EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK INTENSIFICATION, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION THROUGH A GENDER LENS: THE PERSPECTIVE OF ACADEMICS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

by

GOO CHUAN CHIEW

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Social Science**

August 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HEIs   Higher education institutions

CIPD   Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

JDR   Job-Demand Resources

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Science

PLS   Partial Least Square

LIST OF SYMBOLS

M Mean

SD Standard Deviation

N   Frequency

CI   Confidence Interval

VIF   Variance Inflation Factor

AVE   Average Variance Extracted

CFA   Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CR   Composite Reliability

p P-value

r Pearson correlation coefficient

R^2 Coefficient of multiple determination

Q^2 Predictive Relevance

β Standardized coefficient

B   Unstandardized coefficient

MENGKAJI HUBUNGAN ANTARA INTENSIFIKASI PEKERJAAN, KESEIMBANGAN KERJA-KEHIDUPAN, KETERLIBATAN PEKERJA DAN NIAT UNTUK BERHENTI KERJA MENERUSI KACA MATA GENDER: SEBUAH PERSPEKTIF PARA AKADEMIK DARIPADA UNIVERSITI AWAM DAN SWASTA

ABSTRAK

Baru-baru ini, Kerajaan Malaysia telah membentuk semula universiti awam dan universiti swasta untuk mentransformasikan Malaysia kepada hab pendidikan bertaraf antarabangsa. Walau bagaimanapun, penambahan terhadap permintaan kerja yang mendadak dalam kalangan ahli-ahli akademik telah menyebabkan ahli akademik mengalami intensifikasi pekerjaan. Maka, kesan intensifikasi pekerjaan terhadap aspek-aspek kerja lain seperti keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan, strategi penyesuaian, keterlibatan pekerja dan niat untuk berhenti kerja dalam sektor pendidikan tinggi adalah penting untuk kajian masa depan. Penyelidikan ini telah mengaplikasikan Teori Permintaan Pekerjaan-Sumber dan Teori Peranan Sosial untuk mengkaji hubungan antara intensifikasi pekerjaan, keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan dan niat untuk berhenti kerja dalam kalangan ahli akademik di universiti awam dan universiti swasta melalui lensa gender. Kesan penyederhana oleh keterlibatan pekerja terhadap hubungan antara intensifikasi pekerjaan, keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan dan niat untuk berhenti kerja juga ditelusuri. Kajian ini menggunakan desain penjelasan berturutan dalam pendekatan metod-campuran (*sequential explanatory design of mixed-method approach*) di mana dapatan kualitatif membantu untuk menghuraikan dan menginterpretasikan dapatan kuantitatif. Data kuantitatif dikumpul melalui soal selidik yang melibatkan 190 orang responden di

universiti awam dan swasta di Malaysia manakala data kualitatif dikumpul melalui temu bual separa berstruktur bersama 12 orang ahli akademik (6 orang ahli akademik dari universiti awam dan 6 orang ahli akademik dari universiti swasta). Seperti yang dihipotesiskan, analisis PLS-SEM untuk data kuantitatif menunjukkan hubungan antara konstruk pada arah yang dijangka. Secara khususnya, intensifikasi pekerjaan dan niat untuk berhenti kerja didapati mempunyai hubungan positif manakala intensifikasi pekerjaan dan keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan pula didapati mempunyai hubungan negatif. Tambahan pula, keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan mempunyai hubungan negatif dengan niat untuk berhenti kerja. Keterlibatan pekerja didapati menyerdahanakan hubungan antara intensifikasi pekerjaan dan niat untuk berhenti kerja. Walau bagaimanapun, keterlibatan pekerja tidak menyerdehanakan hubungan antara keseimbangan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan dan niat untuk berhenti kerja. Data kualitatif dianalisis melalui pendekatan tematik manual. Dapatan daripada analisis kualitatif menunjukkan hasil terperinci tentang perbezaan gender dan perbezaan antara universiti awam dan universiti swasta. Walaupun hasil kuantitatif tidak menunjukkan perbezaan gender yang signifikan dari segi pemboleh ubah kajian ini, hasil kualitatif telah menunjukkan bahawa ahli-ahli akademik masih mengaplikasikan peranan gender tradisional, iaitu ahli akademik lelaki lebih memfokus pada kerja berbayar manakala ahli akademik wanita lebih memfokus pada kerja reproduktif. Data kualitatif juga menunjukkan bahawa ahli akademik menggunakan 5 strategi daya tindak (seperti strategi tingkah laku, sokongan, penyumberan luar, strategi kognitif dan aktiviti rekreasi) untuk menguruskan intensifikasi pekerjaan. Beberapa implikasi penting daripada dapatan kajian juga dibincangkan untuk kajian dan praktis masa hadapan.

