

**LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PRACTICES
IN SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A
CASE STUDY OF BP HEALTHCARE GROUP**

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LIFE BALANCE: A CASE STUDY OF BP HEALTHCARE GROUP

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study delved into the crucial factors influencing work-life balance (WLB) practices among leaders and employees at BP Healthcare Group. Guided by the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), the research specifically investigated how the organization's executives and staff implemented, supported, and engaged with WLB policies from both internal and governmental standpoints. The study pursued four primary objectives: identifying the antecedents that shape WLB behaviors among BP Healthcare Group personnel, examining how leaders communicate and enforce WLB policies, understanding employees' perceptions and experiences of WLB, and analyzing the impact of job pressures, particularly work demands like hours and workload, on their WLB experiences. Using a qualitative approach, rich insights were gathered through interviews with ten key stakeholders. The findings underscore that employees experiencing a positive WLB are more likely to exhibit greater work effort, leading to increased family happiness and improved overall job performance. A significant contribution of this research is the introduction of the PACE Strategy, a novel framework outlining essential steps for effective WLB policy implementation. This model offers a valuable benchmark for BP Healthcare Group and other organizations striving to enhance their competitive edge by fostering a positive WLB for their employees. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the critical need for a holistic approach to WLB, urging managers to adopt diverse strategies that cater to the unique needs of their workforce, thereby cultivating a more balanced and productive environment.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model, leadership practices, organizational policies, BP Healthcare Group

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in quality and scope, for the fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration.

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(24 July 2025)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration is my own work and that all contributions from any other persons or sources are properly and duly cited. I further declare that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. In making this declaration, I understand and acknowledge any breaches in this declaration constitute academic misconduct, which may result in my expulsion from the programme and/or exclusion from the award of the degree.

Name: Ong Chiang Hock

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ong Chiang Hock', written in a cursive style.

Signature of Student:

Date: 24 July 2025

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
COR	Conservation of Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
JD-R	Job Demand-Resource
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LWI	Life-to-Work Interference
PACE	Perception, Alignment, Capacity and Support, and Execution
RBV	Resource-Based View
USD	United States Dollar
WFC	Work-Family Conflict
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WLBC	Work-Life Balance Context
WLBPPs	Work-Life Balance Policies and Practices
WLI	Work-to-Life Interference

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

Clinical laboratories play a significant role in the healthcare industry. Most diagnostic tests, from blood testing to genetic analyses, are performed in clinical laboratories to diagnose disorders. Clinical laboratories provide data and resources that optimize the distribution of diagnoses and test findings in the healthcare system. This ensures that test results are trustworthy and correct, allowing clinicians to make appropriate clinical and diagnostic judgments across multiple levels of health care services. According to Data Bridge Market Research, the Malaysia clinical laboratory services market is predicted to increase at a CAGR of 5.8% from 2021 to 2028, reaching USD 3,130.48 million by 2028 from USD 2,006.35 million in 2020. Growing usage of digital pathology platforms, as well as advancements in clinical diagnostic methods, are the primary drivers pushing market demand over the forecast period (Data Bridge Market Research, 2021). This uptrend scenario within the industry has created employment opportunities as well as new challenges for companies to ensure their most valuable asset, which is the employees, well taken care in order company to create the competitive advantage (Anggiani & Anita, 2021; Barney et al., 2021; Davies et al., 2019; Davis, 2017; Yu & Yang, 2022). In addition, empirical studies have indicated that work–life balance initiatives help to retain people as a means to stay competitive (Bouwmeester et al., 2021; Castro-González & Pérez, 2021; Park et al., 2021; Stankevičienė et al., 2021).

1.1 Background of Study

The term "work-life balance" (WLB) whilst is commonly used, however there is no clear meaning in academic literature. Historically, work and family were considered as incompatible issues, particularly for women with dependent care duties. The term work-life balance (WLB) first appeared in published research in the 1970s, referring to studies of individual responsibilities in paid job and personal (mostly family) life (Gregory & Milner, 2009). Because of globalisation, new technologies, '24/7' workplaces, constant organizational reorganization, the application of rigorous performance indicators, the weakening of trade unions in many contexts, and the rising participation of females in the labour market over the last two decades, WLB has evolved into a more holistic and inclusive research field (Rashmi et al., 2021; Chandra, 2012). Thus, work-life balance, rather than work-family balance, has emerged as a socially constructed idea as well as an individual discourse.

