AN ANALYSIS OF WORK AND NON-WORK PATTERNS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC SECTOR WORKPLACES: A MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH

By

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between the work and non-work lives of Malaysian public sector employees. The study sought to analyse how the interface between work and non-work life is influenced by both organisational contexts as well as the broader social and cultural context of Malaysia. As the research in the context have been under-investigated and the research subject usually adopts a single-level of analysis, therefore, this study is based on a multi-level analysis examining the interaction between the macro level (role of the State), meso level (the role of the organisations), with micro level influences (such as the individual's religious and cultural values) and how, in turn, these factors affect the ways in which employees organise their work and non-work lives. The research is conducted in three organisations and includes 71 in-depth interviews. Each organisation chosen reflected different workforce compositions in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and religious backgrounds. A multi-level perspective demonstrates how structural factors are significant when examining how actors are either enabled or constrained in their ability to manage the relationship between work and non-work. The findings of this study demonstrate that the State, organisations (through their different working practices, working hours and organisational cultures), religious and cultural values as well as the range of familial, communal and institutional supports influence how employees organise their work and non-working lives. Within the Malaysian context, religious and cultural values emphasise the dual commitment of work and non-work lives for employees. Thus, the study highlights how this context affects management's decisions and employees' expectations and experiences. This study also found that work/non-work life approaches vary at the meso level because of different organisational contexts. Finally, the nature of the relationship between work and non-work varies according to the strategies which workers adopt. Variations of work/non-work integration identified among workers in the study demonstrates that some achieve partial to full integration, whereas others either experience conflictual relations between work and home, or develop strategies to segment work and non-work. Thus, the study identified different degrees of satisfaction and dis-satisfaction with the relationship between work and non-work. Hence, work/non-work integration can be best viewed as a continuum. A multi-level examination of macro-, meso- and micro levels can provide critical learning points for policy makers and employers aware of the need to find culturally appropriate ways to enhance work/non-work integration as well as to alleviate the harmful effects of work/non-work conflict.

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List of Abbreviations

8MP	Eighth Malaysia Plan
9MP	Ninth Malaysia Plan
AMO	Assistant Medical Officer
COLA	Cost of Living Allowance
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CUEPACS	Congress Union of Employees in Public Civil Services
CUSTWU	Custco Workers' Union (pseudonym)
HOCWU	Hospico Workers' Union (pseudonym)
HR	Human Resources
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IWE	Islamic Work Ethic
LSC	Letter of Service Circular
MBJ	*Majlis Bersama Jabatan* (Workers-Management Joint Council)
MQLI	Malaysian Quality of Life Index
NIOSH	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
G.0	General Order
O&G	Obstetrics and Gynaecology
PWE	Protestant Work Ethic
SC	Service Circular
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UNTES	Unico Union-Related Body for Teaching Staff (pseudonym)
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A.	United States of America
WFCD	Women, Family and Community Development
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WLI	Work/Non-Work Integration

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is aimed at examining how Malaysian public sector employees approach their work and non-work lives. Adopting a qualitative case study inquiry approach, this study utilises a multi-level analysis which focuses on examining the interaction between the macro level (role of the State), meso level (the role of the organisation and union in the emergence and development of work/non-work policies as well as how the nature of work and the organisation of working time affect work and non-work patterns), with micro level influences (such as the individual's religious and cultural values) and how, in turn, these factors affect the ways in which employees organise their working and non-working lives. Research on work/non-work spheres is important to organisations, individual workers, families and societies as they can affect organisational/worker performance as well as non-work life functioning (Noon & Blyton, 2007). These factors are also important markers of societal well-being and can be used as a platform for harmonious employment relationships.

1.2 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Work and non-work integration has become a specific research theme in the West as the number of females in the labour force and dual-earner families have increased and the strains of multiple sphere participation as well as the need for active management of the work/non-work spheres have become more apparent (Kirchmeyer, 1995). However, the majority of the research on the relationship between work and non-work spheres tend to adopt a single-layered approach which entails examining either the micro-,

meso- or the macro level, but not the interaction of all three levels (Daud, 2010; Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2010; Yusuf & Ahmad, 2009; Hill *et al.*, 2007; Lu *et al*., 2005). Increasingly, researchers such as Warhurst *et al.* (2008) and Grzywacz *et al.* (2007) contend that a multi-layered approach which combines analysis of the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, is more appropriate in examining how workers manage their work/non-work lives, especially in a national context. Hence, a multi-level approach is used in this study to examine how workers manage their work/non-work spheres, looking at the influence of the macro level - the role of the State, the meso level - organisational factors and the micro level - individual workers' perspectives, and the related influence of religious as well as cultural values on workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work lives management.

