

## Quality of Work and Life Balance in Teleworking

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**Abstract:** This study examined the relationship between the effectiveness of implementing teleworking and the outcomes of employees' quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction in their organization. Qualitative research methods were deployed; total of 150 questionnaires were sent to identified teleworkers in a selected organization. A response rate of 61% was achieved which denotes that a total of 91 teleworkers responded to the questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction have significant relationships with teleworking. This study is expected to contribute in providing a realization among various firms within the public and the private sector within Malaysia about the evolving preferences among employees in the advancing technology era. Furthermore, this study is expected to create an essential and fundamental step in aiding organisations in their efforts to increase and improve their employees' motivation, engagement and productivity.

**Key words:** Teleworking, quality of life, quality of work life, method, productivity, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

Many decades ago, the industrial revolution forever revolutionized the social and working landscape. In recent years, technology has brought about rapid transformations in the style of work for almost every office worker. The advent of new technology has increased productivity, expended individual's knowledge, shifted workers from the fields into the city and changed the family structure. Instant communication between various locations has made the exchange of information easy, immediate, precise and reliable. In order to compete in the global market, many organizations are building new structures to adapt to these various phenomena such as increased diversity in the workforce, changing family structures and new economic and technological revolutions.

Many firms have encouraged their employees to shift to Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) as a means to act in response to the ever increasing competition, market volatility, economic downturn and changing needs and preferences of the workforce (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). The conventional view of work as a 9-5 job, 5 days week<sup>-1</sup> is now changing as social, demographic and technological changes are rapidly transforming both employees' perceptions and their approaches to work. Organizations have tried to be flexible in their staffing arrangements as

many face pressure to maximize employees' productivity which serves as an impetus for workplace flexibility (Raiborn and Butler, 2009).

In the past, there were extensive problems that acted as a flexible workforce but the vast developments of information technology have provided solutions to these problems (Stavrou and Kilaniotis, 2009). Flexible work arrangements are encouraged to help management and employees achieve harmony between organizational and individual objectives. Additionally, firms trying to achieve their goals through flexible work arrangements are able to lower costs and to motivate employees towards higher productivity and engagement (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009). Flexible work arrangements are rapidly becoming widespread in many urbanized countries such as the United States and United Kingdom. These arrangements range from conventional part-time working to high technology teleworking. The more common ones include team-time working, teleworking, flexitime, annualized hours, job sharing, part-time working, temporary working and homeworking (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009). Malaysian employers may have to seriously consider offering greater flexibility in work arrangements. With the emergence of dual income families, working parents have to reconcile the demands of work and family (Stavrou and Kilaniotis, 2009). Hence, employers who are able to facilitate and generate a family-friendly environment that helps

employees to balance work and family will hold the key to retaining valuable staff and enhancing their efficiency and morale.

Apart from offering flexibility to employers and employees, flexible work arrangements may help to address Malaysia's potential labour shortage which will arise from the ageing of the population in the long term. Flexibility appears in many forms as regards looking at working patterns and concepts but on the whole, it involves variations of hours worked, start and finish times and location (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009).

These options have increased over recent years with the impact of technology and innovative schemes. However, what is feasible in any given workplace may well be limited by operational requirements and the resources available. Work Life Balance (WLB) is defined by Bailyn as the harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work in order for women and men to be able to achieve their potential across the domains in their life and roles. According to Maruyama *et al.* (2009), Work Life Balance (WLB) has always been a concern to many employees wishing to improve working life and its relationship to broader quality of life. Emslie and Hunt also highlighted that the lack of Work Life Balance (WLB) is a problem for men and women and it is important to bear in mind that their individual choices are constrained by socioeconomic resources and cultural norms about family work and gender.

Employers at large may have to be more aware of the trends, expectations and needs of the new age employees (in the 21st century). Monetary rewards may not be the solution when people are placing more value on quality of life and making efforts to keep their personal and work life lives in balance (Pruchno *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, a positive approach towards achieving a positive Work Life Balance (WLB) should be taken into consideration. Allowing employees to embark on Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) provides positive outcomes, especially as an initiative to motivate employees, attract prospective employees and business and improve productivity and employee turnover (Raiborn and Butler, 2009).

The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of implementing teleworking as an aspect of organizational support and realization of employees' efforts to achieve a favourable Work Life Balance (WLB) and improve job satisfaction. Therefore, this study seeks to highlight the contribution of teleworking and explore the implementation gap in teleworking arrangements based upon an understanding of employees' needs and preferences through their experiences as teleworkers.