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK INTENSIFICATION, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION THROUGH A GENDER LENS: THE PERSPECTIVE OF ACADEMICS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

ABSTRACT

The Malaysian government has recently reformed the public and private universities in order to transform Malaysia into a world-class higher education hub. The rapidly growing work demands among academics in public and private universities has caused academic work intensification. Thus, the effects of work intensification on other aspects of work such as work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention in the higher education sector are pertinent for further research. This study applied the theory of Job Demand-Resources and Social Role Theory to test the relationships between work intensification, work-life balance and turnover intention among academics in Malaysian public and private universities through a gender lens. The moderating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between work intensification, work-life balance and turnover intention was also explored. This study employed sequential explanatory design of mixed-method approach whereby the qualitative results are used to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of the quantitative study. Quantitative data were collected through a survey from 190 respondents in public and private universities in Malaysia whereas the qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 academics (6 academics were from public universities and 6 academics were from private universities). As hypothesized, the PLS-SEM analysis on the quantitative data

showed that the path relationships among the constructs were in the expected directions. Specifically, work intensification and turnover intention were found to be positively related, whereas work intensification and work-life balance were negatively related. Additionally, work-life balance was negatively associated with turnover intention. Employee engagement was found to moderate the relationships between work intensification and turnover intention. However, employee engagement did not moderate the relationships between work-life balance and turnover intention. The qualitative data were analysed through manually thematic approach. The findings from the qualitative analyses reported richer results on gender differences and public and private universities differences. While the quantitative results did not show any significant gender differences in terms of the study variables, the qualitative results show that academics are still performing traditional gender roles where male academics are more focused on paid work and female academics are more focused on the reproductive work. The qualitative data also revealed that academics engaged in 5 coping strategies (i.e. behavioural strategies, support, outsourcing, cognitive strategies and leisure activities) to manage their work intensification. Several important implications of the study findings for future research and practice are also discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Background

Education is an important field for a developing country like Malaysia. In the past 58 years, the Malaysian government has played a pivotal role in improving the quality of education and providing more educational opportunities to citizens in Malaysia. The higher education system in Malaysia consists of both public and private universities. There are 20 public universities and this number approximately triples the number of private higher learning institutions (Yunus & Pang, 2015). In a higher education system, academics are important as they nurture qualified graduates who are crucial to the development of the nation (Mustapha, 2013). Today, the role of an academic is not merely sharing knowledge in the lecture hall but it also includes teaching, research and other administrative services in the university (Aqilah & Juliana, 2012). The sharp increase of universities in Malaysia suggests that academics have to multitask in this demanding era of working field (Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006). When the workload of an academic increases, it will also cause work intensification. Lu (2009) defines work intensification as employees carrying more workload than normal. When employees are demanded to finish extra tasks and responsibilities, they experience work overload and less break time. This might lead to poor work performance, work-life imbalance (Smith, Hughes, DeJoy & Dyal, 2018) and emotional exhaustion (Burchell, Ladipo & Wilkinson, 2005). Emotional exhaustion is likely to cause the employees to distance themselves from work which may eventually have turnover

intention (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Burke, Koyuncu & Fiksenbaum, 2010; Chuan-Chiew, Ang & Teh, 2018).

Turnover intention is defined as an individual having an intention to leave his or her organization within a defined period of time (Shwu-Ru & Ching-Yu, 2010). The causes of turnover intention are individual's negative opinions and attitudes toward their job and work place (Shwu-Ru & Ching-Yu, 2010). Malaysia faces a critical issue of shortage of well-trained and experienced faculty members in order to meet the rapidly growing education requirements (Bakar, Mohamad, & Sharmeela-Banu, 2015). There are several factors that contribute to turnover intention among lecturers, institutions and community. Lecturer factors include their salaries, course preparation and research experiments. Institution factors are related to working conditions, resources arrangement and responsibility. Finally, community factors include budget, authority, government new policies and rules and regulations (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2004). According to Noor and Maad (2008), turnover intention is positively related with actual leaving. When academics finally leave, this will bring challenges to the universities as they have to increase costs on recruiting and training new hires. It will also affect the productivity of the universities given the low morale of the other staff who choose to stay (Chen, Ching, Wang, Hwa & Chu, 2010). This means that it is important for the university to develop strategies to alleviate levels of turnover or to decrease the turnover intention among the academic staffs (Deery & Jago, 2009).

Many researchers believe that work-life balance is very crucial in an organisation as it does not only lead to improving the company productivity but also results in greater company loyalty and lowered intention to leave the organisation (Byrne, 2005; Deery, 2008; Deery & Jago, 2009; Noor & Maad, 2008; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Malik, Zaheer, Khan & Ahmad, 2010; Chuan-Chiew *et al.*, 2018).