Workers' work/non-work needs are not homogenous or static. Workers, depending on their gender, age, marital status and life-cycle stage, are required to fulfil a variety of roles and responsibilities. Such roles and responsibilities exist alongside their work roles and responsibilities. As each sphere places its own demands on workers, the provision of appropriate work/non-work policies in the workplace is important. However, it is difficult to state definitively what workers desire in terms of family accommodations or what they view as being appropriate work/non-work policies. It is reported that the establishment of suitable work/non-work policies at the workplace produces motivated and satisfied workers which, in turn, leads to enhanced productivity which benefits employers (Coussey, 2000). To address these complex issues it is important to establish the nature of the relationship between work and non-work lives. For example, whether work and non-work lives stand in opposition, competing for time and attention, draining energy and evoking conflict or if employees draw on their experiences in each sphere of life to enrich the other parts of their lives in a process of integration. An important consideration in this assessment is the degree of diversity in the ways people approach their working and non-working lives. As such, it is important to consider differences and similarities across gender, life-cycle stage, age, ethnic group and religion. Ethnicity and religion are important considerations within the context of Malaysia as a multi-religious and ethnically diverse society. This study seeks to

examine how these values influence people's perception of their work and non-work lives. It is evident that religious and cultural values have critical implications on workers' attitudes towards their dual commitment to work and non-work responsibilities. While work/non-work conflict in association with cultural values from the Asian perspective has attracted the interest of many researchers (Hassan *et al.,* 2010; Lu *et al*., 2006; Yang *et al*., 2000), research on the influence of religion on work/non-work integration in the Malaysian context is still noticeable absent. Reed and Blunsdon (2006) examined the influence of religious and cultural perspectives on work/non-work roles and found that collectivism influenced workers in Asia to be more focused on family commitments (Rowley *et al*., 2010, Lu *et al.,* 2005; Yang *et al.,* 2000). The limitation of existing literature in that religious and cultural influences are not given consideration and thus, a multi-faith context presents an opportunity to investigate whether religious values influence workers' attitudes towards the management of their work/non-work lives.

Studies also show that workers' ways of managing their work/non-work spheres differ according to organisation type as well as social and cultural values, and country (Blyton *et al.*, 2006; Houston, 2005; Kossek & Lambert, 2005). Research shows that in addition to the broader cultural and religious influences, organisational factors play a crucial role in facilitating the management of work and non-work lives (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Warhurst *et al*., 2008; Blyton & Dastmalchian, 2006; Cowling, 2005; Bond, 2004; Glass & Estes, 1997). These factors include how working time is organised (Ford & Collinson, 2011; Blyton & Dastmalchian, 2006; Cowling, 2005); the nature and provision of policies to facilitate work and non-work life (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Poelman & Sahibzada, 2004); and the way in which organisational cultures influence the potential take-up of these policies (Kossek *et al*., 2010; Bond, 2004). In this study, the organisation of working time is a very important feature due to the nature of work in the three organisations involved in this study. Many workers who work long hours do so because they want to, regarding work not as being debilitating but as affirming (Cowling, 2005; Isles, 2004). The interaction between work/non-work life integration in relation to hours worked and workload pressure, in the Malaysian

context, has yet to be investigated. Bohle *et al*. (2004) contended that work intensification was an issue for permanent workers who worked inconsistent hours and that more stable and more controllable working hours appeared to diminish work/non-work conflict. However, the extent to which longer working hours and managerial control over workers' working hours affect the way in which workers' manage their work/non-work life integration has yet to be empirically investigated in the Malaysian context.

Meanwhile, Lewis (1997; 2001) argues that organisational culture is a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness of work/non-work policies. A supportive organisational culture accommodates workers' work/non-work lives through a variety of supports namely: organisational support, e.g. work/non-work policies and practices; accommodating superiors and co-workers; and occupational support, e.g. flexible jobs (Md-Sidin *et al.,* 2010; Clark, 2001; Allen, 2001; Thompson *et al*., 1999). This questions the role of the organisational structure and culture in supporting or impeding Malaysian workers' integration of their work/non-work lives and the differences in the way workers manage their work/non-work lives. Many studies (Nord *et al*., 2002; Coussey, 2000) have shown the positive effects of the integration of work/non-work spheres on employers and organisations, but research has not fully examined how workers successfully achieve such integration.