## **Literature review**

**Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA):** Pressures and demands of work, reflected in longer hours and exhaustion can lead to consequences such as less quality time with family, a poorer quality of personal life and also lower productivity (Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). Many people seek balance for various reasons including social needs and time for friends, childcare, eldercare, sports, health and personal interests (Almer and Kaplan, 2002; Thomas and Ganster, 1995). Therefore, a balance between work and personal leads to greater satisfaction and productivity in both domains. There are many positive findings about flexibility and flexible work arrangements. A number of studies suggest a positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and reduced stress, decreased negative spillover from work to family, greater work-family balance, less work-family conflict and enhanced physical and/or mental well-being (Almer and Kaplan, 2002; Thomas and Ganster, 1995). Specifically, using a composite index to measure flexibility, Litchfield and Pitt-Catsouphes (2000) found a positive relationship between flexibility and perceptions of stress (lower), work-family balance and overall life satisfaction (both higher). Similarly in a study of hourly and professional workers in a national retail chain, James *et al.* (2007) found that workers with flexibility reported higher psychological well-being than those without flexible work options. Interestingly, methods for providing flexible work options for hourly workers were revealed in this study. Findings on flexibility and flexible work arrangements suggest a positive relationship with reduced stress, less work-family conflict, greater work life balance and enhanced physical and mental well being (Almer and Kaplan, 2002).

**Teleworking potential:** Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) tend to be known by the terms teleworking or telecommuting which in today's business environment, encompass any alternative work arrangement performed electronically by one person or between or among two or more people away from a central location, regardless of whether travel to that location was typically part of the work process (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). Teleworking is the framework of an approach to applying technology in both strategic and tactical ways to benefit organizations, team and individuals. The convergence of technology, accessibility of information and how individuals think about personal interactions will change the way many employees work. Teleworking refers to incorporating and optimising technology to be more productive, to collaborate better and to be more proactive. However, teleworking is not just about technology; it is about

people. The manner in which people use technology in their work relationships is at the heart of making teleworking work. Raiborn and Butler (2009) also highlighted that the benefits of teleworking would improve the work life balance as employees are able to enjoy life and pursue career goals at their own pace with less conflict between life and work. Positive outcomes of flexible work arrangements are repetitively emphasized to enhance job satisfaction which stems from having the autonomy and flexibility to control work pace and arrange workflow. The main contribution towards increased satisfaction was the notion that teleworkers felt that they were trusted by employers to accomplish work assignments (Raiborn and Butler, 2009).

Organizations at large have realized the business imperative to help their employees integrate the demand of work and family responsibilities (Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). Flexible work arrangements have been seen as the solution to the need to work on a 24/7 basis in a global environment where employees are able to work odd hours from different locations not only confined to their home. Furthermore, teleworking has been seen as a way to decrease the number of people driving on highways and filling parking lots. The key characteristic of today's business model is flexibility and forward thinking organizations have established flexibility programs (Harrington, 2007). The value to employers of operating a range of working patterns has been broadly recognized and the human resource agenda has seen the emergence of flexible working policy as a means of achieving enhanced productivity as well as a tool for employee engagement (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). Thus, retail businesses all over the world are now able to extend their operating hours which will provide clear benefits to customers at large. Employers believe that reduced absence rates, the better calibre of recruits likely to be attracted to such a working environment and the increase in moral and job satisfaction as well as the competitive edge are likely to yield significant savings (Geurts *et al.*, 2008).

**Work Life Balance (WLB):** Work Life Balance (WLB) is all about having a locus of control over when where and how employees work and can be achieved when an individual's right to fulfil life in both domains of work and personal life is accepted, supported and respected as a norm and a mutual benefit for the individual, the business and society. The current interest in work-life balance in both scholarly journals and the popular press stems from a perception that excessive workplace demands have negative consequences for other important life spheres such as family and leisure (Hilbrecht *et al.*, 2008).

Raiborn and Butler (2009) suggest that to be balanced is to approach each role-work and family with an approximately equal level of attention, time, involvement or commitment. Positive balance is an equally high level of attention, time, involvement and commitment where these would reflect individual's role of engagement (Tremblay, 2003).

While much research has addressed the pros and cons of teleworking from an economic and environmental vantage point there are fewer studies on teleworkers that explore the relationship between teleworking and work life balance and job satisfaction. In terms of its contribution to work life balance, temporal flexibility would seem to provide an ideal solution for time-pressured employees with families. Tremblay (2003) found that both men and women viewed telework as an attractive form of non-standard work because it allowed them to reduce their travel time to be at home later in the morning and earlier in the evening and thus to achieve a better balance between work and family responsibilities.

Employees' work life balance priorities are considered to fall within three general categories: Working time arrangements comprising total working hours and flexibility and for those with parenting or other care responsibilities, parental leave entitlements such as maternity, paternity and childcare subsidies or direct provision (McDonald *et al.*, 2005). When these needs are met through organizational work life programmes, employees are found to have augmented organizational commitment, dedication and job satisfaction. A greater sense and power of control over work schedules leads to improved mental health (McDonald *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, work life programmes that allow employees to have a greater involvement at home appear to be linked to employee well-being for both men and women (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2003). When employees' needs are not met, they are expected to suffer work life stress, particularly those with caring responsibilities and time stress is partially or entirely offset by other factors such as material rewards or job satisfaction (McDonald *et al.*, 2005).

