of salient attraction of work-family balance practices in the workplace is important. This is because the family-friendly career paths and policies are comprehensibly provided, for instance flexibility in the workplace. Such supportive practices will help to lower the risk of negative job attributes between work and family roles in order to obtain employees satisfaction (Carolina, 1997), and to support workforce health and safety relations (Reader *et al.*, 2017). The following section explores how these practices are implemented by the manager and their effects in the workplace.

### **3.3 Family-friendly Practices/Programmes**

Several organisations have responded to work-family conflict issues with family-friendly practices. Almost every paper that has been written on family-friendly practices has either discussed how job applicants have been attracted by the employer's offer of these, or how employees that use such practices have lower levels of work-family conflict and higher levels of job satisfaction (Breaugh and Frye, 2008). Commenting on these practices, Casper and Buffardi (2004, p405) argue that "perceptions of support may be a psychological mechanism through which these benefits influence behavioural intentions". In a recent study, Smith and Riley (2014) defined 'family-friendly' practices as those that strike a balance between family and employment responsibilities and aspirations amongst workers. Likewise, scholars are also introducing a broad understanding of family-friendly practices from different perspectives. Such views describe how family-friendly policies can create a difference of interest between the employer and worker (Lewis & Lewis, 1996).

In certain studies, the actual practices that have been discussed relating to the family-friendly concept are looked at simultaneously. The study conducted by Bloom *et al.* (2011) has shown that the family-friendly practices such as average hours worked, average holidays taken, childcare flexibility, working from home, job switching, job sharing, and childcare subsidy, carry out by some countries. In addition, their findings proved that the practices positively affected the work-life balance amongst

managers. However, the factors of actual practices (such as flexible working arrangements) that operate in the workplace have limitations on the aggregate of access to family-friendly requirements and the embedded nature of choice in the process (Healy, 2004). Therefore, the goals of policies or practices to make the workplace more family-friendly are not a basis for the future survival of a company, but rather is suggested as a change in organisational culture (Callan, 2007).

There are a growing number of organisations which use family-friendly practices. However, such policies can have a negative effect if they are not associated with an increased retention rate without the involvement of supervisor support (Chou and Cheung, 2013). In addition, there is also discussion about family-friendly workplaces that include human resource management (HRM) workplace policies. Such examples of working arrangements by the organisations relate to organisational communication and HRM practice (Hall and Liddicoat, 2005). That is to say, unawareness of the existence of family-friendly practices amongst workforces was caused by the conflicting information provided at management level.

Overall, these programmes or practices highlight the need for fulfilment amongst employers and employees in organisations. Furthermore, the workplace policies in the next discussion will be reviewed with attention to work-family policies. This is to get a broader understanding about how these formal agreements (i.e. work-family policies) might influence the successful implementation of WFBPs.

### **3.4 Work-family policies**

Do managers in an organisation prefer to avoid or use the family-friendly practices, work-family balance practices, or work-family policies? A study by Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) examines the four main concerns; namely the acceptance decision, the design decision, the organisational implementation decision, and the individual allowance decision. These reveal the decision-making processes which favourably influence managers in an organisation. Such concerns are the variables that will be used to examine different actors and factors (manager's behaviour or attitude), thus, influences efficiency and efficacy of work-family balance practices in actual implementation.

As before, the discussion of the implementation of work and family policies in previous literature is limited. According to Lai Ching and Kam Wah (2012), the policy implementation between three industrialised countries - Sweden, the UK and Singapore - shows different actual implementation strategies. Such strategies are strictly connected to the welfare regime of a country. Similarly, the patterns of development in work-family reconciliation policies for parents in France, Germany, Netherlands and the UK have been carried out by Lewis et al. (2008). Such a policy was implemented in the UK and was developed from the beginning of the mid-1990s until 2010. Also, it was reported that the attention of UK policy focused in the first instance on childcare services, which included promoting mothers' employment and children's early learning. Nevertheless, these practices later diverged into paid maternity leave (extended from fourteen weeks to nine months), paternity leave allocation to the father (if the wife returns to work), flexible working hours and flexibility to care for elderly dependent relatives (Hawton and van Heeringen, 2009; Rigby and O'Brien-Smith, 2010; Ruhm, 2011; Shortland, 2015). Such practices keep on changing, depending on the role of the state in the work-family policy area. In the UK, for instance, research on flexibility goes further to be a key concept within labour law and policy (Grabham, 2013).

Factors thought to be influencing utilisation of work-family balance policies have been explored in several studies recently. According to Lai Ching and Kam Wah (2012), social policy has become economically focused on a worldwide scale through the growth of trade commercialism. Such competitive and productivity beliefs have impacted on jobs in the labour market. Furthermore, studies have revealed the outcomes, which are the achievement of the work-family balance, in a practical term known as family-friendly policies (Lee & Hong 2011). In analysing the direct and indirect effects, Saltzstein (2001) argues that those policies were not expected to make much difference to employees who have to deal with various kinds of family demands. In the policy portfolio of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, promotion of family-friendly employment practices is emphasised, to cherish a culture of mutual support and concern in the workplace, while reminding employers that working people are also members of a family with multiple roles as parents or children. Employees can also behave as catalysts for change by creating support groups and by encouraging co-workers to use family-friendly plans (Veiga *et al.*, 2004). For example, one of the

outcomes of introducing family-friendly practices is that staff turnover is expected to reduce within the organisation, which the employees believe shows support for their family and personal life on the part of their employers (Swody and Powell, 2007).

### **3.5 Work-Family Balance Practices (WFBPs) in the workplace**

Workplace practices adopted 'family-friendly' to work-life balance in the workplace has generated many discussions and concerns, particularly among policy-makers, facilities managers and line managers (Budd and Mumford, 2006; Maher, Lindsay and Franzway, 2008; Rubery and Urwin, 2011). This is as a result of the demand of family needs that cannot be separated from work life (Liu and Wang, 2011). However, they recognise that productivity within the organisation will improve with the adoption of such practices. For instance, these new practices can be applied to achieve organisational needs, or introduced to gain a more positive result compared to their competitors. However, from the employees side, employees are people who will be more attracted to organisations that allow them to meet both work and family responsibilities in their employment (Carolina, 1997; Wood *et al.*, 2007; Hyams, 2009; Bessa, 2012). Thus, to balance their practicality in family life as well as work life, there needs to be co-operation between organisations and employees.

This struggle of implementing work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the workplace associated with understanding of both parties is reviewed. As mentioned earlier, the WFBPs in this study refer to available WFBPs that can be utilised by the workers in the workplace, including the human resource practices and policies established by organisations. According to Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003), the effects - either negative or positive - on the quality of individual life is distinguished from the high level of engagement across their combined work and family roles. The engagement of a worker means they are able to be proactive in making changes and eager to take action in organising their work environment (Lu *et al.*, 2014). The challenges faced by the work-family balance research arena can not only be described from that subjective experience by workers, as there are results in concrete objective indicators, such as better physical health through their enhanced performance (Elianne F. Van Steenbergen and Ellemers, 2009). Thus, to experiment the actual action on the use of the WFBPs amongst employees, particularly supervisors or managers, is observed in this study.

Another perspective discussed by Felstead et al. (2002) is the concept of work at home in the context of work-life balance. It is no different from other known work-life balance practices in the workplace such as flexible working hours, yet they argue that the implementation of work-life balance practices in the home working environment is part of the factors that associated to the adoption of those practices. As a consequence, they found that managers' attitudes to work-life balance are not significantly different whether working at home is permitted or not. For instance, they conclude that the public or government-owned organisations sector have more opportunities to work at home, relying on management techniques for self-monitoring within individual responsibilities for quality of their own. Furthermore, there is the issue that some employees need to meet the job requirement, such as meeting with customers, thus their working from home will need to be combined with other work tasks (Budd and Mumford, 2006; Basile and Beauregard, 2016).

This current chapter extends beyond the work-family balance and the adaptation of WFBPs to explore the wider effects to individual and organisational in the workplace. The relationship between managing and practicing WFBPs in the workplace is of particular interest to an organisation, in terms of policy and practice. Support by organisations and the commitment of employees rely on actions taken by a manager or supervisor (Rashid *et al.*, 2004). The management of WFBPs at different levels (such as state, organisation and trade union) is presented briefly in this study, in order to comprehensively examine the influence of each level.

Recent years have witnessed a growing revolution in how WFBPs are applied in the workplace. Identifying the definition of the term, as used by previous scholars, provides valuable information to this study. The usage of the term 'dual-career families' has changed from its first use in the late 1960s until now, as the term is now generally used and has also been expanded into different terms and aspects (Kalliath and Brough, 2008; Beham and Drobic, 2010; Odle-Dusseau, Britt and Bobko, 2011; Devi and Rani, 2012). Work-family balance practices (WFBPs) as defined here involve the use of family-friendly employment practices and other activities which support work-life balance programmes or policies in the workplace. This means that WFBPs refer to the implementation and establishment of human resource practices and policies by organisations that permit a balance between one's work, family, and personal life, and

create an encouraging workplace environment, conducive to commitment amongst workers.

WFBPs are a common human resource practice and have been adopted in most Western countries, although they are new to Asian countries (Subramaniam, 2010). The trend towards comparative studies that highlighted the routine operation of work and family practices in the workplace is likely to continue. In fact, there are multi-country employment practices that have proved the implementation of WFBPs operating at different levels, such as at the company level and individual level. The WFBPs in this study will refer to the four groups of practices provided within Malaysian organisations, which include: (1) work arrangements (e.g. five-day week work schedule and flexible starting and finishing times); (2) family care benefits (e.g. full-pay leave and unpaid leave); (3) child care facilities and related benefits (e.g. after-school child care); and (4) other benefits (e.g. company trips with family members and family days) (Ahmad, 2007). However, in terms of managing WFBPs, information provided by previous studies is limited. Thus, this research will contribute to the extension of this field of study.

As pointed out in the introduction of this chapter, taking an approach to the important potential source at either the meso level (i.e. organisation and trade unions) or micro level (i.e. individuals), encourages the scholar to look into the subject more comprehensively. There is, for instance, a continuous rearrangement and financial uncertainty in organisations, which leads to a desire to boost the managerial environment by policies, particularly those linked to WFBPs (Ford and Collinson, 2011). In the following section, our intention is to review the policy making process and the current implementation of WFBPs in the workplace. It will investigate each level of the management process that is connected to WFBPs.

### **3.6 Managing WFBPs at the Micro Level**

There are studies of managerial experience of work-family conflict at the macro- and meso-levels of organisations (for instance Cheng and Chee, 2008; Md-Sidin, Sambasivan and Ismail, 2010; Ahmad and Zainol, 2011; Rahman *et al.*, 2014). A study by Subramaniam (2010) for example, examined the family-friendly policies offered by organisations in terms of work time flexibility implementation amongst employees,

consisting of 50 identified respondents and 175 other acquaintances working in the central business region of Malaysia (i.e. in the Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur district). A study by Ahmad (2007) examined the implementation of family-friendly employment policies amongst four selected private manufacturing sector organisations, consisting of two local and two foreign organisations, using a case study of policy practices in the Malaysian government.

Another study which applied a quantitative approach was carried out by Noor (2011), who examined perceived work-life balance satisfaction using an online survey of 1078 academics from three public universities in Malaysia. However, there is a limitation of those studies, which does not include the actual practitioners or users of the practices amongst individuals at the micro-level in the workplaces studied. This current research contributes to this evidence-base by developing a framework that combines template and thematic analysis (Brooks *et al.*, 2015) with insight of Malaysian employees, particularly amongst managers at the micro- or individual level of the organisation.

**At Micro level** - The micro level of analysis refers to individual themselves and the broad issues linked to work and family. For instance, a culture-specific aspect comes from strong family-based cultures such as in Eastern and Latin countries (Poelmans *et al.*, 2005). In addition, the rise of women's participation in the labour force within different countries, and the development of a family structure that moves away from a more traditional concept of women as home carers, have been an important aspect of the micro level within organisations. As a result, the introduction of family-friendly environments through practices or programmes within organisations in most Eastern countries has increased the fulfilment of the needs of the work-family interface (Hassan *et al.*, 2010). The availability of WFBCPs within organisations, particularly at the individual level, particularly amongst manager, is explored below.

The comment 'Balance goes beyond juggling personal and professional lives and time commitments' by Hertneky (2010, p1) sparked interest among many scholars and led them to explore the balancing role of work and family in the workplace. As far as *balance* is concerned, family-friendly practices are introduced as an initiative within organisations which helps individuals to balance their work and family lives in the workplace (Eby *et al.*, 2005). A study by Eby *et al.* (2005) has proved that the character of one's roles could impact the work-family interface (i.e. the unconnected issues

relating to human resource outcomes, such as labour turnover and absenteeism). Difficulties arise, however, when an attempt is made to implement the practices within the organisation. Such attempts have been made to demonstrate the contribution of work-family balance programmes introduced by the employer for either employees or employers/organisations (Butler, Gasser and Smart, 2004; Simard, 2011; Shah, 2014; Thakur and Bhatnagar, 2017). Furthermore, the limitation of the literature is that it does not consider the manager's perspective as internal agent or his/her personal preferences, and this gap will be filled by this study. Hence, in the next section, a wider view of the manager's role and his/her position on the implementation of the organisation's policies, as well as personal interests regarding new WFBPs in the workplace, will be reviewed.

### **3.7 The role of manager**

Managers are assets to organisations and are sometimes forced to expand their most valued employees' work-life balance. In fact, they are the main management player who performs a functional role in an organisation (Knies and Leisink, 2014) and, namely, the effectiveness of the implementation of family-friendly practices depends on managerial commitment (Carolina, 1997). This criterion includes the manager's position of power towards their subordinates, and the work groups. Furthermore, Martin (2011, p137) defined managers as "a 'set' or 'group' of individuals with little desire or capacity to pursue interdependent activities, little collective action is likely to be initiated by them". Thus, promoting and implementing a work-family culture in the workplace is an important indicator of ability to achieve organisational and individual performance targets (Huffstutter, 2007; Bakar and McCann, 2014).

The importance of aspects of WFBPs at the individual level, such as employee demands and satisfaction with the work-life balance programmes, have been underlined by many scholars, especially in the field of human resource management (MacDonald and Liff, 2007; McCarthy, Darcy and Grady, 2010; Thakurta and Suresh, 2011). Managers are one of the most important factors in the reconciling process of work-family relations in the workplace, and this has a direct relationship with all employee outcomes (Eby *et al.*, 2005; Dulk *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, employee outcomes, such as work performance and productivity, are related to work-life balance practices (Subramaniam, 2010). Hence, individuals are believed to be attracted more



to an organisation that allows them a choice of career paths and policies in the workplace (Bakar and McCann, 2014; Russo, Shteigman and Carmeli, 2015).

Many scholars hold the view that managers play a very important role within organisations, mainly as internal mediators between the organisation and employees (Dane and Pratt, 2007; Dulk *et al.*, 2011; Hassard, Morris and McCann, 2012; Dulk *et al.*, 2011). Such a role as an internal agent of the organisation includes managers' preference to take action on practices of work-family balance policies or programmes. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the role that managers play and their relations with their subordinates in various workplaces (Allen, 2001; Callan, 2007; Martin, 2011), specifically on the effectiveness of WFBPs and how that is determined by managerial commitment (Carolina, 1997; Murray and Syed, 2010; Hassard, Morris and McCann, 2012).

Furthermore, Omar's (2003) research has revealed one of the characteristics that impacts on organisational features: the position of individuals within the organisation regarding his or her aims, behaviour and attitudes. In other words, the attitudes of managers within organisations play a crucial role in ensuring that practices such as work-life policies operate in the workplace (Dulk *et al.*, 2011). Despite the fact that individuals at each level in the organisation (either at the macro, meso or micro level) are striving to achieve a balance between the needs of the workplace and their personal life outside the workplace, there are still difficulties to face (Dulk *et al.*, 2011). A study by Rothbard, Phillips and Dumas (2005) has found that employees face extreme difficulties in striking a balance between their professional and domestic lives. Thus, it is suggested that WFBPs should focus on the managerial role within organisations at the individual level and how this impacts on employees' multiple roles and identities in their work life activities.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This review began with a general theoretical description of the managerial role in WFBPs. This field of work and family research is working towards the formulation of a solution through programmes or practices in the working environment (Lockwood, 2003). It has provided the basic information about the role of managers at different organisational levels. Particularly, this chapter is structured to lay out the key elements

of the role of each organisational level, including the state, the organisation, trade unions and the individual. The chapter, however, discusses the managerial role from activities involvement and go beyond the WFBPs management. Furthermore, in the next chapter, the factors that are needed and to be applied in Malaysia as the context of this study will be explored. This will then conclude the literature review aspect of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: THE WFBPS DISCOVERY IN MALAYSIA

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an understanding of work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the Malaysian context. It aims to discover the employee's practical needs and the WFBPs that are available after the introduction of these practices in Malaysia. The chapter begins with a brief introduction of the practicality of WFBPs in the Malaysian organisations. Namely, its aim is to review the outlook for workforce participation in Malaysia, which has created ample working opportunities for Malaysian women and thus the need to introduce WFBPs into the workplace. This is followed by a discussion on Malaysian organisational structure to illustrate the development of the working environment in different sectors in the country (i.e. government-owned and privately-owned companies). Subsequently, this chapter reviews the human resource literature of policies and practices undertaken by scholars who have used the term work-family balance or work-life balance in the working environment. In addition, the previous chapter explored WFBPs in organisations, and this chapter completes the discussion by analysing the relationship between WFBPs and the role of the manager in the Malaysian workplace. The last part of the chapter scrutinises the managing role of WFBPs by reviewing the importance of culture and ethnicity, which may directly or indirectly influence Malaysian managers' attitudes, behaviour and managerial role with regard to WFBPs in the workplace. As a final point, the chapter reviews the proposed research sample organisation and the management of WFBPs in Oil and Gas (O&G) organisations, in order to extend the knowledge of the WFBP arena into the Malaysian workplace.

#### 4.2 WFBPs and Malaysian labour force participation

The participation of the labour force with regard to its split between women and men has been broadly discussed at a global level, but is very limited at the national level. However, the major concern discussed amongst scholars is female workers' participation in the labour force; as this has increased, so have family-friendly practices or programmes supported by organisations (Budd and Mumford, 2006; Maher,

Lindsay and Franzway, 2008; Seierstad and Healy, 2012). For instance, Nordic countries, such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, have adopted family-friendly policies to maintain the involvement of female workers in the labour force (Datta Gupta *et al.*, 2008). In addition, the UK government is obliged to aim for equal responsibility between men and women (Lai Ching & Kam Wah, 2012). In addition, Poelmans *et al.* (2003) highlight that female-dominated organisations possibly provide family-friendly work arrangements as an encouragement to females. In other words, policies are applied in different ways in order to address family-friendly practices. These policies are necessary to achieve workplace policies that comply with the European perspective on family-friendly practices (Lewis, 1996). The Equality Act 2010 seems to have been successful compared to previous separate sections of legislation in the UK. Such laws direct the UK's legal obligations with respect to equality (Grabham, 2013).

The increase in the number of women working has an influence not only on the attitudes and aspirations of the women themselves, but also on the wider economy (Crompton and Lyonette, 2014). However, providing family-friendly practices or programmes may not be enough. Some authors have mainly been interested in questions concerning emotional and instrumental support. For instance, the lack of emotional support in the workplace has been reported as one of the causes of family-work conflicts (Eby *et al.*, 2005; Ahmad, 2008; Carter and Yeo, 2014). The demand for work-family practices has increased in many countries, including Malaysia. Malaysia has particularly adopted work-family practices through family-friendly employment policies. Even so, it is still at the early stages of policy development in an attempt to reconcile the demands of work and family life (Ahmad, 2007; Lee and Hong, 2011). According to Budd and Mumford (2006), there is pressure for an outline of family-friendly practices in many countries and organisations. However, these pressures come from a variety of directions.

In the case of Malaysia, the labour force participation increased from 67.2% in January 2015 to 67.4% in February 2015, a 0.2 percentage point increase. The data shown in table 1 gives an overview of the involvement of the employed and unemployed in the Malaysian labour force with regard to economic activities. The labour force is defined by the Malaysia Department of Statistics (2015, p2) as “those

who, during the reference week, are 15 to 64 years (in completed years at last birthday) and who are either employed or unemployed”. In addition, the employed term here refers to “all persons who, at any time during the reference week worked at least one hour for pay, profit or family gain, which is as an employer, employee, own account worker or unpaid family worker” (Malaysia Department of Statistics, 2015).

Table 1 The labour market in Malaysia

Indicator	Previous month of the same year			Same month of the previous year	
	February 2015	January 2015	Change %	February 2014	Change %
Labour force ('000)	14,119.2	14,043.6	0.5	13,887.3	1.7
Employed ('000)	13,664.3	13,601.6	0.5	13,440.9	1.7
Unemployed ('000)	454.9	442.0	2.9	446.4	1.9
Outside labour force ('000)	6,814.0	6,865.3	-0.7	6,720.3	1.4
Labour force participation rate (LFPR) (%)	67.4	67.2	0.2	67.4	-
Unemployment rate (%)	3.2	3.1	0.1	3.2	-

(Source: Malaysia Department of Statistics, 2015)

Another work-family study explores the effect of WFBPs within different cultural contexts in Western countries (Cantera *et al.*, 2009). In European countries, for instance, these cultural contexts are seen to have different effects at different individual levels, including single employees, employees with a partner and employees with a partner and children (Brummelhuis and Lippe, 2010). The study shows that there is increased awareness of the importance of the employee’s family structure and the impact of supporting WFBPs amongst workers. However, in the Malaysian workplace particularly, the challenges and difficulties faced by managers, for instance, have an impact on how cultural expectations are maintained in some societies (Jogulu and Wood, 2011). One of these challenges is to take the role of senior management (both male and female) in Malaysian organisations. Even though WFBPs or policies have slowed down women’s career progression in some countries (Datta Gupta, Smith and Verner, 2008), it has not been clearly proven that this has occurred in Malaysia.

In practice, there might be different controls or behavioural factors related to the organisational structure. These factors, as mentioned by Rasdi, Ismail and Garavan (2011), are for example the manager's position, action towards career success, organisational get-together activities and management initiatives. In other words, it is important to understand the relationship between individual, structural and behavioural factors (Keim *et al.*, 2014), which will be discussed in the next section. The Malaysian organisation structure will be reviewed in order to determine the possible relationships between individual factors (i.e. manager attitude) that might exist in the workplace.

### **4.3 WFBPs and Malaysian organisational structure**

The literature particularly reveals that an overwhelming majority of all work-family balance studies have been carried out in Western countries and only a limited amount of literature has been devoted to the Malaysian continent. In the next section, this will be reviewed in brief in order to understand the structure of Malaysian organisations.

#### **4.3.1 Malaysian multicultural and organisational setting in promoting the WFBPs**

Much of the current literature on work-family balance pays attention particularly to the importance of work-family balance policies or programmes in the workplace. Compared with the extensive research on work-family balance in the context of the EU, there is a lack of information on what happens in practice in Asia. For instance, to gain a clear understanding of management acts amongst Asian employers, specifically Malaysians, we should understand that they are based on not just concepts but also culture. This multicultural country with three major ethnicities, which are the Malays, Chinese and Indians, would give a different picture of what happens in practice, and how the practices or programmes have been implemented amongst employees in Malaysia.

A number of studies have explored the collectivist effect, such as support from family and strong social ties, on women's managerial attitudes and internal motivation (Alam, Jani and Omar, 2014). For instance, the interconnection between family and working systems is an important indicator to understand the local women's culture regarding the workplace, particularly female managers (Clark 2000). Such approaches

to portray the action taken in the workplace to address the relations between women and WFBPs in Malaysia is through the breastfeeding practices in urban Malaysia (Sulaiman, Liamputtong and Amir, 2017). However, the need for managerial roles in the broader context of a family-friendly environment and actual practical mechanisms amongst Malaysia managers needs to be explored.

Even though Malaysia has no lawful arrangement for employee involvement in organisations, there are demands on the development of local labour unions in the workforce, particularly in public sector organisations (Hu, 2009). In the past six decades, the Malaysian history of the labour movement started to weaken, and it was controlled by restricting rules. In the twentieth century, moving forward from the implementation of a New Economic Policy (NEP) for development of the Malaysian economy, there have been further restrictions on labour unions' involvement (Kaur, 2000). Unions' activities are an important factor in maintaining the voice of the personnel in the workplace. Still, the restrictive rules that have been applied to trade unions affect other factors, such as the influence of Japanese management and work practices. This occurred after the Malaysian government switched to export-oriented industrialisation and opened industrial relations, with Japanese investment coming into the country (Kaur, 2000). Therefore, such adjustment had a significant effect on the labour movement, seen in the implementation of management and work practices that claim to ensure working class organisation. However, in recent years, the development of outsourcing activities such as liberalisation and labour flexibility, inside both public and private entities, has increased the ability of unions to protect and improve labour force interests (Hu, 2009). Thus, the following section reviews the introduction and implementation of WFBPs in between government- and private-owned company.

#### **4.3.2 The WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian government-owned vs private-owned company**

**The government-owned company** - A formative study of the Malaysian public sector is taken from the work of Khalid (2008). In her study, Khalid reviews the New Public Management (NPM) in Malaysia, which is the philosophy of the country, and many of her techniques have been implemented there. For instance, the power of business-like practices and other various modern management practices and philosophy have

been implemented. Furthermore, various administrative improvement programmes and privatisation policy have been utilised for the country's economic growth and development; they have become an implementer to the private sector and a service provider to the public. Malaysian government-owned or public organisations have had a protective role since the formation of Malaysia in the late 1960s (Khalid, 2008). The implementation and delivery of services to the people is carried out by the public-sector organisations. The government, which is a policy maker at the macro level or state level of Malaysian labour, plays a role in the work arrangements of public sector employment.

There are large numbers of people employed in the public sector, both males and females (Malaysia Department of Statistics, 2015). This increased labour force in Malaysia gives a positive sign of opportunity to human development and economic growth. In addition, the Malaysian government has implemented several policies to turn the country into a developed country. The development strategy aims for industrialisation nation status by the year 2020, and aims to balance economic growth and human development. In order to achieve this strategy, the government have given recognition to the centre of development and population policies under the Ministry of Social Unity and Social Development (United Nations, 2001). Malaysian public sector family-friendly practices such as child care, work-life programmes, and alternative work schedules, have been proven to be strong preventions of employee turnover intention amongst public sector employees (Kim and Wiggins, 2011). These policies have been implemented, particularly in public agencies including government-owned and other private sectors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and community groups. Therefore, such events or activities are seen only to provide an indirect relationship but are not a legitimate avenue for discussion between representatives from different sectors on standard law or policy that can be applied to all.

**The privately-owned company** – Furthermore, the main objective of family-friendly practices or policies is to encourage a culture in a workplace that helps to create a new relationship between work and family responsibilities (Wood *et al.*, 2007). As a study carried out by Ahmad and Omar (2010) found that the employees perceived family-friendly practices or programmes in terms of support provided and a family-supportive work culture for the employers. They argued that such initiatives help



employees to balance their work and family responsibilities and lead to positive organisational outcomes. In addition, Ahmad and Omar (2010) also concluded that the increase in affective commitment amongst employees is a result of the adoption of family-supportive work culture by the related private sectors in Malaysia.

Furthermore, in this study, Company B is the second case subject studied, that is, the privately-owned O&G Company. Even though the operations of foreign and private O&G companies in Malaysia must be run through Production Sharing Contracts, they create high competition with Malaysia's national oil company. The government's national oil company has to undertake all exploration and production activities by providing basic facilities and services, whilst the private companies improve competitiveness by training their employees (Hu, 2009). Thus, concerning the various policies introduced for the country's economic growth and development, the privately-owned company has become an agent of the government workforce system and a service provider to the public.

#### **4.4 The Malaysian work cultural context**

This section continues to further review the Malaysian work cultural setting. The following section is divided into three parts: (1) human resource management, (2) multicultural and ethnic diversity, and (3) work ethics and attitude, in the Malaysian workplace.

##### **4.4.1 Human resource and workforce composition**

Malaysia is one of the best-known Eastern countries with a multicultural population. In 2014, Malaysian citizens comprised of Malays (68.1 per cent), Chinese (23.8 per cent), Indians (7.1 per cent) and others (1.0 per cent), creating a total population of approximately 27.6 million (Population and Demography Statistics Division, 2014). This mixture of cultures gives us a unique opportunity to understand the cross-cultural dimension in the Malaysian context. Even though Malaysia is dominated by ethnic Malays and the Islamic tradition is the country's mainstream 'culture', the working practices carried out by different ethnicities are reflected in the managerial role in both the private and public sectors (Rasdi *et al.*, 2013). Malaysia is widely accepted as a country that has been remarkable, perhaps uniquely successful, in managing and

containing ethnic conflict in a post-colonial context, against expectations (Brown *et al.*, 2004). Meanwhile, the attitudes towards women managers have changed, from traditional religious and cultural norms to modern values.

A great deal of previous research into Malaysian 'family values' or the 'Asian family' has focused on complex crossings amongst diverse local and global family values (Stivens, 2006). In addition, Stivens' reviews of family values associated with Islamic values point out that the family values discourse in the Malaysian context has operated at just such a multi-layered structure of meaning. However, this explanation tends to overlook other factors, such as family value influences, which need to be observed in the context of the personal and cultural history that influences the family's or individual's role values (Preston and Ngah, 2012).

Furthermore, the New Development Policy (NDP) and the New Vision Policy (NVP) of Malaysia were introduced to provide long-term sectorial planning in order to integrate and incorporate the aim of local women to become fully developed (CEDAW, 2004). For instance, in Malaysia, companies guarantee that women can enter the labour force (Koshal, Gupta and Koshal, 1998). On top of that, a study by Kaur (2000) argues that social, cultural and religious backgrounds are important for Asian women, including Malaysian women, who participate in the labour marketplace. Thus, there are also concerns over the availability of family-friendly policies to help women in particular to be more disciplined in their working arrangements (Selvaratnam and Yeng, 2011).

Multitasking and the diversity of women's roles in and outside the workforce forced organisations to adopt policies and practices related to work and family balance (Burgess *et al.*, 2007). For instance, in order to understand local women's culture in the workplace, particularly with regard to female managers, it is important to recognise that the work and family systems are connected (Clark, 2000). In addition, a study conducted by Koshal *et al.* (1998) shows that traditional cultural and religious backgrounds have incorporated modern values about women, which are important for Asian women who participate in the labour marketplace (Ahmad-Zaluki, 2012). By drawing on the concept of gender differences in decision-making styles as an example, Haniffa and Ahmed (2008) have been able to show that Malaysian male managers are more significantly directive, risk-taking and strategic in their decision-

making styles, whereas Malaysian female managers reported that they are more significantly democratic, participative, consensus-driven, normal-adoptive and hesitant in their decision-making style (Haniffa and Ahmed, 2008).

Although family-friendly working arrangements are more likely to be provided in female-dominated organisations in order to support female caregiving roles (Poelmans, Chinchilla and Cardona, 2003), there are countries where the majority of women are responsible for family duties and are aware of how this will impact negatively on their career path and progression (Jogulu and Wood, 2011). However, Stivens (2006) presents a study that analyses the conceptualisation of rural change in Malaysia, and it was found that a wide range of roles are taken on by men and women, both daily and at different stages of their lives. Such factors, which are categorised by activities such as social status, gender role and earning capacity, are related to personal and cultural history. In addition, in a useful investigation into religion and work integration, Possumah *et al.* (2013) show that individual values, attitudes and behaviour, which form the cultural system, have different influences on work and the organisation in a country.

Gender diversity in the workplace is another characteristic found in the previous study as one of the significant factor discussed in the work-family literature. In one of the important investigation of gender diversion, Huang and Gamble (2015) concluded that the gender role influenced job satisfaction from the context of the foreign multinational retailer in China. However, the study offers no explanation for the distinction between labour role and family or other responsibilities plays by gender in the workplace. Previous studies have also been argued the mixed relations between gender and work-life conflict (Murray and Syed, 2010; Craig and Powell, 2011; Williams and Nadin, 2012). The gender impact on the work-life interface has also been found to be related to work-family balance at the individual level of an organisation. Thus, gender diversity is a useful factor in work-family balance study.

Similarly, it is a widely held view that differences in cultures affect the perception of work ethics (Rashid and Ibrahim, 2008). The principal working ethic amongst Malaysian managers can be seen in the main ethnic group, which is Malay, without excluding other related factors such as religion, individual personalities and working

group environment. As an example, the section below discusses the issues of ethnicity and ethnic differences.

#### **4.4.2 Multicultural and ethnic diversity**

A cross-cultural environment in the workplace is a well-known topic amongst scholars in work and family research. Korabik *et al.* (2003) draw our attention to cross-cultural evaluations of how public or government organisational policies and cultural potentials established employer practices and employees' experiences of managing work and family roles. The variables, which are ethnicity, culture and religion, are believed to have a cross-cultural psychological impact on work or non-work responsibilities (Hassan, Dollard and Winefield, 2010). Such moral characteristics, i.e. the effect of individual or collective positive influences, develop through the transition from childhood to adulthood with values added and the acceptance of attitude and behaviour processes (Gupta and Sulaiman, 1996). A study by Raduan *et al.* (2006) reveals that ethnicity, culture and religion are the factors considered to have the most impact on career success amongst managers. More recently, attention has been focused on the ethical behaviour of managers in Malaysia, which is a contributing factor to the policy-making process and work practices (Gupta, 2014).