Research based in Western countries report that in addition to the role of organisation, unions are also positively associated with the existence of work/non-work policies (Heery, 2006; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Ackers, 2003; Turnbull, 2003). However, the role of the union movement is constrained in the Malaysian context due to suppression by government legislation (Kuruvilla, 1996). More importantly, since the Malaysian Government is reported to be endeavouring to attract more female workers to participate in the labour market, it needs to provide more work/non-work policies to support this group at work (Hassan *et al,* 2010; Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010). However, without support from unions and organisations at the meso level, the Government, as the State-employer, has limited influence on work/non-work

integration within the Malaysian public sector workplace. This poses the question of the extent of the influence of unions in promoting work/non-work policies at the national and organisational level.

Most studies which have analysed work/non-work issues have employed a single-layered approach - the focus has been either on the micro-, meso- or the macro-level, but not the interaction of all these three levels (Ren & Foster, 2011; Craig & Powell, 2011; Daud, 2010; Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2010; Hassan *et al.*, 2010; Yusuf & Ahmad, 2009; Hill *et al.*, 2007; Samad, 2006; Lu *et al.*, 2005; Bohle *et al.*, 2004). As many scholars have observed, existing work/non-work literature over-emphasised on the individual level of analysis (see Casper *et al.,* 2007) and are predominately focused on the situation in Western countries (Bardoel *et al.*, 2008). Additionally, despite the rising interest in work/non-work research in the Asian context, this topic is still under-researched in the Malaysian context. As there is a need for more research in countries with diverse cultural contexts (Poelmans, 2005), it is important to examine the relationship between work and non-work lives and the different work and non-work integration patterns amongst employees in the Malaysian public sector. Utilising a multi-level approach facilitates better understanding of the reasons why individuals have specific work/non-work integration patterns and different work/non-work life experiences.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research aims to examine the relationship between the work and non-work lives' of employees in the Malaysian public sector, to elicit the attitude of public sector workers towards work/non-work arrangements, and investigate the influence of beliefs and values on workers' attitudes on their work/non-work lives, utilising a multi-level approach. As the largest employers in the country, public sector organisations have pioneered work/non-work arrangements which can be emulated by private sector organisations. Such arrangements are however still at the early stages, and organisational as well as workers' awareness of them and work/non-work related issues is also believed to still be at a rudimentary level. Further, as work/non-work

management in Malaysia is an under-researched area, it is the aim of this study to gain better understanding of the present situation of the work/non-work lives of workers in the Malaysian public sector context. Moreover, since the Malaysian Government is focused on the implementation of work/non-work policies in the public sector, there is a need for more research on countries with diverse cultural contexts (Poelmans, 2005). Hence, the main objective of this research is to explore the understanding, provisions and practices of work/non-work life in selected Malaysian public sector workplaces. The second objective of this research is to examine the effect of organisational factors on workers' management of their work/non-work spheres. The third objective is to analyse the underlying factors that influence workers' prioritisation of their work/non-work spheres. The fourth and last objective of this research is to examine workers' management of their work/non-work spheres. To achieve these research objectives, the following research questions were formulated.

1.   To what extent have the State, unions and management influenced the emergence and the development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector organisations involved in this study?

2.   How do organisational factors such as the nature of work demand and the organisation of working time affect workers' work and non-work patterns?

3.   To what extent do cultural and religious values as well as diversity across gender and life-cycle stage influence workers' views and attitudes towards their work/non-work responsibilities?

4.   How do workers manage their work/non-work spheres? What are the factors that influence the different degrees of prioritisation and integration?