**Quality of life:** In the past decades, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of individuals with significant responsibilities both with family and in the workplace with rising numbers of single parents, working mothers, dual career earners and fathers heavily involved in parenting (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009). It is a struggle for every working professional to balance the demands of life with their career. All too often, one becomes consumed with professional activities such as making the sale, finishing the report and preparing for the meeting.

Individuals become so involved with the everyday demands of achieving their professional goals that they may let their personal goals and relationships suffer. It is never easy to say that career must take priority. After all without work, one may not possess the money to provide for one's personal needs and family demands. These are profoundly considered as the ultimate personal goals (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009).

James *et al.* (2007) highlight that the Work life Balance (WLB) is not an opportunity to gain more holidays, more leave and shorter hours at work. It is all about focusing on the best ways to organize work demands and personal life. It is not just about parents and childcare, although this is an important factor. Family demands include when parents with large families or young dependents face more daunting family needs compared to an average bachelor. Family needs and demands are difficult to integrate with work demands and expectations may result in work/family conflicts (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009). With that said, a balanced involvement in work and life roles may also reduce the chronic work life conflict that is likely to occur for individuals who are successfully engaged in both roles in both domains of personal life and work life. Maruyama *et al.* (2009) discovered that balanced engagement in work and life roles is expected to be associated with individual well-being because such balance reduces work life conflict and stress both of which detract from well being. James *et al.* (2007) highlights that the individuals who are likely to invest considerable psychological involvement in their combined roles and allocate their substantial involvement equally between their work and life roles would demonstrate a positive involvement balance compared to those who spent a limited amount of involvement who would demonstrate a negative involvement balance.

**Quality of work life:** The working environment and conditions play an important role in organizations and affect employees' behaviours and relationships (Desimone *et al.*, 2002). Demands at work may interfere with family needs and responsibilities when requirements at work conflict with the demands at home or tension builds up when an individual is at home while under pressure from responsibility at work. Generally, quality of work life refers to how employees perceive their work environment which influences their work-related attitudes and behaviours. It provides a frame of reference through which individuals make sense of organizational life (Joyce and Slocum, 1984). This type of measure reflects a generalized approach to organizational climate which is in contrast to the approach that considers specific facets of

climate such as climate for service or innovation (Dawson *et al.*, 2008). Thus, quality of work life is also influenced by human resource policy and practices which offer information about the managerial outlook of employees and hence affect employees' work behaviours and experiences. For example, the implementation of teleworking may reflect an organization's attempt to build a climate of caring and commitment to employees (James *et al.*, 2007).

In response to employees' need to balance the two domains of personal life and work life, employers have resorted to various changes in work concepts to keep up with the ever-changing needs of employees through flexible work arrangements and teleworking is one of the initiatives applied to ensure employee retention. Organizations have now started to institute family-friendly programs to suit their employees' needs and preferences. James *et al.* (2007) have identified the main characteristics of family-friendly work cultures such as temporal flexibility, operational flexibility and an understanding by organizational leadership that family comes first. Hilbrecht *et al.* (2008) also claimed that cultural changes will make certain that employees can make better selections to accommodate their families without damaging their flourishing careers in their respective organizations.

**Job satisfaction:** The outcome from one particular job is either favourable or unfavourable depending on the fit between the characteristics of the job and the desires and needs of employees. Campbell (1990) explained that many items influence the degree of job satisfaction; these include the job itself, management beliefs, future opportunities, the work environment, pay benefits and relationships with co-workers. Job satisfaction has been defined as the extent to which the expectations that an individual holds for a job match what one actually receives from the job (Campbell, 1990). This definition proposes that job satisfaction is a universal or comprehensive affective response and reaction that every individual embraces pertaining to their jobs. It was contended that the most common approach to the measurement of job satisfaction where the universal or global approach evaluates job satisfaction is based on an individual's overall affective response and reaction towards their job (Campbell, 1990). In many countries, flexible working arrangements are advocated as a means of balancing work and other commitments and thus reducing work life conflict and work pressure and improving job satisfaction. Maruyama *et al.* (2009) investigated the impacts of flexible work arrangements on employees' perceptions of quality of work life conflict,

stress and their ability to carry out their caring responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements such as teleworking, flexitime or flexible working hours, part-time work and working from home were found to reduce work life conflict because they offer employees more preferences and choices.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Quantitative methodology is being adopted in this study as it is a fast, inexpensive, efficient and accurate means of assessing information regarding the respondents involved in this study. Furthermore, quantitative methods are widely used in various fields of study and research. Quantitative methodology was chosen due to its limited researcher involvement, leading to a more controlled study with reduced bias and enabling the researcher to predict and illustrate the theory and outcomes of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) towards Work Life Balance (WLB) among employees in the organization chosen for this study to be conducted in the local context in Malaysia. The survey method was selected in this study to portray the situation and depict the characteristics of a large group of employees who had embarked on teleworking in the selected organization and to examine their work life balance conditions.