Prior to independence, the British colonists brought large immigrant minorities from China and India into Malaysia. Accordingly, the Malays, Chinese and Indians have been living and working in Malaysia for an extended period. An increase in population has created three dominant ethnic groups: the majority are Malays, which make up 68.1%, followed by the Chinese with 23.8% and Indians with 7.1%. Multicultural values are applied in most Eastern countries, particularly Malaysia, and the 'collectivist culture' term explains how work and family are usually integrated (Hassan *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, what makes the context of this study uncommon is the influences of ethical work and culture on the ethical behaviour of managers before and after WFBP practices are applied.

In addition, previous studies have indicated that various ethnical indicators have a positive impact on cultural behaviour. Such indicators, which include the belief systems of different ethnic groups, shape the values and behaviour of Malays and Chinese in the Malaysian business culture (Storz, 1999). Those For example, from the

cultural perspective, Malaysians are reported to have a higher context culture compared to the US (Karande *et al.*, 2000). With this such cultural influence, thus, result in work and cultural behaviour amongst Malaysians in the workplace.

In the **Malay culture**, there is a conceptual study by Storz (1999) discussing the *budi* concept. Such a characteristic is explained by giving examples of values that have virtuous qualities, which are *murah hati* (generosity), *hormat* (respect), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *mulia* (righteousness) and *malu* (feelings of shame at the collective level). However, there are limits to how far the concept of *budi* can be taken. Interestingly, those cultural values are also viewed as a contrast factor with religious value systems (Becher, 2005). Muslims make up the major faith group in Malaysia. For instance, Malay-Muslim is the largest group in this multicultural society, yet this does not lead to an assumption that 'all Malays are Muslim or all Muslims are Malays'. Furthermore, in the Malaysia case, instilling Islamic values has become a national policy and has been applied for more than 20 years (Ismail, 2007). In his analysis of Islamic work values, Ismail (2007) argued that religious and cultural values, such as trustworthiness, justice, equality and love, were believed to inspire success and to be good examples to other Muslim countries. The work ethic in Islam has assigned great importance to work and is defined by the Qur'an. According to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), "God loves those who work and strive for their livelihood" and "to search lawful earning is obligatory after the compulsory things (like prayer, fasting, and belief in God)" (Possumah, Ismail and Shahimi, 2013, p.259).

The **Chinese belief** system is composed of essential philosophies, which are Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism (Storz, 1999). Moreover, in his analysis on Malaysian Chinese, Storz argued that Confucianism is a core value system that influences how individuals view human beings and the social world. In addition, such values are derived from the *ren* concept, which refers to goodness and humanity. However, the Chinese belief system has led to cultural diversity with the same sources of values which are Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism (Storz, 1999). In Malaysia, the Chinese are mostly Buddhist and the Indians are mainly Hindu (Aziz, 2011). In a study that set out to determine the effect of culture and religiosity on business ethnics, Rashid and Ibrahim (2008) found that the Chinese Malaysians were less concerned with religious matters yet were following the *Budhist-Taist* faith. One question that

needs to be asked, however, is whether this factor highly influences the Chinese Malaysian working ethic or if it has less of an impact. There are faith or belief systems that represent Christian, Buddhist and Hindu beliefs amongst Chinese and Indians instead (Bhatti *et al.*, 2013).

**Indians** are the third largest ethnic group in Malaysia. In their review, Rashid and Ibrahim (2008) mention that the Indians, which are mostly Hindus, are characterised by their faithfulness, high working effort and social abilities. In addition to this belief, a study by another author (see Ashok and M.S.Thimmappa, 2006) has shown the Hindus' faith values, such as *sama* (conciliation), *dama* (bribery) and *danda* (punishment), in a managerial context.

#### **4.4.3 Work ethics and attitude**

Malaysian cultural values embrace harmonious relationships with traditional and historical practices, such as respecting elders, religion and the implications of group work, which are unique (Bakar and Mustaffa, 2013). Whilst there is a great deal of concentration on the importance of WFBCs, there still needs to be more evidence focusing on the work ethic, specifically Islamic work ethic, utilised by Malaysian managers. One study by Zabid and Alsagoff, (1993) found that "Malaysian managers have relatively high ethical values notwithstanding their endorsement of some of the potentially unethical practices". Even though Malaysia is a modern, moderate Muslim nation, the existence of unethical practices is against Islamic teaching and morality, and this is a challenge to managerial integrity (Ismail, 2007). Several studies investigating ethical behaviour and social responsibility have been carried out in relation to organisational outcomes, such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Parkes & Langford, 2008; Gupta, 2014).

In addition, a useful example of Malays' status, hierarchy and power in Malaysia can be found in Boyle's (1998) research. According to Boyle (1998), Malaysians rely on the structures of status and hierarchy to support power relationships, and they are grateful to serve leaders. However, numerous studies have attempted to explain the country's differences through the dimensions of individualism and power distances (e.g. (Ong, 1988; Karande *et al.*, 2000; Oudenhoven, 2001; Haar *et al.*, 2014). In the case of Malaysia, different figures are believed to have authority over decisions made

on the preferred rules (Rowley, 2005). For example, at an organisational level, human resource professionals have a responsibility to understand the correlation between work and family, and how it can impact on workplace activities amongst employees (Lockwood, 2003). The discourse on management-level factors, such as the ethical behaviour of managers, as been discussed previously, along with this dual positioning of the O&G managers and executives that will be discussed further in this chapter. Similarly, Ibrahim (2013) points out that methods for achieving a balance between work and family are influenced by management-level factors, i.e. the ethical behaviour of managers that either encourages or inhibits the assimilation of work and non-work activities for employees. Thus, there is still a need for an in-depth understanding and focus on experiences and knowledge in regard to managing and practising WFBCPs within the workplace.

However, another weakness is that we are given no explanation of how those behaviours are developed from the perspective of the manager or supervisor. In this study, strategies to enhance the understanding of the implementation of work-family balance amongst managers might involve the role of religion in individual life, as well as its impact on everyday life routines and rituals outside the workplace. Hence, the influence of utilising and achieving WFBCPs, either inside or outside the workplace, on Malaysian managers' thoughts about dual-career roles and commitment will be explored in this study.

Even though Malaysia is a modern, moderate Muslim nation, the unethical practices in existence are against Islamic teaching and morality, and this is a challenge to managerial integrity (Ismail, 2007). Several studies investigating ethical behaviour and social responsibility have looked at their relationship with organisational outcomes, such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Parkes and Langford, 2008; Siu and Lam, 2009; Kaliannan, Abraham and Ponnusamy, 2016). However, another weakness is that we are given no explanation of how those behaviours develop the understanding of the manager or supervisor.

In the following section, the discussion will look into the introduction of WFBCPs in the O&G workplace, which will significantly focus the range of the study's context. This important information better reflects the realities of the actual practices of the

WFBPs from the O&G managers' and executives' perspective and implementation experiences.

#### **4.5 The oil and gas (O&G) workplace and WFBPs introduction**

The current study of WFBPs will be carried out in an O&G company that is one of the leading companies and a major Malaysian economic provider. The study will examine the understanding of WFBPs amongst managers and develop an understanding of managers' roles in relation to WFBPs. Furthermore, it aims to assess whether WFBPs have a direct or indirect effect on managers who have undertaken these initiatives in Malaysia. The O&G company has been chosen because of the feasibility of assessing the data and the experience of the company with regard to WFBPs amongst its employees.

In relation to Malaysian public and private sector organisations, there is a weak link reported between employees' performance and the reward scheme available in the O&G industry. However, the Malaysian government has initiated measures such as the government-owned company transformation programme, which is believed to be implemented by senior management to spread a high performance culture amongst their respective companies (Norhayati and Siti-Nabiha, 2009). This transformation program is also expected to transform senior management into agents of change for the governments. Instead of understanding how senior management delivered the government's aim of increasing performance amongst government-linked and government-owned companies, this study will investigate how line managers in each company play a managerial role in relation to organisational needs and their needs when implementing WFBPs.

##### **4.5.1 WFBPs and formal practices or policy development**

In the Malaysian O&G context, formal practices or policies known as local customs or laws are provided by the organisation to employees, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants, agents and representatives, who agree with the terms and conditions of the organisation (Rahim and Liwan, 2012; Petronas, 2015; Shell International Limited, 2015). Such policies or formal practices for WFBPs specifically, described by Ahmad's (2007) study that include child care, work arrangements and family care benefits. He



suggested that these approaches are just starting as policy development within its early stages in Malaysian organisational studies.

Even though policies of the WFBPs were reported to have been implemented more in governmental organisations than in private institutions (Ahmad, 2007), each developing and implementing process involves different insights for both government-owned and private corporations. For instance, the government introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduction in 1971 and the National Development Policy (NDP) in 1991 (Shahiri, 2012). These policies must be implemented by government-owned, public and private organisations, including the Malaysian O&G industries. However, the operations in the O&G sector involve different types of resources, such as energy and human capital. Those resources are yet to be explored, particularly with regard to the formal practices or procedures of WFBPs.

Another factor that may affect work-family practices and policies amongst employees in the workplace is the manager's role identity, which is displayed through either an individualist or collectivist culture's influence (Rasdi *et al.*, 2013). For example, preliminary work on business behaviour was undertaken by some authors (e.g. Karande *et al.*, 2000). In those studies, the important concern is the role of the manager. Hence, it is believed that by paying attention to differences in ethics, managers will develop an understanding of each other's ethical decision-making processes (Karande *et al.*, 2000).

However, the implementation of WFBPs in an organisation is not taken for granted by managers, and it is still a motivator for their own career progression and job satisfaction (Ford and Collinson, 2011). Role-related factors can be used as important indicators to increase understanding of the issues related to human resources and work-life balance in the O&G workplace. The managerial role of organising and managing work-family programmes and practices, while desired by all concerned, might become intolerable in terms of attitudes and behaviour in the workplace (Stevens, Beyer and Trice, 1978). The differences lie in the empowering potential of employees or practitioners to operate the practices at an individual level (Patterson, 2008). Misconceptions, mainly involving eco-friendly concerns and the work-life balance amongst the O&G workforce, have been reported to influence the O&G working performance (Tordo *et al.*, 2013).

#### 4.5.2 O&G workforce determination and the WFBPs expectation

The nature of job in the O&G industry involve dual-roles (i.e. manager and engineer roles) at two different location between offshore (i.e. on the sea) and onshore (i.e. office and labs) for an individual manager particularly. However, there is high demand for labour force participation and a critical need for skilled and experienced employees working with the O&G industry (Harun *et al.*, 2014). It is widely acknowledged that the Malaysian O&G industry now stands at 30% of total government revenue, or RM66 billion (PEMANDU, 2014). In similar vein, the study of Harun *et al.* (2014) has shown that an offshore working environment, on an oil rig for instance, creates awareness amongst workers of the challenges that many people face. The challenges include the limited welfare activities and socio-emotional impact on the work-life balance of the employees.

Furthermore, to provide a better understanding of the adoption of WFBPs, the role of managers involved in undertaking these practices in the workplace should be examined. For instance, Martin (2011) claimed that managerial capabilities and organisational performance are connected. Specifically, in his research, Martin found that the relationship between executive leaders/managers, individually and collectively, and an organisation's performance, is the foundation of aggressive involvement in managerial capabilities. In addition, there are continuing studies to investigate the impact factor to the work-life improvement. In such studies urged in a relation of managerial behaviour and working performance (Basile and Beauregard, 2016; Ropponen *et al.*, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017), and manager as an influential individual (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011; Grabham, 2014) at the workplace. Thus, the importance of a manager in giving opinions or the capabilities in an organisation were reviewed.

In the context of a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) behaviour, which reflects their support for WFBPs adoption, this may give a competitive advantage in terms of employee recruitment (Khallash and Kruse, 2012). To illustrate, in the study by Siwar and Tareq (2009) on CSR, it was found that 80% of GLC respondents from the study had a CSR policy. This explained the existence of corporate responsibility in a business or CSR behaviour and the ethical responsibility regarding the implementation of WFBPs. Also, CSR shows the organisation's

commitment to conducting its business economically, socially and in an environmentally sustainable manner to balance the interests of a diverse range of investors (Siwar and Tareq Hossain, 2009). In other words, the perception of stakeholders regarding the actions of an organisation is an indicator of social performance and has a direct effect on the behaviours and attitudes of the organisation's employees (Riordan *et al.*, 1997).

Yet, the study of WFBPs does not only focus on their positive side effects. The study by Guest (2002), discusses the challenges and strategies for improving work-life balance. In his review, the application of family-friendly practices or policies is not seen as being associated with an improvement in work-life balance. This is due to certain practices which have only limited impact, and which are implanted in the organisational culture and workplace setting (Met and Ali, 2014). For instance, a fundamental change in organisational culture requires changes in beliefs, values and norms (S. Lewis and Lewis, 1996).

#### **4.6 Multiple roles and dual-positions of the O&G managers**

Managerial responsibility also impacts on the effectiveness of WFBPs implementation (Kuhnen *et al.*, 2001). For instance, Martin (2011) urged that the managerial capabilities and organisation performance are connected. Specifically, in his research, Martin has found that the relationship between executive leader/manager, individually and collectively, and an organisation's performance is the foundation of aggressive involvement in managerial capabilities. Thus, the importance of manager's positions and roles of the O&G industry are explored through their dual-positions as a manager and engineer in the workplace.

The **dual positions** of managers involve work role as a manager and an engineer in the O&G workplace. For instance, as an employee, managers are influenced by their own individual preferences. Managers or executives have their own personal needs and motives relating to social employment relations, such as offering support and compassion in the workplace to employees or their subordinates (Inkson, Heising and Rousseau, 2001). In other words, there is limited study on O&G managers' who oversee implementing WFBPs. Thus, this gap is filled in by the current

study to explore and examine the attitude and experiences of the manager towards the WFBPs implementation.

Furthermore, past literature has found that managerial attitudes are a result of interactions between cultural, social-structural and personal regularities (Ryan, McFarland and Shl, 1999; Lyness and Kropf, 2005; Hartog and Belschak, 2007). Besides, differences between individualist and collectivist cultures may have contributed to the degree of each anticipated role, either as single and independent entities or linked to the situation in which they appear. This is a result of cross-cultural variations. For instance, the study by Rasdi, Garavan and Ismail (2013) has reported that, in a collectivist culture such as Malaysia, managers place a high value and focus on networking to maintain relationships for subjective career success outcomes. Thus, to provide a better understanding of the WFBPs adoption, this can be looked at the role of manager that involved in undertaken the practices in the workplace.

The managers have the discretion to support the implementation of WFBPs for employees, their families, employers and society as a whole. However, the fact that such WFBPs are being offered or implemented within an organisation does not guarantee the actual usage of the programmes (Poelmans & Beham, 2008). In addition, Poelmans and Beham (2008) argued that there is a lack of managerial support and an unsupportive organisational culture of non-work responsibilities within the labour force that hinders employee take up of the WFBPS offered.

In another view, managerial support and work performance are found to be interconnected (Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Baranik, Roling and Eby, 2010). This is certainly true in the case of managerial support, which is found to be one of the variables that affects family-supportive workplace environments. Indeed, the manager has an important position in supporting and utilising work-family balance programmes introduced by the organisation (Scheibl and Dex, 1998; Powell and Mainiero, 1999; Rasdi, Ismail and Garavan, 2011). Therefore, management facilitates the formation of the social independent variables of life quality and work-family conflict amongst employees in the workplace (Md. Sidin *et al.*, 2010).

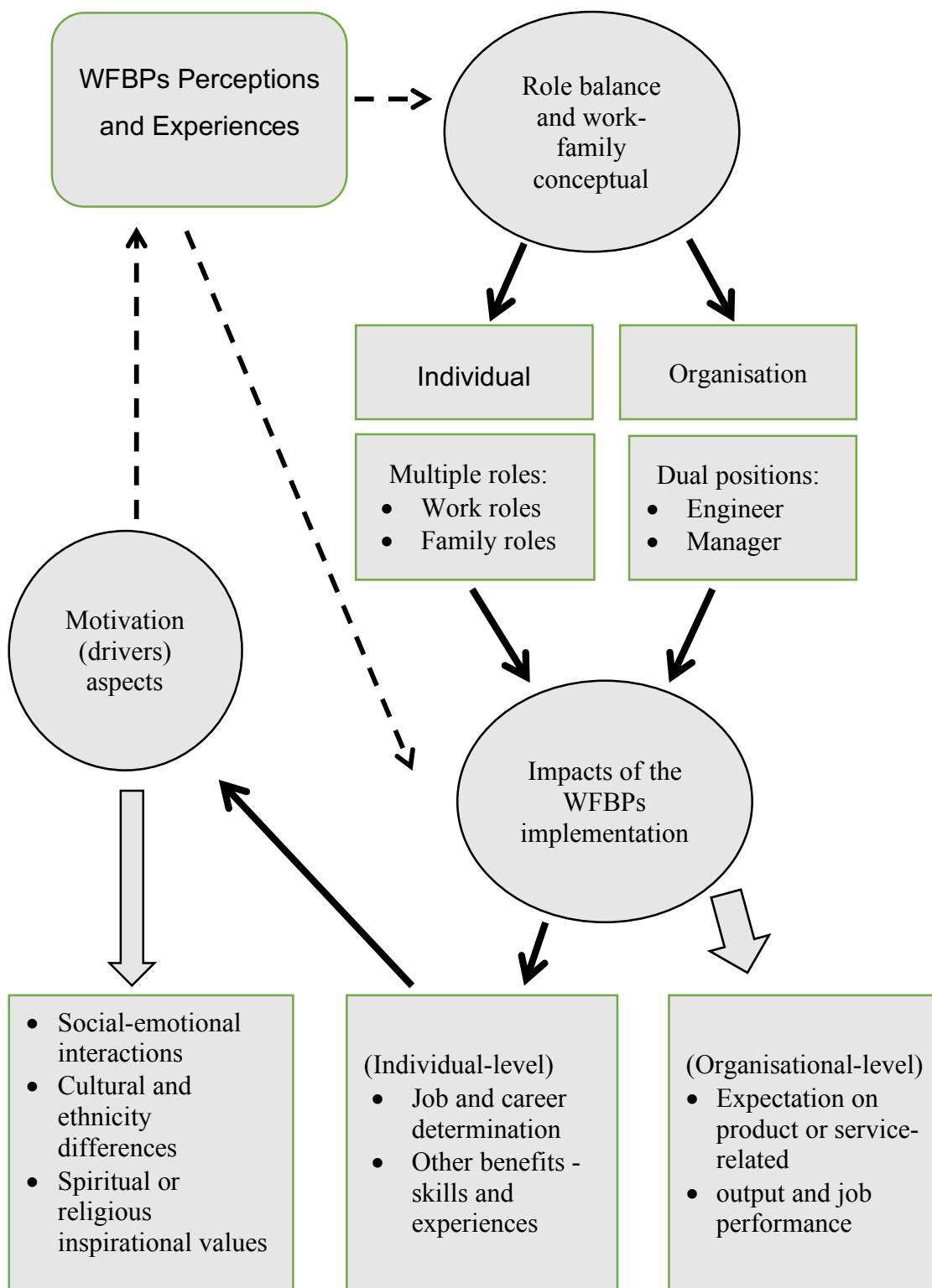
As discussed earlier, changing labour force demographics, such as workers' needs for challenges and self-development, is one of the factors to be considered

when analysing the impact of work-life balance (Khallash and Kruse, 2012). In the same vein, Kim (2008) has proposed a supportive organisational culture which is believed to enable the full utilisation of family-friendly practices or programmes. The vital role of manager as an internal agent in implementing such applications and practices in the workplace. However, there is limited literature explores the role of managers in implementing and managing WFBPs particularly, in the O&G workplace. Thus far, this study has urged to better understand and explain the factors by looking at the WFBPs implementation amongst managers in the O&G industry.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In summary, this section attempted to explore the intentions of Malaysian organisations regarding WFBPs and the influence of organisational and societal culture and work in the workplace. This chapter then discussed the issues that arise from this and how they can be resolved. This study attempts to expand beyond managerial capabilities to manage WFBPs amongst the workers in the Malaysian context. In that way, it will provide new insights into the understanding of the cultural and ethical effect of WFBPs implementation amongst Malaysian managers. There are a few gaps in knowledge in this field, mentioned in all three parts of literature review chapter of this study. These gaps from previous studies will be filled to develop the framework of this exploratory study in the following chapter as illustrated in figure 1 below. Accordingly, the next chapter will explore the methodology used to examine these relations in Malaysia.

Figure 1 Summary of the knowledge based from the literature review of the role balance and work-family conceptual



## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study looks at the important aspect of the manager's role and the impact of undertaking WFBPs in the workplace. This chapter presents the key points of the conceptual development of this study. The concepts of work-family balance and work-life balance are complex constructs with sets of causes and consequences. Hence, the conceptual model is developed from the literature review chapter as a guideline for this study. In the following section, the review of the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the study is used to guide the investigation of this thesis. The concepts of segmentation and spillover and the theories of compensation and role balance are selected to provide a vigorous discussion of the understanding of WFBPs.

#### 5.2 The Theoretical and Conceptual Foundation of the Study

As noted earlier, the term 'WFBPs' used in this study has been derived from a broad understanding of *work-family* balance and *work-life* balance concepts. The definition and understanding of the term were built from the theoretical foundation of the role balance theory by Marks and Macdermid (1996) and it is guided by the segmentation, spillover and compensation concepts (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard, Phillips and Dumas, 2005; Wheatley, 2012). However, the development of a conceptual model and research framework that links the work and family interfaces is still under study. Thus, this study aims to explore the linking process of work and family interface, which gives a broad understanding of work and the family arena to individual experiences of the WFBPs in the workplace.

The role balance theory provides a theoretical basis for understanding the involvement of the self-organisation of an individual in the workplace. It also leads to an additional question about how this theory could be linked to the academic interest in human resources. With this knowledge base, the concepts of segmentation and spillover and the theory of compensation between work and the family domains were used to develop the study of theoretical foundations and understanding. In particular,

the evidence presented consequently supports the idea of a relationship between the work and family domains.

In order to understand the uses of WFBPs in the national context of the Malaysian workplace, the current study aims to evaluate the understanding and adoption of WFBPs at the individual level of an organisation. In particular, this study focus to examine the experiences and understanding of Malaysian managers, and specifically, how these managers have implemented WFBPs in the workplace. This will be done by looking at one of the proven factors involved, which is the influence of behaviour and attitude. The elements or factors that directly or indirectly impact the understanding of managers with regard to undertaking these practices can be analysed from the research findings of the research. In addition, the theories addressed in this study are essential for the understanding of the conceptual research framework and later for presenting the empirical evidence of the study. The most appropriate theories reviewed from the literature have been included in the study.

### **5.3 Use of Role Balance and Traditional Theories and Concepts in Context**

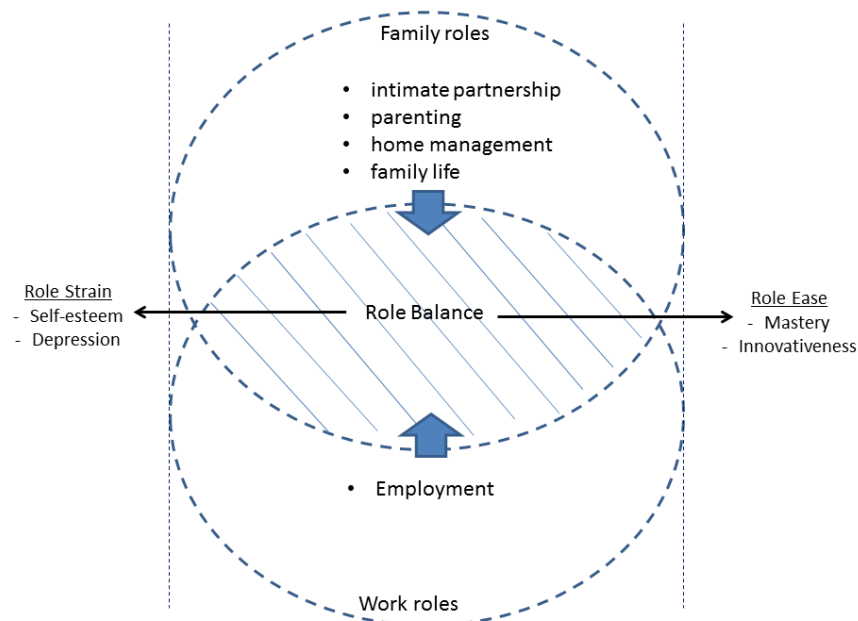
By drawing on the role balance theory, it can be seen that a well-organised self-system can contribute to individual behaviour, and that “people possess a salient role in their self-system and that an individual’s actions, cognition, and emotional experiences may largely depend on this salient role” (Chen and Li, 2012, p188). Particularly, the positive variant of the role balance theory defined “the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one’s total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care” (Marks and Macdermid, 1996, p421). That is, role balance is known to describe “general orientation across roles, an inter-role predisposition, not a role-specific one” (Marks and Macdermid, 1996, p421).

While individual life role expectations and the achievement of family roles depend on an intimate partnership, parenting, home management and other activities related to family life, the work roles depend on employment and career commitment. Role balance is the key to most things in an employee’s life, as this is how people solve the juggling problem. Whitehead (2003) has pointed out that the roles performed by an individual need to be considered as the relevant issues for achieving a life



balance. A key aspect of the role balance theory is to show that the more a person balances multiple roles and activities, the less strain and depression they experience. To illustrate this relationship from the researcher’s point of view, figure 2 below has been generated.

Figure 2 The illustration of the role balance theory



Source: Researcher’s illustrated model of the role balance theory from Marks and Macdermid’s (1996) study

On the other hand, the conflict between work and family roles occurs when there are pressures from incompatible mutual roles (Abidin, 2009), which leads to work-family imbalance (Pillay *et al.*, 2013). As reviewed and discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis, the implementation of organisational practices is important in fulfilling multiple roles and balancing work and family demands inside and outside the workplace. The general demand role (e.g., family roles or work roles) is often used interchangeably to refer to “the responsibilities, requirements, expectations, duties, and commitments associated with a given role” (Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996, p.401). Thus, the practices undertaken by individuals in the organisation give explicit instructions to further explore this role balance theory between work and family study in the workplace arena.

Beyond the conceptualisations of both work and non-work (and particularly family) domains, the traditional models of work-life concepts from the five models reviewed in chapter 2 of the thesis (i.e. segmentation, spillover, compensation, instrumental and conflict), are emphasised. Firstly, the concept of **segmentation** is explained by how people manage their multiple roles on the boundary of work and non-work responsibilities (Rothbard *et al.*, 2005). Thus, work and non-work are segmented or separated by boundaries. Moreover, Edwards and Rothbard (2000) described segmentation as a means of separation of work and family, so that the two domains will not impact one another. Likewise, they proved the theory by giving segmentation a position, buffering the relationship between work and family by decreasing the causal structures of resources (e.g. time, attention and energy).

Secondly, the concept of **spillover** between work and life is associated with time-created challenges and stress for dual-career households who wish to use WFBCs (Wheatley, 2012). Wheatley suggests that there is a decrease in the negative career effects for employees who practise flexible working arrangements by improving the gender balance management in the workplace. However, Grzywacz and Marks (2000) investigated the differential impact of spillover and compensation under different conditions. For instance, the support for spillover was reflected by the positive relationship between general types of activities in the workplace, and dependable types of activities outside the workplace.

Finally, Edwards and Rothbard (2000) explain the **compensation theory** by stating in brief that an individual pursues support in a satisfied domain in order to compensate for dissatisfaction in the other domain. Also, they use causal structures (e.g. mood and behaviour) to prove the effects of individuals as dynamic mediators, to understand the transfer of importance, time, or attention from an unsatisfactory domain to an ideally sustaining domain. The two domains referred to are the work and non-work domains; the latter refers to activities such as leisure, family and political participation, which is associated with off-work activities (Staines, 1980). An example of the segmentation theory is when there is a lack of independence or autonomy in the workplace, and a person will look for actions other than work that permit him or her to be independent.

Overall, although most studies in the field of work-family balance have focused heavily on a conflict perspective (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006), they are continuing to evolve in the work-family balance concept. Yet, empirical evidence for the selected theories and concepts is lacking. Hence, the theoretical and conceptual discussion above provides evidence of work and family domain relationships and the effect of the role balance on individual attitude and behaviour.

#### **5.4 Conceptualising and Designing a Research Framework from the Selected Theories and Concepts**

The emphasis of this study is on exploring the perceptions of the WFBPs implementation. In particular, this is amongst the individual with multiple roles demands of work and family lives balance in the oil and gas workplace. Thus, the understanding of employers with regard to fulfilling work-life balance requirements and promoting WFBPs in the workplace is significant (Murray and Syed, 2010). Based on the research problem of the study, it is believed that WFBPs implementation is influenced by individual attitude and experiences, which are in turn, influenced by the diversity of cultures and religious values. Gupta's (2014) cross-culture analysis has shown that the ethical aspects of business behaviour, mainly individual factors, affect such elements as managerial decision making. This means, as in many other religions, that ethics play a significant part in workers' attitudes towards work (Ibrahim, 2013), such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Yousuf *et al.*, 2012). This working ethics attitude will be one of the important elements highlighted in this present study.

Furthermore, based on the discussion of the theoretical and conceptual foundation of this study, it can be seen that there is limited empirical evidence to support the theory. For instance, although the role balance theory offered a different perspective on ways to solve issues of life demands in the workplace, there is still a lack of research to support this theory (Marks *et al.*, 2001). Thus, this study aims to provide empirical evidence about the work, family and role balance interaction with regard to the selected theory.

Also, another limitation to be addressed in this study is the lack of a comprehensive review of variance across countries. The cross-cultural factors in Malaysia, which is an eastern and developing country, will be different to those in western and other developed nations, as the WFBPs are implemented in different settings. For instance, the influence of culture and religious values on WFBPs in the national context of Malaysia is significant. In particular, this study has been conducted with O&G workforces, which a focal point of interest from which to view work-life balance practices. There is evidence that the O&G industry fails to promote and facilitate work-life balance support in the workplace (International Gas Union, 2012).

To summarise, this study makes two main theoretical and practical contributions to this area of study:

1. Providing empirical evidence of work and family relationships through the elements of WFBPs implementation amongst managers in the workplace, and
2. Addressing employees' work-life balance in Malaysia, amongst oil and gas workforces in general, and amongst managers and executives in particular.

Therefore, there is a need to address work-life balance experiences and practices in the Malaysian context.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The research framework of this study is based principally on the extensive body of literature on the work-family balance concept and work-life balance theories that have been developed over the last two decades. Although WFBPs implementation facilitates a better understanding of work-life balance in the workplace, their effectiveness is moderated by the understanding of the player and their experiences. By providing empirical evidence of the experiences and feelings of the managers, the following research objectives seek to address the gaps in the literature. The research objectives are as follows:

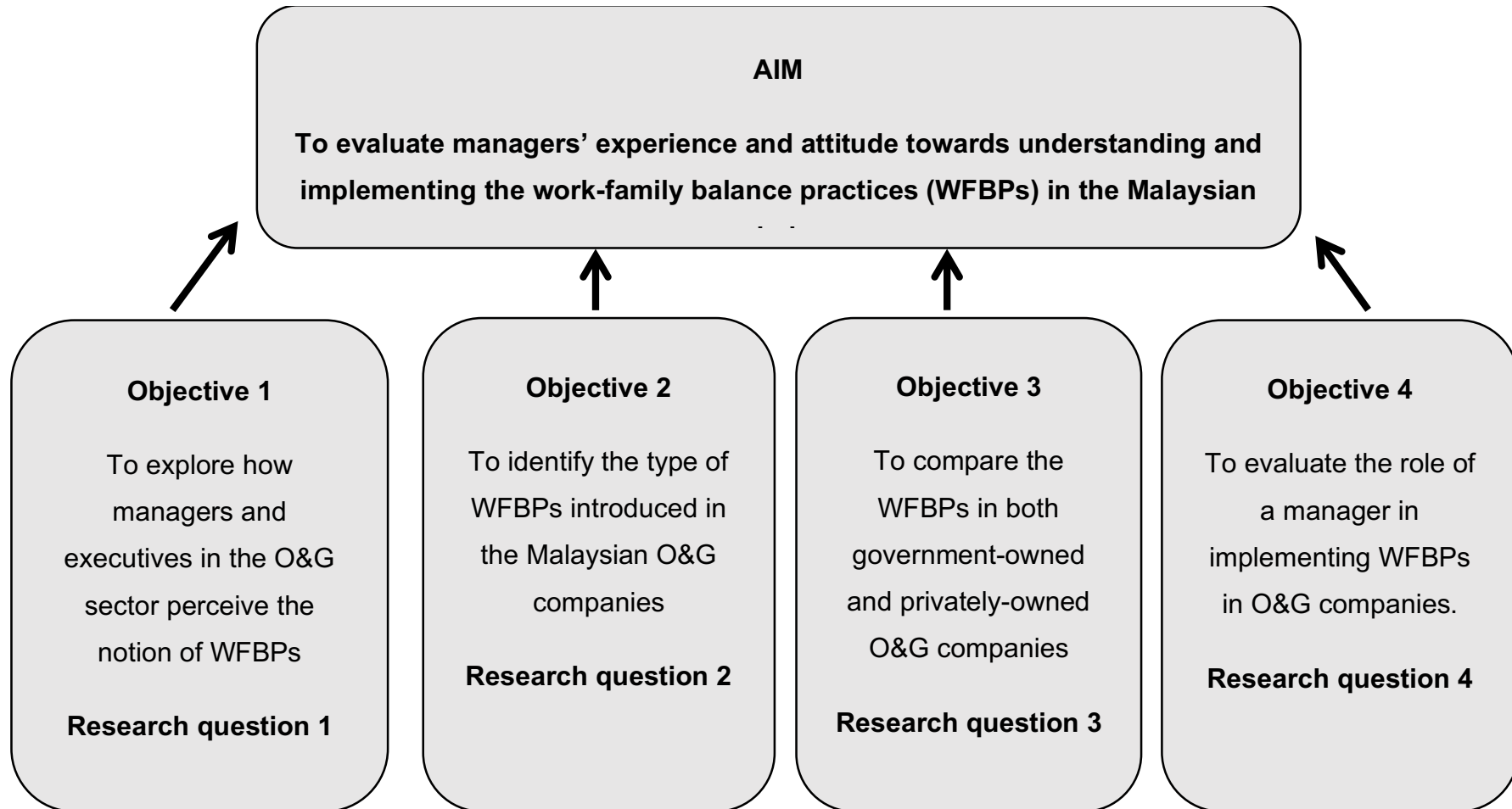
1. To explore how managers and executives in the O& G sector perceive the notion of WFBPs.
2. To identify the type of WFBPs introduced in the Malaysian O&G companies

3. To compare the WFBPs in both government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies.
4. To evaluate the role of a manager in implementing WFBPs in O&G companies.