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Rosenthal (1964) defined work-life balance as a form of inter-role conflict which happens when stress between work and family are not integrated. It becomes difficult for an employee to participate meaningfully, either in his or her work role or family role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It is very important to know that practising work-life balance does not mean giving up the equal time for paid work and. Therefore, work-life balance can be defined as employee's satisfaction with their multiple roles during their personal life. Generally, work-life balance is associated with the equilibrium between the amount of time and effort somebody put it in their paid work-life and family life (Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004).

Furthermore, past study (Byron, 2005) also suggested coping strategies as one of the way to decrease conflict and enhance the work-life balance. Coping strategies were also found to minimize the effect of stress for the employees (Belal, Hassan & Rusnah, 2009). Due to the high workloads of academics, this study believed they used certain strategies to balance their professional and personal issues, thus decrease their turnover intention.

Besides coping strategies, employee engagement has also proven to increase productivity and reduce employee's turnover intention. Generally, firms are now fully utilizing employee engagement in an effort to increase the commitment of employees and drive performance level (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010), "With high levels of engagement, firms can see revenue growth of 2.5 times over their competitors and a 40 per cent reduction in expensive staff turnover" (Hay, 2010, p. 5). It is very crucial for employers to know what drives employee engagement. Haid and Sims (2009) argued that there are 5 top global engagement drivers: encouraging involvement in organization, promoting interaction with customers, democratizing the workface, supporting work-life balance and rewarding employees. An organization should

engage more with employees by providing the opportunities for the employees so as to accelerate their performance. Kahn (1990) stated that job engagement is the combination of work roles and the individuals themselves where the more they passionately engage themselves in their work roles, the more they will push themselves to achieve excellent results in their workplace. Several studies also show that the more the employees engage themselves either mentally or physically, the higher their productivity rises (Baumruk 2004, Kahn 1990, Richman 2006 and Shaw 2005). In other words, if academics are engaged with their work, they will produce more outcomes (i.e. research paper, connecting industry, knowledge transfer etc) for the university.

Past studies have shown that female lecturers experience more stress when compared to male counterparts (Aqilah & Juliana, 2012). Women academics often have heavier teaching load (Waltman, 2001), lesser research support (Nye, 1997) and work in committees compared to men (Huang, 2008) and these can lead to increase of turnover intention (August & Waltman, 2004).

Other than gender differences, academics in public and private university face different challenges and problems. Public universities are bounded by governmental and bureaucratic regulations as the academics need to pass though many processes to finish a task (Arokiasamy, 2009). Meanwhile, academics in private universities often face financial constraints where they have to creatively seek funds and produce a research with commercial value as to meet the demand from the faculty (Pey, 2009). Thus, it is likely that there will be differences in the experience of academics from private and public universities.

This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in the aforementioned areas by uncovering the experience of academics in Malaysian universities through a gender lens. The study findings hold significant implications particularly to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), policy makers and the top managements of the universities with regards to useful statistical data on the factors that can contribute to the turnover intention among academics. This study is also important in that it explores the experience of men and women as academics in light of the changing work landscape in the higher education sector.

1.2   Problem Statement

The role of academics is not only to teach but also to produce research papers in order to fulfil the nature and policy of the university management (Pey, 2009). Academics also face the challenges of financial constraints as they need to seek funds individually to enhance the quality of their research. At the same time, they have to meet the requests and demands from the university to produce research with commercial value. On top of research and teaching duties, academics are also required to hold various responsibilities in the university such as student affairs, course management, research and etc. (Pey, 2009). In other words, the policy system of the university has created challenges for academics, whereby they are required to not only work independently in terms of funding with limited resources, but they are also expected to produce excellent research publications and be productive (Arokiasamy, 2009). As a result, the academics will experience work intensification and may have turnover intention.

Past studies (Bakar *et al.*, 2015) also have shown that Malaysia is facing a shortage of well-trained academics in order to meet current education sector. Times

Online Media (2014) reported that in recent years that academics are leaving public universities for better offers and less workloads. In 2014, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) lost 21 clinical lecturers (Times Online Media, 2014). In the following year, the number of medical lecturers who left USM had increased to 38 in 6 months (Samy, Chin, Rajaendram & Chow, 2014). Universiti Malaya (UM) also lost 21 of their clinical lecturers to private medical schools and hospitals in Malaysia (Times Online Media, 2014). Private higher education institutions are also facing the same issue whereby the number of academics is showing a decline trend. The total number of academics in private universities declined from 32992 (year 2010) to 24476 (year 2013), even though the number of institutions was increasing at the same time (Department of Statistic, 2015).