**Population and sampling:** The target population for this study was confined to all teleworking employees who had embarked on a flexible work arrangement in a multinational IT company based in Malaysia. This firm had expanded and built its second site in Cyberjaya in 2006 and the teleworkers chosen as respondents were employees who had experience in teleworking, drawn from all levels with regard to their rank, age, gender and level of education. Questionnaires were distributed, consistently focusing on those who had adopted teleworking to avoid errors of internal validity. The total population of teleworkers in the organization studied was estimated to be approximately 180 employees.

Based on Morgan and Krejcie's sampling table, the researcher determined that it would be necessary to use a sample size of approximately 123 employees. However, the researcher inflated this number and 150 questionnaires were distributed to the identified teleworkers in the company.

This study adopted a convenience sampling procedure to obtain the necessary information on Work life Balance (WLB), quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction from employees who had already embarked on teleworking in a selected organization. Convenience sampling is known to be the cheapest and

easiest procedure (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). The primary virtue of this sampling method is low cost. This will ensure that the researcher has the freedom to choose appropriate participants for the study without being confined by restrictions. This procedure saved considerable time and money on data collection.

**Data collection:** The survey questions were employed on the basis of other studies and adapted from a study by Firth. The instrument was altered accordingly to ensure that it fitted the study's needs and requirements to measure the influence and impacts of the implementation of teleworking towards Work Life Balance (WLB) and its elements. The questionnaires were modified to include measurements of each variable identified for this particular study. Data analysis was based on the responses received and the questionnaires were distributed by hand or via email to the identified employees in the identified organization. Respondents were given up to 7 days to complete the questionnaires before the researcher collected them for analysis.

**Research instruments and measurement scales:** The questionnaires were adapted to fulfil the main objective of this study which was to discover and measure the conditions of work life balance among employees due to the implementation of teleworking as their new working arrangement on a daily basis. The questionnaire was adapted, modified and designed for the convenience of respondents in the selected organization. The questionnaires were drafted in English and respondents were assured that this study would maintain their confidentiality and anonymity as the answers given would not be disclosed and no names were requested. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of five sections.

Section one uncovered the respondents' demographic details while section two captured employees' opinions of their quality of life. Section three will elicit the employees' opinions on their quality of work life and section four examined their job satisfaction in their current working environment. Finally, section five set out to discover the respondents' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of teleworking.

The researcher believes that rating scales have several uses, design features and requirements. Therefore, the questionnaires were adapted from a study by Firth, but changes were made to meet the needs and requirements of this study.

There are simple category scales, offering two mutually exclusive responses. The multiple-choice and multiple-response scale in the questionnaires allows the

respondent to select one or several alternatives. The Likert scale used in this study consists of a series of statements with which respondents were asked to agree or disagree using a 4-point scale. The value of the rating scales depends on the assumption that the researcher can make good judgments where the ideal number of points for a rating scale should match the stimulus presented and extract the information required.

The researcher sought to quantify the degree to which employees' in the selected organization are supported in work and family issues and how this influences employees' effort and ability to balance their professional and personal demands. The questionnaires were designed to receive responses via a 4-point Likert scale indicating the extent and degree of agreement or disagreement with the series of statements. The itemized rating scale of 1-4 signifies the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements given in the questionnaires.

**Survey administration:** The survey was self-administered by the researcher and every set of questionnaires was compiled with instructions prior to distribution. Questionnaires were prepared in English as the organization was known to be a multinational company and English is its primary communication language. Each questionnaire was sent either by hand or via email to the identified teleworkers in the organization. These media were selected in agreement with the survey participants to aid the accessibility, administration and monitoring process. The researcher made herself available to answer any questions and enquiries pertaining to this study and also to provide assistance to survey participants when completing the questionnaires. All randomly selected survey participants were given a short brief regarding the purpose of the research and confidentiality was assured before handing over the questionnaires. Respondents were given 1 week to complete the questionnaires before they were collected.

During data collection, the participants were asked to provide their responses based on their experience as teleworkers in their organization. They were assured that there were no right and wrong answers pertaining to the questionnaire distributed. The responses given by these participants were not disclosed and were treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity to adhere to the rules of ethics and gaining access in research methodology.

**Response rate:** A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to the identified teleworkers in the selected organization by the researcher via email and by hand. Ninety one questionnaires were returned to the researcher, representing a response rate of 61%.