The research questions were designed from the literature reviews and were developed in order to address directly the objectives of the study. The links between the research questions and research objectives are shown in figure 3.

1. What perceptions do managers have of the WFBPs in the O&G workplace? and how the O&G managers experienced the WFBPs in the workplace?
2. What are the types of WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian organisation?
3. What is the arrangement of WFBPs in the government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies?
4. What are the influence factors on the work-life balance amongst implementers in the O&G workplace??

Figure 3 Links between Research Aims, Research Objectives and Research Questions



## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the choice of methodology and the subsequent research methods chosen to enable the achievement of the current research objective. As its main objective, this study aims to investigate the managerial role or responsibility in understanding the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the workplace. In detail, this research seeks to examine, in the Malaysian context, the actions taken in implementing WFBPs in the workplace and the impacts of these actions on employees at various employment levels.

First, the research philosophy underpinning the practicalities of conducting this research is stated. The study is intent on providing an understanding of the work-family balance concept by looking into individual WFBPs action performed by managers in the working environment. Second, it describes a social constructivist approach, the qualitative methodology used and the short, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews used as the research mechanisms for data collection. Next, this chapter examines the ethical considerations involved, and includes a discussion of establishing quality in qualitative research. In addition, it describes the steps taken to determine the interview schedule, the preliminary study and research development. Finally, the 'hand-picked' method and the process of accomplishing the analysis are revealed.

#### 6.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy underpinning this study is interpretivism. The "epistemology concerns what it is possible to know whereas ontology concerns what there is to know in the world 'out there' which result in different philosophical traditions that have answered research questions in the different ways" (Harper, 2011). Namely, epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge, whilst ontology relates to basic categories dealing with the nature of being. In particular, the current study is concerned to build the understanding of what managers and subordinates do in real-life when undertaking the WFBPs in the workplace. However, all the studies reviewed

so far (particularly research in the work and family arenas), suffer from the presence of some methodological limitation(s), for instance, Chang, McDonald and Burton (2010). Interpretive studies can demonstrate the following: “tell the story, as they see it, of how the themes are related to one another and how characteristic of the speaker or speakers account for the existence of certain themes and the absence of others” (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). For this reason, the current study is carried out using the interpretivist philosophy, an approach that can make a difference to research intentions. Interpretive studies of texts and transcription of interviews are examples of this kind of approach.

This study has an epistemological approach as the foundation for determining its research design. The epistemological basis of research philosophy involves a series of approaches that permit scholars to get close to the data. In line with the qualitative nature of this study, a case-study approach based on a constructivist paradigm has been selected as the research philosophy. The selection of a constructivist research philosophy is aimed at focusing understanding, or at finding out what a particular action means, and it requires that one interprets what the actors are doing in a particular way (Schwandt, 2000). This is based on the basic requirement of seeking ‘understanding’ of the phenomenon (Silverman, 2014). In other words, the interpretivist approach is concerned with daily engagements of people with their surroundings and relationships (Williams, May and Wiggins, 1996). Also, it provides the researcher with qualitative research to enable them to understand the study phenomena from a theoretical perspective.

Interpretivism and social constructionism provided the frameworks used for the interview approach of this study. For example, such theoretical bases can inform the semi-structured and unstructured interviews used to explore the different implications, views and explanations of organisational members (Cunliffe, 2011). The interviews were conducted to explore interaction, interpretation, social context, meaning and process, all of which are integral to the concept of the WFBPs being researched. This argument in support of the chosen research approach is supported by Laverly (2008), who states that interpretivist research is targeted at the understanding and reformation of knowledge and at the contribution of the research participants. Hence, this approach



allowed the researcher to gather and generate data in a way that was flexible and sensitive to features of the research context.

### **6.3 A social constructivism approach**

The focus of this study is to investigate the individual views of employees' actual experience (i.e. the WFBPs implementers): the attitude of lived individual processes in handling and adopting WFBPs. This approach is aimed at gathering, as far as is possible, the natural historical dimensions of such processes, to enable understanding of the experience and the interpretations of actual stages, behaviours and interactions amongst managers. In relation to this aim, the main components of the research questions are empirical. By this means the research interest and aim of this study is based on an interpretive paradigm, to provide the clarity of research objective needed to contribute to the study of Malaysian employees' context at the micro-organisational level.

The research objective helps the study to achieve the aim by adopting a qualitative approach. This is an inductive research approach, as it aims to gain an understanding of how the people being studied are involved in the WFBPs. According to Smircich and Morgan (1980), this type of methodological approach originated in exploring the nature of social phenomena. The inductive process is central to interpretive research and is known to help to orientate the research methodology in the right direction, as well as being seen as a potential justification for carrying out qualitative inquiry (Schwandt, 2000). The epistemology of this study takes an interpretivist stand and is based on the aim and practices of understanding human actions towards work.

#### **6.3.1 The approval of micro-level setting research**

Previous chapters (as in chapter 3.7) have emphasised that the macro (organisational level) and the micro (individual level) of analysis were importance of identifying the roles of both the institution and the individual. Whilst the macro-level recognised for institution setting, it has been noted that the micro-level is particularly appropriate for the identification of practical differences, and the actor's attitude to the working environment. In which analysis at the individual level has reviewed the different

national and local settings of comparative employment relations (Bryson and Frege, 2010). Moreover, according to this perspective, much information is needed regarding the study of WFBCs in diverse cultural contexts (Poelmans, 2005a), in particular, in Malaysia. In addition, this is consistent with the idea that “within a subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used to explore different meanings, perceptions, and interpretations of organizational members” (Cunliffe, 2011). Hence, in light of aspects of the Malaysian working environment and the managerial role in workplace inspiration for WFBCs implementation, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews have been carried out in this study.

#### **6.4 Qualitative Methodology**

A preliminary study was conducted on a small-scale sample and attempted to model full-scale performance in the actual interview. The interview guide was obtained from the literature analysis and formulated according to the aims of the study. Data collection was done within two Malaysian O&G companies that are represented by Company A, the government-owned and Company B, the privately-owned O&G companies. Moreover, the importance of managers’ opinions in Malaysian public sector organisations and the ethical responsibility in an organisation has been reviewed. To restate, the present study is aimed at exploring the current situation, in the Malaysian context, of work-family balance or work-life balance understanding and experience, and of WFBC implementation amongst employees. The qualitative interview is used to obtain the interviewee’s perspective, and in particular, to discover how and why they developed their particular perspective (King, 2004). Hence, this method offers an effective way to provide data regarding actual situations, by collecting employees’ views, and exploring their attitudes and behaviour regarding WFBCs in the workplace.

#### **6.5 Research design using semi-structured interviews**

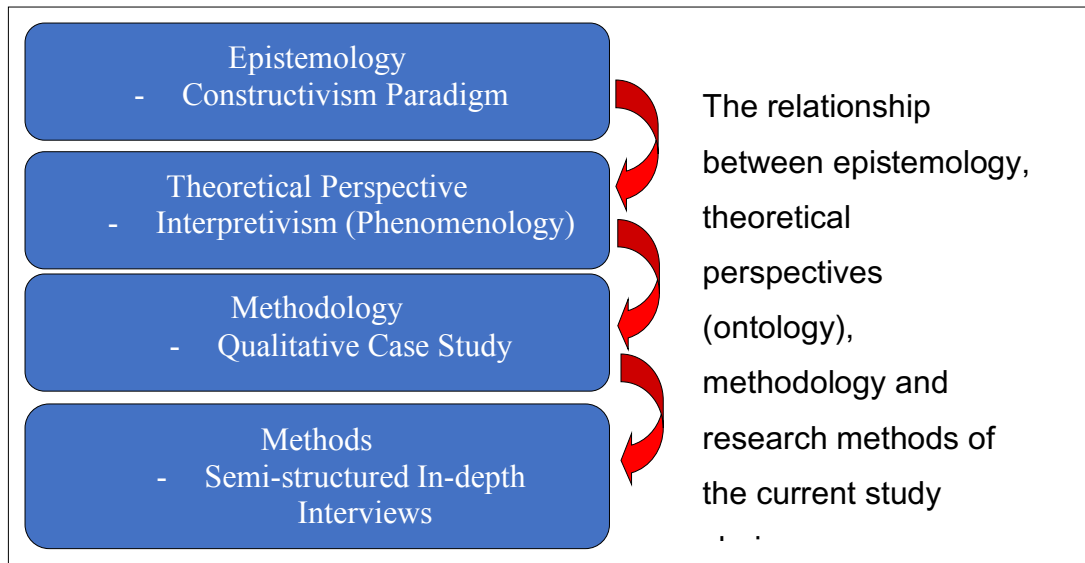
In-depth interviewing is one of a number of interview types which have different styles, approaches, advantages and limitations amongst other methods of collecting data (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012). The study by Johnson and Rowlands argued that in-depth interviewing is relatively involved because of the long duration of one-to-one,

face-to-face interaction between interviewers and the participants. Despite its known imperfections, in-depth interviewing is expected to be the best approach for achieving greater depth when the research question involves highly conflicted emotions, and where different individuals or groups involved in the same line of activity have complicated, multiple perspectives on some phenomenon (Veiga, Baldrige and Eddleston, 2004; Becher, 2005; Cheung and Halpern, 2010; Sulaiman, Sabian and Othman, 2013). In addition, face-to-face in-depth interviews are preferable for obtaining information from people who live in hard-to-reach places, difficult-to-access people (such as higher position stakeholders), and those who are illiterate (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Hence, in this study, open-ended questions were prepared as an interview guide for in-depth, semi-structured interviews, to cover everything which the researcher needed to discover.

Semi-structured format interviews are typically conducted as face-to-face encounters, and are carried out by asking a set of similar questions of the participants (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). These interviews provide the opportunity to analyse a variety of influences that might be discovered through the actors' face-to-face interaction with the researcher (Geary and Trif, 2011). The face-to-face semi-structured interviews in this research project were conducted amongst employees who had given their consent to participate. The choice and appropriateness of the research questions as informed by the interview approach chosen are set out earlier in this chapter, to generate detailed accounts of work and family practices at the workplace from the multiple perspectives of management position levels.

As a summary of the researcher's view of the relationship between epistemology, ontology, methodology and research methods, the inter-relationship between each is illustrated in figure 4 below. As a novice researcher in the qualitative study case methodology approach, it is important to implement the foundation philosophy which underpins the study.

Figure 4 The relationship between epistemology, ontology, methodology and research methods



## 6.6 Conducting qualitative research methods

The interview approach adopted by this study is as suggested by King (2004, p.14) and follows four steps: (1) defining the research question, (2) creating the interview guide, (3) recruiting participants, and (4) carrying out the interviews. For instance, at the beginning of the development process for the research questions, the sequences ‘how’ and ‘what’ were added; that is, to examine the employee participants’ meanings and to explore practices that are deployed in the real-life situation (Silverman, 2014). The following section presents the steps used, in order to explain the process of preliminary study and the data collection process that was carried out.

### 6.6.1 Defining the research question

The aim and objectives of the study were focused on in developing the research questions. Interviews with employees were the appropriate approach in order to understand their points of view. To develop significant and accurate questions that give direction to the overall research pathway, literature analysis on specific research questions development should be carried out. This is related to how the researcher wants to answer the study topic. In this study, the questions for the interviews were initially developed by referring to previous studies (Whalley, 2000; Azura Omar and Omar, 2003). They were adapted from Omar (2003) and used in the preliminary stage

of the study. Also, prior to obtaining firm and reliable data for further consideration in the actual data collection process, the questions were expanded and structured in an open-ended manner.

The development of specific questions to gather specific data is taken into account. The overall aim of this research is “to answer the main research questions and to explore a new or emerging area of WFBPs in the Malaysian context”. In addition, one of the main research questions which has specifically developed for the interest area of the study, is "how do scholars conceptually define WFBPs?". As indicated by the literature, the limitation of previous studies is that, given a different interpretation and perception of the ‘work-family balance’ term amongst employees themselves, the research result could, or would, be different. For instance, looking at the current situation in the Malaysian context, the understanding of work-family balance or work-life balance is emerging into the practices that have been implemented amongst local people. Thus, to answer the specific research question, an important step is to consider whether to use the inductive or the deductive approach.

### **6.6.2 Creating the interview guide**

A qualitative interview method was deployed for the primarily stage of facilitating an understanding of the actual application of the WFBPs phenomenon amongst employees, in managers, in the workplace. The preliminary and fact-finding stages were also carried out, and these stages were later used to develop the semi-structured questions for the actual data collection stage. This study is interested in people’s behaviour, thoughts and emotions, and in the environmental conditions in which people behave, think, feel and implement WFBPs. It aims to evaluate experience amongst managers and employees in the Malaysia workplace, and so the interview approach is the most significant aspect to adapt.

### **6.6.3 The interview schedule**

This study carried out semi-structured format interviews. The information gathered was obtained by following the aims of the study direction through in-depth conversations. The questions developed from a series of subjects which resulted from the research objective driver. These questions were partly structured, to enable the

respondents to speak about their involvement in WFBPs in as much detail as they wanted. These were four main questions used as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 The semi-structured interview questions

<b>Research Objective Driver</b>	<b>Semi-Structured Interview Questions</b>
1. To critically examine the concept Work-Family Balance Practices (WFBPs).	<p><b>Aim 1: How scholars do conceptually define the WFBPs?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about your view based on your understanding of work-family balance practices at your workplace. How do you define the term ‘work-life balance’?</li> <li>• What do you know about working practices or policies?</li> <li>• How do you relate this working practices or policies to the WFBPs?</li> </ul>
2. To identify the range and scope of work-family balance initiatives in the Malaysian organisation.	<p><b>Aim 2: What is the range of work-family balance initiatives and practices in the Malaysian organization?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the practices implemented in your company to improve the level of work-life balance among the employees?</li> <li>• How do you know about this practices availability?</li> </ul>
3. To evaluate the role of managers in implementing WFBPs in the Malaysian context.	<p><b>Aim 3: How the managers undertake the WFBPs in the workplace of Malaysia context?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe in detail what are the actual practices (WFBPs) have been applied in your workplace</li> <li>• What are the best practices that have been applied so far in utilizing the availability of work-family balance practices by you and employees?</li> <li>• Why do you think it's the most efficient compared to the other practices?</li> </ul>
4. To assess whether WFBPs have a direct or indirect effect on managers who implement these initiatives in Malaysia	<p><b>Aim 4: How the WFBPs adoption affected whether direct or indirect on the manager in the workplace?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes your company implement the WFBS at workplaces? Why?</li> <li>• What does motivate you in contributing to the adopting of the process as an individual, manager in this situation?</li> <li>• How is your expectation on the action of these practices affecting your daily work-life balance in the workplace?</li> </ul>

#### **6.6.4 Preliminary study (pilot study)**

A preliminary study is conducted on a small-scale sample and attempts to model full-scale performance in the actual interview. The interview guide was obtained from the literature analysis and formulated according to the aims of the study. The aim was to locate a group of public and private sector employees, especially managers. At the beginning of this preliminary study planning, a list of participants was gathered from various sources, such as colleagues and researcher contacts in the UK with a different country background. Most were Malaysians living temporarily in the UK for either study or work purposes. Prior to the in-depth interview assessment of this pilot study, the interview was piloted through website chat rooms (online medium). These live chat interviews lasted around 10 to 15 minutes per session for each respondent. Some of the questions were reconstructed and paraphrased towards simpler questions for the final interviews. To illustrate, the final question “How do you define the term ‘work-life balance’?” was originally worded “Tell me about your view, based on your understanding of WFBCs at your workplace”. This initial question was too long and hard to use to direct the respondent to give their thoughts on, and understanding of, the issues being investigated. Hence, open-ended, semi-structured questions were developed to provide a better-constructed format and to ease the participants’ understanding, and this was useful in carrying out the real data collection.

#### **6.6.5 Case study approach in selecting specific organisations and acquiring documentary information**

The case study of the O&G industry is a result of filling the gap from the limitation information of the previous study. Particularly, this study is to provide the impact of the WFBCs implementation amongst managers in the O&G industry context. This case study leads to the expansion of knowledge in the WFBCs area. Thus, in this study, first come up is to recruiting specific organisations and satisfied specific requirement that essential.

The main criteria in selecting organisations by case study approach were carried out, to decide the participants of this study that:

- a. they are from the oil and gas (O&G) industry and had difference organisations sizes to show different in approaches

- b. they were promoting and committed to work-life balance practices or family-friendly practices related in the workplace
- c. there were both public and private organisations examples of local Malaysian registered organisation

In addition, the following section continue to describe the selection of Malaysian O&G companies of the study.

#### **6.6.6 The selection of Malaysian O&G companies**

Furthermore, the in-depth semi-structured interviews using face-to-face sessions were conducted and carried out with 34 Malaysian respondents. This involved the participation of the O&G companies within two selected public and private sectors. The O&G company is chosen because of the feasibility to assess the data and the experience of the company to undertake the WFBPs amongst their employees. This is hoping to examine the understanding amongst manager and to develop the understanding of manager role relations to the WFBPs. As one of the large range business corporation, the Malaysia O&G company have grown to entrust with the responsibility of developing the human resource recruitment. There were two selected O&G companies participated in the study. It was recognised as amongst the ranked multinational O&G largest corporations with workplaces located throughout Malaysia. They have a well-organised resources employee relation function and this allowed the study to explore the extent to which organisations framed work-life balance or work-family balance practices/policies. Access to the selected interviewees or participants are reported separately in details in the next section.

The focus of this study will be directed to understanding the practices' (i.e. the WFBPs) implementation amongst employees of O&G sector in the Malaysian organisation. The aim of this study is focusing on the respondents who participated from two selected companies, which amongst the leading company of Malaysian national O&G company. Each company first been contacted through the researcher personal contact (i.e. closes friend) that working in the O&G company. Then, a letter of invitation to participate were circulated amongst the possible participants to keep the formality between researcher and the participants. The case study approach is used in many situation, such as to contribute and understanding of individual,



organisation and related phenomena (Yin, 2009). Hence, case study approach helped the researcher in this study to select the O&G companies of Malaysia as a study context.

### **6.6.7 The general background study of the Company A and Company B**

In this study, **Company A** is the first case subject, that is, the government-owned O&G Company. This company is supported by government-controlled funds, which are also used for such activities as buying out failing projects, including privatised projects that have suffered losses. Much of this was perceived as bailing out politically-connected and powerful corporate interests (Hu, 2009). Concerning to the NEP, Malaysia is a federal system, and states with oil resources wanted to maintain some control over petroleum operations and revenues. The work-family balance policies and practices such as paternity leave, women employment, working hours, maternity benefit and part-time work are stipulated within the Malaysian Employment Act 1955, which must be followed in public or government-owned organisations (Noor and Mohd, 2015). However, the range of WFBP initiatives and practices implemented in the government-owned O&G Company has yet to be explored, which is the aim of the current study.

In addition, the company A which has been established in 1974 is Malaysia's fully integrated Petroleum Company, multinational ranked amongst the largest corporation on FORTUNE Global 500®. The Company A have more than 89 wholly-owned subsidiaries group of companies. Also, the group of companies with 38 partly-owned subsidiaries and 20 associate companies. Company A is one of the Petrochemical industry in Malaysia that reinforced by Malaysian Labour Law 1955 and Occupational and Safety Law (1994). The enforcement of rules and regulation within public sector industry is to protect the safety of workforce in Malaysia. In addition, the company was authorized with 100% proprietorship and control over the petroleum resources of the country since August 1974 (Hakami, Gharib and Adli, 2014).

Furthermore, the organisational culture of Company A highlights through the company's code of conduct and business ethics. That means to be committed to the highest ethics of integrity, transparent and responsibility in the management of the group's business and operations. In terms of quality management, the company applying the principles of value-based management, which covers five core areas of

responsibility, include shareholders, employees, customers, business partners and communities. The core values and culture of the Company A is applying to every employee of every group company worldwide. In which the term “employee” of the company means any person who is in the employment of Company A including but not limited to executives, non-executives, secretaries, seconders and individuals on direct hire (Petronas, 2012). Moreover, the researcher also found that the company promoted the duties of good faith, fidelity, diligence and integrity amongst the workforce as one of the code duty value in the workplace.

The second company selected from one of the privately-owned company in Malaysia. **Company B** has been established since 1898 in Malaysia and an integrated energy company comprising wholly-owned, joint-venture and public-listed companies. As one of the largest network of retails stations and catering one-third of Peninsular Malaysia and half of Sabah and Sarawak’s market requirement, the company represented core values and business principles as the company profile.

Furthermore, the company B is a multinational company based in Malaysia and connected to more than 75 active employee networks in 27 countries (International, 2016). Based on the company range, which internationally, the company diversity and inclusion reaching progress of the employees and contractors. The company promoted the culture of respect, understanding and attachment as company values. In addition, company B describes the behaviour of the employees and their core value related to the business principles by applying the code of conduct in the company environment. In details, such code of conduct, which listed all the company workforce’s responsibilities, includes manager’s role. The study found that this Code has included and ensured the manager responsible for deciding and implementing appropriate consequence management in response to a violation of the Code if any (Shell International Limited, 2015). The code of conduct training is available to all employees and contractors to sustain the quality of the practice. In relation to the human resource policies and standards, the company comply the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation. However, details of the written policy are not included and limitation of an internal document related.

In conclusion, Malaysia is the research context of the current study. In particular context is the Malaysian O&G companies. The above information shared the public- and private-sector working policies and practices that related to the human resource activities of the company involved. Having outlined the general background of two companies using case study approach the next section will viewed the selection process of interviewees and participants of the study.

#### **6.6.8 Selection of interviewees and recruiting participants**

Initially, the sample was selected from amongst employees at the meso- and micro-levels of organisations. The selection of the sample will refine the parameters of this present study. “Qualitative research design tends to work with a relatively small number of cases in which researchers are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail” (Silverman, 2005, p. 9). There is a huge difference in reflecting their work and family roles between Malaysian men and women. In order to understand the viewpoints of employees’ feelings about WFBPs and related programmes at their workplace, interviews with various employee categories were carried out. This was to gain a variety of perspectives on WFBPs in the workplace. Thus, participants were chosen and gathered from the recognised contacts of the researcher who it was believed could best help to address and construct the research questions. The selection of criteria for the interviewees were adapted from the research by Ahmad and Omar (2010), which recognises three target groups of employees including 1) managerial and executive, 2) supervisory and technical, and 3) clerical and other support staff. For instance, participants from amongst managers who had experience of the challenges of implementation and introduction of these new practices, and from amongst technical and other support staff that had experience of WFBPs available for them to apply for, were identified.

Data collection was conducted from January 2016 to April 2016 amongst 34 employees in the workplaces in the Malaysian O&G sector. In gathering research data, the diversity of ages, educational level and social level within the Malaysian managers chosen to participate was considered. A total of 40 personnel was expected to be involved in the interviews to begin the fieldwork process. The potential participant’s information was obtained only after the first phase of face-to-face, semi-structured interviewed sessions, which were carried out with personnel drawn from contacts and

referrals of interviewees. Most of them had given their consent to participate in this research interview and gave consent to be contacted to set up an appointment. This strategy of snowballing sampling was put in place in the gathering of participants for the in-depth interviews (Saunders, 2012). This approach was an effective way to develop the recruitment strategy for the study.

#### **6.6.9 The General Information about the Respondents**

A great deal of previous research has revealed that some indicators of the respondent background that include gender, age, rank/position, race/ethnicity and working experiences are related to the work-family balance and family friendly policies research (see Huang and Tai, 2009; Campbell and Hwa, 2014; Kauppila, 2014; Huang and Gamble, 2015). Based on this knowledge, this current study includes seven (7) categories of respondents' background information extracted from the total numbers of thirty-four (34) interviewed raw data of the respondents.

Those categories include: gender, age, marital status, working experience, ethnicity, and religions or faith believes. Managers were main respondents of this study. The respondents are amongst employees of the two-high profile Malaysian petroleum (O&G) companies. Most of the respondents were at senior position with more than 2 years working experiences in the O&G sectors. The anonymous respondents' name is labelled as R1 to R34 by means to data protected as of the respondents requested. Also, the name of the company from two participated organisations were also labelled as Company A and B for the same reason. However, the findings of the following information gathered will be discussed in detail to introduce the general information about the respondents.

Table 3 The profiles of 34 respondents within two O&G companies

No.	Demographics	Company A	Company B	Total number of interviewees
1	<b>Gender:</b>			
	Female	15	6	21
	Male	5	8	13
2	<b>Age categories:</b>			
	25-35	9	10	19
	36-45	2	1	3
	46-55	8	3	11
	56-65	1	0	1
3	<b>Marital status:</b>			
	Single	3	2	5
	Married	17	12	29
4	<b>Years in service:</b>			
	1 year or less	2	3	5
	2-5 years	7	6	13
	6-9 years	4	3	7
	10-15 years	4	1	5
	16-20 years	0	0	0
	21-30 years	1	1	2
	over 30 years	2	0	2
5	<b>Ethnicity:</b>			
	Malay	17	10	27
	Chinese	3	1	4
	Indian	0	1	1
	Others	0	2	2
6	<b>Religion:</b>			
	Islam	17	10	27
	Buddhism	0	3	3
	Hinduism	0	1	1
	Christianity	3	0	3

The first category shown in table 3 is the gender category. The numbers of respondents recorded consist of 13 males and 21 females from two different companies A and B. The second category followed in the table is the distribution of respondents' age. This includes the higher respondents were aged between 25 and 35 years old (i.e. 19 respondents), next, following by aged between 46 and 55 years old (i.e. 11 respondents), then, following by aged between 36 and 45 years old (i.e. 3 respondents) and the last respondent is aged between 56 and 65 years old. Furthermore, the third category shown in the table is the respondent's marital status. That is, amongst 29 respondents holding married status, whilst 5 holding the single status of marital reported.

Moreover, in the fourth category shown in the table is the working experience amongst respondents reported. The highest number reported is amongst 13 respondents which have been between 2 to 5 years in the service. The rest of the respondents reported to have been 1 year or less (5 respondents); 6 to 9 years (7 respondents); 10 to 15 years (5 respondents); 21 to 30 years (2 respondents) and over 30 years (2 respondents) in years the services. Meanwhile, the fifth category showed in the table is the respondents' ethnicity. It addressed the 27, 4, 1 and 2 of the respondents, respectively, were Malays, Chinese, Indian and others ethnicity. Also, finally, the religions or beliefs amongst respondent recorded were 27 Muslims, 3 Christianity, 3 Buddhism, and 1 is Hinduism.

## **6.7 Carrying out the interviews**

Transcription of interviews of this kind provides qualitative data. In this study, data has been collected through the process of semi-structured interviews conducted in face-to-face sessions. Strategies to begin the data collection process involved informal communication between the researcher and potential participants, chosen as described in the section 6.6.8. Prior to participation, consent was given by mobile text messages, or WhatsApp messenger by the selected participant, and the invitation letter and information sheet were sent by e-mail. Phone contact was used as a follow-up procedure to obtain the participants' preferred times and venues for the interview. Each appointment date, time and venue were then recorded into an online Google calendar (free application provided by Google.com) and was also recorded in the researcher's reference notebook.

The interview guide, which comprises lists of prepared questions that need to be covered in the interviews, was used with the participants by asking one or more questions and using a variety of probes. This study involves a series of semi-structured questions, which narrow down from main questions to sub-questions, and which drive the data collection process. Both clear questions and answers were needed whilst carrying out the interview sessions. As shown in table 2, the semi-structured interview questions are part of a broader overarching research question. However, the semi-structured interviews are flexible in allowing the researcher to change the order or details of how the topics are covered (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Moreover, the researcher uses a variety of probes such as "could you tell me more about that?" or

“could you name some of the practices which you’ve implemented?”. This is to gather more detailed information regarding research intentions. With the participant’s permission, the researcher used tools whilst conducting the interviews, namely, a voice recorder, a personal log journal and the self-administered questionnaire. The data collected was then transcribed into written texts and kept privately to be used by the researcher in the data analysis process. To illustrate, the following are the tools used to gather qualitative data whilst carrying out the interviews.

#### **6.7.1 Personal log journal (field notes)**

The process of taking notes was carried out whilst conducting the face-to-face interview sessions. Some of the written texts describe the behaviour of the participant such as “he was looking at the window whilst describing his family background”. Such motions or actions were written down in the diary whilst the conversation took place. This note-taking was used to illustrate the participant’s reactions or responses to the questions asked during the interview.

#### **6.7.2 Audio voice recording**

A voice recorder is an additional tool that was used to capture the living voice whilst the interview session took place. In this study, the participant’s consent to the recording process was first gathered. This voice recording procedure was used to make sure that the interviewing session was not interrupted by continual note-taking at the same time. Following interview, the recorded voice was transcribed into written text data to be analysed.

#### **6.7.3 The self-administered questionnaire sheets**

Gathering a short response was the focus of the self-administered questionnaire, which prepared in order to collect additional demographic information about the participants. Some of the questions were adapted from Whalley’s (2000) study and some were adjusted to achieve the research intention. In particular, the questions were more direct and required only a short time to answer. The questions covered the interviewee’s educational background, supervision responsibility and the list of practices or policies that were available in the workplace.

## **6.8 Establishing quality in qualitative research**

There is discussion amongst scholars about those critics who suggest that qualitative researchers are creatively hypothesising on the basis of rather thin evidence (for instance, Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). However, in recent qualitative studies, scholars have been measured in different ways, and there are competing claims regarding key markers as to what is accepted as good quality qualitative research criteria. Due to this, some scholars have listed criteria for key markers which are believed to reflect the validity of inquiries, such as fairness, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and also reliance on the internal ethical system (Lincoln, 1995; Morse *et al.*, 2002; Seale, 2007). Tracy (2010) takes issue with the contention that these criteria are common to all qualitative research, instead of being paradigmatic differences. In her discussion of the quality of qualitative criteria, Tracy lists eight criteria that include (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigour, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics and (h) meaningful coherence. In particular, it has been stressed by Kitto, Chesters and Grbich (2008) that interpretative rigour, such as transcript validity, is one of the criteria for assessing the quality of research by the reader. For instance, reflexivity is the result of the excellence demonstrated by the researcher through interpretive rigour. In this study, the relevant methods and tools of analysis are critically chosen and established by ensuring that all the steps and strategies used are reliable, trustworthy and ethical. Thus, in order to carry out this present research, I decided to focus on three criteria which have been widely emphasised and viewed amongst qualitative scholars as fundamental. These criteria are rich rigour (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005), reflexivity (Gray, 2004; Dawson R. Hancock and Algozzine, 2006; Wallace and Wray, 2011) and meaningful coherence (Bhagat, Steverson and Segovis, 2007; Dane and Pratt, 2007). These criteria are outlined in the following sections.

### **6.8.1 Meaningful coherence**

According to Tracy (2010), meaningful coherence is one of the qualities that enables the excellence of the qualitative researcher in delivering their study purpose, using correct methods and procedures, and meaningfully interrelating literature, research design, findings and interpretations of the research output.



The choice of the evaluation of WFBPs implementation as the research topic was an early stage of conducting this study. The aim is to enable the evaluation of managers' experiences and attitudes which might influence the managerial role in undertaking WFBPs in the work environment. This is based on a strategic review of previous literature in the discipline. This research focuses particularly on the adoption of family-friendly human resource management (HRM) policies that have been broadly discussed amongst scholars internationally (for instance, Moshavi & Koch, 2005; Poelmans, Chinchilla, & Cardona, 2003; Poelmans, Kalliath, & Brough, 2008) and Malaysian scholars locally (for instance, N. M. Noor et al., 2014; Norsiah Aminudin, 2011; Subramaniam, 2010), whilst sharpening research design into feasible methodology and procedure, and providing significant research findings. Thus, the processes carried out in this study are considered appropriate to meet the criterion of meaningful coherence.

### **6.8.2 Rich rigour**

Many scholars hold the view that discovering and developing qualitative research is marked by a rich complexity of meaning (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012) by offering additional distinction and flavour to studies (Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005). This study meets this criterion by choosing as the sample to study Malaysian employees both at individual levels amongst managers, as well as their subordinates. For instance, the multicultural, multi-religion, and multiracial complexity amongst different level positions of Malaysian employees and undertaking WFBPs has not fully been explored previously. One aspect of this criterion is the researcher acting as an internal observer and interpreter of the phenomena of the research, and by describing the learning experience and research expectations whilst conducting the study.