There are a number of factors that can contribute to turnover intention; two of which are individual's negative opinions and attitudes toward their job and workplace (Liou & Cheng, 2010). Other factors that contribute to intention to leave among academics can be related to bureaucratisation (Azman, Jantan & Sirat, 2011), high level of job stress (Makhbul & Khairuddin, 2013), organizational commitment (Noor, 2011), job satisfaction (Mohd Noor, Stanton & Young, 2009) and work-life imbalance (Shahid, Amdan, Alwi, Syazreena, & Hassan, 2016). Therefore, to address these issues, the top management of the university should prioritize the effort to retain talented academics of the university. It is very important for the university to understand that the knowledge of an academic is hard to be replaced. Loss of talented academics might affect negatively the research output and in turn the rank of the university. The image of the university is dependent on their academics' performance and commitment and this differs from other industries which mainly focus on profits and revenues (Robyn & Du Preez, 2013). High rates of turnover can also be costly as it will decrease

performance and commitment of the remaining academic staff (Brennan & Skarlicki, 2004). Moreover, organizations have to bear the losses incurred on recruiting and training new academics (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008).

To address this problem, there is an urgency for the university's top management to develop strategies to alleviate the high levels of turnover or to decrease the turnover intention among their academic staff. One of the strategies could lie in a better understanding of the experience of work-life balance among academic staff. Work-life balance policies have been identified to reduce the work intensification of academics. The top management of universities and policy makers can better manage their human resources by developing or revamping their policies to prevent academics from leaving.

Besides that, the experience of men and women are different in terms of attitudes, performance and feelings. Female academics usually have to perform a lot of duties at home and also at the office. As married working women, they have more obligations when they become mothers. They have to juggle between two jobs at the same time such as taking care of the family and working as an academic. Working mothers today have to be fully involved in their careers and also to fulfil their family responsibilities. Thus, they need to cope with the competing demands of their multiple roles. Insufficient time to perform all tasks at one-time, heavy responsibilities at home and taking care of their children are probably the main factors that drive women to quit their jobs. It is noted that the high voluntary resignation of women is due more to the domestic and social responsibilities of a woman than those responsibilities of a male (Bakar *et al.*, 2015). Thus, it is important to find out through a gender lens, the factors that can possibility influence academics' turnover intention.

1.3   Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

i.   To examine the relationship between work intensification on turnover intention;

ii.   To explore the relationship between work-life balance on turnover intention;

iii.   To investigate the moderating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between work intensification and work-life balance for turnover intention;

iv.   To identify the coping strategies that are employed by the academics in managing their work intensification;

v.   To ascertain gender-specific differences in terms of self-reports of work intensification, work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention in the context of higher education sector and

vi.   To explore if the experience of male and female academics in Malaysian public universities differ significantly from their counterparts in private universities in relation to work intensification, work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention.

1.4   Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

i.   Is there any significant relationship between work intensification and turnover intention?

ii.   Is there any significant relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention?

iii.   Does employee engagement moderate the relationship between work intensification and work-life balance for turnover intention?

iv. What are the coping strategies employed by the academics in managing their work intensification?

v. Are there gender-specific differences in terms of self-reports of work intensification, work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention in the context of higher education in Malaysia?

vi. Do work intensification, work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention differ between academics in public and private universities?

1.5 Significance of Research

This study has both theoretical and practical values. The theoretical contribution towards social role theory is reflected in examining this topic through a gender lens. It contributed to a better understanding on both men and women's experience in the context of higher education sector in Malaysia. In recent years, the women labour force participation rate in Malaysia is single-peaked if compared with other countries like Japan and Korea (Economic Monitor, 2012). The data show that in Malaysia, at the age of 30, women will leave their job and focus on the responsibilities of taking care of children and family, but they will never get back to the force work once they leave their job. Meanwhile, women in Japan and Korea will get back to workforce after 15 or 20 years (Department of Satistics, 2012). The study findings can provide useful statistical data on how Malaysian men and women academics react to their work role and family role. Thus, provide implications on how to retain the women workforce.

Due to the limited literature that relates to work intensification, work-life balance and employee engagement to turnover intention in the context of Malaysia's

higher education sector, this study can contribute to the body of knowledge in this field. The practical value of this study is that the findings can provide MOHE, policy makers and the top management of the universities with useful statistical data on the factors that can reduce Malaysian academics' turnover intention. Thus, the top management of universities and policy makers can better manage their human resources with regards to developing or revamping their policies to prevent academics from leaving the university.

1.6   Research Scope

This study was conducted by sequential explanatory design of mixed method design. The quantitative study was used to investigate the relationships between work intensification, work-life balance and turnover intention among 190 academics in public and private universities in Malaysia. The role of employee engagement was examined as a moderator between the independent variables and dependent variable. The respondents of this study are academics from public or private universities. Four public and four private universities in Malaysia are targeted for data collection.

The qualitative study was used to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. A total of 12 academics was interviewed to gain their experiences in terms of work intensification, work-life balance, coping strategies, employee engagement and turnover intention. There were 6 academics from public universities and the rest were from private universities in Malaysia. Also, equal numbers of male and female academics were interviewed, and the data collected were analysed. Comparison can thus be made from the gender perspective.