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to gather data on workers in the Malaysian public sector. The data collection process comprised two phases: a

preliminary stage and a case study phase. At the preliminary stage, six public sector organisations participated in the research which was aimed at identifying the range of work and non-work provisions and policies offered to employees, the workforce composition and union involvement in the development of these provisions. Three case studies were then selected for further analysis on the basis of each organisation having different facets of diversity and willingness to participate in the study. Six Human Resource (HR) managers and four union officials were interviewed during the preliminary stage and seventy-one workers were interviewed during the case study phase. Workers' characteristics were reviewed in terms of age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, religion and occupation level. The research methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

1.5 CHAPTER CONTENTS

By adopting a multi-level approach to examine how Malaysian public sector workers manage their work/non-work lives this study found that in order to enhance work/non-work arrangements the Government, as a policy maker at the macro level, and public sector organisations, as implementors and deliverers of services to the people, need to be more proactive. As the Malaysian society is known for being highly collective and strongly upholding the interests of the extended family (Hassan *et al*., 2010), appropriate institutional supports (organisational and government) are expected to be made available in the workplace. Additionally, familial (spouse and family) and communal supports (neighbours and paid help) are also expected to be available outside the work environment. In the context of this research study, it must be stated that the gender ideology as suggested by Korabik *et al.* (2003) is somewhat different in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society like Malaysia, as workers do not only expect support from their organisations but also from their family and the community.

At the meso level, organisational support is important not just to enhance the work/non-work policies introduced by the government but is also considered an essential resource or coping mechanism since it is able to reduce the negative effects of stressors and the level of work/non-work conflict (Bond, 2004; Hopkins, 2005; Valcour & Hunter, 2005). In this study, the ability to manage work/non-work integration is crucially influenced by the availability or absence of appropriate provisions at work. Hence, organisational factors are important to ensure the integration of workers' work/non-work lives. The three organisational cases considered in this study provide some important contextual dimensions whereby the organisation of working time was seen to contribute the most to workers working long hours. The reason why workers worked long hours and experienced work intensification was due to the nature of their work demands – reactive and unpredictable time demand; under-staffing; as well as the different management approaches to working time. The evidence provided in this research not only suggests that work practices can influence workers' work/non-work lives, but also indicates that workers' work/non-work lives can also be affected by organisational characteristics.

This study also found that religious and cultural values influenced workers' attitudes towards their dual commitment to work and non-work responsibilities. Their attitudes to commitment to work and obligation to their employer in terms of performing good deeds, being respectful, and showing loyalty to their employer were perceived as being part of their accountability to and worship of God. The 'good values' inculcated by religious and cultural believes and practices were not just limited to workers views of being committed to work, but also influenced workers' attitudes on commitment to their non-work lives, i.e. family responsibilities – nuclear and extended family and spiritual wellbeing.

This study also focuses on how public sector employees manage their work/non-work lives within the different contexts and multiple influences. Work/non-work life approaches vary at the meso level because of the influence of different organisational norms. The nature of the relationship between work and non-work spheres vary

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according to the strategies adopted by the workers. This is influenced by the variety of supports available, at an organisational level, the degree of family and community support, as well as the nature of work demand and life-cycle changes. Thus, the variations and diversity across and within cases can be best viewed as a continuum.

The contents of the thesis are now described. The introductory chapter explains the rationale for the study, the research objectives and research questions. Chapter Two focuses on evaluating the literature on the relationship between work/non-work spheres. The first section presents the conceptualisation of work/non-work life while the second section explains the management of work/non-work life, with emphasis on work/non-work life management from the individual perspective, the role of organisation and trade union at the meso level, and the State at the macro level. Finally, the need for multi-level perspectives in analysing work/non-work issues is discussed.

Chapter Three outlines the rationale for using a qualitative approach in data collection, details the research objectives and research questions and describes and discusses the methodology used in investigating the complex relationships between work and non work spheres amongst employees in the Malaysian public sector. The research design is based on a case study of three public sector organisations. Research methods are also discussed, including sampling, interview schedules, data gathering and data analysis. This is followed by methodological considerations and discussion of ethical considerations.

Chapter Four describes and discusses the macro level role of the State as a policy maker in the development of work/non-work arrangements for public sector employees. This chapter also discusses the context of the study in terms of the geographical location of the research. It also provides in-depth profiles of the six initial organisations examined for assessment of the overall work and non-work provisions within the public sector organisations in this region of Malaysia. Additionally, there is a more detailed examination of the three case studies selected, Unico, Hospico and Custco, including a profile of the trade unions in the three organisations.