Drawing on an extensive range of sources, this criterion has been mentioned by Smircich and Morgan (1980) who state that "scientists can no longer remain as external observers, measuring what they see; they must move to investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to the task". Subsequently, Maxwell (1992) reported that "as observers and interpreters of the world, we are inextricably part of it; we cannot step outside our own experience to obtain some observer-independent account of what we experience. Thus, it is always possible for there to be different, equally valid accounts from different perspectives".

### **6.8.3 Reflexivity**

The relationship between researcher and participants is important because of the unique outcome to each outcome especially in translating between the researcher's characteristics into participants' perceptions (Thomas, 2005). Furthermore, it is suggested to the researchers evaluate the study again by re-visit it throughout data collection and as it develops to consider the role of reflexivity in the research process (Dawson R. Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). In this study, the participants are from three major ethnicities and religious backgrounds, chiefly of Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnicities and Islamic, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu beliefs. The researcher is a Malay-Muslim Malaysian and has a higher education background. These criteria are used as opportunities and advantages allowing the researcher to act as an insider-observer, and to encourage the participants to be frank and trusting whilst sharing their experiences of undertaking WFBPs in the working environment.

### **6.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were salient throughout the planning and conduct of the study and the ethical approach used followed the guidance for good research practice provided by Brunel University London. This process ensures that research activity complies with the relevant regulatory and ethical standards. Ethical approval was sought and received and was applied to the participation information sheet, which was given to each participant before he or she consented to participating in the project.

The researcher own Malay background helped in to be aware of the cultural sensitivities in this study. In addition to endorsement by the Ethics committee, this cultural background helped the researcher to acquire experience and knowledge whilst conducting the interviews. Some of the interviews were conducted in the Malay language and later translated into English. In this respect, there could be deficiencies in the meaning of the data collected caused by the translation process. Challenges and difficulties would come from finding the exact equivalent word to the English form of words, which could be very important in order to express and convey the correct meaning. To avoid this issue having a negative impact on the study, awareness of its potential effects were kept to the fore, and great care was taken throughout the translation process. Next, the researchers send the initial transcription of the recorded

interview back to the participants for validation. Thus, every effort was taken to translate the words in the interviews based on their context.

The study included questions concerning the respondent's family, educational and religious/faith background. Each participant was given the opportunity to answer or not to answer any of the questions, because there might have been some questions considered too personal to them. Their confirmation of understanding of this option was sought by giving clear information that stated that participation was voluntary and they could choose not to answer any questions if they did not feel comfortable with them, or could choose not to complete the questionnaire at all. Also, pseudonyms would be used to identify responses, hence ensuring that respondents' identities could not be linked directly to the study.

## **6.10 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The data analysis strategy will be carried out using of the documentary information and template thematic analysis. In this study, the document and information of law enforcement or written policy in the company participated would be analysed from a documentary and web-based materials. Whilst the main source of data of this study would be collected from the internal source of the case study, which is the interview recorded materials.

### **6.10.1 The documentary information analysis**

The first strategy of the study analysis is from the data of law enforcement practice in operation of the organisation involved. The document information that include archival records (e.g personnel files or employee records) and the company profile will be analysed using the participant consent of the study. The case study of an individual would avoid source of the organisation only to avoid bias conclusions made in the case study (Yin, 2014). In addition, the open source information such as the available and employees benefits offered by the company are open accessing source that provided by the company through the related websites (i.e. annual review report and human resource job advertisement). However, document evidence on the details of practise related to family-friendly practice or work-family balance practices by the internal law enforcement development are not released for the research purpose.

Even though data collect of the open source are limited, yet, it is used to obtain information on the process of policy or practices development in the company. Also, those information complemented by the analysis of data collected by an individual from personal interviews with managers and their subordinates in the workplace.

### **6.10.2 The interviews recorded material**

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the two selected Malaysian O&G companies. All the information collected from the interview were processed using a systematic analysis that involved transcription of the audio recorded into digital text. As an interviewer, the researcher was guided by the prepared interview's questions that developed from the research questions of the study (as presented in previous section 6.5 of this chapter). The transcription of the data collected was analysed using the thematic analysis. To portray, the process of data coding, analysing and interpreting starts with the developed template that known to the template analysis process. The template analysis is referring to a particular way of qualitative data analysing and usually in the form of interview transcriptions. As explained by King, Cassell and Symon (2004, p256), template analysis is 'the process of identifying principal or a priori themes from textual data'. Particularly, the template analysis involves the development of a coding that serves as a template to summarise themes or nodes. Namely, this approach is known to involve qualitative data and to create a structured template of thematic codes (King, 2004; Cassell, 2008; Caza, 2012; Gatrell *et al.*, 2013). In addition, the template used in the thematic analysis helps started the researcher built themes with based understanding of the literature review chapter.

Furthermore, the analysis process is changing continually, very much like the collecting process; constructing a specific analysis process therefore depends on the aim of study. Namely, the goal of this study is to examine managers' experiences and views of the managerial role in the workplace regarding the WFBPs. It is important to analyse the meanings of the responses given by the respondents and this is the goal of the research. Hence, in this study, thematic analysis is used to find the meaning of the collected data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, using the process of working with data suggested by Bazeley (2007), the researcher is able to follow a step-by-step process of the basic operations of data analysis. Also, with the guidelines of

some qualitative scholars on data analysis, the researcher gathered the basic operations into one practical data analysis, using raw interview transcription. This research strategy, i.e. the processes of (1) defining a priori themes; (2) transcribing the interview; (3) carrying out initial coding of data; (4) producing the initial template; (5) developing the template; and (6) interpreting and writing up, will be explained in the following sections. Moreover, the NVivo, which is a computer programming tool, is used for data structuring. It assists with the process of data coding and data content analysis.

### **6.10.3 Defining a priori themes**

One criticism in much of the literature on the process of data analysis is that the researcher filters what to record, choosing some things and ignoring others, and grouping together different observations and events into thematic categories (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). There are, however, some possible solutions for this problem. Bernard and Ryan (2010b) explained that "a priori themes come from characteristics of the phenomenon being studied". Namely, the researcher had a clear understanding of the study area from the literature and had studied the theoretical orientations of the phenomenon. In this study, the themes or nodes were decided in advance of the data collection by the researcher. In order to start the data analysis, a set of a priori themes were determined. This was done by referring to the interview schedule which had four main objective drivers; these provided structure to the process of data analysis. This also assisted the researcher with segmenting the text into understandable, meaningful and manageable data. Also, the template was initially designed from the interview guide. King (2004) pointed out that the interview topic guide is a set of prepared questions to be immediately used by the interviewer, and it is thus a good starting point for constructing an initial template. Besides, there is also a place for new codes to be inserted as the data is analysed.

### **6.10.4 Transcribing the interviews**

In this study, data collected through an audio recorder was the main source of the data collected. The conversations between the researcher and the interviewees were transformed into texts by listening to the audio repeatedly in order to get refined textual data for what was being said. The transcript was saved into a Word file and processed

into a final transcript by adding the notes taken while conducting the conversations. The process of converting audio into digital text is usually called transcription. The first step in this process is listening to the audio recording and converting it into words by typing on the keyboard. This digital text is saved as a file on a computer, so that it can be used repeatedly for the research purpose and can be printed out.

There were also personal log journal or notes that were written by the researcher during the conversations. This text noted actions such as the interviewees' hand movements while talking, and some additional points that showed emotions and physical actions, which could not be recorded through the audio recorder. These highlighted the topic discussed in the conversation. Another source of information that could be added to the raw transcript was the short-response questionnaire form; this recorded certain thoughts of the interviewees and was not recorded by an audio recorder or field notes. Questions such as "What are the practices that have been applied by the company?" were included on the form to make sure that the interviewees clarified their answers from the direct conversation. This also served as a guide for the interviews, as it could be referred to in order to see the actions that had taken place in the company.

#### **6.10.5 Carrying out initial coding of the data**

One of the challenges faced by the researcher is carrying out the initial data coding process. According to Strauss (1993), the process of data coding is a difficult operation, especially amongst inexperienced researchers. The process requires researchers to understand and master the operation. The researcher therefore researched the literature in order to gain an understanding of the foundations of the coding concept, and drew up a step-by-step procedure as suggested by some of the previous scholars. As a result, the guidelines taken from the literature review of the coding process led to carrying out the following steps: (1) scanning each line of the transcripts; (2) listing possible themes or codes seen in the materials; and (3) going through the transcriptions line by line a few times. Moreover, as a novice researcher in qualitative studies, the researcher opted to use these basic operation or steps to direct my analysis in the first stage of carrying out initial data coding. To illustrate, the process of coding is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 Example of coding

<b>Data extract</b>	<b>Coded for</b>
<p>Even though my children are grown up, I'll make sure that I create the environment that they want to come home. That's what I mean integration between work and family. Integration gives more meaning, but nothing is wrong with the balancing</p>	<p>Definition of work and family balance</p>
<p>...I am a mother of two children, a wife and friends of my own family. I am a manager in my department and I am a friend of my colleague.</p>	<p>Manageable multiple role</p>
<p>As a senior project, executive I am eligible to apply a day off to claim my working overtime.</p>	<p>Availability or practice (s)</p>

### 6.10.6 Producing the initial template

The interview schedule, which contained the main research questions, subsidiary questions and probes, was used as it helped me to recognise codes within the text while reading the transcripts a few times. The codes, which represented themes, were identified; they referred to the important views and issues from the textual data. The process was repeated until the list of themes was produced. The codes were then rearranged into a different order by specific connections and concerns. When preparing the initial template, a set of questions was constructed from the objective drivers. Afterwards, the potential lower-order codes were created from the subsidiary questions and probes. As an illustration, as can be seen in figure 6 below, the initial template of this current study consists of four highest-order codes. The main research questions in the higher order and codes that formed these themes are grouped underneath. Those higher-order codes are sub-divided into one, two or three levels of lower-order codes. All of these steps were followed from the suggested process of utilising template analysis by King et al. (2004). One of the steps taken, for example, the use of an interview topic guide, is the best starting point from which to construct the initial template.

Figure 6 The development of initial template of the study

<b>Higher-order codes</b>			
1. Conceptual definition of WFBPs	2. Type of practices implement	3. Drivers for WFBPs implementation	4. Impacts of the WFBPs
<b>Lower-order codes</b>			
1.1 Position level category	2.1 Availability of practice/policy	3.1 Role responsibility of practice	4.1 Area identified in course of discussion
1.2 Policy making history	2.2 Practice (s) taken	3.2 Individual action	4.2 Managerial role to indirect/Direct effects
1.3 Background of the understanding	2.3 Factors influencing WFBPs implement	3.3 Factors influencing managerial or individual	



### **6.10.7 Developing the template**

The template was developed constantly while the process of coding was being carried out. Whilst reading the transcripts and discussions with my supervisor, this initial list of codes was kept open so that the template could be continuously revised. The changes of various kinds required me to continue systematically working through the full set of transcripts, as well as to identify and mark the potential themes or codes that were relevant to the study's aim. This involved insertion, deletion and changing the scope of the process while developing the template stage. The final template of the study was eventually designed with four higher-order codes from the initial template.

### **6.10.8 The developing of code manual**

The listed steps (stage 1 to 4) as shown in table 3 below were carried out in the data coding process. This data coding procedure was adopted from the previous scholars (see Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Bryman, 2008; Campbell, 2008). Thus, the coding process, findings and interpretation will be discussed in the later section.

Table 4 The data coding procedure taken from the previous scholars

<b>Stages in data coding</b>	<b>Process involved</b>
<b>Stage 1:</b> Read the raw interview transcripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the text as a whole, make notes at the end</li> <li>• Mark the unit of analysis</li> <li>• Unusual issues, events etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2:</b> Read Again	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark the text (underline, circle, highlight)</li> <li>• Marginal notes/annotations</li> <li>• Labels for codes</li> <li>• Highlight key words</li> <li>• Note any analytic ideas suggested</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3:</b> Code the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematically mark the text</li> <li>• Indicate what chunks of text are about – themes – index them</li> <li>• Review the codes</li> <li>• Eliminate repetition and similar codes (combine)</li> <li>• Think of grouping</li> <li>• May have lots of different codes (don't worry at early stage – can be reduced later)</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4:</b> Relate general theoretical ideas to the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding is only part of analysis</li> <li>• You must add your interpretation</li> <li>• Identify significance for respondents</li> <li>• Interconnections between codes</li> <li>• Relation of codes to research question and research literature</li> </ul>

The expected results of the process are mainly to gather the final descriptive codes which then group into themes that reflect richness of the phenomenon captured. By encoding the information using the code manual as listed above, the researcher able to describe and organises the saturated idea at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon. The coding process was applied onto the thirty-four (34) interview transcripts.

### **6.10.9 Constructing the template**

Furthermore, to understand the process involved in the data collection of the thirty-four (34) respondents, the links between aim, research objectives, research questions and data analysis are illustrated. As shown in figure 7, the link between aim, research objectives and research questions the earlier stage of initial templates developed consist of four (4) main themes or templates of the WFBPs. The development of this template is based on the previous discussion as gathered from chapter 2, 3 and 4 of the thesis. Furthermore, the template used as the initial structure of the central themes which then later helps in the thematic analysis of the data interpretation process and development.

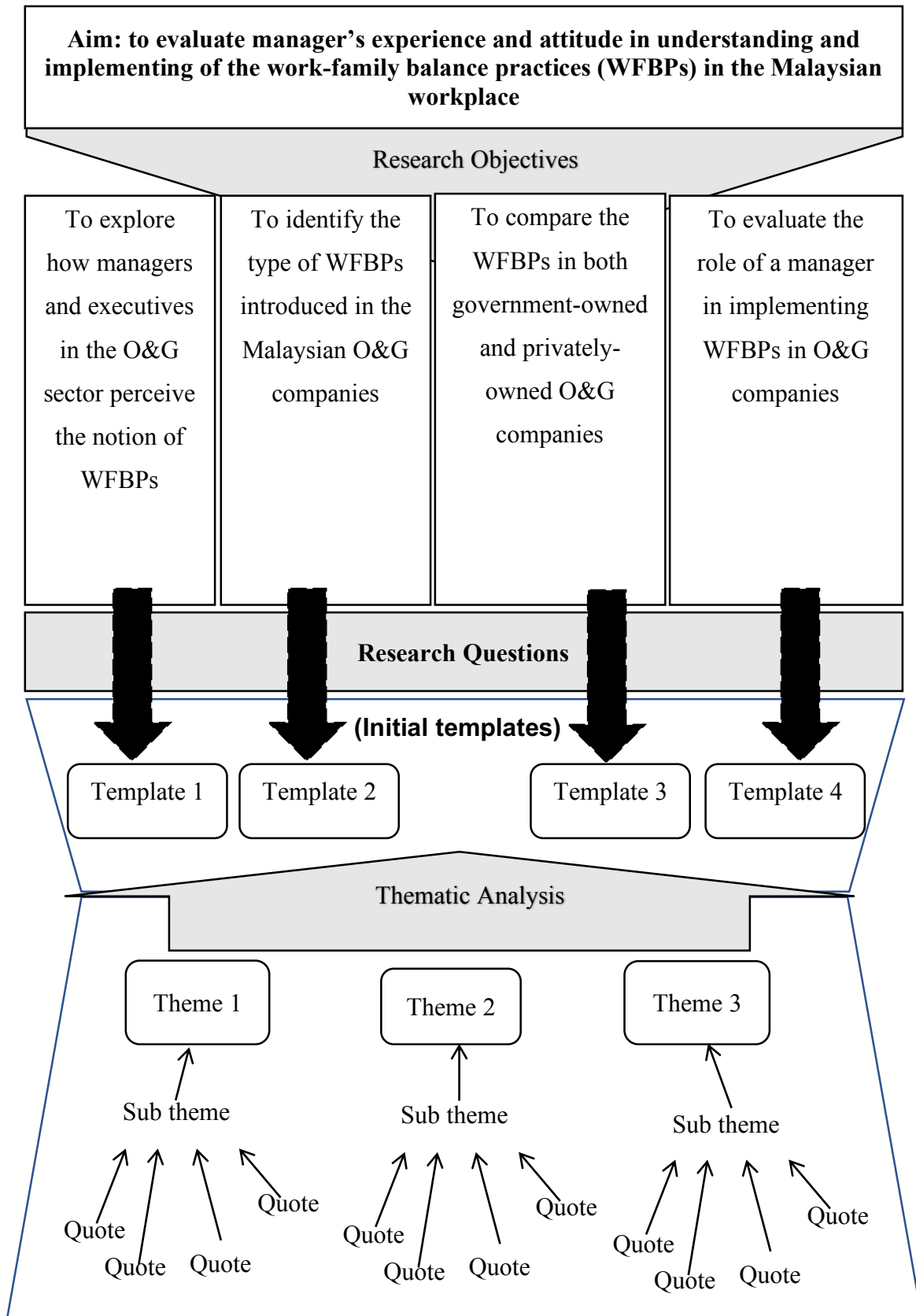
### **6.10.10 Coding process using the NVivo version 10 & 11 software**

The information gathered are based on the total of thirty-four (34) semi-structured interview transcripts that have been analysed using the NVivo software tool. The software used to organise data collected and has facilitated activities such as coding. In the below discussion, the flow of the thematic analysis procedure has been carried out. The final themes of the coding process changed a few times until the saturated group of codes achieved the relations with the research questions of the study. The final themes are arranged into four levels which have been created and recognised as followed:

1. Parent nodes (theme)
2. Child nodes (category)
3. Child nodes 2 (sub-category)
4. Quotes

As results of the overall process described above, figure 7 illustrated the link of the process involved.

Figure 7 Link between aims, research objectives, research questions and data analysis



### **6.10.11 Interpreting and writing up**

The final template and coding of the data means to the closely step of interpreting and writing up. The process include delivering the rich of the data by "produce an account which does as much justice as possible" within the constraints of a formal write up or report (King, 2004). However, selecting quotes that make clear how the respondent's experience is not an easy task and it required the researcher empathic understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bernard and Ryan, 2010d). There are no specific rules of how a researcher should go about the interpreting the coded data. In fact, one of the procedures suggested by Strauss (1993) is the editing techniques by utilising the codes of meaningful by repeatedly comparing with the original textual data. Whilst also, another interpreting technique is suggested by King (2004) by (1) codes listing with some indication of frequency, (2) themes selectivity to the relevant task under the phenomenon of study, (3) openness that controlled by the selective need and (4) relationship between themes could go beyond the standard of the linear template.

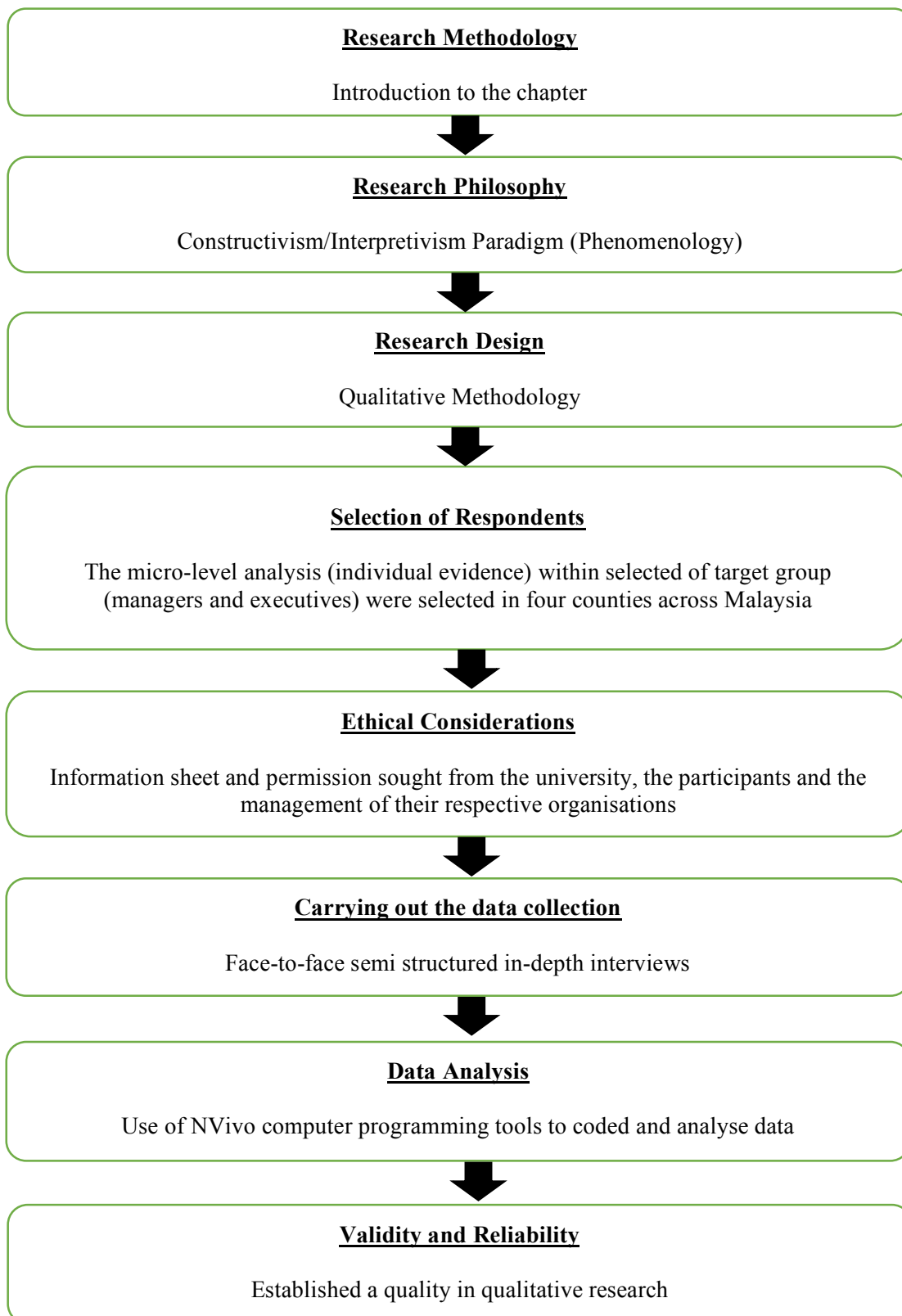
In the current study, each of the codes addressed were divided according to the research questions. The codes are the result of interpretation of the semi-structured interviews questions which latter directed to achieve the research objective. The findings of the research will be explained and presented in chapter 7 and onwards.

### **6.11 Conclusion**

It is very important to understand the research designology before carrying out the research. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the methodology framework through the underlying philosophy of the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist approach in social science is used to explain the meaning of human actions or behaviours and interaction through their actual experiences. This chapter presents the qualitative case study methodology used to develop the research questions, the interpretivist approach (phenomenology) and the study design, using semi-structured interviews to study WFBPs amongst Malaysian employees in the workplace. Also, the researcher is able to view the world by looking through the respondents' precious experiences and perspectives. Thus, the approach allows the researcher to engage with the respondents through their real activities and experiences, the multiple role perspectives and different positions of the workforce, and by taking into account the

research context. Furthermore, in order to achieve the aim and objectives of the study, a qualitative research approach was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 34 personnel (13 males, 21 females) in four selected counties across Malaysia. In-depth information was gathered from the interview transcription, and the collected data were stored, coded and analysed using NVivo. The results of the 34 interviews are presented in the following chapter.

## 6.12 Components of Research Methodology



## CHAPTER 7

### FINDINGS ONE: THE STUDY CONDUCTED IN GOVERNMENT-OWNED O&G COMPANY (COMPANY A)

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the study's findings. The data collection of the study was conducted between January 2016 and April 2016 with managers and executives of Company A; the government-owned O&G company, in four different districts of Malaysia. I conducted 21 interviews. In this section, the study analysed the managerial role of oil and gas (O&G) employees in implementing the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in Company A by considering the individual perception, experiences, as well as the organisational policies and practices cultural practices.

Company A is a government-linked company (GLC), which fully owned by the government of Malaysia, and as explained in the Literature Review chapter (see *chapter 4.6*) is a Malaysian government-owned company. Company A is ranked amongst the Fortune Global 500 biggest corporations in the world and since then it has developed a lot. As one of the main petrochemical industry companies, Company A has an important role in Malaysian economic growth. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate managers' experience and attitude by undertaking the WFBPs in the workplace. In relation to the previous conceptual and theoretical arguments raised in the Literature Review chapter, the study had specified four main themes because of the face-to-face in-depth interview's transcripts. The themes are; (1) the notion WFBPs; (2) type of WFBPs available and implemented in the company; (3) drivers for WFBPs implementation; and (4) implication of the WFBPs.

#### 7.2 The notion WFBPs

In this section, I have analysed the qualitative data of the government-owned company, Company A. The results have been presented in two main categories: the "integration concept between work and family domain" and "separation concept between work and family domain".



### **7.2.1 Integration concept between work and family domain**

This section shared the study analysed how the respondents conceptualised the notion of the WFBPs by harmonising between work and family domains to achieve life balance or integration in the workplace. This perspective is characterised as a mutual dependence between work and family domains. In this section, the study divided the findings into two main sub-sections for a comprehensive analysis. These sub-sections include “work roles and family roles integration” and “individual liberty and work ethics combination”.

#### **7.2.1.1 Work roles and family roles integration**

Based on the findings of the interviews, the work roles and family roles integration represent the incorporation between person’s role-system inside and outside the workplace. The findings showed that the role integration is understandable as the individual responsibilities to combine their life domains such as work and family in the workplace. A 32-year-old female manager delivered an example of this understanding below:

*It’s quite interesting when we talk about work-life balance (smile). In my opinion, I should be able to manage my work without ignoring other responsibilities outside such as my family need and time with your children. I did it by combine both roles in such action that depends on the needs (R2, a female manager from Company A)*

The above respondent provided evidence of the integration perspective of the WFBPs towards role integration. This is referring to the ‘integration concept’ that defined by the respondent as ‘to combine both roles’. She explained that according to her life-balance belief, the role integration between life at workplace and life at outside workplace is a good strategy to achieve happy family and life balance everywhere. As an example, in the family, a wife has a very important role such as a basic role in preparing food for all the family members when at home and even though the wife is a manager at the workplace. This integration perception promoted in harmonising work and family roles as such as give respect to people even at a different level or age in the community to get a better result of the long-life relationship.

Another quotation that shared this concept was described by one of the respondents of this study as follows:

*Even though my children have grown up, I'll make sure that I create an environment so that they want to come home. In creating the same environment so that employees want to come office, the idea is you bring home to office! That's what I meant by the integration between work and family. To me, 'integration' gives more meaning, but nothing is wrong with the 'balance'. Because sometimes you behave differently (R22, a female manager from Company A)*

Given a similar meaning in describing the work-family balance concept as the above respondents, another respondent added the criteria of the work and family role into the integration achievement. The criteria mentioned was the ability to combine work and family role at the given place at the correct time with minimal conflict. In next section, the second sub-category views the perception on individual and work ethics relationship that found in the study's finding.

#### **7.2.1.2 Attitude and work ethics combination**

The work ethics requirement and attitude of an individual is a second sub-theme that reflected the individual actions and responsibilities in representing the integration perspectives within respondents. The relationship between work and individual is personal attitude and action. Those are influenced by inside or outside attributes towards the trust given on individual by the company through the required work ethics in the workplace. One of the respondents shared the situation as below:

*I would define work-family balance as the balancing act between paid work and non-paid work, which includes family and other social activities, inside or outside the workplace...: This is because work and non-work involve in a huge portion of my life. Therefore, it has to be a balance between personal and organisational needs in the workplace. I believe in an action taken for each role given by individual attitude and working ethics requirement (R20, a female manager from Company A)*

In addition of the above quotation, the respondent has been asked to explain the 'personal needs' aspects as mentioned in balancing her daily activities. She argued

that such personal activity as in, at any time consent, if there is a need to call home to update her family, she put the company's trust in the decision to make a phone call by replacing time used at another break time. Thus, she believed that that action is a balancing act to achieve a balance between work and family domain in the workplace.

Furthermore, another respondent perspective interpreted from the findings is by having a life complement. This is also mentioned in the interviews which portrayed that life domain such as work and non-work life requirement to complement each other. For instance, the religious or faith-belief is described to specify the needs whether inside or outside the workplace as a 29-year-old manager said:

*There is no exact time like eight hours working time per day for the family. I must optimise more time with my children compared to time spent with husband or myself. At the workplace, because of the nature of the job, there are majority male employees. Hence, I had to deal with male workers every day. The job role at the site/plantation (i.e. the off-shore workplace) involve more physical energy, focus, and technical skills and sometimes required me to spend more time. With the trust given by my husband, I could finish my work with individual freedom to focus on work (R14, a female manager from Company A)*

The integration understanding within the respondents defines their action towards the WFBPs implementation. That is aspect of the balancing act as shared in the above quotation were proven that the process of integration between work and family domain involved in the decision of undertaking the WFBPs in the workplace. However, there is another concept of the separation perspective found in the analysis that explains the action of balancing between work and family domain in the workplace. In the next section, this will reveal the second different main perspective in understanding the WFBPs notion.

### **7.2.2 Separation concept between work and family domain**

In this section, the study analysed how the government-owned company employees gave the perspective of separation domain involve in achieving life balance in the workplace. The study divided this topic into two main sub-sections including “equal

division between work roles and family roles”, and “flexible time and location division: working on off-shore and on-shore”.

#### **7.2.2.1 Equal division between work roles and family roles**

The equality of person’s role between life domain inside and outside the workplace found in the findings that describes the undertaken WFBPs perspective. One of the interviewees’ responses in the interviews states that:

*From what I believe or my personal perspective, work is work. That means once you finish your work, that’s it. You’re finished with the task given to you. Yet, life is continued. Work is a subset to life. For instance, I need to perform on my job to make sure that I get my pay and I contribute to my career part, yet, life is continuing wherever you are. (R33, a male manager from Company A)*

Moreover, the ‘balance’ aspect explained by the respondent portrayed equal perspective and gives the separation element between work role in the workplace and a wife/husband/son/daughter role outside the workplace. In addition, the participants also expressed the role and position level differences in the organisation. Due to the fact that working position and managerial role in the public sector have agreement, which the formal rules or policies, need to be followed. However, the work-family balance of one person is separate but equal by both role and position level in terms of work and family life in the workplace. Thus, there is a practice promoted by the company through individual actions at the organisation level instead.

#### **7.2.2.2 Flexible time and location division: working on off-shore and on-shore**

The flexible time means by the equal time allocation that a person could manage between work and other life domain whilst working off-shore or on-shore of the O&G work environment. This is specifically demanding by the workplace nature of the O&G sector. The workplace nature is between the off-shore (on the platform that surrounded by seas) and on-shore (on the ground) basis. There are two working shifts for each working calendar that separate two weeks working onshore and another coming two weeks working offshore. The time division of the job workplace also divided between

work and family domains, yet, in this section, the study analysed this understanding by the participant's willingness to adopt the WFBPs in the workplace. This insight of the work-family balance explains by one of the male manager, R13 of Company A when he shared his experience:

*Working with two shifts job (i.e. offshore and onshore), I would manage my time equally between work and family accordingly. For instance, I would focus to my offshore job without my family around and I would focus with them if I'm onshore especially spending more time with family and children. (R13, a manager from Company A)*

The time allocation between work and family is to achieve the work-family balance and a well-known strategy amongst O&G workforce. Those actions are described amongst respondents that the off-shore workplace taking away their family or other non-work activities time allocation from person's life at one time, whilst the onshore rotation gives balance to the family and other non-work activities afterwards. Thus, the job position and working environment of the O&G employees have different views that could give different understanding of the WFBPs implementation at the workplace.

Another perspective is the location division that separate their life domain into work needs and family needs at different roles and domain. That separation perspective explains by a manager, R22:

*There are always two sides of the world [the working place and outside the workplace]. That's what I need and to create meaning. This is subject to the environment, substance that comes with the environment, and your own inner principle. Because nobody would tell you the meaning and to some extend the equation is all about knowing yourself better. When you provide in something to create that meaning to the recipient with the hope that you find yourself and continue to be adaptive. This is where I put the 'balance' as an element that gives meaning on both sides of the world. Which I mean by being able to satisfy me that includes my energy and focus, the recipient of my contribution, and is equal in the other side (R22, a female manager from Company A)*

The findings show that the respondent describe the ‘balance’ term that represents the ability to achieve work life balance is by doing only one domain, which either work or family life, at one time in the workplace. This division of location and time flexibility explained by the respondent by given example of their experience through actions or practices taken at specific location with the need to complete the job. Also, she added that the company trust is another responsibility of a manager or employee at the workplace to create a good working environment. Thus, the separation between work and family life in the workplace is another perspective that driven individual action towards WFBPs implementation and understands.

in summary, this section discussed the two groups of main perspectives amongst the respondents from Company A in understanding the WFBPs notion. next, further analysis showed that the ranges of practices available and undertake in the company A workplace.

### **7.3 Type of WFBPs available and implemented in the company**

In this section, I analysed the qualitative interview data in relation to the range of available and undertaken practices and policies. The data revealed: “formal WFBPs” and “informal WFBPs”.

#### **7.3.1 Formal WFBPs**

The ‘formal WFBPs’ or formal practice applied in the government-owned company is available as general material and open access to employees of the company by the Human Resources Department. The details of family-friendly policy that available in the company are only for the internal reference and the researcher unable to access. However, in this section, the study has listed the practices mentioned in the interviews with the participants of the formal WFBPs that available and implemented in the company.