1.7   Definition of Key Terms

This section provides definitions of key terms employed in this study.

Table 1.1

Conceptual Definitions and Operational Definitions of Variables

Variables	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Work Intensification	The rising levels of work demands during normal working hours and the potential for work to invade the private life through demands on personal time (Korunka & Hoonakker, 2014).	Work intensification refers to perceptions of the need to work at increasing speed, perform different tasks simultaneously, or reduce idle time measured by using the Work Intensification Scale (Korunka & Hoonakker, 2014).
Work-life Balance	People having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as a norm to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society (Wong & Ko, 2009).	Work-life balance refers to the level of balancing work and family life as measured by using the 8 items Enough Time-off From Work (Wong & Ko, 2009).
Coping Strategies	Management of work and family roles in response to work-family conflict (Haar, 2006).	The strategies used by the academics to deal with work-family conflict as obtained by the semi-structed interview guide.
Employee Engagement	A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006).	The degree that academics focus on and do their work by using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006).
Turnover Intention	An individual's intention to leave his or her organization within a defined period of time (Ang & Poh, 2013).	The degree of academics' intention to leave the university by using the Turnover Intention Scale (Ang & Poh, 2013).

Gender

The social differences between women and men, as opposed to sex, which is the biological differences between female and male (Acker, 1992).

Age

The length of time that one has existed or one's duration of life (Dictionary.com, 2002).

1.8   Organization of Remaining Chapters

This chapter has delivered the background of the research topic, research problem, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the research and research scope. Chapter two will discuss previous studies on work intensification, work-life balance, employee engagement, turnover intention and gender. Chapter three describes the research framework and research methodology. Chapter four discusses the results of the study. The final chapter will present the implications and limitations of the study. It concludes with suggestions for research in this topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will first discuss the Malaysia higher education sector and its recent developments. Then, it will review the definitions, theories and concepts of the key variables (i.e., work intensification, work-life balance, employee engagement and turnover intention) as well as related literature for a better background understanding. This chapter then moves to discuss the development of the hypotheses for the study. A summary of key studies is presented in the final section.

2.2   The Malaysia Higher Education Sector and Recent Developments

The higher education sector exists to educate students, preserve the quality of education and encourage research for the development of our nation (Nawi *et al.*, 2016; Mustapha, 2013). Due to globalization, the university no longer focuses on only producing human capital. It also trains and concentrates on inputting values that are beneficial to the students, industries, and to the society at large. Globalization has also affected the national education policy and institutional developments in Malaysia (Basak & Govender, 2015). As such, new strategies and plans have been designed to reorient and transform the way in which universities are managed and the way educational services are delivered (Hee, 2007).

In 2006, Malaysia initiated a strategic plan to transform our national higher education to global higher education. This plan is currently at the second phase. The first phase was to set up the framework, while the second phase focuses on strengthening and refining the initial framework. Apart from the transformation plan, cultivation of a culture of academic excellence is also crucial to foster a world-class higher education in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). Cultivation of the culture of academic excellence will improve the quality of higher education, and thus transform Malaysia into an education hub in Asia Pacific that offers a world-class education (Atan, 2007; Shariffuddin, Razali, Ghani, Shaaidi & Ibrahim 2017). Therefore, it is important to develop excellent and experienced academics as they play strategic roles in improving ratings in key areas such as research quality, academic reputation of faculty, academic programs quality, research contribution to society, preparation of tomorrow's leaders and quality of graduates (Achour, Mohd Nor, & Mohd Yusoff, 2016).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia are categorized into public and private universities. These universities offer undergraduate, postgraduate and diploma programs. The public universities are managed and funded directly by the federal government and indirectly by the public sector. From 1957 to 2015, the number of universities in Malaysia has increased from just two universities to twenty public universities and thirty-eight private universities (Yunus & Pang, 2015). Besides that, there are private universities supported by government business agencies such as Multimedia University of Malaysia (MMU), and Petroleum National University of Malaysia. There are also universities supported by political parties in the present alliance government (i.e. Malaysian Chinese Association, MCA) such as University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and local private universities owned by individual

owners. All these universities offer programs of various disciplines. Apart from that, there are total of 68,264 academics in Malaysia public and private universities (Wan, Chapman, Zain, Hutcheson, Lee, Austin, 2015)

Malaysian public universities are classified into three main categories: research, comprehensive and focused universities (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). Research universities such as Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) focus on research and innovation, while the comprehensive universities such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIAM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) offer a wide range of study programs. The focused universities such as Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) etc. emphasize on delivering focused programs. These directions provide a clear aim for the respective universities on their positions and tasks as they compete to become world-class higher education institutions (see Mahmud, 2007; Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011; Ramakrishnan, 2005).