Chapter Five focuses on Unico and examines how Unico employees manage their work and non-work lives. This chapter explores the interaction of the organisation and the influence of religious and cultural values on employees' attitudes towards work and non-work life. It also includes assessment of the influence of the organisation with respect to the nature and degree of support for work and non-work integration in the policies and practices promoted and implemented, as well as the ways in which working time is organised in Unico. This chapter will also examine employees' attitudes towards work and non-work life and the related influence of religious and social values in Malaysia. Finally, the chapter details how employees at Unico manage these two spheres.

Chapter Six focuses on the situation in Hospico and how Hospico workers manage their work/non-work spheres. Separation of work and non-work life spheres is seen as necessary by the management due to the nature of most jobs in Hospico which involves the provision of emergency care. As such, the relationship between work and non-work life is complex, especially when the reactive nature of work demands and under-staffing result in work intensification and workers having to work long hours. Additionally, work/non-work provisions were relatively low, particularly there was no on-site crèche in workers' housing quarters or in the workplace. In this context, religious and cultural values as well as the range of supports, including familial, communal and organisational were found to have a significant influence on Hospico workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work lives and the way they managed their work/non-work lives.

The discussion in Chapter Seven revolves around work/non-work life at Custco. The chapter encompasses an assessment of the influence of the organisation with respect to the nature and degree of support for work and non-work integration in the policies and practices promoted and implemented, as well as the ways in which working time is organised. The Custco management perceives work/non-work arrangements to be an important agenda. As certain jobs in Custco have high work demands, the management takes care of the workers' work and non-work spheres by providing and implementing

beneficial work/non-work arrangements. The nature of most jobs and under-staffing in Custco contributed to workers experiencing work intensification and having to work long hours resulting in complex work/non-work life relationships. In this context, religious and cultural values influenced the workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work lives. Additionally, this chapter discusses the variations and diversity in how the Custco workers managed their work/non-work lives.

Chapter Eight discusses the key findings from across the three organisations studied. This chapter focuses on examining the interaction between the macro level (role of the State), meso level (the role of the organisation) and micro level influences (such as religious and cultural values) and how, in turn, these factors affect the ways in which employees organise their work and non-work lives. This chapter discusses the variations and diversity across and within the three cases and how these variations in work/non-work integration can best be viewed as a continuum.

Chapter Nine concludes this thesis and presents the key empirical and conceptual contributions of the study with regard to the examination of employees' work and non-work lives. Additionally, methodological reflections and limitations of the study are acknowledged and practical/policy implications suggested to encourage future research on work/non-work issues.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the rationale for this thesis which examines the management of work/non-work spheres in the context of Malaysian public sector employees. The research objectives and questions have also been presented and an outline of the contents in each of the chapters in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

EXPLAINING THE NATURE OF WORK AND NON-WORK SPHERES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines how public sector employees in Malaysia manage to integrate their work/non-work lives by analysing the role of the State as a policy maker and employer in facilitating integration, as well as examining how religious and cultural values influence employees' attitudes to work and non-work in multi-ethnic context. Work and non-work integration has become a specific research theme in the West as the numbers of females in the labour force and dual-earner families has increased and the strains of multiple sphere participation as well as the need for active management of the work and non-work has become more apparent (Kirchmeyer, 1995). However, the majority of the research on the relationship between work and non-work tends to adopt a single-layered approach which entails examining either the micro-, meso- or the macro level, but not the interaction of all three levels. Increasingly, researchers such as Grzywacz *et al.* (2007) and Warhurst *et al.* (2008) contend that a multi-layered approach which combines an analysis of the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, is appropriate for examining how workers manage their work/non-work lives in a national context specifically. A multi-level approach will be used in this study to examine how workers manage their work/non-work spheres, looking at the influence of the macro level - the role of the State, the meso level - organisational factors, and the micro level - individual workers' perspectives which is influenced by religious, social, as well as cultural values on workers' work/non-work management. The role of the State is particularly pertinent in this study because the State is the employer as well as policy maker.

Accordingly, this chapter will first focus on the concepts of work and non-work life as well as the management of work/non-work life at the individual level. This will be followed with the discussion on the management of work/non-work life by looking at the role of the organisations, trade unions and the State. Finally, the need for multi-level perspectives in analysing work/non-work issues will be discussed.

2.2 THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF WORK AND NON-WORK

Lambert and Kossek (2005:515) define work/non-work relations as 'a focus on the relationship between work and personal life'. Thus, to evaluate the relationship between work and non-work lives, this section will discuss the concepts and linkages between work and non-work lives for organisations, families and societies.