It is concerned with the complex and dynamic relationship of paid job and non-work life areas (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). Furthermore, it is believed that the contact is bidirectional, with work-to-life interference (WLI) and life-to-work interference (LWI). The majority of work-life research focuses on WLI since it is not only more likely to occur and dominate than LWI (Frone, 2003) but it also piques the interest of HR academics and politicians. This is because WLI is more easily 'social-constructed' through the intervention of laws and workplace policies and practices, whereas LWI is primarily concerned with diverse and unexpected personal circumstances beyond the control of organizations (Keeney et al., 2013). Employees find it challenging to limit work demands inside the workplace in order to preserve a WLB. Because the employment relationship is unequal and indefinite, employers have the capacity to manage an employee's labour in terms of time, intensity, flexibility, and

benefits. This can imply that work spills over into everyday life and has an impact on WLB (Hyman et al., 2003). WLB difficulties are fundamentally linked to labour management control issues, and such control is mostly conducted through official and informal employment regulations (Lee, 2023).

Formal job regulation can stem from the external legislative framework and policy agenda designed to protect employees' work-life rights, as well as from internal policies and practices enacted by businesses to promote employees' work-life benefits. At the same time, managers and employees may have different goals and attitudes toward work-life issues, and they may pursue their own informal employment regulation (Flanders, 1970). Some existing work-life literature acknowledges labour management and control (Rashmi et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Fleetwood, 2007a, 2007b; Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Working hours' regulation, flexible working arrangements, leave entitlements, childcare opportunities, support and well-being programs, and contextually derived informal support, arising from organizational culture, managerial decisions, and collegial support, are specifically discussed as the 'best practice' within the work-life management. According to research into formal approaches, specifically WLB policies and practices, their implementation is beneficial to improving employee well-being and organizational sustainability, particularly when embedded in a supportive organizational and managerial context (Chaudhuri et al., 2020; Lu, 2015; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

1.2 Problem Statement

WLB concerns are prevalent not only in wealthy Western countries, but also in rising economies such as Malaysia. However, over 95% of work-family/life research is conducted in the Anglo-American and European contexts (Lee et al., 2020; Kossek et al., 2011; Casper et al., 2007). Besides that, as a result of the rapid and intense

economic growth in Asia over recent decades, workers in the region experience considerable stress due to prolonged and rigid working hours, work-life imbalance, insufficient formal employment regulations, and a scarcity of family-friendly workplace policies (Chaudhuri et al., 2020; Chou & Cheung, 2013; Fujimura et al., 2014; Lee & Lin, 2013; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2017) has necessitated the needs to understand the area of concern. It is unclear how the WLB is perceived in Malaysia, and there has been very little research into this problem in HRM, even though job intensification and a lack of work-life related perks severely threaten employees' WLB (Ahmad Fairuz Mohamed et al., 2022; Xiao & Cooke, 2012; Noor, 2002). Because work-life difficulties differ depending on the national context, the Anglo-American perspective of WLB may be insufficient to comprehend work-life issues in Malaysia (Ling & Powell, 2001; Fleetwood, 2007; Cooke, 2013). As a result, work-life experiences in Asia are likely to differ from those in the West. Differences in Asian cultures, values, social structures, and human resource management (HRM) techniques, in particular, may have a distinct impact on employees' work-life experiences (Mohd Misron Omar et al., 2021; Le et al., 2020). Malaysia's distinct economic, institutional, and cultural characteristics provide a fertile research ground for investigating WLB challenges, redefining the WLB discourse, and refining existing work life/work-family theories (Ling & Powell, 2001). This presents a huge gap for this research to fill in order to better understand the nature of Malaysia employees' work and Malaysia owned organizations' ability to sustain long-term performance, for this research, will be focusing on BP Healthcare Group as one of Malaysian largest private clinical laboratory provider. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate and investigate two issues: (i) the WLB-derived perceptions and

experiences of BP Healthcare Group employees, and (ii) the influence of relevant workplace regulations and practices, on employees' WLB and performance.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the antecedents that influence BP Healthcare Group leaders and employees' practices in supporting the work-life balance. This study also explored how BP Healthcare Group leaders learn about, communicate, support, and implement their organizational work-life balance policies and procedures, as well as governmental public policies relating to work-life balance.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks answers to the following research questions.

- i. What were the general perceptions and experiences of WLB among BP Healthcare Group employees?
- ii. How did work demands, especially working time and workload, influence BP Healthcare Group employees' work-life balance experience?
- iii. What antecedents influenced BP Healthcare Group staff's practices regarding work-life balance support: (i) as a leader, and (ii) as the employees of BP Healthcare Group?
- iv. How did BP Healthcare Group leaders learn about and take steps to implement their organisational work-life balance policies and procedures? Write your first research question here.