**Validity and reliability:** Reliability analysis was conducted to test the soundness and accuracy of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Consistency indicates how well fit and well quantifying concept being measured as a whole set. Uma (2003) highlights that Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach's alpha was computed in terms of the average inter-correlations among items measured. According to Uma (2003), reliabilities of  $>0.70$  are considered reliable and consistent. The measurement for this study was found to be acceptable, being  $>0.70$  as suggested by Uma (2003). In addition to that the questionnaire was given to Associate Professor Dr. Haslinda Abdullah for review and validation to ensure that reliability and accuracy could be attained. Amendments were made to the questionnaire in order to maintain the accuracy and reliability of each of the questions formulated before the researcher distributed them.

**Data analysis:** The researcher processed and analysed the returned questionnaires using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis was conducted in detailed to inspect and observe both independent and dependent variables based on the allocated measurement scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics where the sample received was explained and the frequency of the responses for each item in the questionnaires tabulated and then converted to percentages. The researcher measured the central tendency and how the clustered the variables were to ensure that the questions formulated and designed were a good fit to the concepts of this study. The researcher analysed the data using the frequency distribution technique for personal data and independent variables to better discover whether data entered was valid and to determine whether the distribution of variables would deviate from the normal distribution. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to find and test the significance of relationships and influences that exist between the independent variables (quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction) and the dependent variable (the implementation of the teleworking work concept). These tests were utilized to explore the differences and relationships between variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Quality of life in teleworking experiences:** The second part of the questionnaire deliberates on respondents' quality of life through teleworking experiences. There are

Table 1: Quality of life

Quality of life	N	SD	D	A	SA
I often do work at home	91	2.2	11.0	73.6	13.2
Work demands do not interfere with my home and family life	91	9.9	3.3	79.1	8.8
Home life interferes with my responsibilities at work	91	-	47.3	49.9	9.9
My job reduces the effort I can give to activities at home	91	1.1	36.3	59.3	3.3
My supervisor and company support my family responsibilities	91	-	19.8	57.1	23.1
My job makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities	91	-	44.0	48.4	7.7
Work responsibilities do not interfere with my personal life	91	-	29.7	60.4	9.9
Family demands interfere with work activities	91	2.2	39.6	49.5	8.8
I never feel stressed or depressed about work	91	4.4	49.5	38.5	7.7
Employees who have a good work life balance will be more effective and successful	91	-	15.4	42.9	41.8

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

10 questions formulated to capture the quality of life of each respondent in their organization through teleworking experiences. Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents mostly agree that they often perform work at home: 86.8% agreed with the statement provided. In addition to that 87.9% of respondents agreed that their current role at work does not interfere with their home life. Many of the respondents (59.8%) agreed that their home life interferes with their responsibilities at work. However, most of the respondents (62.6%) agreed that their current job with teleworking does help them in reducing their effort to give activities at home. The support from supervisors and the company seems to be transparent to these teleworkers of whom 80.2% agreed that ample support was given to employees regarding their responsibilities at home.

However, more than half of the respondents (56.1%) also agreed that their current job made it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities. The majority of respondents (70.3%) also agreed that their work responsibilities do not interfere with their personal responsibilities. Furthermore, 58.3% of respondents agreed with the statement that the demands of their family or spouse interfere with work-related activities. However, most of the respondents (53.9%) disagreed that they never felt stress about work.

The results in Table 1 shows that most of the teleworkers who participated in this survey (84.7%) agreed that the existence of a good work life balance in the organization would be helpful in aiding them to stay effective and successful.

The quality of life as a component that will be influenced on implementation of teleworking in the organization through Pearson correlation analysis. The results obtained from this analysis demonstrated that the significance value is 0.000 which is obviously  $<0.05$ . Referring back to the formulated hypothesis 1 as stated in this study, the researcher concluded that this study should accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{1A}$ ) that quality of life does have a significant influence through the implementation of teleworking among the teleworkers

Table 2: Pearson correlation of respondents' quality of life through implementation of teleworking

Mean quality of life	Mean experience and perception on implementation of teleworking
Pearson correlation	364(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
N	91

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

studied. The findings obtained also highlighted that there is a significant relationship between quality of life and implementation of teleworking in this study ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

**H<sub>1A</sub>:** Respondent's quality of life has a significant influence on the implementation of teleworking arrangements.

Therefore, this study supported the findings of Maruyama *et al.* (2009) who conducted a multivariate analysis of the work life balance outcomes of teleworkers in the United Kingdom and highlighted that there is relationship between teleworking and employees' work life balance. The findings of this study suggested that teleworkers who spent time working from home reported better quality of life and this can be obtained and maintained through teleworking by being able to balance the work life and home life domains without being present in the office. With that said, employees who telework gain a brand new perspective on particular issues and also learn how to manage their own time more effectively.