Clearly, the roles of academics are inevitably affected by these categorisations. For example, the research universities put a higher emphasis on scholarly work when compared to teaching universities (Maimunah & Roziah, 2008). Thus, the lecturers in research universities are expected to produce excellent research publications when compared to the lecturers from teaching universities (Arokiasamy, 2009). As stated by Robyn and Du Preez (2013), HEIs depend more on their academic staff's abilities and commitments as compared to other industries. The role of academics is not only to teach, but to also produce research papers in order to fulfil the nature and policy of the

university management (Pey, 2009). On top of research and teaching duties, academics are also obliged to take up administrative roles in student affairs and course management as these will affect their merit during year-end evaluation (Pey, 2009). Thus, academics do play an important role in determining the success of any educational entity (Nawi *et al.*, 2016).

Given that academics have been entrusted with various responsibilities, they might experience work intensification, which in turn could affect their work-life balance and lead to turnover intention (Chen *et al.*, 2014). Academics are the most important resources for higher education institution's future development and growth. As mentioned in chapter 1, both public and private HEIs are facing a decline in the number of academics. Therefore, without proper strategies and efforts to retain the academics, the ability of higher education institutions to sustain their standard and compete will decline. This study aims to investigate the experiences of academics, and to give some insights to the management of higher education institutions on ways to reduce intention to leave among academics. Through the findings of this study, the management of higher education institutions will be better informed of the experiences of their academic staff and the areas they are to focus on in order to retain their academic human resources.

2.3   Work Intensification

Globalization of economies with the use of advance technologies and the increased speed and pace of communication have resulted in the rise of work intensification (Lu, 2009). In many countries, the developments have increased the speed of working life and brought new hazards and risks to workers, while the old traditional hazards still

exist at work (Szollos, 2009). Employees are left with lesser time for more tasks, including the increasing need to adapt to continuous organizational changes (Roberts, 2007). All these scenarios have contributed to work intensification (Lu, 2009).

Work intensification will increase levels of work load during working hours. It will also require the employee's personal private time (Gallie, 2007; Green, 2006; Macky and Boxall, 2008). Lu (2009) defined work intensification as extra workload for employees. Franke (2015) also described work intensification as the extra stress beyond traditional demands. Authors of various studies suggest that work intensification is made up of different dimensions: pace, effort and affect (Green, 2004), time demands (longer work hours), emotional demands (levels of job stress) and job demands (greater workloads) (Burke *et al.*, 2010). It also includes high working speed, tight deadlines and insufficient time to complete a job (Boisard, Cartron, Valeyre, Gollac, & & Besancon, 2005; Ozutku, Hatice, & Altindis, 2013). In addition, work intensification comprises role overload, time demands, and hours worked (Boxall & Macky, 2014).

There are empirical evidences (e.g. Burchell *et al.*, 2005) to prove that work intensification is a new demand, which employees at all levels experience alike and suffer from it. When work intensification occurs among employees, it will induce physical exhaustion and mental stress (Green & McIntosh, 2001), lower job satisfaction (Burke *et al.*, 2009), high turnover intention (Burke *et al.*, 2010) which lead to different kinds of occupational illness (Lu, 2009). Research also shows that work intensification is positively related to psychosomatic and musculoskeletal complaints (Franke, 2015). The level of effect is even beyond the level of work intensity. Franke (2015) described work intensity as a state where employees were forced to draw their mental and emotional resources in order to fulfil high workload.

When employees are demanded to finish extra tasks and responsibilities, they experience work overload and less break time. This may result in poor work performance and reduced family time (Burchell *et al.*, 2005). Work intensity is the requirement to work at very high speed and to tight deadlines while work intensification is the increased workload for each worker. This shows that workers suffer more from work intensification.

Studies done by Apple (1986) and Ozga and Lawn (1981) show that labour process is constrained by its progressive intensification which involves three interrelated dimensions of workload, time and social relationships. When employees are given extra workload, they will hold on to their primary goals in order to concentrate on their secondary goal, which is to cope with the work intensification itself (Broeck, Cuyper, Witte & Vansteenkiste, 2010). As a result, employees will perform unprofessionally when they are executing their tasks. Working standards and quality will be reduced sharply as their main purpose is to finish their assigned tasks. Therefore, work intensification can also affect the performance of the employees.

Apart from that, Burchill *et al.* (1999) suggested that pressure levels at work can strongly affect the quality of work. Some management might be concerned about the pressure levels of employee and the problems of work intensification. However, they have to realize that supportive relationships between line managers and employees may not be able to solve the problem because the management never addresses the root cause of work intensification which is reduced staffing levels. Reduction in staffing levels is undertaken by senior managers in response to the market pressures by their competitors and stakeholders. Due to the fear of losing the job or the position in the company, workers have to accept higher work demands that are causing higher work intensification. Similarly, this problem also occurs in the

academic context with the high level of redundancies existing in employment and the belief among academics that they will obtain a less rewarding job if they are made redundant. Subsequently, this would cause a long-term negative effect for academics such as low motivation and high turnover intention.