1.4 Research Objective

This research intended to investigate the antecedents that affect the practices of BP Healthcare Group executives and workers in promoting work-life balance. This study examined how leaders at BP Healthcare Group acquired knowledge of, convey,

endorsed, and executed their organizational work-life balance policies and procedures, in addition to governmental public policies about work-life balance. Specifically, this research attempted to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To explore the perceptions of work-life-balance among the BP Healthcare Group employees.
2. To investigate to what extent BP Healthcare Group employees' WLB was influenced by the dominance of work demands (i.e., working time and workload)
3. To investigate what antecedents influenced BP Healthcare Group staff practices regarding work-life balance support: (i) as a leader, and (ii) as the employees of BP Healthcare Group?
4. To ascertain how did BP Healthcare Group leaders learnt about and took steps to implement their organisational work-life balance policies and procedures.

Table 1.1: Alignment of Statement of Problem with Research Objectives and Research Questions

Statement of Problem	Research Objectives	Research Questions
<p>(1) Over 95% of work-family/life research is conducted in the Anglo-American and European contexts (Kossek et al., 2011a; Casper et al., 2007).</p> <p>(2) Unclear how the WLB is perceived in Malaysia, and there has been very little research into this problem in HRM, even though job intensification and a lack of work-life related perks severely threaten employees'</p>	<p>(1) To explore the perceptions of work-life-balance among the BP Healthcare Group employees.</p> <p>(2) To investigate to what extent BP Healthcare Group employees' WLB was influenced by the dominance of work demands (i.e., working time and workload)</p> <p>(3) To investigate what antecedents influenced BP Healthcare Group staff practices</p>	<p>(1) What were the general perceptions and experiences of WLB among BP Healthcare Group employees?</p> <p>(2) How did work demands, especially working time and workload, influence BP Healthcare Group employees' work-life balance experience?</p> <p>(3) What antecedents influenced BP Healthcare Group staff's practices</p>

<p>WLB (Xiao & Cooke, 2012).</p> <p>(3) Differences in Asian cultures, values, social structures, and human resource management (HRM) techniques, in particular, may have a distinct impact on employees' work-life experiences (H. Le, et al., 2020)</p> <p>(4) Malaysia's distinct economic, institutional, and cultural characteristics provide a fertile research ground for investigating WLB challenges, redefining the WLB discourse, and refining existing work life/work-family theories (Ling and Powell, 2001).</p>	<p>regarding work-life balance support: (i) as a leader, and (ii) as the employees of BP Healthcare Group</p> <p>(4) To ascertain how did BP Healthcare Group leaders learnt about and took steps to implement their organisational work-life balance policies and procedures</p>	<p>regarding work-life balance support: (i) as a leader, and (ii) as the employees of BP Healthcare Group?</p> <p>(4) How did BP Healthcare Group leaders learn about and take steps to implement their organisational work-life balance policies and procedures?</p>
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1.5 Significance of the Study

The study utilized a Malaysian corporation as the empirical environment to evaluate Anglo-American models and theories, determining the degree to which Anglo-American work-life management practices impact Malaysia. It specifically analyzed employees' opinions and experiences of work-life balance, as well as the official and informal strategies for work-life management in Malaysian workplaces. It is envisaged that this research could enhance the work-life interface and human resource management literature, with findings that impact managerial practices and policy agendas. This research empirically substantiates the overall-based approach (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) and enhances the comprehension of work-life balance (WLB) as a multifaceted and dynamic construct shaped by various interrelated circumstances. It also facilitates a critical examination of how the significance of

work-life discourse is shaped by context, so demonstrating the relevance of work-life strategies, originating from Anglo-American research, inside the Malaysian setting. This research examined both formal (WLBPPs) and informal (WLBC) work-life management approaches in the Malaysian workplace, analysing their availability and effectiveness for individuals and the organization. Furthermore, the research contributes by evaluating the applicability of the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) the frameworks related to the availability, utilization, and efficacy of WLBPPs (Budd & Mumford, 2006; Daniels & French, 2006) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) within the Malaysian context. This study further enhances the critical examination of the broader HRM literature. This research underscores the absence of an HR strategy concerning employee health from a strategic HRM perspective (Guest, 2017). Conversely, it highlights the issue of managerial informality in relation to broader concerns, including the enforcement of employment legislation and the principles of management transparency, equity, and non-discrimination, rather than solely focusing on work-life management. These two themes should not be viewed solely as Malaysian difficulties but can also be generalized to reflect broader HRM concerns. This study delineates the potential for work-life management to enhance employee wellbeing, yielding beneficial outcomes for human capital and organizational development, especially within the Malaysian setting. From the perspective of a Malaysian company, work-life balance must be regarded as an integral component of the broader ecological equilibrium within an organization and society. Given that Malaysian employment policy and HRM practices are governed by a 'top-down' institutional framework, both the policy agenda and managerial practices can be restructured to enhance employees' work-life balance through strategic and practical work-life management.