##### **7.3.1.1 Monetary benefits: paternity leave, and study leave or career break**

The respondents pointed out a series of formal WFBPs:

*As a male manager (smiley face) I am happy that company provide us with the **paternity leave**. In which that is given to male employees that wives have newly give birth. To me it is a good for me in supporting spouse (R33, a male manager from Company A)*

This policy allows employees to take up to 4 days of paternity leave.

As explained further by the respondents, this practice is quite recent. Moreover, company A allows employees to take a period of study leave:

*The company has given me the opportunity to **continue my study abroad** few years back and as a result it does give me lots of opportunity to progress in my career with the company. Even though they don't give me all this luxury in term of flexibility, it's part of my motivation to work with the company. The availability of this practice is mentioned by the human resource manager in the meeting. (R25, a manager from Company A)*

Study leave or career break is a practice that is given to certain levels of managerial position by request. However, to enable manager benefit of those, there are some terms and conditions required that applied. The participants argued that this practice is available to help the applicant (employee of the company) and spouse who aim to continue study abroad or in the country for career wise and progress. Thus, one could affect the work-life balance by taking a career break in the future.

### **7.3.1.2 Non-monetary benefit: optional extended maternity leave, medical expenses for employees, and working hour flexibility**

Moreover, the maternity leave's policy allows a pregnant woman to have 60 days/ two-months maternity leave. As been explained by the respondents, some of the pregnant women continue the leave application for another extra day on unpaid leave quota. That actual practice is taken by the woman who needed more than 60 days and up to 90 days of the maternity leave. As one of the respondents said:

*The **'third-month optional maternity leave'** had been introduced quite recently in the company. However, this practice is the most family-friendly to the employees*

*especially women. The practice benefits the pregnant woman in planning to or not to take extra leave in the third-month of the maternity leave (R14, a manager from Company A)*

This respondent experienced the third-month maternity leave by options given by the company which she mentioned as new policy of the company. Employees are given opportunity to opt the 90 days off with the third-month unpaid leave instead of 60 days off in fully paid maternity leave. For instance, one of the managers, R26 saying that:

*I have been applying some of the practices which I considered as one of the family friendly practices, for instance, the **health care support** that include me and my family to get financial support if anything bad that could happen to any of us in the future. (R26, a manager from Company A)*

Another WFBPs is flexible working:

*Previously in this department we applied **working at a fixed time**, which was 9 am to 6 pm. Yet later, the company introduced flexible working hours with options. This is a very good practice that helps employees to plan their working performance in flexible working hours. For example, I could come at 7 am and finish work at 4 pm and sometimes I would choose to come at 9 am and get back at 6 pm. Another practice is working at home. This is only in a specific matter in which I need to complete the task remotely from home. (R33, a male manager from Company A)*

The shared experiences are the monetary and non-monetary benefits of the WFBPs that provided in the company. Such practices are examples of the HR policies where the influence on the employees' work-life balance could be heard and shown from their story, face and voice expression while being interviewed. However, this study found another interesting type of the WFBPs, which not mentioned as a standard HR policy of the company, were found implemented in actual practice amongst the respondents. Those practices and details continue to discuss in the next section as an informal WFBPs.



### 7.3.2 Informal WFBPs

The 'informal WFBPs' are labelled for the practices related to the WFBPs mentioned by the respondents in the study that implement in the company but not a standard HR policy or unwritten in the company policy. Such practices include monetary benefit (i.e.) hardship allowance) and non-monetary benefits.

There is other evidence that monetary benefit has an influence on the respondent in term of the practices shared. That is the hardship allowance, which referring to the extra time pay on offshore job, for certain time when needed amongst the manager. As mentioned by a male executive as stated:

*I am working as a senior executive engineer in the company. As an engineer, one of the monetary practices that I could relate with the 'family-friendly' is the **hardship allowance**. In which this is like working extra hour when there is a called for the offshore job. In my view, this benefit helps in motivation to work extra hour. This is because while working offshore, I am separating myself from my friend and family for a while is the job in nature (R13, a male manager from Company A)*

This finding is categorising as informal practice and somewhat counterintuitive. Also, the respondents added on the extra job when needed in the offshore platform. He explained that, sometimes, there is an incident on the platform (offshore) that required an additional workforce at the specific time. This situation is happening especially on the outside working schedule. Thus, the manager or engineer that needed to come will be giving this extra working hour and rewarded with the hardship allowance.

On the other hand, data analysed also found that the non-monetary benefits experienced within manager and executive in the company and disclosed in the following category.

#### 7.3.2.1 Non-monetary benefits: mother's room, and half-day off

Furthermore, the informal practices could be described as the non-monetary benefit as found in the analysed data. That is a well-known practice provided in the company and adopted by employees to achieve the life balance between work and family in the workplace. The relationship between a company formal and informal practices or

policy has been explained by one of the respondents in the semi-structured interviews. The manager, R19 shared the experience of using the mother's room, which is a small room with breastfeeding facility for mother, as one of the informal practice applied in the company:

***Mother's room** is available in my department. It is a good practice that suggested by a group of young mothers amongst the executive of the company. The mum's or mother's room is a small room that facilitated with chair and fridge. It provides the basic need for a mother in expressing and storing the breast milk (R19, a female manager from Company A)*

The findings also recognised the informal practices that implemented in the company. Those practices mentioned by respondents as one of the company's initiative to promote the family-friendly environments. Most of the respondents have not less than five years working experience with the company. This is could view the response given by the experience share by R26, a female manager as following:

*There is a **half-day off** practice which recently implemented in the company. This is still a new practice or informal practice in the company. It's good for the female employees especially, when they are in need to look after their children or taking the kids to a medical check-up by requesting a half day off during office hours. Depending on the department's leader or supervisor, she would replace the half day off on another working day in the future. Yet, it has to be recorded in the punch card or attendance list for the HR alert (R26, a female manager from Company A)*

This participant indicates that the company do care about what WFBPs implementation amongst employees need. This brought another advantage for the family-friendly supporter and implementers. Thus, the company through the HR department helped the employees to advance their work-family needs in the company whilst create a working performance and family-friendly working environments.

### 7.3.2.2 Religious and cultural value practices

The most striking result to emerge from the data is that the religious and cultural value practices that shared the Islamic and multi-faith beliefs values influences. As 35-year-old male manager states:

*The multi-cultural and different religions amongst employees are the asset values of the company. One of the examples of this informal policy is the **Islamic teaching session** that held once a week for about 15 to 20 minutes per session, in the Muslim prayer room. Each session is led by one of the invited speakers presenting different topics such as self-motivating, religious history, and other current issues related with the self-development. This is not a compulsory session to attend but this is one of the approaches taken by the company to promote a good cultural need in the workplace (R18, a male manager from Company A).*

The participant added that the practice is important to him and his other Muslim colleague and he emphasised that this is based on his understanding of the Islamic ethical philosophy. This in which explained his view that he then explained how the importance of individual action or correctitude to encounter each role to undertaken practices at working environment. Thus, those actions also explained how a person influences by the religious practices to their working ethic and self-behaviour in the workplace.

Furthermore, whilst this study found that it is contributed by individual action through the traditional and religious practices as shared by one of the respondents as follows:

*To me, as a Muslim we are encouraged to serve the community as well as our family. The motivation factor is that “what is the best for other people is the best for me” and this is when I delivered in a correct way, a correct attitude of manner (R34, a female manager from Company A)*

As shown in the following table 4 is the summary of the formal and informal practices available in Company A as shared and mentioned amongst the respondents.

*Table 5 Summary of the formal and informal WFBPs available in the Company A*

	<b>Formal WFBPs</b>
Monetary (paid annual leave)	paternity leave
Monetary (paid annual leave)	study leave or career break
Non-monetary benefits	optional extended maternity leave
Non-monetary benefits	Medical expenses for employees and their dependents
Non-monetary benefits	flexible working hour
	<b>Informal WFBPs</b>
Monetary benefits	hardship allowance
Non-monetary benefits	half day off
Non-monetary benefits	mother's room
Religious and cultural belief practices	Islamic teaching session

**Source: Researcher's finding 2017**

As a summary, those formal and informal types of practices that found in this study presented the development of adaptation process of the WFBPs in the Malaysian O&G government-owned company. Next, this study continues to disclose the drivers of organisational and managerial strategy implementation of the WFBPs.

#### **7.4 Drivers for WFBPs implementation**

In this section, the study analysed how the managers and organisational set their strategies to develop, implement, and promote the WFBPs in the company. The analysis of this study was divided into two main categories including “macro-factors influence on the WFBPs implementation”, and “other factors influence on the WFBPs implementation”

##### **7.4.1 Macro-factors influence on the WFBPs implementation**

In this section, the study divided into two sub-sections to deliver the comprehensive analysis. This section described the study's findings on the good work ethic in the workplace. These sub-sections include “multiracial and multicultural, social and emotional provisions, and Islamic and other-faith belief and other inspirational values”.

#### 7.4.1.1 Multiracial and multicultural

Based on the findings, the population of the Malaysian-Malays of the company workforce are higher than other ethnics (i.e. Malaysian-Chinese, Indians, etc.) and within the managerial position in the company. The influence of the WFBPs on the cultural and ethnics diversity has impacted to the cultural traditional attitude or known as 'adat' in daily action and behaviour amongst workforce. The situation was described by one of the respondents of this study as follows:

*In the company, I can see some of the Chinese colleagues are mostly young and fresh graduate. From my own experience, the Chinese normally get married at quite late age, which is around 30's and above. Whereas, my other colleagues, which most of them are Malays married at the early age around 20's and above. So, some of them have more experience in term of family and working life. At this stage, I think they are handling the work and family very well and much better than me. For example, they go outstation and travelling with the kids, which for me it's difficult though. This multi-cultural environment in the company gave me some motivation on the handling practices of my family and work life (R29, a female manager from Company A)*

As shared by one of the Chinese respondents as above, one of the cultural value, which is the 'tuah' or 'respectable blessing' belief, shared an interesting cultural value. Such value is taking care of elderly people amongst family members. That cultural or traditional belief is a **good value to keep a good relationship with circular of people around a person**. The value affects the individual attitude in daily activity even at the workplace. Such implication shared by one of the respondents from their experience by describing the action as a good model of individual attitude. She described as followed:

*In the company, there is always a good example of different action and attitude from a different individual in the office. Such attitude is examples applied and show **by a manager who is a single lady who always comes early at the office and will clean the mother's room, which facilitates for the married women in the office. She sometimes asks her subordinate if there is anything that needed in the room.** This is a good behaviour that reflected from her good understanding of people's need around her (R31, a female employee from Company A)*

The inter-cultural traditions or cultural value are an important key element of the WFBPs implementation strategy in introducing amongst Malaysian workforce. Such example as found above shared the cultural added value that believes to impact the practice's acceptance amongst the implementer in the workplace.

#### **7.4.1.2 Social and emotional (i.e. socioemotional) provisions**

Based on the findings of the study, the second categories that found is the social and emotional provisions amongst workforce. Company A is one of the largest Malaysian O&G government-owned company and its dealing with the professional position and managerial role challenges at the individual level of the organisation. However, in experiencing such diverse human professional resources, the individual manager position had to deal with the issue of social or emotional needs amongst themselves and workers in the workplace. The following quotation represents the situation.

*One of my role as manager is to have a critical thinking. In specific, manage and strategies of the people talent. It could be challenging when I need to put myself in people's shoe, because this is where I'm talking about people. The company provide the practices [WFBPs] to dealing with such challenges (R16, a male manager from company A).*

Interestingly, one of the respondents shared his experience in handling his subordinate with the health issue. He believes that a social and emotional provision as such as health and human well-being applied in the WFBPs. In which he believes that these practices could increase the workforce interest to remain working with the company. The following statement from one of the respondent's states that:

*As my previous experience, most of my staffs were male and only two were females. At those years, which without the family-friendly practice, it was quite difficult to raise specific issue if it is related to woman in the workplace. For instance, one of the female staff had health issue related to an early pregnancy phase. Hence, she tried to avoid working aggressively. Yet, the condition was getting worse and she had to take three-month unpaid leave with the advised of the medical letter. The situation had been discussed at the management level to consider a benefit and welfare of the women*

*workforce in the company. Even though it took few years of the discussion, such practice i.e. the three-month maternity leave been implemented recently (R1, a male manager from Company A).*

Thus, it helps the company by strategies the implementation process of the WFBPs through the managers to employees. In addition, the interesting aspect of this result is the implementation process and its progress understood to be a human resource practice that is available and undertaken among employees. The company provides a guideline that is expected to be followed in a case to happen in any conflict of interest in the workplace. For instance, the preference of the person's interests or the interests of his/her family/household members, associates or friends is considered rather than to the interests of the company. In actual practice, based on the study's findings, one of the respondents shared the experience as follows:

*One of the staff had a problem in handling her job and as a result this lowered her job performance. I had to arrange a meeting with her in person. She told me that she had a problem with her husband who has been gambling compulsively. So, she claimed that she is a victim. She feels ashamed with this problem that she faces every day and as a result she underperformed in the workplace. Thus, such a case showed me that the work-life balance is important and corresponds to the company's code of conduct (R33, a female manager from Company A).*

This study found that in handling the diverse organizational workplace with the Malaysian multi-cultural value, one of the strategies is through the well-being management. The well-being management is a taken strategy provided by the company A to work-family balance management at the workplace. The company believed that the number of women workforce in the O&G industry is increasing and this is whilst the emerging of the social norm in multiple roles such as a working woman in the workplace and time in managing family outside the workplace.

#### **7.4.1.3 Islamic and other-faith belief and inspirational values**

The findings in the study show an interesting impact factor of the individual behaviour and work ethics in representing the WFBPs acceptance and implementation. Based

on the data analysed, another finding reveals the second sub-theme of the understanding organisational culture in O&G, the company A. The study found that the Islamic teaching value influences on the daily working ethics amongst respondents through experiences shared.

*In the company, even though Islam is a majority faith belief or religion amongst the community, we do respect and value our other faith-belief group or individual. in fact, we are acting like a family in the workplace in suggesting or advising on a strategy to handle work-family conflict or issue especially if there is any of us in need for advice (R32, a female manager from Company A)*

Another respondent shared her experience in this situation as follows:

*The Islamic lesson or short session provided by the company every Friday is available for the staff. Even though it's not in standard company policy, it is one of the company strategies to approach and create a good relationship with the employee through the religious or faith –beliefs activities and Islamic cultural value, which majority of the staff is a Muslim. That Islamic value is interesting aspect amongst staff in which it sorts of additional life aspect that fills the emotional and internal human need (R27, a female manager from Company A)*

In addition, the respondent also explained that the Islamic teaching value helps her and another colleague in handling emotional or physical challenges faced amongst the young or junior engineers and managers. She mentioned that the gap and separation feelings between them and family (i.e. the working offshore shift arrangement) sometimes are fulfilled with the connection to God, Allah the Almighty. Therefore, the faith belief and its teaching value are one of the interesting aspects that impact the acceptance and implementation of the WFBPs.

Furthermore, the discussion continues in the next section, that revealed the second strategy through experiencing workforce determinations.

#### **7.4.2 Other factors influence on the WFBPs implementation**

Based on the documentary reviews on the studies and reports of the company of this study, the two main aspects that found to drive the company in promoting a diverse



organisation are “talent and career management support”. Those aspects shared in detail in the next following sub-section for comprehensive analysis.

#### **7.4.2.1 Talent and career management support**

In this section, the study analysed the concern of multiple roles raised by the respondents in the semi-structured interview carried out in this study. The analysis shows that at the individual level, most of the woman respondents shared their strong commitment as a manager in the workplace, and a spouse, mother and sister/neighbour outside the workplace. On the other hand, some of the respondents mentioned indirectly that the company provided the talent management to managerial role synergy and other commitment at the workplace. A respondent said:

*As for me, my position as a woman manager is a challenge. It was started at junior level and along the way to be a senior engineer, the job expectation increased. I was fascinated to experience the challenges whilst developing my family. There are job assessments that keep me upgrading my skills experience. Even though it gave pressure to achieve the company expectation, yet, it was fascinated to experience the challenges whilst developing family at the same time (R27, a female manager from Company A)*

The woman manager with multiple role experience has ability to manage the difficult environment and working demand (Ruderman *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, the talent-development processes have provided balancing medium and variety options to the manager with the multiple role commitment.

Furthermore, the talent-development amongst skilled and experienced professionals in the O&G industry specifically, in the public sector is a challenge. Taken into those consideration, the company implemented the family-friendly programs to improve the limitation on the related employment work-life balance policy. Such experienced and feelings shared by one of the respondents as follows:

*I can say despite I want to have work-life balance but my prune I can say 70% towards my career. That's what I say to myself I want to have work-life balance. In actual fact it's not. I was very engrossed with my career end up to the certain extent my children*

*become rebellious. Up to the extent that my children become violence and especially my eldest son. Of course, I have lot of difficulty and in term of be harmonization been affected and that was the moment I reflect myself what do I want in myself. That's when I took decision to take a one year off to go and follow my husband and to accompany him to United Kingdom (R25, a female manager from company A)*

The management of human development towards the O&G work demand is an important aspect. The findings above shared some of the substantial human needs beyond a diverse organisational strategy. The example above points out the demand in skills and experiences human resources within the O&G industry. In addition, based on the document reviewed, the company's code of conduct and business ethics reported that the company aim is to be a well-being of society and maximising resource management for growth, which in relation to the manager's position and role mentioned.

In summary, these results of the WFBPs implementation strategy provide the important insights in the understanding of religious and cultural belief and experiencing determinations amongst the O&G government-owned workforce. The next section, therefore, moves on to discuss the WFBPs implication of the study's findings.

## **7.5 Implication of the WFBPs**

In this section, the study analysed the implication of the WFBPs from this study's interview findings. The findings showed that the undertaken practices have contributed to the implementer understanding of the WFBPs in the workplace. This section is reported in two main sub-sections including "implication to individual" and "implication to the company" to provide a complete analysis.

### **7.5.1 Impacts on individual manager work-life balance**

The undertaken WFBPs in the workplace give direct implication to individuals of this study. Based on the findings of this study, the respondents described their experience in the semi-structured interviews that is grouped into three categories including: "job satisfaction", "Islamic work ethic" and "traditional and moderate cultural values".

### 7.5.1.1 Job satisfaction

In this section, the study analysed the findings based on the individual impact of the undertaken WFBPs amongst respondents. The findings showed that the first aspect on the individual that undertake the WFBPs mentioned in the interviews is job satisfaction. This situation is described by respondents as follows:

*To me, these work-family practices help me to balance my responsibilities inside and outside the workplace. In the working place, I believe this is to maintain the trust of the company to the workers. Thus, I will make sure that every task and job is achievable, and I feel the job satisfaction (R10, a female manager from Company A)*

*The company offered such practices [the WFBPs] to give more opportunity to employees in achieving life balance in the workplace. However, the implementation is depending on the individual enquiry and needs as well as the job satisfaction whilst working with the company. Hence, my preference is job satisfaction in terms of skill experience and managerial role (R3, a female manager from Company A)*

Even though Company A is a government-owned company, which is well-known to have good family-friendly working environment, the respondents of this study stated that there is still low awareness amongst the employees on the undertaken WFBPs in the workplace. A 35-year-old female manager shared her experience as follows:

*I was informed about this practice [WFBPs] when I was about to deliver my first baby which happened five years back. Before that, I don't have any idea or I don't know about the existence of such practice in the company. Thus, I was worried about my future career in the O&G field especially after giving birth. Yet, the practice helps me to understand the important of getting know the benefits provide by the company related to the work-life balance. This is by promoting the practice and after effect regarding the feeling of satisfaction with the job given in the workplace (R21, a female manager from Company A).*

The job nature of the O&G sector involves the offshore working place that separates the social entertainment of a person for more than two weeks by spending on the oil platform. Yet, the respondents of the study shared their feelings on job satisfaction in

term of knowledge and skills experience that value in the O&G career future. On top of that, the respondents also mentioned that the satisfaction allows some of them to appreciate the pleasant working environment created from the WFBPs on the ground or onshore, that thus, give them the advantage to experience the balancing act in life domain with family and other outside activities.

#### **7.5.1.2 Islamic work ethic**

The second sub-theme found in the finding is the WFBPs impacts on the individual well-being and satisfaction that influence the feeling of being kind Muslim that promoting Islamic teaching value and other faith-belief value into own actions. The actions towards the avoidance of risk that could undermine the values of good faith, fidelity, diligence, and integrity are one of the company business ethics. On top of that, a huge number of Muslims working in Company A shows that the WFBPs influences on the workforce actions towards work ethics is significant. As a Muslim, some of the respondents in the study's interviews repeat a few times about to be nice and gentle with a woman at any time. That is means, to respect and give privacy for cultural and personal need such in term of expressing milk amongst young mother. Also, another faith believer also mentioned about the cultural belief within the respondents in term of the women's right and ethical behaviour to show respect. Moreover, the religious or faith-belief impact of the WFBPs implementation in the workplace being illustrated by one of the respondents as follows:

*The company provides the Islamic talk on a weekly basis. Also, only in the month of Ramadhan, it is a daily talk. The employees have the option to or not to attend this session that arranges at the lunch hour break with no fee. This course balances my understanding between standard work ethics and Islamic ethics This course balances my understanding between standard work ethics and Islamic ethics, which is the notions referring to "command the good and forbid the evil" in all spheres of life. That such balance is a daily knowledge that benefits me and helps to balance between my work, my belief and my other activities (R2, a female manager from the company A)*

Another Islamic work ethic that applies amongst Malaysian-Muslims is to get a permit in doing something that not a standard HR policies of the company. The 'taking

permission' before action is an example shared by one of the respondents that allow her to take up to fifteen minutes' break from the given working hours for expressing breast-milk in the mother's room. She explained that this action relies on the trust given by the company through the top manager in doing something other than given work at the working hours in the workplace. She continues by relating her action to the Islamic teaches that the trust is not only given by the company but also by Allah the Almighty or God that prevents her from doing sin or feeling uncomfortable in future life.

The roles of managers from the individual views explain the commitments between work domain and another life domain in complementing one to another in the workplace. The finding shows that such actions represented from the self-belief teach and value from the beginning of person's life towards their career pathway and other life outside the workplace. A manager, R25 described this situation as follows:

*In balancing between work and family life is by adding more responsibility to make more benefit in your life. The more you give to society, the more you get back in terms of love and other support. This is the part where I believed that as a Muslim, the Almighty teaches us through the religion about giving more and sharing with others. (R25, a manager from company A)*

The above participant explained that this commitment is believed to integrate between personal achievement and organisation performance which results to job satisfaction and job performance. In addition, she also explained that as a Muslim, it is compulsory to have a basic understanding of religion or self-belief. Namely, this the life complements of those with love and support from other people allows individual to balance their life domain. This has, in turn, led to people applied and implements the WFBPs in the workplace, as has been returned this action and belief to the community.

In following section, the study analysed the third impacts of the WFBPs adopted in the workplace that shown implication to the organisation

### 7.5.1.3 Traditional and moderate cultural value

The most cultural value influences found in this study come from the Malaysian-Malays ethnic amongst participations interviewed. The Malaysian-Malays culture is part of the well-known organisational cultural that impact the working environment setting of the Company A. In which such effect one way or another convey within the participants that those elements influence their daily actions, understanding and ethical behaviour through the work practising and has relation to the religious or faith-belief of an individual in the workplace.

The WFBPs enriches an individual between work and family that found to be prominent in the public-sector workforce, especially amongst manager and executive including the O&G government-owned company setting. The respondents of this study stated that the employee benefits grant in the company which developed their working attitudes and work ethics. The good impact to both domains between work and family described by one of the respondents as follows:

*The company is very good in term of advocating work-life/family balance especially in accommodating young mothers in the company. Recently they introduced a few policies that catered those in need. The individual needs regarding the complementary elements of life balance advantages from the company's practices. Such practices, I believed give justice, equality and love that are good value and qualities in my Malay-culture and Islamic teaching. These values are important especially in emotional and spiritual guidance that retain me to work with the company (R30, a female manager from Company A)*

In addition, she also explained that the development of family-friendly cultural in the workplace not only benefit to women in the company, yet, also men. This experience includes the supportive and encouragement from the men colleagues. Some of the respondents commented:

*It [the WFBPs] directly benefits me by the facilities provided in the company. As a father, I am sending my children to closest child care of the office. This is for instance, give me time to visit or pick up after work which located at the next building. The company provide a mum's room for the ladies or young mother. As a father, I*

*understand the situation from my wife view and fatherhood experiences. Indirectly, it gives comfortable situation amongst men and privacy to the women to express milk. In term of support, the company through bosses will allow you to go out and support such activities (R1, a male manager from Company A)*

Some of the respondents commentated that the tradition way of achieving the work-life balance is by having family bonding time after work such as having dinner together. Also, creating the same friendly bonding time with the colleagues in the workplace, for instance, at the lunch break hour or at the company's event. Also, some explain that the Malay cultural doesn't have the 'me time' whilst people at that arena living in the big and collective community life. The example given by the respondent about this traditions behaviour or attitude is having a friend talk after working hour by visiting the house with family to get the update of each other as a way of communication. The traditional way of communication mentioned by the respondent in this study must involve the body language, eye-to-eye connection, and the voice intonation whilst a person having a conversation. These are the relationship value that been implemented in working ethic in the workplace between the speaker and listener. Thus, the collective cultural of Malaysian type of community involves the traditional and religious value with high concern amongst managers that influences the working ethic of the organisation workforce

In another example of cultural value is amongst Chinese and Indian culture such as give respect to the older people in the community by individual. This action is also applied amongst the senior position to the older people in the company. This value describes the action of giving respect to other in creating a pleasant working environment. The respect of people's is an action of individual behaviour and attitude towards the people around them.

These findings shared the impact on an individual from the various undertaken WFBPs available in the company.

### **7.5.2 Impacts of WFBPs to organisation**

In this section, based on the findings, the study identified three categories which pointed out impacts of the adopted WFBPs in the workplace that indirectly affected

the company. The categories include are “intense loyalty and retention”, “performance-reward visions”, and “employee-employer mutual understanding”.

#### **7.5.2.1 Employee loyalty and employed retention**

Based on the finding shared within the respondents is viewed as the first important impact to the organisation. The study showed that the company advantages indirectly from the undertaken WFBPs in the workplace. A 35-year-old manager remarked:

*To me, since the company implements the work-life balance practices in the workplace, it creates good feedbacks that increase the engagement between the company and staff. For instance, the company creates many avenues for staff participation in balance and healthy activities at the workplace. Thus, this is a good impact to the company in retaining employees working with the company (R33, a male manager from Company A)*

Skilled employees and good experiences in the O&G sectors are important assets to the government-owned company especially at the manager position. This finding shared the situation by one of the respondents as follows:

*The reasons to retain working with the company are flexible working hours and places which are given practices to me as a manager. These are privileges to me and I could say sometimes the benefits make me to be loyal and retain working with the company (R10, a female manager from Company A)*

Also, she explained that the company might increase the workers' retention time by extending the practice to all staff positions. Thus, the impacts measured through the increasing production skills and job experience in the O&G sector.

#### **7.5.2.2 Performance-reward visions and nationalism benefits relationship**

In this section, the second key element to implication of the undertaken WFBPs in the workplace is a performance-reward vision in relation to the nationalism benefits. The



company involves in a lot of services related to O&G production. The option to work in the O&G company is to provide a conducive and supportive environment where individuals can be themselves and reach their full potential with the job given. This experience shared by one of the respondents as follows:

*To me, since this is a local company and the workforces are amongst Malaysian, thus the contribution I give would benefits Malaysian. I have been well-treated since working with the company where the company created a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment within employees. Thus, I wanted to be a part of the good support system in supporting the company's initiative and my work-family performance as expected (R1, a male manager from Company A)*

Moreover, the performance-reward as mentioned amongst respondents of this study stated that the company also provides the non-monetary benefits in related to the work-life balance initiatives. The benefits include the HR-day event and religious programme that available to employees at all stages of their careers and they are encouraged to take part. This action is to create a supportive work-life balance environment in the workplace, which creates good vision of the life balance in the workplace.

Another visions or hope mentioned amongst the respondents found in this study is the action taken by an individual in the company at the management level in promoting and introducing the WFBPs to the subordinate. The practices help in a way that the life balance to be understood as one of the non-benefits to increase work and family performance.

### **7.5.2.3 Employee-employer mutual understanding relationship**

Another impact found in the study's findings is the mutual understanding between organisation and employees. This is referring to the common understanding of the advantage from the WFBPs implementation. The company performance is indicator to the individual or employee ethical behaviour that perform good job requirement. One of the respondents who adopted the WFBPs described the situation as follows:

*To me, it is important to have a mutual understanding between company and employee. For instance, the company support the existence of mum's room to expressing milk amongst women worker; in return, the employees must develop the company's trust on the wise given time by performing the job as required (R25, a female manager from Company A)*

The relationship between employee and company is developing through the job engagement and performance. This element has been mentioned by one of the company's respondents in the face-to-face interview. In addition to explaining that, the respondent mentioned about the WFBPs is one of the engagement programs as examples to be adopted by the company. For this reason, the respondent argued that it is important to have the WFBPs to create the understanding of each responsibility whilst advantage from the practices and fulfilled the job requirements as needed.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an analysis of the data generated from the study that was conducted in government-owned company of Malaysian O&G industry. This analysis was based on the themes elaborated in the previous Literature Review chapters. The next chapter involves a similar analysis of the data generated from the study conducted in other Malaysian private company of O&G industry.

## CHAPTER 8

### FINDINGS TWO: THE STUDY CONDUCTED IN PRIVATELY-OWNED O&G COMPANY (COMPANY B)

#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the Company B's finding which presented the privately-owned O&G company. The data collection of the study was conducted between January 2016 and April 2016 with the managers of Company B in four different states of Malaysia (i.e. Kuala Lumpur, Terengganu, Malacca, and Sabah). This study conducted 13 interviews with the managers of Company B. In this section, the study analysed the managerial role of the Oil and Gas (O&G) employees in implementing the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) by considering the individual perception, feelings, undertaking experience.

The company B is a Malaysian multi-national company and one of the largest O&G private company from the world's largest independent O&G company. The company helps to meet the country's diverse energy needs by supplying gas for cooking, heating, and generating electricity for homes and business, to liquefied natural gas to fuel trucks and ships. Moreover, the company helps develop local economies by creating new jobs and contracts to local Malaysians by hiring graduates and experienced professionals. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate manager and executive experience and attitude by undertaking the WFBPs in the workplace. In relation to the previous conceptual and theoretical arguments raised in the Literature Review chapter, the study had specified four main themes as a result of the face-to-face in-depth interview transcripts. These include; (1) the notion WFBPs; (2) type of WFBPs available and implemented in the company; (3) drivers for WFBPs implementation; and (4) implication of the WFBPs the perspective on an understanding WFBPs notion.

#### 8.2 Managers' perceptions and understanding of WFBPs

In this section, the study analysed the qualitative interview data in relation to the perception and understanding of the notion of the WFBPs amongst private sector's

managers and executives of the Company B. The result was reported in two main categories that have been interpreted from the data analysed. Those two categories are “integration concept” and “separation concept” between work and family domain.

### **8.2.1 Integration concept between work and family domain**

This section analysed how the private sector respondents of the Company B conceptualise the notion of the WFBPs into the integration concepts between the work domain and family domain and its understanding perspective. This is based on the findings that shared the understanding of the WFBPs notion within participants in the study’s interviews.

#### **8.2.1.1 Managing multiple role wisely**

Most of the respondents of company B described themselves as having multiple responsibilities inside and outside the workplace. For example, the multiple role played by a manager in the workplace such as a leader, colleague, subordinate, and administrator. This experience was shared by one of the respondents by saying that:

*To me, I am integrating my working life and family life as much as I could in the workplace. For instance, I’ll do my best to practice any of the employee’s physical or psychological activities promoted by the company in the workplace. This will be reflected in my action while I’m outside the workplace. If I can give example (while staring outside the office windows) most of my actions were inspired by the elderly people of my family community. Such attitude is respectable to elder people either inside or outside the company based on their knowledge and good behaviour. This is what I called ‘adat’ in the Malay community that I believe is a good practice to a young generation like me...in which those attitudes would influence me in the workplace anyway (R12, a manager from Company B)*

*In additional question given to the above respondent, the respondent answered by described his preference in defining the ‘balancing act’. He described that the balancing act is an **action taken to plan, organise and action to harmonise between work, personal and family** inside and outside the workplace.*

Moreover, in illustrating the multiple role integration position of a manager, another interviewed respondent explained that she agreed on the 'family-friendly practices' that adopted or provided by the company. She continued to explain that as a young mother and a female manager, there is always challenges and life conflict in the workplace. Such practices like 'mother's room' help her in **reducing such challenges and issues** related to work-family conflict by achieving balance inside the workplace, yet, it need to be used wisely. In similar agreement, another respondent explained that the acceptance of the WFBPs in the workplace is through the **role integration amongst personnel or manager by supporting another married subordinate or colleague** to implement the available WFBPs in the company. The following quotation reflected the explained experiences:

*From my point of view, work-life balance is achievable by **managing my role such as integrating between works, family, & social network wisely**. The example of practice likes hardship allowance in the company of O&G is an advantage to minimise the pressure while working offshore. The benefit could spend with the family on a holiday or off working day. To me, this has balanced my work and family needs (R24, a male manager from Company B)*

### **8.2.1.2 Linking between individual attitude and work ethics**

In further experienced action taken in explaining the agreement of the respondents on integration between work and family life in the workplace is by linking the two domains. This experience share by one of the respondents as follows:

*If I could define a 'balance' term from the 'work-family balance' notion, I will explain it as to behave with the **right attitude and has a useful person** to my family, which whether I am a father, a son, or a husband. So, this is also applied when I am at the office, which whether I am a CEO, a manager, or a staff of the company. I had experienced one of the situations of this opinion to describe this action. There is one time when I need to stay after working hour in my office to complete a work task. One of my staff reminds me to return home as my family is waiting for me. As a leader, I smiled at him and told him that I would leave as soon as I finish my work and thanks him for the reminder. To me, even he is my subordinate; I appreciated him because*

*he cares about me and my family. At the same time, it reminds of my other roles that I need to complete after the working hour...it makes me think that my colleague and staff are my families that balanced my life (R28, a manager from Company B)*

In detail, the respondents shared their understanding that the acceptance of the WFBPs is rely on the individual action towards personal attitude and work ethics. For instance, action taken to plan, organise and act to harmonise between work, personal and family, and managing my role such as integrating between practices, family, & social network wisely. The managers integrate both work and family domain in the workplace through the WFBPs implementation. While there is not mentioned on the positive or negative experienced on the work-life balance in the company, yet, the respondents answering the questions given actively and responsive way. Thus, the researcher reported those responses in reflecting the influence of the WFBPs in the privately-owned company to support in WFBPs and avoid of imbalance between multiple roles and work-life conflict that might happen to the manager.