#### Quality of work life on teleworking experiences:

Respondents' quality of work life was measured based on the nine questions formulated with four scales. Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents in this study (93.45%) agreed that flexibility would help them manage personal and work responsibilities. Less than half of the respondents (42.9%) disagreed with the statement that current responsibilities do not interfere with their work responsibilities while 71.4% agreed that their job does not reduce activities at home. Respondents mostly agreed that they were able to effectively achieve work objectives through the implementation of teleworking (87.5%). Most

Table 3: Quality of work life

Quality of work life	N	SD	D	A	SA
Flexibility helps me to manage personal and work responsibilities	91	-	6.60	70.3	23.1
Current responsibilities do not interfere with work responsibilities	91	-	16.50	78.0	5.5
Home life interferes with responsibilities	91	-	42.90	41.8	15.4
My job does not reduce activities at home	91	-	28.60	58.2	13.2
I am able to effectively achieve my work objectives	91	-	14.30	74.7	11.0
My supervisor and company are very supportive of personal responsibilities	91	-	14.30	71.4	14.3
I do not take work out of the office	91	4.4	46.20	39.6	9.9
Facilities at work allow me to concentrate on my work and collaborate with others	91	-	11.00	60.4	28.6
I am happy with the amount of time spent at work	91	-	17.60	67.0	15.4

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree

of the respondents (85.7%) also agreed that the company and the supervisor provide support regarding personal responsibilities with the total percentage of half (50.6%) of the respondents disagreed that they do not take work out of the office and work after hours. Most respondents agreed that the company's facilities allow them to concentrate and collaborate with others (89%) and most respondents (82.4%) were happy with the amount of time they spent on their work. Quality of work life was believed to be improved through teleworking among the respondents of this study, most of whom provided positive answers pertaining to the statement about their quality of work life.

The correlation analysis conducted to measure the relationship between employees' quality of work life through the implementation of teleworking in their organization. This study also formulated a second set of hypotheses predicting whether there will be a significance relationship between teleworkers' quality of work life and the implementation of teleworking. Based on the findings received, the researcher concluded that the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{2A}$ ) was likely to be accepted as the significance value obtained is  $<0.05$ . This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable quality of work life and the dependent variable implementation of teleworking.

**$H_{2A}$ :** Respondents' quality of work life is significantly correlated with the implementation of teleworking arrangements. The findings obtained on quality of work life support the findings from similar studies conducted by Maruyama *et al.* (2009) and Ndubisi and Kahraman (2005) on teleworking adoption in various organizations. These studies present significant empirical evidence for the critical importance of attitude, behaviour and perceptions of the workplace where teleworking plays an important role in allowing teleworkers to have more control over their hours of work and reduces their stress and importantly for teleworkers, enables them to balance their work and life demands. Findings from Maruyama *et al.* (2009) highlighted that teleworkers reported better work life balance as they were able to

Table 4: Pearson correlation of respondents' quality of work life through implementation of teleworking

Mean quality of work life	Mean experience and perception on implementation of teleworking
Pearson correlation	0.364(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003
N	91

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

utilize more of their time flexibly to be with their families, fulfilling domestic duties while at the same time maintaining and making good progress in their careers. The present findings also demonstrate that employees who telework are able to selectively blend their personal and work duties (Table 4).

**Job satisfaction and teleworking experiences:** The researcher formulated eight statements as shown in Table 5, to measure the respondents' job satisfaction through the implementation of teleworking in their organization. The vast majority of respondents (93.4%) were satisfied with their working conditions in the company and 83.5% agreed that they had opportunities to boost their career advancement in their current job. Further, 82.4% of respondents agreed that they were given recognition for their work and tasks accomplished. Most of the respondents (89%) also agreed that they had control and freedom to make their own decisions pertaining to their jobs. Respondents also agreed that they received frequent feedback and review from their superiors (92.3%) while 87.9% indicated satisfaction with the current company policies. Satisfaction with managers' leadership styles was expressed by 95.6% of respondents while 70.3% agreed with the statement that demands of family and spouse could interfere with work-related activities.

Referring to Table 5, the researcher carried out the final analysis using Pearson correlations to discover the relationship between the independent variable job satisfaction and the dependent variable implementation of teleworking as defined in this study. The analysis set out to test the final hypothesis of whether job satisfaction has a significance relationship with the implementation of teleworking. Based on the findings, the alternate



Table 5: Job satisfaction

Statements	N	SD	D	A	SA
I am satisfied with the current working conditions in this company	91	-	4.4	83.5	9.9
I have the chance to boost my career advancement	91	-	2.2	3.3	80.2
I receive recognition for tasks done	91	2.2	15.4	62.6	19.8
I have the control and freedom to make decisions on my job	91	3.3	7.7	74.0	14.3
I often receive feedbacks and reviews of my performance	91	-	16.5	78.0	14.3
I am satisfied with the company policies and administration	91	2.0	13.2	73.6	14.3
I am satisfied with my manager's leadership style	91	2.2	6.6	81.3	14.3
Demands of my family and partner interfere with work related activities	91	-	36.3	56.0	14.3