BP Healthcare Group established in 1982, has undergone aggressive expansion and transformation over the years. Today, it has become one of Malaysia's foremost integrated healthcare providers with core competence and innovative strength in diagnostic, laboratory, and medical technologies, together with other complementary specialized healthcare services. It is the group's aim to provide one-stop integrated healthcare solutions to its customers through interlinked support from the companies within the group. All the established Diagnostic Centre provide primary care services to the clients. These not only include professional medical consultation and dispensing, but also vaccinations, preventive health checks and screening tests, wellness coaching and complementary distribution of health education materials. The differences between BP Healthcare Group's diagnostic centres and a hospital are that there are non-bedded, provide faster result turn-around time, and emphasise screening for early stages of illnesses via non-invasive, state-of-the-art diagnostic tools. To date, BP Healthcare Group are the largest diagnostic chain in the country and Southeast Asia. For corporations, the services BP Healthcare Group offer include pre-employment, panel ship, occupational health and safety and employee's health screening. The above comprehensive services make BP Healthcare Group a truly integrated one-stop healthcare solution provider. To the knowledge of the researcher, there is no other similar company in Malaysia that has the same size and capabilities. This notion further supports the choice of using BP Healthcare Group as our main case for study.

This study aims to investigate antecedents influencing leadership and employee practices in supporting the work-life balance (WLB). The scope of this qualitative study is delimited as follows:

- (1) Focus on Perceptions: Investigate the perceptions and experiences of employees regarding the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives within the organizations.
- (2) Examine Key Drivers: Explore the leadership approaches and employee self-management practices that impact work-life balance.
- (3) Targeted Population: Be conducted among employees in BP Healthcare Group in Malaysia.
- (4) Qualitative Focus: Employ a qualitative approach to gain in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences through structured interviews.
- (5) Timeframe: Collect data reflecting current practices and experiences from October 2024 to January 2025.

This study will not quantify the financial impact of work-life balance on organizations, or compare practices across different countries.

1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Work-Life Balance

Defined as the ability of an individual's endeavour to allocate sufficient time and energy to family obligations while fulfilling job responsibilities (Rashmi et al., 2021). It is also a concept used to allocate employees' energy, directing their attention, time, and vigour between professional responsibilities and other significant facets of their personal lives (Swa, 2024; Khairunneezam et al., 2017). Work-life balance is a comprehensive evaluation of the degree to which individuals' efficacy and contentment in professional and familial responsibilities align with their life ideals at a certain moment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

1.6.2 Antecedents

In this research "antecedents" are operationally defined as the factors or conditions that precede and influence an individual's ability to achieve a work-life balance. Identifying these antecedents was crucial for understanding the underlying causes that affect WLB among the BP Healthcare Group employees (Obina et al., 2024). Based on JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) the key antecedents factors influencing WLB, not limited to are: job performance, job demands and job resources. Understanding these antecedent factors through qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and thematic analyses, provides a comprehensive view of the challenges and facilitators of WLB among health test laboratory professionals. This knowledge is instrumental in developing targeted steps (or interventions) to implement organisational work-life balance policies and procedures.

1.6.3 Job Performance

Defined as "the goal-relevant actions of an employee" (Susanto et al., 2022; Campbell et al., 1993). Campbell et al. (1990) defined work performance as actions, decisions, and choices executed in accordance with the organization's set objectives. An employee demonstrates effective performance when his conduct aligns with the organization's objectives and when he possesses the requisite talents and skills to attain the organization's expected outcomes. Consequently, job performance has been regarded as a crucial element in business and occupational psychology research (Kahya, 2009). Moreover, Swasto (1996) posited that worker performance encompasses the actions or behaviours executed by individuals during a certain timeframe. This performance represents the culmination of effort, talents, adherence to goals, and devotion.