In the next section, this study continues to reveal another theme that found in the data analysis on the perception of WFBPs notion in the Company B, the privately-owned O&G company.

### **8.2.2 Separation concept between work and family domain**

In this section, the analysed data of the second perspectives that found in the study, has categories and labelled as the separation concepts between work and family domain. This study divided this topic in two parts: 1) equal role division, and 2) time-spent division; working at off-shore and on-shore.

#### **8.2.2.1 Equal role division**

This study found out that the equality of a person's role between life domain inside and outside the workplace would be given different view of the undertaken WFBPs. This role equality expressed by one of the respondent in the interviews by saying that:

*For me, 'work-family balance' is when you put your things or matters at the right place and time. As in simple meaning I could say, 'one job at once'. For example, if your son*

*or wife is hospitalised, you should prioritise your family first even your work is important. So, what I mean by work-family balance is that you must be aware of your work as in that's not the only work you do. Vice versa, you take care of your family as in that's not the only thing you do (R28, a male manager from Company B)*

This finding explains that the role of **a person could only be in one of the domain at a time**. For instance, while role as a manager and engineer at the workplace, and role as a wife or mother at home. Similarly, another respondent also voiced the thought by saying that work and family are two different domains of life, but, they complement to each other. He then continued by explaining that those equal responsible such as **managing a company or managing a family could only completed at one time at a different place**.

Moreover, the WFBPs acceptance in the workplace is described by another respondent in the interview by saying that work and family domain is two separate subject of life. The aspect of life elements, for example, she said could **transform some elements into action by giving a certain level of energy and attention**. Thus, this is only to specific task or role either at home or in the workplace. Some interviewees commented:

*My multiple-role as a mother, a wife, a manager, an employee, and other position in social activities are currently very demanding. This is especially when it involves my energy and focus in the workplace. At the same time, as a young mother, I am thinking what do I need to prioritise at home. Most of the issue on the list is my internal life, which nothing to do with my company directly. Therefore, I would say that the work-family balance to me is by trying to manage my energy and attention one time when I am in the workplace and not to bring home. If I could handle that situation and not affecting my family life, I would stay in the company. If I couldn't then I should find another job (R11, a female manager from Company B)*

Other respondents also said:

*To me, this two role mentioned (i.e. work and family) is from different domain. This means that work is completed job in the workplace whilst family and other outside*

*activities at different attention and focus. Those need to fulfil different needs and energy (R23, a male manager from Company B)*

*From my point of view, the work-family balance is you complete your work at the workplace and don't bring the work home. For example, whilst I'm at home, my colleague or office friends respect my time, attention, and needs by not interrupt me with the office matter (R15, a female supervisor from Company B)*

These findings show that the understanding of work-family balance in the workplace represents the separate action for both domains between work and family roles and position. Namely, a person in charge of one task at one specific life domain and equally divides at one time. In practice, one of the respondents details the acceptance of WFB concept by individual divide his/her attention and energy in doing something as in a need to complete the job, thus, trust is given by the company in the workplace in term of good working performance.

#### **8.2.2.2 Time-spent division between offshore and onshore works**

Moreover, the findings shared some of the managers views on the job culture of the O&G industry that involve a place division environment offshore and onshore working time (i.e. two shifted working time) and place arrangement (i.e. offshore and onshore). While this section is looking at the WFBPs perceptions of the manager, this time-spent division on specific job and role as a manager and engineer in the workplace, therefore, it results to the second aspect that pictured the work-family balance understanding by separating both domain in the O&G working environment.

This study has analysed the understanding of separation concept between work and family domain by looking at the participant's willingness to adopt the WFBPs in the workplace. It also revealed the company's strategy in balancing the effect of offshore working (i.e. longer time away) through the working time arrangement. Such practice is the two-working schedule, which is two weeks onshore and another two weeks working offshore. As one of the monetary examples, this approach is one of the company policies in working rotation or arrangement that recognised as one of the WFBPs initiatives taken by the company. Thus, it suggested the separation concept between work and family domain that balanced some respondents in the workplace.



In addition, this insight of the WFBPs understanding explains by one of the male manager, R7 of Company B when he shared his experience as follows:

*I am single and a manager in one of the company's department. Whilst looking at this family-friendly practices or WFBPs implement in the company, I look at it as one of the tool for me to balance between my work and family (i.e. my parents, siblings, and friends). I mean, I can allocate enough time to spend between my family, friends, work, and my other social life inside and outside the workplace. What I normally do, I had enough time managing my job task as in planned and scheduled weekly or monthly ahead. Thus, time spent is managed consistently by specific role played such as a manager, son, or friend within my responsibilities. Working on-shore is just like any other job that time spent with work and family is manageable without division. Whilst working offshore is always a challenge particularly in time spent with family (R7, a male supervisor from Company B)*

Furthermore, time division between working off-shore (i.e. location surrounded by seas and isolated) and on-shore (i.e. location on the ground) is one of the O&G job preference. As a private company, amongst respondents, have been described the time division between work and family is a must. A respondent of the interview gave different opinion in term of time division. He stated that the time spent in the location of the job preference as follows:

*Working in O&G required you to divide time specifically. For example, whilst doing off-shore my time is only focusing on my job as an engineer at a given plantation 24/7 a day for two weeks because I need to monitor the machine according to standard procedure. On the other hand, whilst working on-shore, time divided into two which is eight hours in the office as a manager and after working hour as a husband at home. Therefore, work-family balance to me is that I can manage time division inside and outside the workplace according to my role (R12, a male manager from Company B)*

The above experience is the perspective of the O&G worker on time spent division to achieve the work-family balance. Even though it is a continuous challenge (i.e. working offshore and onshore) as an O&G employee, being a manager or executive in a well-known O&G private company create a good reputation and high paid job. Thus, this

finding shows that the available WFBPs and policies in the workplace are to achieve a good life inside and outside the working environment with regards to workforce job satisfaction in the workplace.

In brief, this section presented the first main themes found in the study which included two main perspectives in describing the WFBPs notion amongst the respondents from Company B. Next, the second main themes found in the study's finding disclosed the ranges of available and undertaken practices and policies of the company B.

### **8.3 Type of WFBPs available and implemented in the company**

In this section, the study analysed the qualitative interview data in relation to the "ranges of available and undertaken practices and policies" in the workplace amongst the manager and executives of the Malaysian O&G privately-owned company context. This is reported in two separate sub-sections: "formal WFBPs" and "informal WFBPs".

#### **8.3.1 Formal WFBPs**

This section presents the findings of the interviews regarding the formal WFBPs and available to practice in the private sector workplace. The 'standard or formal rules' or known as 'code of conduct' amongst the participants is a formal practices or policy that given by the company to describe the expected behaviour of individuals associated with their roles in the workplace.

##### **8.3.1.1 Monetary benefits: paternity and maternity leaves**

In this section, this study analysed the practices related to the work-family balance that mentioned in the interviews amongst the participants. These known practices available in the company and shared the participants' experiences in adopting it in the workplace. There is a non-monetary such as paternity and maternity practices that provide and available for the employees when a person in need and whilst working with the company in achieving the work-family balance in the workplace.

The study's respondent shared the following views:

*I've been working with the company for almost 25 years now. One of the new policies that have been introduced recently is **paternity leave**. As a father and a manager, this is a good family-friendly policy implemented in the company (R28, a male manager from Company B).*

*The paternity leave is one of the written policies available in the company. I am not sure when this has been implemented, but as young mother; this is a good support system available for the male employees whilst the woman has **maternity leave** in similar (R9, a female manager from Company B).*

*This year, this company upgraded the **maternity leave to three months** (i.e. 90 days) instead of 60 days. Such policy gives impact to the staff individually and to the company as well (R6, a female manager from Company B).*

One of the above respondents has a working experience of more than six years with the company, and she added that through the human resource department, the company spread the information (i.e. from the management to lower level of employees) to create awareness about the work-life balance aspect in the working place. Also, the findings show that the company provides easy-to-assess information about the WFBPs that are available in the company. The code of conduct of the company reaches the employees by giving the option of specific position with different needs and values. Hence, the non-monetary benefits give more opportunity to the employees to undertake the WFBPs in the O&G workplace.

### **8.3.1.2 Flexible working time and place practices**

Another formal WFBPs mentioned by the respondents is a **flexible working time**. In response of such situation, during interviews, a 53-year-old female manager shared the following views:

*As a manager, we couldn't be so rigid in given the benefits to staff. We give them options to implement certain practices. For instance, even though we give flexible working hour to everyone [manager], we manage the practice by setting up into two*

*shift options either 8am to 5pm or 9am to 6pm instead (R4, a female manager from Company B).*

Another respondent shared his experience in the interview that is **flexible working place (e.g. working from home)** as stated that:

*At a certain level of position, as what I had experience, I had been given a 'working from home' benefits. This practice allows me to do my work at home or anywhere not in the office. But, this only implemented amongst managers that can deliver the task on time as needed by the management (R7, a male manager from Company B).*

Both flexible working time and place as shared above, experienced by the manager in the company. Both benefits have given the manager to helps them in delivering their job and complete the task assigned. The flexible working time and place is not a new WFBPs, yet, it is only applicable to managerial position and not to junior engineers or technical support employees. Thus, these practices are shared in the study findings to include the WFBPs found in the interviews.

However, not all formal WFBPs is mentioned within the participants in the interviews is reported. For instance, the study leave or career break benefit is one of the formal WFBPs available for a particular level or specific position of management position in the company. The company however limited and enable a certain number of managers to benefit from this practice. There are some terms and conditions required and applied. The participants explained that this practice available to help the applicant (employee of the company) and a spouse who aim to study abroad further or in the country for career-wise and progress. Thus, one could affect the work-life balance by taking a career break in the future.

### **8.3.2 Informal WFBPs**

The informal WFBPs are unwritten practice which take place within the company as in actual action taken related to the family-friendly practices. These practices are grouped into two main categories: “non-monetary benefits”, “discourage employees to work overtime”, and “happy hour practice”.

### 8.3.2.1 Non-monetary benefits: car or space parking for ladies and CSR communities program

The first category of informal WFBPs found in the study's findings is the non-monetary that related to family-friendly benefits. In this section, the study analysed how the privately-owned O&G managers and executives recognised the informal WFBPs that related to the work-life balance which provide work motivation for them. One of the participants, a 40-year-old female manager shared her experience using one of the non-monetary benefit and family-friendly practice provided in the department as she stated that:

*One that I know, there is a practice that available, yet, it is not a formal policy. The practice is the **car park slots for the pregnant ladies** which closest to the office entrance. As my own experience, I was motivated to go to work even in my third trimester of pregnancy stage. To that extend, I believe this is non-monetary benefit given by the company to help me and other female employees to maintain the job continuity in the workplace (R6, a female manager from Company B)*

Another participant from the different department shared his experience as follows:

*We created a programme, which involves non-work activities, outside the workplace that **cares for communities**. There is a team include management and non-management employees that manage and oversee the program. The involvement of staff and management in the non-work activities were supported by the company (R12, a male manager from Company B)*

As mentioned above, some of the respondents believed that the work-life balance or work-family balance is achieved through voluntary activities that associate or supported by the company at the workplace. This finding shows that the non-work activities such as care for communities provide as an annual program and organised by the management team. It is interesting findings to include this volunteering activity as non-monetary benefits of the WFBPs by the respondents. The employees engage with the management team to achieve the objective, which is to get support other life activities inside and outside the workplace. The participants in this study highlighted

the community program as one of the non-monetary benefits for them to achieve their life balance. Hence, this non-monetary benefit through the informal WFBPs create a new perspective of the work-life balance in the workplace.

### **8.3.2.2 Discourage employees to work overtime.**

A 55-year-old male manager described a situation as follows:

*Some of the practice that related to work-family balance is not written as policy. As a manager, I really encourage work-life balance concept. For instance, by **discourage people to get back late** specifically, after working hour. At the early action in promoting this practice, I would ask my subordinate or colleague a reason if I saw or knew someone who wanted to stay back. To me, my intention is just to make sure they feel guilty if they have no reason to stay after work at the office. As time goes, sometimes I tested the action by staying a bit late in the office to see if people stay back, yet, no one found to do that. So, this practice works (R28, a male manager from Company B).*

In addition, the respondent also added that this action also promoted him to be so-called 'understanding boss' for some of his friends and he did not ignore that judgment, yet, take that as a good deed's action that comes from his inside intention to do so. While, the second category of discouraging employees to work overtime is found in study's finding of the Company B, the following finding of happy hour practice is presented.

### **8.3.2.3 Happy hour practice**

A small number of those interviewed suggested that the traditional or cultural value related is added in the company's practices. For instance, the happy hour, which is a gathering event at a given time for 30 to 45 minutes' break, at the workplace. A 28-year-old Chinese woman manager shared this experience by saying that:

*I come from a Chinese ethnic background and I believed most of Malaysian is influenced by a collective family-type relationship. I am raised up in the big number of*

*family members and would always taking care of each other whether by spending time for networking or knowing each other better. In the company environment for instance, this traditional practice is created in the 'happy hour' that held once a week within department. This has usually taken half an hour break at the end of the working day, so that, all staffs in my department can gather in the pantry or a meeting room for informal meeting about various topics (R8, a female manager from Company B).*

A collective family-type is another unique culture for Malays ethnic as well. The family bonding amongst family members is as important as a unit of cell in a human body. The time spent together well used of each member of the family to update and sharing daily activities to feel the burden or happy moment as one body. The time spent with each member in a family either small or large is count as a family-bonding influence. Thus, this finding suggested that the happy hour practice is a cultural value added that has a good impact on the daily individual action in the company.

As shown in the following table 5 is the summary of the formal and informal practices available in Company B as shared and mentioned amongst the respondents.

Table 6 Summary of the formal and informal WFBPs available in the Company B

	<b>Formal WFBPs</b>
Monetary (paid annual leave)	three months of maternity leave
Monetary (paid annual leave)	paternity leave
Non-Monetary	flexible working time flexible working place
	<b>Informal WFBPs</b>
Non-monetary benefits	mother's room
Non-monetary benefits	discouraging extra working hour
Non-monetary benefits	happy hour
Non-monetary benefits	Social activities (CSR community's programs)
Non-monetary benefits	Medical expenses coverage for employees and their dependents

**Source: Researcher's finding 2017**

Overall, those formal and informal types of practices that found in this study presented the development of adaptation process of the WFBPs in the O&G privately-owned company. In the next section, the study continues to discuss the third main themes

found in the data collected - that is the drivers for WFBPs of organisational and managerial strategy.

## **8.4 Drivers for WFBPs implementation**

In this section, the study presented the drivers of the WFBPs that provide the development and implementation strategy of the WFBPs within the Malaysian O&G sector. This study divided the section in two sub-sections to deliver a comprehensive analysis. The sub-sections are “understanding a multi-cultural and organisational culture” and “experiencing a diverse organisational workplace”.

### **8.4.1 Macro-factors influence on the WFBPs implementation**

In this section, the study analysed how the WFBPs implementation promoting a diverse organisation amongst O&G employees in the working environment. This section includes three sub-sections of “multiracial and multicultural”, and “socio-emotional support”.

#### **8.4.1.1 Multiracial and multicultural**

Another aspect that found in this study is the influence of the Malaysian culture on the organisational working cultural setting. The WFBPs introduction and implementation within Malaysian organisation particularly in O&G workplace found in this study. The respondents in the qualitative interviews of this study stated the following agreement:

*Malaysian culture is inclusive of different ethnic background and religious. The WFBPs promoted one of the main Malaysian cultural environments that are the collective family-type relationship. The diversity of employees in the company for instance, reflected the needs of family-friendly practices that allowed us to continue with this **family-type bonding and activities in the workplace**. As a Malaysian Indian, I feel comfortable to talk or discuss about family matters in the workplace amongst colleagues. Hence, some issues that related to work-family conflict could be discussed with the management team (R31, a male manager from Company B).*



Another respondent shared similar experience as follows:

*It's good to have multi-cultural background working in the same working place. This company for instance, we are diverse in term of working culture that adopted from western or European countries with different culture. To me, Malaysian in regards of working ethic, have been expected to work 'hard' not 'smart'. So, we tend to work hard by coming early to work and go back late to home. Although we know that working smart is important to be effective, able to manage time spend, no 'zero-chatting', and yet, this working culture is changing in our community. I learned this as a good working culture and not difficult to try (R28, a male manager from Company B).*

In general, the effectiveness of the WFBPs in the Malaysian multicultural organisation is significant, notably, the organisational working cultural setting amongst the **collectivism-based community in the O&G working environment**. As explained by Yang Yang *et al.* (2011) about the organisation diversity that proven to provide a greater variety of knowledge and experience to the choices of handling problem and opportunities amongst employees. Thus, the current research showed the finding of the study.

#### **8.4.1.2 Socio-emotional support**

As another important driver of the WFBPs found in the company B, the socioemotional support has reflected the concern among respondents. The concern is especially on the organisational strategy of the WFBPs introduction, availability and implementation in the workplace. The feeling and experiences shared from the semi-structured interviews of the current study with managers and executives of the O&G Company B presented. A 34-year-old male manager shared such social and emotional influence as follows:

*As a person, I have been brought up in the collective-type of Malaysian community. In which, extended families are the basic unit of society and used to have a mind-set of 'mind everyone-own business' instead of 'mind your own business' as a way of collectivist cultures to achieve the daily life balance. What I meant by this way of life is I supposed in taking care of each other in socialising myself and meeting with people,*

*spending time after work with friends and community, and find a meeting points or social activities that close to the workplace or home. However, my experience working with the O&G industry is a bit challenging in my early career phase. Working offshore, for instance, there is a limited entertainment place because of the O&G platform is in a rural area. thus, my social and emotional limitation in the workplace is effected (R5, a male manager from Company B)*

In addition, some of the respondents raised concerns including work-life balance challenges amongst the manager in which one of the respondents shared his multiple role in the workplace, which include managing tasks, leadership role model, and company's bridge between management team and employees level. Thus, the managerial strategy is to implement and promote the WFBPs to face the multiple role challenges amongst them.

The 'happy hour' practice is introduced in the company to promote such social-emotional support needed to overcome such concerning experiences as shared above. The 'happy hour' practice, which is a specific time that conducted in the workplace at the office hour to allow employees and management team meeting and engage with each other. The availability and endorsement by the company through such practice have shared by the respondents as an acceptance of the WFBPs implementation in the workplace.

Another example is the health and wellness programme after working hour. The company supports the sports tournament inter-department that allows the workers who want to take part in healthy activities for better health performance and productivity of life in the working place. This encouragement is given by the company in prize sponsorship or organising a tournament within employees after working hour.

#### **8.4.2 Other factors influence on the WFBPs implementation**

The first driver in the company B strategy in implementing and promoting the WFBPs is by looking at the influence of the WFBPs in the employees' career progression and development provided in the workplace. These finding include the "talent management and career, "supportive working environment" and "employee-employer interaction.

#### 8.4.2.1 Talent management and career progression development

The study analysed how the individual manager position faces with the challenges and strategy in implementing and promoting the WFBPs in their O&G working environment. Interestingly, the study found that some of the participants and executive of the Company B shared the experienced on the changes process and stages of the previous practices to current practice and policy made by the company since the existence of the WFBPs. It was suggested by one of the manager that the impact has been started with the increased number of workforce and job demand in the privately-owned O&G companies. Similarly, some of the respondents who was at the junior position to share how the progression towards the work-life balance amongst O&G workforce up till now was catered. A 40-year-old female manager described this situation as follows:

*I started working as a junior engineer with the company and at that time I was not married and I worked on job basis like a freelancer. I was paid based on job done. Currently, as a manager, leader to my plantation [term use to refer at O&G large area in the offshore] team, and I am married with 2 children, the job scope is also changed. The company positioned me in the project development and management department based on my skills experiences and talent. This is good career development to me and I am looking forward to increasing my self-development and experience to working with the company (R6, a female manager from Company B).*

Talent management amongst employees especially managers has a huge discussion amongst scholars, especially in human resource management studies. This finding shows such agreement on the relationship of talent-management and the WFBPs influences on the employees' self-management and progression towards the employee's work-family balance in the workplace. Hence, in the specific context of the Malaysian O&G for example, talent management is one of the suggested mechanisms that help to reduce the barrier to women's career progression in the company.

#### **8.4.2.2 Supportive working environment**

Furthermore, the second factor that found in this study's finding which is the supportive working environment. This experience described from most of the dual-career within the respondents of the study. The respondents mentioned about the important of supportive working environment amongst dual earners or career in his/her family to achieve work-life balance in the O&G workplace. One of the respondents described this kind of issue as follows:

*Before married, I used to manage my time between work and family [parents and friends]. I could have described myself as a balance person by harmonising both needs without any conflict. Yet, after married, I and my wife are dual-workers at different sector. Both of us with work and family commitments at early stage a bit struggle in the management of work and life. The job doubles the commitments when one of us promoted to a higher position. Now, I always see that it is important in an organisation to have supportive environment to the dual-career people (R6, a male manager from Company B).*

Through the WFBPs introduction in the O&G workplace, the employees found that it is a good strategy for the company in introducing the work and family balance. The approached of the practices such as flexible working hours is to reduce the work-family conflict inside and outside the workplace amongst the dual earners and dual-career partners in a family. As the above respondents explained to that practice on his life balance experiences, he said this method helps him at the difficult time of his life when he needs the flexible time to manage the career and the family at the same time. Thus, such practice is used as a strategy to career development and management amongst the respondents.

#### **8.4.2.3 Employee-employer interaction**

Another factor that motivates the WFBPs implementation suggested in this study's finding is the employee-employer interaction. This is to describe the good communication and interaction between manager and employees in daily life at the workplace. Such relationship between communication and interaction portrayed the

involvement of organisation in facilitating the achievement of employee's work-life balance in the workplace. For instance, the respondent mentioned that role system of a person could only balance by using 8 hours in the office wisely between work and family life demand. For example, as a manager, one person need to complete tasks and deliver job performance with a happy feeling whilst doing the tasks. Some of the respondents explained that the happy feeling is balancing factor that develop in the workplace by undertaken the WFBPs to harmonise both domain of life. The following quotations typify the shared views of the respondents:

*I would define work-family balance because of a good interaction between employee and the company. Those communications could only be transformed into action by the family-friendly practices provided by the company and the employees use the benefits wisely (R8, a female manager from Company B).*

*To me, I would recommend using the family-related practices available in the company to my colleague or subordinate. The reason is because I believed that this is one of the way how I balance myself between the role as a manager and friend (e.g. young mother) in the working environment (R4, a female manager from Company B).*

As the above experiences, the managers of Company B articulated that the individual and company (i.e. through the managers) linked to such aspect of motivation in achieving work-life balance in the workplace. Thus, this relationship between manager, employee and organiser (i.e. company) established the acceptance of the WFBPs implementation in the company.

In summary, this section revealed the drivers of organisational and managerial strategy in introducing, implementing and promoting the WFBPs in the privately-owned O&G company. The next section revealed the implication of the WFBPs that found amongst the respondents of the study.

## **8.5 Implication of the WFBPs**

In this section, the study found the implications of the WFBPs among the O&G managers. The findings show that the practices executed in the O&G workplace contributed to the acceptance and understanding of the work-life balance among the

employees. The section has reported in two parts: 1) impacts of WFBPs on individual work-life, and 2) impact of WFBPs impacts on organisational strategy.

### **8.5.1 Impacts of WFBPs on individual work-life balance challenge**

This section discussed the impact of the WFBPs implementation on individual work-life balance challenge in the O&G workplace. This section is divided into three sub-sections: “job satisfaction”, “equal opportunities and increased self-esteem”, and “well-being improvement” to give a comprehensive analysis of these findings.

#### **8.5.1.1 Job satisfaction**

The manager and executives of the private O&G company acknowledged that the implementation of the WFBPs has an impact on the career and work-life progress in the workplace. Based on the findings, the respondents stated that the concern is about their job progression in the O&G industry. The self-development experience at the early stage was to have working experience with the Company B, privately-owned O&G company. One of the respondents pointed out that the WFBPs was introduced in the company almost ten years, and till then the practices shared some impacts, particularly to the individual working experience. One of the effects is the job satisfaction that shared by most of the respondents from Company B.

As some managers pointed out:

*I've been working in this field for almost 20 years with two big O&G companies including the current company. I think, rather than have a big amount of salary where people just think about this career, I need to ensure all the needs of the work-life balance are achieved. This is one of my reason to stay with the company (R28, a male manager from Company B).*

*As a manager, the practices introduced in the company gave positive impact on my work performance and hope not only me but subordinate as well. To me, I could say one of the reasons is that if we are only focusing on one thing without giving some space of thinking about other part of life such as family or social activities, the madness in working for instance could drive people to do beyond normal behaviour (could lead*

to a depression, emotionally and actions). Therefore, to me this job satisfaction is gain from the practices implement in the working environment (R12, a male manager from Company B).

*I have experienced in working with different companies with different working environments and job demand. However, when working with the current company, I kept my little pressure if had any with my superior or my colleague to get advice from them. If not, I could imbalance my outside working life. For instance, when I have more working demand, I'll stay late to complete the job and then I return home. This make me satisfied with the job completion, yet, this is not always happening because of the job-sharing practice (R5, a male manager from Company B).*

The above quotation shared the feelings and experiences of respondents that reflected the impact on working arrangement of the O&G industry. The experiences from the WFBPs introduction and implementation influence the job satisfaction amongst individual interviewed in the company. Hence, this WFBPs implementation experiences suggested to effect directly to an individual.

#### **8.5.1.2 Equal opportunities and increased self-esteem**

Another aspect which brought up in the interview is self-esteem development and equal opportunities. This study's findings described that the respondent's self-satisfaction by referring to individual attention and personal needs from the undertaken WFBPs provided in the workplace. For instance, there is different expression shared by respondents through their self-esteem satisfaction, which impacts on individual attitude and behaviour, in the workplace. A 35-year-old female manager shared the experience as stated that:

*This work-life balance practices to me are the best benefits and advantages, especially amongst female employees. As a female manager and engineer in the male-dominated workplace, this approach [i.e. WFBPs] makes me believe that as a woman engineer and manager, the responsibilities are equally developed. This is increased my self-esteem and reflected in my feeling while managing work and family demand. Hence, by giving more benefits to the work and family, there is always an excellent*

*impact on working performance in the workplace and good role model for my family (R31, a female manager from Company B).*

As Company B interviewee R31 stated, the demand on job performance is very high in a private sector company. She described how she struggled to manage her emotions as in a young mother at the early career and stated that the existent WFBPs helped her to better manage her time. She continued by saying that:

*These practices such as the flexible working hour, mother's room, and ladies parking, help me in a different way of my current position as a manager compared to previous year, yet, the practices will give some impact to other people as well as they know how to use them.*

The impact of the self-satisfaction which described by one of the above respondents of this study could lead to the individual behaviour or attitude while completing the task given by the company. Thus, indirectly such self-esteem development and satisfaction does represent the driver of the WFBPs to the actions in the O&G workplace.

### **8.5.1.3 Well-being improvement**

The third implication analysed in this study shows the respondents' concern of other important added values to the work and family life. The findings show that the respondents named such important aspects on how they facilitate their well-being. A female manager remarked:

*Performance comes from fresh mind & body which is usually a result of healthy lifestyle. Therefore, I supported active life-styles such as from the non-work activities within staff and myself. By promoting a healthy event after work, sometimes we set up an internal sports game between my department colleagues and me (R15, a female manager from Company B).*

*I love sports and shopping. These two activities help me to use my spare time with my husband and my children. In the workplace, I do the same activities with my colleagues*



*at the lunch break. These make me happy and keep me moving forward with the job challenges in the future (R31, a female manager from Company B).*

*The company supported non-work activities such as sports and care for community programs. The calmness and 'zero stresses are the result of me being able to do something different from the norm in the workplace. Therefore, I am using the gym which sport facility that provided by the company for all staff (R12, a male manager from Company B).*

*We [the employees] have a women social club and supported by the human resource department of the company. The members of the group able to raise issue related to the employee welfare, discuss, and give suggestion thus bring up the issues to the top management of the company through the HR department. For instance, in the last two years the company had given approval and endorsement of the three months' maternity leave for all women staff. The suggestion came from us and it benefits all women in the company (R17, a female manager from Company B).*

As this study elucidated in this section, the WFBPs implementation affected to the individual attitude and behaviour. In the next section, the study analysed the impact of the WFBPs implementation on the organisation.

### **8.5.2 Impact of WFBPs on organisational strategy**

In this section, the study analysed the WFBPs impacts on the participated privately-owned O&G company. The findings are based on the semi-structured qualitative interviews of this study. This section is divided into three parts: 1) employee loyalty and employed retention, 2) job quality and performance, and 3) supportive working environments.

#### **8.5.2.1 Employee loyalty and employed retention**

The first impact found in the study from the shared experienced amongst the Company B's respondents is the intention to intense loyalty to the organisation. One of the respondents emphasised this situation by stating:

*I am passionate with the company's goal that is "no harm to people and the environment across our business". To achieve this, lots of training and module have been implemented to increase skills and performance amongst the technical and non-technical workers. Yet, as a manager, it benefits me to venture in that area of knowledge and multi-tasking skills to deliver each module or training. Throughout this, some of us had given working flexibility and encouraged the subordinate to implement the work-life balance practices. That's one of the reasons for me to retain working with the company (R12, a male manager from Company B).*

These experienced shared from the respondent, who intense to stay work with the company and suggested that the WFBPs influenced indirectly on their self-satisfaction. For instance, the flexibility working time encourage the manager to organise their role demand between work and family domain while working onshore or offshore in the O&G industry. Such impact shared an example of what makes the skilled and experienced manager retain and loyal to the company. Thus, this effect is an essential aspect for the organisational in giving feedback from the WFBPs implementation in the O&G workplace.

#### **8.5.2.2 Job quality and performance**

The job quality and performance is the second aspects found to impact the organisational from the WFBPs implementation in the O&G workplace. Importance of skills experience to the staff in relation to company's assessment on productivity and performance are mentioned in the interview by the respondents. Based on the findings, the following quotations typified their shared experiences.

*Some company not really care on the existence of the practices, some company do implement the practices. It depends on the company stability to retain the good staff and lower the turnover of the staff. This is important to maintain the company productivity and performance (R17, a female manager from Company B).*

Similarly, a male manager respondent said:

*Working with company that helps to understand the importance of work-life balance is a long-term investment to me. This will result to retain the staffs that together with the company achieve the company's goal. Thus, a person will give a good job quality that increase company production and performance (R7, a male manager from Company B).*

As illustrated above, the respondents agreed that the WFBPs are a long-term investment of life support to individual that received from the company through the WFBPs introduction. Therefore, the findings above show that the experiences shared by the respondents have indirectly reflected the WFBPs impact to the company. Another aspect found discuss in following section is a supportive 'family-friendly' environment.

### **8.5.2.3 Supportive working environments**

Following the finding found in this study, the third aspects that impact the organisation from the WFBPs implementation are the introduction of the supportive family-friendly environment in the O&G working environment. The respondents did not mention the policy of WFB in the workplace is not functioning, but, the agreement of the supportive family-friendly environment is pictured as a focal point to achieve balance in the workplace and indirectly shared the impact for the organisational. A 34-year-old female manager cited that:

*One of the advantages working with the company is a positive working environment. And this is also in regards of to the family-friendly supportive environment in the workplace. To me, this is kind of positive charge that flow into my body, soul, and drive out into an action. Thus, I support the practices through attitude and behaviour affluence my colleague and another subordinate to create and work the supportive family-friendly environment (R15, a female manager from Company B).*

The above experienced not only influence of the WFBPs on personal satisfaction, yet, it reflected the impact of the WFBPs on the organisational particularly on the motivated elements from the introduction and implementation process.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provided findings of the data generated from the study that conducted in the privately-owned O&G company. Overall, Chapter 7 and 8 disclosed the four central themes of the empirical evidence of the study. Table 7 summaries the findings of the study's analysis between Company A and B. In the following chapter, the study presents comprehensive analysis and discussion of the overall research's findings for both company A and B which views the cross-case analysis and discussion of the WFBPs implementation in the O&G workplace.