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Table 6: Pearson correlation of respondent's job satisfaction through implementation of teleworking

Mean job satisfaction	Mean experience and perception on implementation of teleworking
Pearson correlation	0.385(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
N	91.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

hypothesis ( $H_{3A}$ ) is accepted: Job satisfaction is significantly related to the implementation of teleworking in the organization ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

**$H_{3A}$ :** Respondents' job satisfaction is significantly related to the implementation of teleworking arrangements. This study further clarifies the relationship that occurs between the independent variable job satisfaction and the dependent variable implementation of teleworking. The researcher concludes that the relationship between job satisfaction and the implementation of teleworking does exist in this context.

Findings of this research support findings from other empirical studies that suggest that satisfaction and attitude in the workplace are tied closely to the usage of technology and instrumentality. Other research has also identified numerous causes of low job satisfaction among employees including role ambiguity and conflicts between job demands and family commitments and responsibilities (Maruyama *et al.*, 2009).

Employees who do not have to commute as frequently are likely to experience less stress and this also reduces the organization's costs associated with employees' absence because of stress-related illnesses (Table 6).

**Experiences and perceptions of the implementation of teleworking:** The researcher set out to capture the experiences and perceptions of the teleworkers in the organization studied to further enhance the effectiveness of teleworking in the organization and to uncover the implementation gaps among these teleworkers. The participants in this study mostly agreed with the statements formulated to measure their experiences and

perceptions of teleworking. Eight statements were formulated to measure the implementation of teleworking, as shown in Table 7. Most of the respondents (95.6%) agreed that flexibility was very much encouraged while 94.5% agreed that teleworking facilities were provided in their organization. A total of 85.7% of respondents agreed that they were given flexible working hours while 83.5% agreed that they possessed the tools and technology necessary to facilitate teleworking. In addition to that 86.8% of respondents agreed that information regarding teleworking was available in their organization. Almost all respondents (93.4%) agreed that the decision to stay in their current company was related to the flexibility given in their organization. Respondents also mainly agreed with the statement that they were able to manage work and personal responsibilities (82.4%). Furthermore, most of the respondents agreed that teleworking had helped them to balance their work and family commitments (87.4%).

**Contributions of study:** First and foremost, the findings of this empirical study support the view of a number of past studies that teleworking has positive effects on teleworkers' work and home life in general. The main aim of this study was to compare the contributions of the independent variables towards the implementation of teleworking reported by teleworkers and to identify key variables that had not previously been investigated. This study was carried out within the Malaysian context in order to explore the effectiveness of teleworking upon Malaysian employees and to generate awareness among local firms of the importance of preserving employees' work life balance and creating a positive organizational climate which would result in reducing employee turnover, encouraging employee engagement and boosting organizations' productivity.

The study was expected to highlight the work life balance challenges posed by new organizational practices and strongly gendered organizational and national cultures, especially within the Malaysian context. This study was believed to provide a realization among many

Table 7: Experiences and perceptions of the implementation of teleworking

Implementation of teleworking	N	SD	D	A	SA
Flexibility is encouraged	91	-	4.4	75.8	19.8
Teleworking facilities are offered	91	2.20	3.3	75.8	18.7
Flexible working hours	91	1.10	13.2	63.7	22.0
Possess tools and technology for teleworking	91	1.10	15.4	63.7	19.8
Availability of information on teleworking	91	2.20	11.0	65.9	20.9
My decision to stay in company	91	-	6.6	67.0	26.4
My ability to manage work and personal responsibilities	91	-	17.6	60.4	22.0
Teleworking helps balancing commitments	91	-	17.6	52.7	29.7

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

local firms that teleworking as a new work concept suits the new age of employee preferences in 21st century. The growing popularity of teleworking could be attributed to numerous factors such as improved staffing as companies with the option of flexible working may be considered more desirable than competitors who do not offer such an opportunity, leading to both improved employee retention and recruitment. Teleworking has been found to be an efficient option for disabled employees who have difficulties travelling back and forth from home to office. Providing these employees with the necessary equipment and technologies would be more cost effective than making the necessary changes to on-site facilities.

At the same time, this study highlights some pointers for improving employees' work life balance and addressing the implementation gap in teleworking arrangements in the organization studied. The implementation of teleworking must be strategically planned and executed with management-worker trust (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). Key metrics must be established to measure the actual performance of teleworkers. Therefore, this study is predicted to assist future researchers to continue exploring the issue of flexible work arrangements with better tools and processes to achieve outstanding and comprehensive outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis carried out on the three sets of independent variables-quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction-demonstrated positive outcomes in respondents' agreement, supporting the contention that teleworking has helped to improved their quality of life and enabled them to balance the two domains of work and family demands. Many agreed that current job satisfaction has been improved through teleworking as many of the employees appreciate the support from the organization with regard to personal commitments and the flexibility being offered in their current role and job.