One way to prevent those long-term negative effects is for the top management of the university to enhance work-life balance policies and increase work engagement. This is because work intensification has also been associated with high levels of work-life imbalance (Macky and Boxall, 2008; Chuan-Chiew *et al.*, 2018; Smith *et al.*, 2018). It is also considered as the most significant predictor of work to-family conflict (Ozutku *et al.*, 2013; Sirgy & Lee, 2018) and work-life balance (Boxall and Macky, 2014; Smith *et al.*, 2018). Walter's (2011) survey results show that about 51 percent of American employees reported that an increase in responsibilities or extra hours at the office has negatively affected their well-being and work-life balance. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents agreed that they would not be able to sustain their current workload long-term. In the case of academics, when they have to work longer hours at the office and have lesser off time, many are forced to make special and expensive arrangement for additional childcare. Longer working hours and pressure at work have also been repeatedly found to predict work-family conflict (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005). Despite all the identified negative impacts associated with work intensification, it could also bring certain positive effects such as higher pay, better promotion opportunities, high economic output, increased tax receipts, and a reduction in welfare expenditure (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000).

Going back to the recent developments in the HEIs context, this study has employed Korunka and Hoonakker (2014) work where work intensification is defined as the rising levels of work demands during normal working hours and the potential

for work to invade private life through demands on personal time. As noted earlier, work intensification is likely to happen among academics in Malaysia. Academics are now expected to produce more research output and teach longer hours with more students without any increase in real wages (Azman, Pang, Sirat & Md. Yunus, 2014). Thus, it is hard for academics to experience positive work-life balance and therefore, they may have higher turnover intention (Masuda *et al.*, 2012). A review of literature relating to work-life balance will be discussed in the following section.

2.4   Work-Life Balance

The concept of work-life balance was first introduced in the nineteenth century when workers and unions successfully campaigned against long working hours in factories (Bosworth & Hogarth, 2009). The campaign for a maximum cap on working hours was also mentioned in pioneering studies in the field of work-life balance during the early twentieth century (Myers, 1924). In 1938, the United State government introduced the Fair Labour Standards Act with a maximum workload of 44 hours per week (US Department of Labor, 2013). The reduction in working hours, by emphasising the role of motivation and human relations, may improve productivity (Malik *et al.*, 2010; Noor & Maad, 2008). In the 1980s, organizations began to introduce family friendly policies, such as telecommuting and flexible scheduling. Managers of big companies became aware of a greater need and desire of female employees to balance the relationship between family and work. They follow the same line of argumentation in promoting a win-win situation for both sides. The argument is a balanced relationship between work life and private life reduces work intensification, increases the quality of life and therefore reduces the turnover intention.

Although the policies were originally focused on women, nevertheless they also support men's needs. In the late 1980s, work-life balance began to concentrate more on the development of effective recruitment or retention policies (Frame & Hartog, 2003). Work-life balance is still the main focus for a country on their policies development even until present day (2018). As an example, in recent years, Malaysia government has been keen in promoting work-life balance by encouraging flexible working arrangement for the employees in Malaysia (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2018).

Work-life balance has important consequences on employee attitudes towards their company as well as the well-being of employees (Scholarios & Marks, 2004). Thus, it is important to understand the concepts of work-life balance. However, it should be added that defining the concept of work-life balance is a complex task, as it can be viewed from the meaning of 'work', 'life' and 'balance' (Deery, 2008). "Work" in this context can be considered as paid and unpaid work for an employer. This is distinguished from "life" which refers to non-work, family time, and free time spent on leisure activities (Lowry & Moskos, 2008). "Balance", in the context of work and life, does not refer to an equal weighting of the two, but rather an acceptable criterion to stabilize the relationship. The desired point may differ considerably between employee's needs or employer's demands (Guest, 2002).

Work-life balance can also be understood through work-life conflict of its negative relationship (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2009). Work and life constructs are the two most crucial aspects of an individual living as they often conflict with each other (Ackers & El-Sawad, 2006). The challenges of integrating these two aspects of life are huge and complex. This has become part of every working individual in their daily living. This is also why individuals and

organisations are making efforts to reconcile balance between work domain and life domain by reducing the incompatibilities in between (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Greenhaus and Foley (2007), the importance of work-life balance to employees cannot be overlooked because when employees struggle to juggle their work and family lives, their families and work will be negatively affected (Gurney, Emslie & Macintyre, 2007).

On the contrary, the term "work family balance" was introduced in recent years to refer to the specific issues that arise when men and women are trying to balance their working life with their family life. It reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter role phenomenon (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Work-family balance and work-life balance are two different concepts. Work-life balance focuses on the health and life style that arise from work, whereas Work-family balance refers to specifically how work and families intersect and influence each other. Given the context and setting of the current study, the concept of work-life balance is preferred over that of work-family balance.