Table 7 Summary of the findings of the study's analysis between Company A and B

Main Themes	Government-owned company Company A	Privately-owned company Company B
<b>Theme one (1):</b> The perspective of the WFBPs notion	<b>Integration concept between work and family lives</b>	
	- Work roles and family roles integration - Attitude and work ethics combination	- Work and family life integration
	<b>Separation concept between work and family lives</b>	
	- Equal division between work roles and family roles - Flexible time and location division: working offshore and onshore	- Equal role division - Time-spent division: working offshore & onshore
<b>Theme two (2):</b> WFBPs in Malaysian O&G Companies	<b>Formal WFBPs</b>	
	- Non-monetary benefits (e.g. optional extended maternity leave, medical expenses for employees, and flexibility working hours) - Monetary benefits (e.g. paternity leave, study leave or career break)	- Non-monetary benefits (e.g. flexibility working place and time) - Job scope (job rotation and work arrangement)
	<b>Informal WFBPs</b>	
	- Non-monetary benefits (i.e. mother's room and half-day off) - Monetary benefits (i.e. hardship allowance)	- Non-monetary benefits (e.g. car or space parking for ladies and CSR communities program) - Discourage extra working hour and happy hour
<b>Theme three (3):</b> Drivers for the WFBPs implementation	<b>Influence of Macro Factors on Managers' Motivation to Implement WFBPs</b>	
	- Social-emotional interactions - Cultural and ethnicity differences - Spiritual or religious inspirational values	- Social-emotional interactions - Cultural and ethnicity differences
<b>Theme four (4):</b> Implication of the WFBPs	<b>Individual-level implication</b>	
	- Job satisfaction - Traditional cultural values - Islamic and multi-faith values	- Job satisfaction - Personal satisfaction - Well-being enrichment
	<b>Organisational-level implication</b>	
	- Intense loyalty towards the company - Supportive team-work environment - Employee-employer mutual understanding	- Intense loyalty towards the company - A "family-friendly" supportive environment - Job quality and performance

## CHAPTER 9

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the four central themes from the findings presented earlier in Chapters 7 and 8. Significantly, this study continues to contribute to the development of WFBPs in the O&G industry. Thus, the following section presents the structure of this chapter through the cross-case comparative analysis between Malaysian government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies as shown in Table 7.

#### 9.2 Theme One: WFBPs from the Perspective of Malaysian O&G Managers and Executives

The analysis of the O&G workforce's experiences and feelings regarding WFBPs implementation in two Malaysian O&G companies represented by Company A, the government-owned and Company B, the privately-owned firstly has been addresses by the first research question of the study:

**What perceptions do managers have of the WFBPs in the O&G workplace? and how the O&G managers experienced the WFBPs in the workplace? (RQ1)**

In this study, when the managers were asked about their perceptions of WFBPs, they gave varying insights into the practices experienced in the company. These results are drawn from both O&G companies and include 'integration' and 'separation' concepts in experiencing the work and family interface in the workplace. This section has been divided into three parts: 1) the 'integration' concepts between work and family lives; 2) the 'separation' concepts between work and family lives; and 3) the 'integration-separation' concepts between work and family lives: a different vision of WFBP notions amongst the O&G workforces.

### 9.2.1 The 'Integration' Concept between Work and Family Lives amongst O&G Workforces

Industrialisation in a developing country such as Malaysia has changed the traditional role of men and women references. Home tasks that are synonymous with women are now also done by men. The main-provider role in a family is exchangeable between men and women nowadays. In understanding the work-life balance amongst managers with a dual position (individual and organisational managers) and dual role (engineer and manager roles) in O&G companies, this study explored and determined insights into WFBCPs in the workplace.

The 'integration' concept between work and family lives describes a significant understanding of WFBCPs amongst the O&G executives and managers of the study. Firstly, the study identified the **integration between work and family roles** by showing the individual's ability to manage work and family matters, including work demands and family needs. For example, a female takes on the role of the manager in the workplace while monitoring operational jobs both onshore and offshore. In parallel also, has the role of wife, mother or daughter at home when with the family. However, this identified 'integration' term does not provide information on the outcome of the imbalance between work and family, as stated by Gatrell *et al.* (2013) in his study. Other than that, the integration action describes how manager experiences balance their multiple roles between work job positions, family roles, and social activities and networks while working both onshore and offshore. Thus, the integration term identifies those actions taken in the workplace as an input to start the work-family interface management.

Furthermore, another element shown in the study with regard to the integration concept is the relationship between **personal attitude and work ethics** in the workplace. The understanding of some respondents is that integration is a link that reflects the decision-making process of a manager and the action taken. The action is influenced by personal preferences and the organisational expectations of the company. The offshore working platform, for instance, separates employees from their family at a long distance over a certain time frame. The managers must be able to look after themselves in terms of personal needs, job requirements and other environmental factors. To illustrate, personal attitude (such as emotional stability) and

work ethics (such as safety behaviour) are integrated into monitoring work on the operational platform at the offshore workplace. This is similar to the perspective of a 'dual agenda' by Rapoport *et al.* (2002), which argued that the relationship between work and life is a tool for family-friendly organisational practices such as gender equality and a flexible working environment. Thus, these elements of integration depend on the individual's actions, stemming from a personal attitude that is compatible with the work ethics of the O&G workplace.

### **9.2.2 The 'Separation' Concept between Work and Family Lives amongst O&G Workforces**

The separation concept between work and family lives amongst the O&G workforce is another significant element that influences WFBPs. This insight had the most responses amongst the respondents of the study. The nature of the work in the O&G workplace, comprising both onshore and offshore working places, illustrated how this perception was identified amongst the respondents.

The results from the analysis showed that the separation term refers to the division act between work and family life while O&G employees are working offshore. The evidence discovered the separation between work and family is significant while working at the different location (i.e. offshore and onshore). This reflects the fact that the O&G managers and executives all agreed with the physical, emotional, and social strain that temporarily separates work and family life while working in the O&G industry. That is, the separation between work and the family domain will not impact one another (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

The results of the empirical investigation revealed two factors that influence the workforce's perceptions of the separation concept between work and family lives. These are the location division of the offshore and onshore workplace, and limitation of social welfare facilities; these are connected and explain the WFBPs. Supporting literature reveals that keeping this separation between work and family boundaries is artificial and significant, especially in exploring how satisfied and motivated employee on their well-being (Standen, Daniels and Lamond, 1999).

Firstly, the **location division** between working offshore and onshore represents the idea of having enough time, practices and resources at work to support



the work-life balance in the workplace. This perception leads to managers viewing WFBPs as one of the company's approaches to increasing individuals' and organisational performance in the workplace. This view is supported by Bianchi and Milkie (2010), who argued that rational managerial decisions and time availability are organisational resources. On the other hand, the increasing number of female decision-making positions in the O&G companies has been reviewed. That is, the study identified that the female position at the managerial roles also influences the understanding of work-life balance and practices or policy development in the O&G industry.

Secondly, another discussion on the perception of the separation concept between work and family lives is explained by the **limited social welfare experiences** offered in the O&G industry. The separation between working life and social life reflects how the O&G workforces see the necessity of an equal division between work and non-work life. Though working with the O&G industry has limited social welfare, some of the respondents admitted that their job prospects included several different work surroundings, including working in the labs and offices.

### **9.2.3 The 'Integration-separation' between Work and Family Lives amongst the O&G Workforces: A Different Vision of WFBPs**

Overall, the study recognised an interesting finding regarding the perception of WFBPs amongst the O&G workforces. The integration and separation concepts from both discussion sections above identified different visions of WFBPs. The interconnection between integration and separation concepts results from the nature of the work in the O&G industry. The integration-separation concept between work and family lives amongst O&G managers is a result of these interconnected perspectives. However, there are limits to how far the idea of integration-separation of work-life balance can be taken.

Taken together, these results suggest that the understanding of WFBPs contributes to the acceptance of WFBPs implementation amongst O&G executives and managers. The views range from the involvement of individual actions towards organisational awareness to worries about work and family interaction in the O&G workplace. The findings have illustrated that attitude, work ethics and self-

management are important elements in work-family integration, while the equal division of multiple roles, time and location are important in work-family separation. The interconnection between integration and separation elements includes interpersonal characteristics (attitude, work ethics and multiple roles) and skills (self-management, time flexibility and location division), which are needed amongst the O&G workforce while working in the various O&G work surroundings.

#### **9.2.4 Summary**

Despite failing to promote the work-life balance in the workplace (International Gas Union, 2012), the WFBPs experiences amongst oil and gas employees being reported here appear to support this new insight into interpersonal and skills requirement and how they connect to the individual life domain within the O&G industry. However, the differences in perception of the WFBPs notions from the two case studies between Company A and B is significant. The results provide further support for the proposition of the integration-separation concepts between work and family balance based on the O&G working nature (i.e. offshore and onshore) workplace. Apparently, the standard concept refers to integration and separation between work and family lives that identified in viewing managers and executives understanding of the WFBPs notions.

### 9.3 Theme Two: WFBPs in Malaysian O&G Companies

Studies on WFBPs in Malaysia are limited, particularly in the O&G industry. The nature of the O&G environment, between onshore and offshore working, is a fundamental element of this study's outcome. This section will start the discussion by addressing the following research questions of the study:

**What are the types of WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian organisation? (RQ2)**

**What is the arrangement of formal and informal WFBPs in government and privately owned O&G companies? (RQ3)**

This study focuses on the practices of WFBPs found in the O&G companies, which represent government-owned and privately-owned organisations. Based on the study's findings, there are two categories of actual WFBPs, namely formal WFBPs and informal WFBPs. The term '**formal practice**' is used to refer to the established O&G organisational policy followed by employees and contractors and it also refers to the standard human resource (HR) policies based on the general orders of the Malaysian government. On the other hand, **informal practice** is used to refer to the unwritten practices, which take place within the company. This description defines formal and informal WFBPs in this study and supports achieving the family and career goals of the employees in the workplace (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007; Widener and Widener, 2007). In addition, this study has looked at similar trends in WFBPs development in the O&G workplace. Thus, this section has been divided into three parts: 1) the standard WFBPs and policies; 2) Company A: government-owned O&G Company; and 3) Company B: privately-owned O&G Company.

#### 9.3.1 The Standard WFBPs and Policies

In this section, this study present the standard HR practices and policies with WFBPs-related that found similar in both Company A and B of the study. Therefore, the analysis is based on the formal and informal WFBPs mentioned in the study's findings.

### 9.3.1.1 Formal WFBPs

Non-monetary benefits: The study discussed standard WFBPs such as monetary and non-monetary benefits that are like other sectors. As an example, **working hour flexibility** was found to be a non-monetary benefit and one of the most common HR policies mentioned in work-family balance studies. This evidence is similar to that of the Nigerian banking sector (Mordi, Mmieh and Ojo, 2007); the German works councils (Heywood and Jirjahn, 2009); and the UK media sector, which has flexible working times implemented in the workplace. In general, working hour flexibility offers working hour options that range from 7:00 to 16:00, 8:00 to 17:00, and 9:00 to 18:00 to an individual employee based on their job specification.

This also applies to the onshore working of an O&G company. The flexible working hour practice applies to both government-owned and privately-owned companies, yet they use different methods of implementation. This difference is due to the availability of the practice; managers in Company A, the government-owned company, are eligible, whereas in the privately-owned Company B, both engineers and managers of the organisation are eligible for specific operational tasks.

On the other hand, another practice known as **work arrangement or rotation** applies on oil rigs offshore. Such flexible working arrangements are between onshore and offshore working arrangements. While onshore working entails a standard Monday to Friday week, with weekends off, offshore working involves 12-hour days, usually working for around six weeks, after which time the employees are entitled to the same six weeks off. The work arrangement package is a unique practice found in the study, and it includes flexibility in the working hours and place for both O&G companies, compared with actual practice in other sectors. As a non-monetary benefit, such flexibility is a driver for WFBPs amongst the O&G workforces. This practice encourages and supports the work-life balance interface between work and family relationships amongst managers who have a dual role, for example engineers and managers at the workplace and husband/wife or family member at home.

Monetary benefits: Another significant practice of standard WFBPs found in the study is **maternity leave** as a monetary benefit. Also, this is an example of HR policies that are available in Malaysian public and private organisations. While this practice is

concerned with reducing gender differences in the workplace (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005), the approach is very similar to providing more flexible working within the employees' care obligation in an organisation (Grabham, 2014). In the Malaysian public sector, female employees are entitled to take up to sixty days maternity leave (Noor and Mohd, 2015). However, recently, this practice has increased to up to ninety consecutive days, and this has been implemented in both public and government-owned O&G companies.

### 9.3.1.2 Informal WFBPs

Non-monetary benefits: As mentioned above, standard HR policies utilise the formal WFBPs investigated in the study and implemented in the public sectors and government-owned O&G companies. However, the study identified other actual practices, which are the informal WFBPs implement in companies rather than the standard practices of the various organisations. Well-known examples of informal WFBPs are paternity leave, family-friendly day events, car or parking spaces, and time off for breastfeeding (United Nations, 2004; Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011; Lee and Hong, 2011). Notably, this practice is implemented in the O&G workplace studied. This is in line with previous work-life balance studies, for instance, the **family-friendly event** that was mentioned by one of the study respondents. In similar social gatherings, activities such as pony rides for children and softball games for adults help with the social attachment between single and married employees of the organisation (Casper, Weltman and Kwesiga, 2007). A family-friendly event is a one-day event organised by the company. It aims to achieve equal work-life balance amongst O&G employees of different organisation levels, marriage status and culture, in order to create supportive family-friendly working experiences in the O&G workplace.

Monetary benefits: Working in an O&G company offers good job opportunities, particularly amongst the male labour force. Also, it provides such approaches as **paternity leave**, a monetary benefit besides the paid annual leave in a year. In Malaysian O&G companies, this approach is quite recent and has different levels of implementation in the public and private sectors. As stated in a study by Hu (2009), 'paternity leave is not provided for under the law, but it has become a common practice for the private sector to grant leave, ranging from a minimum of one to a maximum of

four days' depending on the company. On the other hand, this paternity leave is available for male staff when their wives give birth and if they are employed within the public sector they are entitled to seven days' leave, following the Malaysian Employment Act 1955. The practice is introduced to promote WFBPs in the O&G workplace and it applies to male employees with the support of their manager in the workplace.

Furthermore, formal and informal WFBPs have different motivations and their introduction, implementation and development can depend on the sector and country context. More specifically, different types of practices have been adopted in the O&G industry. For instance, flexible working hours, maternity leave, medical coverage for employees and their dependents are examples of WFBPs found in the O&G workplace and similar practices have been found in previous studies within different industrial contexts (Lewis, Knijn and Na, 2008; Baranczyk, 2009; Rigby and O'Brien-Smith, 2010; Kim and Wiggins, 2011). As such, these practices are based on different needs and demands. The informal WFBPs recognised in the O&G companies are mostly developed based on the nature of the O&G industry's work, which also involves offshore and onshore work demands. Interestingly, although the WFBPs in the O&G have been observed to promote female workers in a male-dominated industry (Kim and Wiggins, 2011), the study found that these practices represent formal and informal WFBPs with distinct functions in the O&G companies. These different approaches were found to reflect the work-life balance activities that continued to develop in the O&G companies. Thus, further examples of WFBPs being implemented in both government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies will be discussed in the next section. Comparison the WFBPs types and arrangements of the Company A and B

### **9.3.2 Company A: Government-owned O&G Company**

The Malaysian government have formulated the work-family balance policies from the policy recommendations of the New Economic Model in order to support the increasing number of female workers in male-dominated workplaces. The implementation of this policy follows the process employed mainly by the labour market. Government-owned, Company A is one of the Malaysian government policy implementers. The study's results match those observed in earlier studies and present an important outcome with regard to work-life balance studies in the Malaysian O&G workplace. It has commonly

been assumed that there is little difference between the public sector and government-owned O&G companies in their implementation of WFBPs. The findings of this study suggest that this difference has not previously been described, especially in the Malaysian O&G industry context. Thus, it raises questions over whether there are differences in the influence and impact that WFBPs have on individuals and organisations in the O&G sector.

### 9.3.2.1 Formal WFBPs in Company A

A study of WFBPs implementation and their actual enactment was conducted by researching the employees' experiences and feelings. This is especially significant concerning the influence of WFBPs. For instance, working rotations or arrangements in the government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies have categorised this practice as one of the benefits of HR policy. This approach illustrates the offshore and onshore working arrangements amongst the O&G workforce and the need for the implementation of WFBPs. However, it is not being addressed adequately.

Monetary benefits: The first example of the formal WFBPs implemented in Company A is **medical expenses covered for employees and their dependents**. This approach is a monetary benefit that is provided by the company to individuals employed in the organisation and it was the most-mentioned response in the study. In the literature, maternity and medical expenses benefits is payable for the first five children (Hu, 2009). The policy has advantages for both male and female O&G employees. This practice is being implemented in a government organisation that partially supports employees' well-being by establishing WFBPs in the company.

Non-monetary benefits: Moreover, **study leave or a career break** is another formal practice being implemented by Company A, the government-owned based on the study's finding. Even though this career break is unpaid leave, it is a non-monetary benefit that allows individuals to further his/her career, study and family development. The job position stays occupied for the manager who on study leaves. Thus, the employees feel secure in their job position and have a future well-paid opportunity (Baker, 2009). This approach influences individuals in their career progression and life balance, which results in retaining the employees in the company.

### 9.3.2.2 Informal WFBPs in Company A

Monetary benefits: A competitive benefits practice has been widely introduced and implemented in public companies. It has shifted national HR management benefits. One of these practices is the **hardship allowance**, which was found in the study to be an informal practice and new to the study of WFBPs. There is a similar practice that was implemented as a monetary benefit to employees working in remote areas in the Malaysian public sector (Ibrahim, 2013). However, this approach gives an advantage to O&G managers or executives as it allows them to do extra work on the offshore platform if needed. In particular for an employee who is working offshore, that keeps them away from their family for long durations (Dhiman & Mohanty, 2010). Thus, the practice is expected to reduce the possibility of work-life conflict taking place.

Non-monetary benefits: There is a non-monetary practice that allows young mothers in the company to express breast milk in a specific room or place, which is the **mother's room facility**. This is an example of the informal practices that have been proven and implemented in Malaysian O&G companies. This facility is for female employees, and it is based on the time off for breastfeeding approach, as reported by the United Nations (2004). In the O&G industry, female engineers and managers have increased in numbers, including young mothers. Breastfeeding promotes the mother-child relationship that is closely connected to the Malaysian collectivist culture.

Similarly, the **half-day off** practice is another non-monetary benefit that has been identified in the study. As an informal WFBP, its practicality depends on the managerial support of each department to permit employees to take half a day off and to make up the hours on a different working day. However, this action is only permitted for mothers and fathers who need to take their children for formal medical check-ups. A similar practice was found in the study by Hall and Liddicoat (2005), which discussed the initiative that enables an employee to work fewer hours or days, in order to achieve work-life balance in the workplace.

### 9.3.3 Company B: Privately-Owned O&G Company

Company B is amongst the most significant financial providers to the Malaysian economy and it has high labour market involvement. The petroleum, O&G sources and services in Malaysia attract the attention of the country's investors (e.g. multi-



national companies) in this largest petroleum business industry in the country. The practices and policies of WFBPs are coordinated between the Malaysian government and privately-owned companies. Such coordination mainly concerns the skills training and development of the workforce (Noor and Mohd, 2015). In looking for a different insight into the two case studies, the discussion continues with the privately-owned Company B case study. The study's findings have shown a different outcome in terms of the operational policy permitted and its usage in the various workplace settings.

### 9.3.3.1 Formal WFBPs in Company B

Job scope: **Job rotation and work arrangement** is a formal practice that is employed in the O&G workplace, in contrast with the standard job rotation practices. In the healthcare sector, for instance, the work arrangement policy applies job rotation within hospital departments to develop skills and experience in the health workplace (Branine, 2003). On the other hands, work arrangements in the O&G industry apply job rotation or working shifts between offshore and onshore work. While working onshore involves between labs and office tasks, working offshore involve oil and gas operational on the sea. In the various contexts, studies of the workplace culture of the O&G industry between offshore and onshore work are not new, but are limited (Dhiman & Mohanty, 2010). Thus, when practising this work arrangement in the O&G workplace, it is important to identify how much influence it has on employees' work-life balance.

Monetary benefits: **A managerial optional day off** is the second formal practice that was identified in the study and available to managers who work offshore. Such practices allow the manager to take a day off once they return to work onshore by adding up the days off while working offshore. The introduction of such a practice aimed to give more flexibility in monetary benefits amongst skilled and professional managers who have an O&G labour shortage (Met and Ali, 2014). This practice gives the flexibility to utilise annual leave, which is paid leave, which motivates the managers while working offshore.

### 9.3.3.2 Informal WFBPs in Company B

Non-monetary benefits: **Discouraging extra working hours** is another practice found as an informal WFBP in Company B. This practice is applied with the support of the manager to their subordinates. As stated earlier in Chapter 8 of the thesis, this practice influences employees' motivation with regard to work-life balance in the workplace. The motivation is to reduce the work and family conflict by keeping the time commitment and role expectation within work and family support (Luk and Shaffer, 2005). More specifically, the manager discourages their subordinates not to stay late, supporting them to go home for their other personal and family responsibilities.

Similarly, Company B also provides the '**happy hour**' practice, which is another non-monetary benefit for its employees. This practice is referred to as the half-an-hour break (i.e. excluding the lunch break) and it forms the basis of the networking time amongst the employees of each department. It is not a compulsory practice for all staff in the company, yet it is popular in the service and production subdivisions generally. This practice is similar to the 'time out' practice (Karsten, Kamphuis and Remeijnse, 2013), which encourages social leisure time to be taken in the office for networking with colleagues and other staff members of the same unit.

### 9.3.4 Summary

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that there are formal and informal practices provided by Company A and B. The two categories practices, conclude the similarity, which available in both workplaces and the difference within the Company. Such similarity includes the formal practice, which is maternity or paternity leave and flexible working hour or place. On the other hand, the informal practice found in Company A such as the half-day off, while discouraging extra working hours is applied in Company B.

Table 8 The WFBPs and policies of the Company A and B

Type of WFBPs	WFBPs and policies description	Company A	Company B
Job scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working hour flexibility</li> <li>Job rotation and work arrangement</li> </ul>	√ √	√ √
Monetary benefits (paid leave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maternity leave</li> <li>Paternity leave</li> <li>Optional extended maternity leave</li> <li>Studied leave or career break (applicable for manager position only)</li> </ul>	√ √ √ √	√ √ X √
Monetary benefits (extra hour allowance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hardship allowance</li> <li>Offshore allowance</li> </ul>	√ √	X X
Non-monetary benefits (health and well-being benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical expenses coverage for employees and their dependents</li> <li>Half-day off</li> <li>Religious support session</li> <li>Happy hour</li> <li>Working from home (applicable for manager position only)</li> </ul>	√ √ √ X √	√ X X √ √
Non-monetary benefits (family friendly benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family friendly social event</li> <li>Mother's room</li> <li>Car or parking space for ladies</li> <li>Discouraging extra working hours</li> </ul>	√ √ X X	X √ √ √
Non-monetary benefit (CSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social activities (e.g. humanitarian aid, BAKIT, etc.)</li> </ul>	√	√

**Legend:**

√ – Available

X – Not Available

To conclude this section, the implementation of the WFBPs identified in this study as shown in table 6 has various impacts on the participated individual of the O&G managers. This section presents the differences of the WFBPs arrangement and experiences between the government and privately owned companies based on the study's findings. While both companies utilising the similar WFBPs types as shared in the previous section, it also presents the differences of the WFBPs arrangement for both companies. Hence, this study is presenting the similarity and differences of WFBPs arrangements that found in both Company A and B of the study. The differences in type, motivation and influence of the WFBPs on O&G employees and other industries will be discussed further in the following section.

#### **9.4 Theme Three: Influence of Macro Factors on Manager Motivation to Implement WFBPs**

This section will start by discussing the drivers for WFBPs implementation amongst managers in the O&G workplace and their impact on the employees' work-life balance. Namely, this section addresses the fourth research question of the study:

##### **What are the influence factors on the work-life balance amongst implementers in the O&G workplace? (RQ4)**

Macro factors such as social, emotional, financial, economic, and religious factors are the most-identified drivers for WFBPs implementation in the O&G workplace. Thus, the discussion will continue by addressing the three most significant and interesting findings of the study regarding the factors that influence Malaysian O&G managers' work-life balance: socio-emotional factors, cultural and ethnicity differences and spiritual or religious values.

##### **9.4.1.1 Social and Emotional Interactions**

Based on this study's findings, socio-emotional interaction is one of the motivational aspects that contribute to undertaking WFBPs in the O&G workplace. As an important finding, such socio-emotional aspects are revealed in Company A, the government-owned company of the study. In Malaysia, mostly in public sector organisations, studies of WFBPs are not new; in fact, they continue to develop methods and practices

that influence employees' work-life balance. According to Nasurdin and Driscoll (2012), support at the workplace is one of the socio-emotional aspects that is proven to reduce work-family interference amongst Malaysians.

The action taken by the individuals in the company, shown in the O&G working attitude and behaviour, is shown in the empirical investigation of the study. Supportive environment interactions showed how an individual or organisational manager is an important implementer of WFBPs in the workplace. The WFBPs promoted in the O&G companies, such as paternity and maternity leave and half-days off, are being used to promote this supportive environment in the workplace. In particular, there are other actions illustrated by some of the respondents: sharing life experience; management support; and talent management programmes in the O&G companies. These empirical results are shown in the study's findings. Since those interesting motivational aspects have not been found elsewhere in O&G studies, they are probably not due to company policy restrictions. Thus, this study reveals the socio-emotional driver that contributes to WFBPs implementation and individual actions in the O&G workplace.

Firstly, socio-emotional interactions affected how the O&G workforce accepted WFBPs in the workplace. Some respondents had similar responses as those reported in previous literature, see the **supportive working environment**, as a supporting aspect to reduce work-family interference in the O&G workplace. Work-family interference was derived from the offshore working environment in the O&G workplace, which caused long-distance relationships between husband and wife, father and children, parents and daughters. These elements of separation resulted in low self-esteem and low motivation, especially in dealing with family issues. Thus, the one-to-one session is a significant practice in handling a personal issue in the O&G workplace.

The above finding illustrates how socio-emotional interaction affects an individual's action in the workplace. As a part of the collective community, each Malaysian individual grows up with the family-bonding element that relates to other life activities including their work life. In fact, one-to-one sessions are a platform for employees to share their personal life conflicts with their managers and to give value to work-life balance. They are proven to reduce work-family interference and work-family imbalances in the workplace by implementing WFBPs. This view is supported

by Clark (2000) and Rika Fatimah *et al.* (2008), who state that the interconnected culture between family and working life relationships reflects the collective Malaysian culture in the family institution. Thus, the motivation for a supportive working environment is an essential factor in socio-emotional interactions in the O&G workplace through WFBPs implementation.

Secondly, for some respondents amongst the O&G managers, the influence of WFBPs on socio-emotional interactions is stronger, leading them to have concerns for their **health, safety and well-being** (e.g. work fitness and work satisfaction). Previous research has recognised that perceived work and family experiences have a direct impact on employees' well-being and health (Edwards, 1999). The empirical investigation of the study amongst O&G employees explains how individual differences (such as desires, values, or goals) result in psychological stress in the workplace. This limitation in individual desires captures the mismatch between personal need and the working environment, which may damage well-being and health (Edwards, 1999).

Although the study of the O&G workforce's well-being and health promises an understanding of work-life interactions, this study recognised that the socio-emotional factor has an influence on individual attitude in the O&G workplace. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the respondents are managers with a dual-role as both engineers and managers in the O&G workplace. The study identifies another example of the well-being effect, especially working within the O&G industry, which offers limited social welfare.

The nature of the jobs in the O&G industry involve working onshore, (i.e. based in labs and office), and working offshore (i.e. based on the oil and gas production platform on the sea). For example, working on oil rigs offshore is the essential job scope that motivate employees especially amongst the engineers and managers to work with the O&G industry. Such a 'safety culture' is important for a petroleum engineer who is involved in nearly all of the stages of the oil and gas field. This safety culture refers to the attitudes towards safety in the workplace, with regard to keeping safe behaviour and accident awareness in the O&G workplace. The socio-emotional support for the offshore workforce contributes to the safety culture in dealing with high-reliability hazardous offshore material such as the chemical, nuclear and offshore oil

industries (Mearns and Flin, 1995). This explains the important feelings of safety by providing WFBPs such as non-monetary benefits (e.g. medical financial support) and monetary benefits (e.g. hardship allowance) to the offshore workforce including managers and executives.

#### **9.4.1.2 Cultural and Ethnicity Differences**

Malaysia is a multicultural country with varied ethnicity. With regard to the work-life balance in the workplace, articles have reviewed some positive impacts of WFBPs introduction into the Malaysian working culture (Leaderonomics, 2015). Such harmonisation of the collectivist culture is due to the contribution from individuals and groups of people who wish to achieve the work-life balance aspects of life in the workplace. This study identified other influences on the work-life balance amongst O&G workforces deriving from their cultural and ethnicity differences. In relation to the Malaysian collectivist culture value, this study revealed that more importantly, the impact is towards the inspiration of the individual proactive approach and behaviour in the workplace. This action is an essential contributor to the successful career and performance of the employee (Rasdi, Garavan and Ismail, 2013), particularly the manager's attitudes.

Firstly, the **communication method** is a challenge, and a basic understanding of cultural diversity is the key. This study also identified that the workforce diversity (i.e. gender, educational background and age) have significant impact on how the working cultural is developed in the multiracial and multicultural workplace. The working environment in the O&G sector is closely related to occupational safety issues amongst workforces. The national workforce culture refers to the national values inspired by the attitude, beliefs and behaviour of cultural value dimensions (such as individualism/collectivism and power distance) in the workplace (Mearns and Yule, 2009). Prior studies that have noted the importance of international and cultural differences showed such an impact on the different coping styles in the workplace, which were more effectively used to deal with diverse employee backgrounds (Bhagat, Steverson and Segovis, 2007). As shown in Company B, the privately-owned O&G company applies the happy hour practice to promote frequent multicultural engagement events amongst employees. This illustrates how the company with the

higher number of culturally diverse employees employed WFBPs as one of the motivators for work-life balance in the company. Based on the study's findings, the diversity in culture has an advantage in promoting different skills of communication in handling conflict that might occur in the workplace. Thus, the O&G companies manage the need in diverse workforce by providing different communication medium through the WFBPs implementation (e.g. happy hour and family friendly event) in the workplace.

For some respondents of the study, another influence of the cultural and ethnic variation is how the **gender role equality** contributes to equal employment opportunities in the male-dominated O&G workplace. As a developing country, the O&G industries have an influence on Malaysian revenue and due to their high demand for labour they offer job opportunities for nationals (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008). This study revealed that the introduction of WFBPs reduced the gap in the gender role challenge for both O&G companies. The first challenge is providing an equal working environment for men and women employed in the O&G companies. This difference in gender role is illustrated by the dual-role of engineers and managers in O&G companies. Managers in O&G companies are required to handle and monitor offshore oil and gas production which also involve hazardous operation in onshore or offshore platforms. The WFBPs implemented include flexible working hours, and allowing the dual-role manager to organise personal needs and working demands while working between onshore and offshore. The most challenging situation is amongst the female workforce and the flexibility between work and family needs. The WFBPs introduction and implementation give an opportunity to improve their responsibilities inside and outside the workplace. The 'gender roles can influence all kinds of behaviour including choice of work and career development' (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008, p.52); such experiences obviously showed while working in the male-dominated workplace such as the offshore platform environment.

Furthermore, the importance of national culture values is identified as a stronger aspect in influencing the **work ethics of the individual**. This suggestion is based on the perception of proactive approach action recognised in the study from the acceptance of WFBPs in the Malaysian social community. In fact, this work ethics factor was evident in both companies of the study. The nature of the industry requires



men and women to work together and to have good communication, especially when handling work safety in the offshore environment. The traditional belief in male and female communication restrains the working attitude between men and women in the workplace. Working offshore, for example, separate wives from their family over a long distance. Therefore, WFBPs such as family-friendly day events fill the communication gap between such traditional beliefs. Informal WFBPs link blood-related family and workplace-related family in the workplace. They help to develop trust and understanding between family members and employees. The impact reduces the communication gap and emotional pressure that might occur in the O&G workplace.

#### **9.4.1.3 Spiritual or Religious Inspirational values**

In many Muslim countries, religious teaching (e.g. Islamic support sessions) is a fundamental part of daily work-life activities. The value and practice of Islam are essential in the policy-formation of most Islamic countries, including Malaysia. A strong faith belief from the Islamic teachings has an impact on the WFBPs implementation process and development, especially in the government-owned Company A of the study. This finding is in line with a study by Mutasim, Atiqah, Akhmaliah and Mat (2014), which argues 'Islam gives emphasis to the need and importance of competencies in all areas of life, including managing an organization'. An Islamic support session is an interesting practice recognised as having an impact on individual behaviour and attitude. Thus, this study examines how spiritual or religious values influence and link individual work-life balance and behaviour or attitude amongst O&G managers in the workplace.

Recently, this question has been addressed by researchers in many fields. An example of such study is by Ismail (2007), who showed that unethical practices are against Islamic teaching and morality. It is therefore important to look at the factors that influence managerial integrity in the workplace. The further analysis of this study showed that this new evidence explains the spiritual or religious value that has a connection between a person's body and their soul in relation to achieving work-life balance in the workplace. The finding showed that **Islamic support sessions** are promoted and implemented in daily activities as Islamic ethics and values amongst Muslim-Malaysian employees in O&G companies.