Based on the correlation analysis conducted on respondents' quality of life, this study finds that the alternate hypothesis should be accepted and there is a

significant relationship between quality of life and the implementation of teleworking. This further supports the trend among new age employees to look for ways to balance and reduce stress, pressures and tension resulting from demands from home, work and success. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation analysis of the quality of work life and implementation of teleworking highlights that by introducing teleworking as part of the new work arrangements, the organization has clearly improved most respondents' quality of work life. Flexibility is believed to provide these teleworkers with a greater sense of control over their current role and enabled them to collaborate and engage with their peers in order to achieve career advancement while maintaining a good balance between work and family demands. This relationship was statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

Finally, the last analysis through Pearson correlation revealed a statistically significant relationship ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between job satisfaction and the implementation of teleworking.

## LIMITATIONS

This research focuses on the effects of teleworking among employees in the selected organization and specifically the impacts on employees' work life balance when such arrangements are introduced. Generalization is thus restricted to certain specific areas. Another limitation is that the conditions of employees' quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction were probably influenced by other independent variables that were not defined and selected for this particular study. Therefore, the researcher outlines the limitations found while setting out this study.

Time constraints were identified as the primary limitation in this study. The researcher had limited time to schedule the study due several challenges while working, studying and conducting the research. The study thus, had to be completed within four months as a result of which the outcomes may not be comprehensive, precise and accurate. It is thus recommended that prospective future studies should employ a larger number of respondents to overcome the above mentioned limitation.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

There are several implications of the research findings that support various studies being conducted internationally on how teleworking can improve employees' quality of life, quality of work life, job satisfaction and work life. The findings of this study the hygiene-motivator theory of motivation by Frederick Herzberg in which satisfaction and motivation are associated with various factors in the arrangements, context and environment. The monetary factor is no longer the primary factor in fulfilling employees' preferences and needs; other factors that complement the needs and desires of individual employees must also be considered. The effort made to allow these employees to embark on Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) such as teleworking provides positive outcomes, especially as an initiative to motivate employees, attract prospective employees and business and simultaneously improve productivity and employee turnover (Raiborn and Butler, 2009). Employers at large may have to be more aware of the trends, expectations and needs of the new age employees in the 21st century where monetary rewards may not be the solution as people now place more value on quality of life and efforts to keep their personal and work life in balance (Pruchno *et al.*, 2000).

The present findings also provide some insights for prospective firms in Malaysia that wish to embark on teleworking, demonstrating that flexibility benefits will help employees' efforts to balance work and family life, thus enabling firms to attract and retain the best people. Given that organizational success depends on people, it is crucial that the leaders of these organizations create a work environment where their employees can achieve work life balance and well-being. High levels of motivation, potential and engagement among these employees could be attained through the benefits of flexibility.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The coverage area and scope of the study are limited again due to the time constraints faced by the researcher. The study, thus set out to focus only on quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction in one particular firm. Future research should be enhanced by comparing various firms in the public and private sectors within the Malaysian context. Prospective researchers might be interested to expand the scope of the research to take into consideration other predictors, factors and components that may be influenced by teleworking apart from the variables defined in this study. Thirdly, the financial

factor was one of the main concerns of this study. This study was funded by the researcher and this must be brought to attention as one of the factors contributing to its limitations. Fourthly, limited data availability was also encountered. The researcher did not possess sufficient information regarding the data she intended to gather. The precision of the results will depend on the accuracy of the data. There were difficulties in finding precise data as the published information provides different values of data required from other publishers. This includes the lack of literature on the topic because it is difficult to uncover some of the related variables used in previous studies, especially those in the Malaysian context.

The final limitation that the variables tested in the study are limited in scope; in reality, there may be other factors that influence the relationship between these variables in addition to those defined in this study. This study mainly focused on the dimension of work life balance which comprises the elements of quality of life, quality of work life and job satisfaction. Future researchers should also investigate how other types of flexible work arrangements would affect employees' work life balance and the organizational climate. Furthermore, the researcher strongly recommends that future studies should include job satisfaction as a moderator. This study outlines the benefits of teleworking and its positive impacts for both the individual and the organization. However, challenges and drawbacks could arise from this strategy if it were inappropriately implemented or in cases where flexibility does not suit the nature of a particular job. Teleworking must be managed and established as a program that is periodically maintained, reviewed, revised and invested in (Raiborn and Butler, 2009).

Considering the various barriers to teleworking, organizations at large should increase their knowledge and experience in this arrangement and various factors should be analysed to assess whether teleworking is suitable for their contexts before embarking on implementing teleworking.

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