Work-life balance refers to the ability of individuals, regardless of age or gender, to equally engage in work and family responsibilities together (Guest, 2002; Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw 2003; Virick, Lily, & Casper, 2007). This means balancing work and other commitments (hobbies, travelling, family and etc.), other than just concentrating on paid work (Frame & Hartog, 2003). Similarly, Dundas (2008) suggested work-life balance as effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and leisure and recreation. Haa *et al.* (2014) viewed work-life balance as individual's perception of how well his or her life roles are balanced. However, this study preferred the definition

of Wong and Ko (2009) which proposed work-life balance in a working context as people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as a norm to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society. This definition is more relevant to the context of Malaysia HEIs.

It is important to know that practising work-life balance does not mean that the employee is giving up paid work for family life. Nonetheless, it is defined as the level of satisfaction of involvement of the working men and women in the multiple roles in their personal life (Hudson, 2005). There has been an increasing interest in the conflicting demands of work and family roles, and the effect of that conflict on both organizations and employees in the past two decades (Allen *et al*. 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Generally, work-life balance is associated with the equilibrium between the amount of time and effort a person allocates in their paid work-life and family life (Clarke *et al.*, 2004).

Many studies (e.g. Eby *et al.,* 2005; Moore, 2007; Malik *et al.*, 2010) have reported the importance of work-life balance in an organisation as it does not only lead to improving company productivity, but it also results in greater company loyalty and lowered intention to leave the organisation. Past research and literature (e.g. Forsyth & Polzer-Debruyne, 2007) reported that employees' work-life balance will alleviate high level of turnover intention which in turn reduces the level of turnover (Byrne, 2005; Deery, 2008; Deery & Jago, 2009; Noor & Maad, 2008; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Malik *et al.*, 2010; Chuan-Chiew *et al.*, 2018). In the academic sector, talent retention is a very significant concern whereby work-life balance is important to increase productivity while lowering academics' turnover intention (Johari, Yean & Tjik, 2018).

For many employees, the constant work demands have increasingly blurred their aspects of "work" and "life" boundaries, and time and energy for personal life may be continuously eroded (Lewis, 2003). Wortman, Biernat and Lang (1991) viewed academics more likely than other professionals to having issues in maintaining an effective work-life balance as their work is essentially "open-ended" and involves a wide range of roles which potentially are competing against working demands (Fisher, 1994; Byrne & Barling, 2017). Austin and Pilat (2000) similarly confirmed that the potential of work-life conflict is inherent in academic work. Winefield *et al.* (2003) also found that the majority of academics surveyed reported conflict between work and home commitments. Thus, universities should introduce family-friendly practices to overcome the issues (Shahzad, Rehman, Shad, Gul & Khan, 2011).

Family-friendly practices can be classified into three broad subsets (Ferrer & Gagné 2006; Glass & Finley 2002): family support practices, flexible arrangement practices, and parental leave practices. Family support practices include a set of services which are provided by the university management for academic staffs such as nurseries and canteens, so that they can better meet their obligations within the university. Flexible arrangement practices include all policies that allow academic staffs greater flexibility in working time and place. And finally, parental leave practices are all practices that reduce working hours to provide time for family care-giving. All these practices seek to contribute to work–family balance and it can be managed in many ways.

Ogbonna and Harris (2004) explored the responses of academics and the ways in which they seek to cope with the comprehensive changes to their labour process and the diverse nature of frequently conflicting demands that these have imposed. In other words, academics believe that they have identified their own coping strategies to

achieve work-life balance (Kossek, Baltes & Matthews, 2011). A review of literature relating to coping strategies will be presented in the following section.

2.4.1 Coping Strategies

According to Person-environment Fit theory (Edwards, Caplan & Van Harrison, 1998; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; French, Caplan & Harrison, 1982) an employee's level of work-family stress is affected by three sets of factors. They are; firstly, accessibility of resources, secondly, the extent and intensity of work and family demands, and thirdly, the use of adaptive strategies (Pitt-Catsouphes, Matz-Costa, & MacDermid, 2007). For instance, Quick, Henley and Quick (2004) have suggested that employees need to take an active role in managing their own work responsibilities, family obligations and self-imposed expectations by understanding the source of the demands that lead to conflict, making appropriate choices and using a range of strategies. Similarly, this study used Haar's (2006) definition which defined coping strategies as management of work and family roles in response to work-family conflict.

Coping strategies are often used by the employees to reduce conflict and enhance balance (Byron, 2005). They are an "individual's cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Coping strategies are also the ways an individual, group or organization use to minimize the effects of stress (Belal *et al*., 2009).

Murthy and Shastri (2015) suggested several methods and techniques the employees have inculcated in maintaining the balance between their professional and personal issues. These techniques are meditation and hobbies for maintaining their