In the empirical results of the study, the influence of religion showed the highest impact on implementing Islamic work ethics amongst employees in the workplace. In the literature, spiritual or religious values were shown to be associated with work-life balance amongst employees in the workplace (Jena and Pradhan, 2014). Malaysia is an Islamic and harmonious multicultural society that promotes knowledge sharing, which involves activities such as exchanging experiences, ideas and skills in the workplace (Kumar and Rose, 2012). Employee knowledge-sharing behaviour is one example of Islamic work ethics (Rahman and Muktar, 2014) that result in organisations' innovation. An improvement in the knowledge-sharing behaviour amongst O&G employees showed in their daily actions when handling operational hazards or relevant safety incidents and while monitoring operations at the offshore workplace.

The manager plays an essential role in policy and practices making process in the workplace (Gupta and Sulaiman, 1996; Raduan Che Ros *et al.*, 2006). One of the study's findings on the spiritual or Islamic work ethic of the study revealed that it **influences the manager's decision making** in the workplace. Interestingly, it is identified that providing such a spiritual or religious session fulfils emotional and internal human needs. This belief revealed that the spiritual or religious value has an impact on how an individual behaves and acts in the workplace. Likewise, this finding also showed another influential aspect of spiritual or religious values – including the wife in decision making to address the impact of family commitment towards work. This value has changed the traditional understanding of the husband as the sole decision maker in the family. In particular, both husband and wife complement each other when making decisions over childcare or extended family care within dual-career families.

#### **9.4.1.4 Summary**

Overall, this section recognized a very important driver for the WFBPs that include the socio-emotional, culture and ethnicity differences, and spiritual or religious value amongst the Malaysian O&G workforce. In particular, the relations to the WFBPs development and implementation in Malaysian workplace context. While the aspect of religious value is recognised as a driver in Company A, the Company A shared another

aspect of multicultural influence to implement the WFBPs at the workplace. For instance, there is an Islamic support session in Company A, while a happy hour in Company B in promoting the WFBPs environment in the workplace.

## **9.5 Theme Four: Impacts of WFBCs on the O&G Workforces' Work-life Balance**

The influence of WFBCs on the manager's work-life balance is an important aspect that has been recognised in the study. As discussed in the previous section, there are macro factors such as socio-emotional, cultural and religious influences on the manager's motivation to implement WFBCs in the company. This section aims to evaluate the role of a manager in undertaking WFBCs at individual and organisational levels from their personal and organisational mediator experiences. The impacts of WFBCs on the employees' work-life balance have been identified for both individual and organisational managers in O&G companies.

Concerning the integration-separation concept between work and family lives identified in the study, there are different visions amongst Malaysian O&G workforces about WFBCs. Importantly, the investigation results showed that individuals and organisations experience the impacts of WFBCs in the O&G workplace. The further analysis of this study showed that WFBCs have a high impact on an individual, yet they have indirect implications for the company. Likewise, the implementation experiences and perceptions of WFBCs amongst managers at the individual and organisational level are investigated in more detail. Thus, the following section discusses the investigation results.

### **9.5.1 Individual-level Implications**

As discussed earlier in the literature review in Chapter 4 of this study, the manager plays an important role as the implementer and promoter of the practices [WFBCS]. The dual position at the individual level and organisational level amongst the managers interplays with their personal preferences and organisational expectations. The dual-role between engineers and manager as identified in the study also shapes the attitudes of individuals amongst O&G managers. Thus, managers play an essential role in an organisation (Knies and Leisink, 2014).

In reviewing the literature, limited data was available on the association between work-life balance practices and policies amongst O&G managers from the individual point of view. Instead, there are numerous studies in the field of HR management that discuss the introduction and implementation of WFBCs at the macro and meso level. This study supports the previous research that includes the individual

level to determine the influence of the HR practices and policies that have been implemented in the workplace. Also, this study identified different views of WFBPs, mainly in individuals and organisational managers.

#### **9.5.1.1 Job Satisfaction**

The nature of the work in the O&G industry mainly involves a range of offshore jobs, such as drilling, subsea work and skilled trades. The onshore or offshore environment can create extra pressures, particularly for family and social life. On the other hand, the introduction of WFBPs into the O&G workplace has a strong impact on employees' job satisfaction. This is a significant finding of the study for both government and privately-owned O&G companies. The results showed that the WFBPs influenced employees' personal preferences at an individual level and decision making at the organisational level. This view is supported in the previous studies on work and family motivations, which have a positive impact on job satisfaction amongst employees (Gupta and Sulaiman, 1996). Although the O&G industry is highly competitive, the introduction of WFBPs such as flexible working hours and arrangements, being well-paid, a skilled and professional career, etc. has a positive impact on individual managers.

Furthermore, the **training opportunities and other monetary or non-monetary benefits** identified in the study are an example of how to balance working and family lives. In detail, this study recognised that amongst skills and experienced managers opt to work with the O&G industry for the career development through such training opportunities. These experiences showed that individual managers have the ability to participate in the whole assignment and making decisions while working with the O&G industry. For example, the female manager with skills and experience in the O&G industry utilised the flexibility working hour while working onshore to help her children's development at the same time as being a manager in the office. These practices help an individual to manage both their work and family lives efficiently and enjoyably.

### 9.5.1.2 Self-esteem and Talent Development

Furthermore, another impact of the WFBPs on employees' work-life balance is on individual self-esteem and talent development. This influences the employees' work-life balance in the workplace, mostly because of the gender role issues that could reduce female managers' or engineers' self-esteem while in the O&G industry. Yet, gender roles are not a major issue in O&G work and the norms prescribing the behaviour and activities by the appropriate sex have changed rapidly (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008). Both government and privately-owned companies have recognised this gender role difference in the O&G workplace by introducing WFBPs. This practice aims to reduce the gender gap by providing **employment equal opportunities** in O&G companies.

Another initiative from the WFBPs applied in the O&G company impacts on the talent development amongst employees. For instance, working on oil rigs offshore in the O&G industry involves using heavy machinery, which requires skills and experiences. The company provides **training and development opportunities** for both male and female employees who want to keep their talent. The development of working opportunities in both labs and offices offers good choices of different environments for O&G work. WFBPs, for example medical healthcare and mother's room facilities, are other benefits provided by the company to retain their skilled and experienced professional employees. Practices such as the mother's room are employed in O&G companies to reduce the pressure amongst female workers. This will give more opportunities to female managers to develop their future careers with indispensable skills and more employment opportunities in O&G companies.

### 9.5.1.3 Cultural and Other Added Values

The cultural value is an important aspect, as mentioned in the previous section. This aspect is significant especially, regarding the manager's motivation towards the WFBPs implementation. For example, the attitude of a single-marital manager reflected her belief in her work ethics by doing a positive '*adab*' or custom belief in the O&G workplace. This cultural effect is proven to be the most impactful factor on the manager's working ethics (Raduan Che Ros *et al.*, 2006). A necessary norm action taken by an individual in the workplace is mirroring the individual attitude outside the

workplace. The cultural added value of such beliefs as *'tuah'* or 'luck/charm' in Malaysian-Chinese beliefs, and *'budi'* or 'kind deed' in Malaysian-Malays custom beliefs influences individuals' or managers' attitudes in the workplace. Hence, this impact shown on individual work-life balance through the attitude or behaviour in the sense of work ethics in the workplace.

Similarly, the empirical investigation results of this study showed the example of how a manager (male or female) is looking for not only monetary support from the primary provider (e.g. husband), but also non-monetary support, such as the husband helping the wife to pick up the children after school, or looking after the house while the wife is away for offshore work in O&G companies. This view is supported by Felstead *et al.* (2002), who write that the adoption of WFBCPs in the home environment is part of the associated factor that impacts on employees' work-life balance in the workplace. Also, some of the Malaysian culture, for example, perceives the male as the main provider. Thus, this traditional understanding has changed, especially in the Malaysian O&G working culture.

Moreover, as a developing country, Malaysia has reported a significant increase in the number of women entering paid work and working in male-dominated companies, especially in the O&G sector. In addition, regarding the work ethics, some respondents indicated WFBCPs such as the mother's room, maternity leave and paternity leave as the precious practices that influence on their added value belief. That believed is that supported them to live a healthy social life in the O&G workplace. Therefore, culture has an influence on the individual attitude in the workplace.

Another aspect that impacts on individual work-life balance identified in the O&G workplace is educational background. Various jobs in the O&G industry give opportunities to people with different but related educational qualifications for implementing their knowledge into the real practices of the O&G industry. In Malaysia particularly, the educational courses that provide the highest career prospects are the medical and engineering fields. This is due to a rising apprehension over sustainability in the O&G industry. Thus, the educational prospect is used as an indicator of working opportunities after study and contributes to career aspirations.

## **9.5.2 Organisational-level Implications**

In demonstrating the influence of WFBPs implementation on individual managers, the study identified indirect impacts for the company. Based on the findings, the study recognised the impacts on organisational strategies of providing WFBPs in the O&G workplace.

### **9.5.2.1 Intense Loyalty and Retention**

The study identified that the employees showed their interest and aimed to stay working with the company. As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 3, the introduction of WFBPs through the supervisor's or manager's support increased the retention rate amongst employees (Chou and Cheung, 2013). In the case of the O&G workplace, some female respondents in the study showed their concern about practising cultural values and beliefs through the code of conduct or work ethics provided by the company. This includes how female and male manager deal with their male engineers or subordinates while working offshore. This can be illustrated by the cross-cultural nature and diverse ethnicity of Malays-Chinese-Indian workers on oil rigs offshore. A multicultural culture creates a supportive environment amongst managers and their subordinates, which is promoted by the company through the family-friendly environment, and applied in the offshore workplace. This working culture motivated the employees to implement WFBPs as they keep them loyal and working with the company.

### **9.5.2.2 Performance-reward system**

There is evidence from the literature reviewed of the monetary benefits of O&G careers. (please add references) The monetary benefits of the WFBPs identified in the study such as the hardship and offshore allowance reflected a performance reward and an optional benefit to managers who wanted to do extra work. Implicitly, the practice showed organisations the importance of reward vision and how it could influence employees' career and life demands in the workplace. The well-paid professions are one of the motivations of working in the O&G industry. The O&G



industry is amongst the highest starting salaries of any sectors that also promise career progression.

Another impact of WFBPs implementation in O&G companies is that it is believed to increase nationalism amongst Malaysian employees. The nature of O&G work means dealing with potential hazards, and chemicals that can cause major incidents in the working environment. The belief of 'serve the community' among professionals in the O&G industry is a non-monetary motivation amongst Malaysian engineers and managers who work in O&G companies.

### **9.5.2.3 Employee-employer interaction**

This interconnection between monetary and non-monetary benefits not only concerns employees while they are working in the O&G industry, but also refers to providing other aspects of support for the family. The study's findings show that another impact is on the acceptance of WFBPs to manage multiple roles amongst managers in the O&G workplace. From this experience, managers and lower-level employees showed that the manager's role is not only to promote the practices on behalf of the company, but to link their multiple roles as individual needs and organisational expectations together. Thus, the WFBPs provided by the company indirectly help the manager to fulfil both dual positions between individual preferences and organisational expectations.

Furthermore, another effect of the WFBPs on the company is seen in the job satisfaction responses identified in the study. In which, this study suggest that it is essential to have employee-employer mutual understanding in the workplace. This opinion was related to the work and non-work support from managers for their subordinates or other colleagues in the O&G workplace. This finding illustrates the issues that might refer to the O&G working conflict between lower-level employees and managers or executives. The social difference between lower-level employees and the executives lowered job satisfaction (Harun *et al.*, 2014). Thus, it influences employees' social culture and results in a work-life imbalance in the workplace.

### **9.5.3 Summary**

This section has discussed the two significant impacts on individual work-life balance and organisational practices from the study findings which includes job satisfaction, self-esteem and talent development and cultural and other added values on individual work-life balance. Also, the impact of organizational practices results from the intense loyalty and retention, performance-reward visions and nationalism benefits relationship and employee-employer mutual understanding amongst O&G workforces in Malaysia context. Hence, Table 7 shows the summary of the significant findings in both governments and privately owned companies in experiencing the WFBPs and policies in the O&G workplace.

### **9.6 Conclusion**

The study has revealed that many similarities and differences exist between the experiences of dual-role managers in Malaysian O&G companies. As discussed, similarities can be found in several aspects of the integration-separation insights, experience at work, managing individual needs and organisational expectations, and the standard HR policies and support provided by formal and informal WFBPs in the company. Despite many similarities between the managers' and executives' experiences in Company A and B, there are still some differences in macro factors such as socio-emotional, cultural and spiritual factors, which are significant influential factors, particularly at the individual level. However, the previous discussion has highlighted that these differences can be observed in some areas such as the perception of WFBPs among managers, the type of practices (i.e. WFBPs) available in the workplace, and the policies provided by the company at an organisational level.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

This final chapter concludes the thesis by presenting four main elements. Firstly, revisiting the original research questions of this thesis in the light of its major findings; secondly, make theoretical and practical contributions based on the research framework and discussion sections of this thesis; thirdly, view the limitations of this study; and lastly, make suggestions for further researches.

#### **10.2 Revisiting the Research Questions**

This study set with the aim of exploring and examining the experience and attitude amongst the managers from the WFBCs implementation in the Malaysian workplace. This study disclosed the influences, challenges, and strategy of the salient role of an individual that plays dual-positions (i.e. employee and organisational manager) in undertaking the WFBCs in the Malaysian O&G work environment. The results are based on the interviewed data gathered from 34 respondents amongst the Malaysian O&G government-owned and privately-owned company. The study adopted template thematic analysis to answer the research questions that focus at the individual (i.e. micro level) and individual-organisational (i.e. micro-meso level) of the organisation.

The documentary reviews of the previous scholars in work-family balance area helps the researcher to explore the focus of the study in understanding the WFBCs notions and its associated issues faced in both government-owned and privately-owned O&G company. The reviewed process helps the study in designing the semi-structured interview questions, and afterwards, the findings were analysed in term of the four main themes. These results were identified in Chapter 6 and 7 of the thesis to answer the research questions of this study. The four main themes include: (1) WFBCs from the perspective of Malaysian O&G managers and executives; (2) WFBCs in Malaysian O&G companies; (3) the influence of macro factors on managers' motivation to implement WFBCs; and (4) impacts of WFBCs on the O&G workforces'

work-life balance. The answers of each research questions (RQ) are specified as follows:

**RQ1: What perceptions do managers have of the WFBPs in the O&G workplace? and how the O&G managers experienced the WFBPs in the workplace?**

A better understanding of WFBPs implementation process at the individual level is important in organisational (Brummelhuis and Lippe, 2010), which is used as the key element to measure an individual attitude and behaviour towards organisational performance and outcomes (Bakar and McCann, 2014). Much literature has studied the notion of work-life balance, and many conceptualisations and measures have been recommended and established (Poelmans, Kalliath and Brough, 2008; Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Adisa, 2015; Ropponen *et al.*, 2016). Based on the findings of this study for both company's A and B, the themes 'perspective in understanding the WFBPs notion' has answered how the managers and executives define the WFBPs notions from the working experiences of the O&G context. This research found that both company's manager and executive acknowledged separation and integration concepts between work and family as a vital aspect of the WFBPs requirements, and the acceptance of the practices influence the action taken amongst the managers and executives. Also, this study reveals the combination concept of 'integration-separation' between work and family lives to achieve work-life balance in the O&G workplace. Thus, this new insight and traditional concept of work-life balance recognise the actual practice amongst O&G workforces in attaining lives balance either at the onshore and offshore working environment. However, the next research questions rose to explore the experiences and feeling of the individual that undertake the WFBPs in the O&G workplace.

**RQ2: What are the types of WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian organisation?**

**RQ3: What is the arrangement of WFBPs in the government-owned and privately-owned O&G companies?**

The more recent Knies and Leisink's (2014) study found a clear link on the individual perceptions influences between human resource (HR) management and performance.

The study clearly linked the employees' perceptions to the supervisor's management activities that result to the positive effect on employee's ability, commitment and autonomy. Consistent with this finding, this current study linked the understanding of HR practices variant amongst managers and executives as the main source of organisation activities to the ranges of initiatives WFBPs. Its provision results to practices implementation in the workplace to highlight the individual understanding, acceptance, and actions at the micro-meso level of an organisation.

**RQ4: What are the influence factors on the work-life balance amongst implementers in the O&G workplace?**

Based on the above findings, it sharpens the salient role of individual manager behaviour and action towards WFBPs implementation. These findings directed the study to the third objectives in examining the important key of the drivers to the WFBPs development and implementation strategy. That later discussed in the above section that is agreement with those obtained and reviewed in the literature chapter 2, 3, and 4 of this thesis. The elements of the spiritual and religious values and Malaysian cultural belief resulted in the third themes supported by the conceptual model as suggested by Beauregard and Henry (2009) that linked the relationship of each element discussed. Thus, the current study proposed the Islamic and cultural values elements in moderating the connection between the WFBPs provision and managerial support towards the uses of the practices and organisational/individual performance. The following research question signifies the proposition in conjunction with the findings of the study.

However, the fourth themes of this study could be a contributing factor to the achievement of the study's aim. The theory of decision process by Poelmans (2005) and role balance by Marks and Macdermid (1996) were reviewed and taken account in viewing the HR practices and policies management and implementation of the current study's interest. In which, the findings found that the WFBPs implementation has impact to individual and organisational in various interpretations and explanations. The study proved that the implication to individual manager/executive action influences the implication for organisation activities and performance. These finding

shared the acceptance and action of individual and organisational manager/executive in moderating the organisational/individual performance in the workplace.

Overall, the following table 8 concludes the framework of the study in aiming toward evaluation of the manager's attitude and experiences of the WFBPs amongst the Malaysian O&G workforces.

Table 9 The summary of research objectives, questions and themes

<b>Research Objectives (RO)</b>	<b>Research Questions (RQ)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>RO1: To explore how managers and executives in the O&amp; G sector perceive the notion of WFBPs.</b>	<b>RQ1: What perceptions do managers have of the WFBPs in the O&amp;G workplace? and how the O&amp;G managers experienced the WFBPs in the workplace?</b>	<b>Theme 1: WFBPs from the perspective of Malaysian O&amp;G managers and executives</b>
<b>RO2: To identify the type of WFBPs introduced in the Malaysian O&amp;G companies</b>	<b>RQ2: What are the types of WFBPs introduced in the Malaysian organisation?</b>	<b>Theme 2: WFBPs in Malaysian O&amp;G companies</b>
<b>RO3: To compare the WFBPs in both government-owned and privately-owned O&amp;G companies.</b>	<b>RQ3: What is the arrangement of WFBPs in the government-owned and privately-owned O&amp;G companies?</b>	
<b>RO4: To evaluate the role of a manager in implementing WFBPs in O&amp;G companies.</b>	<b>RQ4: What are the influence factors on the work-life balance amongst implementers in the O&amp;G workplace?</b>	<b>Theme 3: Influence of Macro Factors on Manager Motivation to Implement WFBPs</b>  <b>Theme 4: Impacts of WFBPs on the O&amp;G workforces' work-life balance</b>

### 10.3 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This contribution of this study is three-fold.

**Firstly, the study at the individual level** - as a scholar that promoting the work-family practice, this study focusing on the individual level context to explore the direct and indirect impact of the WFBPs. My fieldwork experience was a valuable process in striking the excitement of self-learning, exploring organisational actual and ideal practice on the ground, and at times a great deal of frustration. The open-minded and a positive way of respondent's attitude while in the field was fertile, productive and 'welcoming' to the search for new knowledge. Even though it has come with several obstacles of different forms, my 'natural' own attitude guided by the aims to achieve study's objectives as much efficiency, practicality, and smoothness as possible. This experience helps me to reveal the actuality of the practices implemented amongst Malaysian O&G employees particularly, the manager of the participated companies.

Moreover, the study urged that the role of individual manager position and action that also deals with the dual-roles as an employee and organisational manager result to the organisational and individual performance in the workplace (Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014). The elements of Islamic values and cultural belief in moderating the connection of the WFBPs provision, acceptance, and implementation process in the workplace extended the work-family balance study at the individual-organisational level.

In addition, by bringing the duality of the manager's role from the individual context of view, the study contributes to support the literature (e.g. Petronas, 2015) of integration and separation concepts between work and family lives. Also, it sparks a new insight of the 'integration-separation' concepts between work and family lives that contribute to understanding the work-life balance experiences in the O&G workplace. This WFBPs notion exposes the needs of those work-life balance elements such as social and emotional interactions, cultural and spiritual within Malaysian government-owned and privately-owned O&G workforces. Thus, this perception reveals drivers for the WFBPs for the organisational expectation to evaluate and facilitate the work-life balance policies and practices in the O&G companies.

**Secondly, the Malaysian case study context** – there is three contribution that related to the context of the study. The first aspect is the Malaysian culture and religion that proven to influence WFBPs introduction and implementation process in the workplace. The main three ethnicities, which are Malaysian-Malays, Chinese and Indians, have disclosed some of the influence of such added value from multicultural diversity from the traditional culture, faith believe and organisational behaviour setting background. Secondly, the aspect of work setting of the O&G industry that involves two separate working places and job of nature doesn't restrict the WFBPs to be implemented in the workplace. Between working offshore/onshore, and engineer/manager position, have given the opportunity towards the achievement of the work-life balance amongst workforce in the O&G workplace (Met and Ali, 2014). In addition, it is also an interesting aspect to consider the *meso* and *micro*-level of Malaysian organisational experience. In such example, the study is significantly related between the analysed practices available at the workplace and the state level policies that indirectly allow the WFBPs implementation in Malaysian workplace. Finally, the findings shared a different approach taken by both government and private companies in implementing the WFBPs. A comparative study of the companies participated in WFBPs implementation and development open some new insights between the organisational expectation and workforce determination amongst Malaysian context of organisational behaviour studies.

Furthermore, the study recommends the Role Balance theory as a useful framework for investigating how individual behaviour and attitude is influenced by 'balancing act' characterisation, which includes individual cultural values, a faith believed values, and talent and career management relations. Thus, the study contributed the work-family balance literature of individual and organisational behaviour through conceptualising and demonstrating how such driven factors (i.e. multiracial and multicultural; social and emotional; and Islamic and other-faith belief values) leads an individual to the implementation of the WFBPs and other HR practices in the workplace.

**Thirdly, the selection of qualitative methodology** - the study contributes to the theory maturity and expansion of the work-family balance field. The finding of the study maps out the effects from the attitude or behaviour of the single player or



individual actor as the WFBPs implementer in the workplace (Keim *et al.*, 2014). The study expands the knowledge towards WFB policies and practices using two sectors (i.e. government-owned and privately-owned companies) that based on the theory of the role balance and other work-family balance concepts. These bunch of information revealed that there is a different way of transferring the theory into the actual practice in achieving the WFBPs understanding through the implementation process and development. Thus, this study contributes the new insights of the theory from the evidence on experiences and feelings amongst implementers.

#### **10.4 The Limitations of this Study**

The current study has found two limitations in conducting the research.

Firstly, the limited data sources from the organisation participated. This study unauthorized to access the company's written document in regards the WFBPs practices and policies implemented in the companies. Since this documentation source of data is limited, this study relies on the semi-structured interviews with the managers and executives that targeted respondents of the study. The source of data from the company documentation could expand in the study's analysis and findings to go beyond the experience and ranges of practices developed in the company. So generalising the results beyond the actual data of the organisational must be stated with qualification.

Secondly, the study focused at the micro level within two Malaysian O&G company's context with a limited number of cases. During the conduct of such research, the respondents were the volunteer from two companies to share their perspective and acceptance experience of the practices, which they unrestrictedly practice in the workplace. The individual respondents considered the role position in the organisational level, gender, working experience, and undertaken WFBPs experienced. The limited number of respondents and cases could not use to represent the views of the O&G employees in general.

#### **10.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

The future study new direction may consider the diversity management of the sample or context in identifying the micro level study of the WFBPs implementation and development process. It requires the views from an individual-organizational level at the implementation process and impacts that lead to the success of the WFBPs in the workplace. Hence, it is recommended to pursue research that goes beyond the organisational strategy's analysis by introducing elements of cultural or faith belief to explore and understand the connection between the work-family demand and organisational performance in the workplace. Moreover, the new research in the work-family balance arena must also consider carrying out analysis on a behavioural strategy that includes the individual-organisational impact and strategy.

### **10.6 Concluding Remarks**

This study looked in-depth the understanding at the perceptions of managers and executives of the WFBPs implementation in the Malaysian O&G workplace. It explored the new insights of the WFBPs notions and importance of individual manager position and actions to connect between WFBPs and organisational/individual performance in the workplace. By using the individual behaviour or attitude and actual practice of the WFBPs introduced in the working place, a new conceptual framework emerged from the study's findings. The actual experiences and feeling based on the individual manager/executive perspective in this study identified the gap between the managerial support and organisational performance that also lead to the identified of the elements of cultural belief and Islamic value in the WFBPs development and implementation success in the Malaysian workplace context. Finally, the study's finding creates new dimension and insights towards the possible elements of an individual-organisational impact from the WFBPs implementation and development in understanding the important role of the manager of the individual and organisational point of view.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ethics forms

#### CBASS Research Ethics Review Checklist – Part 1

##### Section I: Project details

1. Project title:	
2. Proposed start date:	3. Proposed end date:

##### Section II: Applicant details

4. Name of researcher (applicant)	
5. Student Number	
6. Status	
7. Department	Brunel Business School
8. Brunel e-mail address	
9. Telephone number	

##### Section III: For students only

10. Module name and number:	
11. Supervisor's name:	
12. Brunel supervisor's e-mail address:	

	Yes	No
13. Does this research involve human participants?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Does this research raise any ethical or risk concerns as set out in the University Code of Research Ethics or relevant disciplinary code?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
15. Risk Assessment – are there any elements of risk related to the proposed research? (See Risk Assessment – FAQs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

If you have answered **Yes** to any of questions 13-15, you must **complete Part 2** of this form.

**Students:** If you have answered No, please email this document to your supervisor who will confirm that the research does not involve ethical issues. Once electronically signed by your supervisor, please submit Part 1 of this form via BBL within 1 week. Please keep a copy for yourself and bind it into your dissertation/thesis as an appendix.

**Staff:** If you have answered No, please sign below and submit your form via BBL. Please keep a copy for yourself.

**If your research methodology changes significantly, you must submit a new form.**

For Supervisor's/Staff e- signature

I confirm that there are no ethical or risk issues relating to this research and the applicant can proceed with the proposed research.
e-signature/ Date:

CBASS Research Ethics Review Checklist – Part 2

**Section IV: Description of project**

Please provide a short description of your project:

Section V: Research checklist

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box:

	YES	NO
1. Does the project involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children/ young people under 18, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	YES	NO
2. Will the research involve people who could be deemed in any way to be vulnerable by virtue of their status within particular institutional settings (e.g., students at school, residents of nursing home, prison or other institution where individuals cannot come and go freely)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent (e.g., covert observation of people in non-public places)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g., sexual activity, drug use) where participants have not given prior consent to this?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5. Will the study involve work with participants engaged in breaking the law?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6. Will the publications/reports resulting from the study identify participants by name or in any other way that may identify them, bring them to the attention of the authorities, or any other persons, group or faction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8. Will the study involve the use of human tissue or other human biological material?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
10. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
11. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
12. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
13. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	YES	NO
14. Will the study require the co-operation of another individual/organisation for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? If yes please attach the letters of permission from them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
15. Will you be undertaking this research as part of a work placement or in conjunction with an external organisation? If Yes and the organisation has conducted its own research ethics review, please attach the ethical approval.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

If you have answered 'yes' to any of questions 1-13, you will need to complete the University Application Form for Research Ethics Approval.

**Students:** If you have answered 'No' to all of questions 1-13, please **sign below and submit this completed Checklist, consent form, information leaflet and any other documents and attachments for your supervisor's approval by email . Once you have received it back from your supervisor you will be able to submit via BBL. Forms that do not have your supervisor's approval will be rejected.**

**Staff:** If you have answered 'No' to all of questions 1-13, please **sign below and submit this completed Checklist, consent form, information sheet and any other documents and attachments via BBL.**

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Code of Research Ethics and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. **This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.** Any significant change in protocol over the course of the research should be notified to the Departmental Ethics Coordinator and may require a new application for ethics approval.

Applicant (Principal Investigator) Name: NOORHASYIMAH ISMAIL
Applicant's e-signature:
Date:

## Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences

Brunel Business School



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Study title:** The Study of Managerial Role in Relations to the Work-Family Balance Practices (WFBPs) Implementation amongst Malaysian Employees in the Workplace

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study sets out to explore work-family balance practices or family-friendly workplace practice amongst employees and employers in Malaysia. The aim is to examine whether the role of each position in the organisation, such as implementing work-family balance practices or programmes in the workplace, enhances their understanding of striking a balance between work and family life.

#### **Why have I been invited to participate?**

As part of this research, we are conducting interviews with managers who have experience of human management resource and management application practices. It is envisaged that this will be helpful to generate practical and more informed guidelines, for prospective researchers, when conducting research in non-western countries where the human resource practices are implement.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Your participation is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any questions or not complete the questionnaire if you do not feel comfortable with any of the questions.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

Your name or any other personal attributes are not required. Pseudonyms would be used to identify response hence; you cannot be linked directly with the study.

**What do I have to do?**

Participation would entail in the form of an interview and the interview will take about an hour at a time/place of their convenience.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

If you still do not wish to participate, that decision is entirely yours. Moreover, you are free to withdraw from the interview should you wish to do so at any point of time.

**What if something goes wrong?**

The information which has been published in any articles only used for research or study purposed and this cannot be withdrawn. However, the information is entirely pseudonyms or non-relations directly to you or your organisation.

**Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Your name or any other personal attributes are not required. Pseudonyms would be used to identify response hence; you cannot be linked directly with the study. All information will be treated confidentially.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

We aim to publish the anonymised findings of our research in peer-reviewed journals.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is funded by Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) Malaysia

**What are the indemnity arrangements?**

Due to ethical concerns, anonymised interview transcripts from participants cannot be made openly available and only will be used by the author/researcher for the study purposed.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been reviewed by the College Research Ethics Committee.

### **A passage on the University's commitment to the UK Concordat on Research Integrity**

Brunel University is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from our researchers during the course of their research.

### **Contact for further information and complaints**

Please kindly contact me if you have any questions about the study, or would like more information.

**Note: This research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee**

Email: *noorhasyimah.ismail@brunel.ac.uk*

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## Appendix C: Consent Form

### SAMPLE CONSENT FORM TO BE ADAPTED AS APPROPRIATE

The participant should answer every question

	YES	NO
I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
at any time (Please note that you will unable to withdraw once your data has been included in any reports, publications etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
without having to give a reason for withdrawing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
without it affecting my future care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to my interview being recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I will not be referred to by name in any report/publications resulting from this study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that my comments can be quoted as long as they do not directly identify me when the study is written up or published	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in this study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:
Research Participant signature:
Date:

Principal Investigator name:
Principal Investigator signature:
Date:

One copy to be kept by the participant and one by the researcher



## **Appendix D: Pilot Interview Guide (face-to-face interview)**

### Section A: Scheduled of the Interview Session

The following table of lays out one-to-one conversations are suggested interview session

Proposed date of conversation (e.g.)	Name (Pseudonym)	Company ID	Schedule time session	Reciprocator's role position
23 <sup>rd</sup> Jan (Monday)	Candidate 1	PT	13:00	Senior Executive Engineer
24 <sup>th</sup> Jan (Tuesday)	Candidate 2	SGM	13:00	Engineer
30 <sup>th</sup> Jan (Monday)	Candidate 3	TM	13:00	Manager

### Section B: Questions for In-depth Interview Session

Research Aim: To evaluate manager's experience and attitude in understanding and implementing of the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) in the Malaysian workplace

Main Research Question:

1. What do employees understand about the work-family balance practices (WFBPs) at the workplace?
2. How the managerial role affecting in WFBPs in the company?
3. What affects to the practices outcomes from Malaysian cultural work ethics context?

## Appendix E: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Allocation time of interview per session: 30 up to 45 minutes

<b>Research Objective</b>	<b>Main Research Question</b>	<b>Semi-structured Questions</b>
General questions		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your role and duties in this organisation?</li> <li>2. When did you start working in this organisation?</li> </ol>
To critically examine the concept Work-Family Balance Practices (WFBPs).	How scholars do conceptually define the WFBPs?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell me about your understanding of 'work-life balance' in the workplace or</li> <li>2. Can you define the concept of work life balance?</li> <li>3. How do you define 'work-family balance'?</li> <li>4. From you understanding, what are the different between practices and policies in-relation to the WLB/WFB in your workplace?</li> </ol>
To identify the range and scope of work-family balance initiatives in the Malaysian organisation.	What are the range of work-family balance initiatives and practices in the Malaysian organization?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe in detail what are the actual practices (WFBPs) that your workplace offer</li> <li>2. How do you know about the existence of these practices?</li> <li>3. In general, what do you think are the most common WFBPs in Malaysia?</li> </ol>
To evaluate the role of managers in implementing WFBPs in the Malaysian context.	What are the key elements in experiences of the WFBPs adoption in the Malaysia workplace?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why does your company implement the WFBPs?</li> <li>2. What is your role in implementing these practices?</li> <li>3. Provide examples of WFBPs that you have implemented. What barriers did you need to face?</li> <li>4. Do you think that these WFBPs have a positive role among your employees? In which ways? Provide examples.</li> </ol>
To assess whether WFBPs have a direct or indirect effect on managers who implement these initiatives in Malaysia.	How does the WFBPs implementation process occur amongst managers in the workplace?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you directly benefit from WFBPS? In which ways?</li> <li>2. Do you believe that WFBPs improve your work performance? Provide examples.</li> </ol>