2.2.1 Work

Work is usually conceived of as involving paid work as Geurts and Demerouti (2003:280) note work is 'a set of (prescribed) tasks that an individual performs while occupying a position in an organisation'. One of the main issues, when looking at what constitutes work, is the inclusion or not of work performed in various contexts such as the home (housework) or, in voluntary association (community/voluntary work). 'Work' is normally perceived as 'formal paid employment' or 'market work' or 'work that is performed in return for a wage' (Ransome, 1996; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). This study defines work as paid work, unpaid extra hours and the time taken travel to and from work. To better understand how work affects the rest of life, it is important to analytically examine the relationship between workers' activities of paid work and the rest of life beyond the workplace.

2.2.2 Non-Work Life

One of the most used labels in the work/non-work field is work-family, indicating that there are two life domains, work and family. In most developed nations, family has primarily been defined as the nuclear family with two adults with children at home. The focus is mainly on how the working parent(s) manage to balance work and family responsibilities in terms of child development and of family functioning in house work tasks (see Poelmans, 2005). This view is not without limitations. First, the extended family is not systematically taken into consideration. Whereas the close family may be a well-functioning unit, work can impact the extended family relationship and vice-versa. Second, the focus is often on children at home so that having adult children is not fully considered. Nonetheless, the relationships between parents and children do not stop so that working couples with adult children may still have their adult children in mind when evaluating the functioning of their family. Third, the focus has been clearly on couples (single or dual-earner), but less on single parenting as well less on couples without children and even less on singles. Significantly, each one of these units may be perceived by the individual in focus as 'a family'. It is thus important to consider the context in which individuals see and define the family.

'Non-work' or 'life' is generally taken to be a thing that lies outside the realm of formal paid employment, but which falls inside the realm of family or home life (Ransome, 2007: 377) as well as to activities and obligations beyond one's own family situation (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003: 280). Thus, this study defines non-work as life outside the formal paid employment and consisting of caring responsibilities for family/extended family, the activities outside paid work, including household and spiritual activities, activities with family and friends and community activities.

2.2.3 The Relationship Between Work and Non-Work Life

Beyond the definitions and conceptualisations of work/non-work domains and to understand the relationships between them, it is crucial to review how both domains interact through three concepts namely segmentation, compensation and spillover.

Segmentation

The concept of segmentation contends that work/non-work spheres, i.e. family life, are often physically and temporally separate since, traditionally; men assumed the role of breadwinner and women the role of homemaker (Ackers, 2003; Clark, 2000). Thus, work/non-work spheres are viewed as operating independently and were segmented. Also known as the Theory of Separation (Fletcher & Bailyn, 2005), the concept of segmentation originally viewed work/non-work as two spheres separated in time and space due to the inherently different functions they serve (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). This concept views the world of separate spheres as natural, however, the assumptions embedded in this image have implications for the task of work redesign to achieve equity and effectiveness (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996:174). Such that work and non-work are constructed as a dichotomy whereby the spheres are socially constructed as separate and discrete and are differently valued. Moreover, the skills and attributes associated with each are set in opposition and deemed inappropriate when practised in the opposing sphere. This means that having skills in one sphere almost certainly disqualifies one from being good in the other (Fletcher & Bailyn, 2005). Further, entities in a dichotomous relationship to each other are unequally valued as Fletcher and Bailyn (2005: 175) indicate:

"*Skills associated with public sphere work are seen as signs of competence and value to society, and as an important part of one's identity. Skills associated with private life, in contrast, are seen as just 'natural' and are undervalued, whether paid or not paid.*"

In brief, this concept is based on the principle that the work/non-work domains are two different domains independent of one another. Segmentation occurs when domains have distinct structures so there is no interference between the two. The division of domains in time, space, thoughts and functions enables individuals to compartmentalise their life. This view of work/non-work spheres is perceived to be the result of an active choice of the individual (see Clark, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Compensation

Compensation Theory views workers as individuals who are seeking greater satisfaction from their work or family life as a result of being dissatisfied with the other (Lambert, 1990). In terms of work involvement, this theory suggests that individuals who are not involved in their work will seek involvements outside of work. Also, those who are highly involved in the work role are unlikely to seek additional involvement outside their work. In brief, compensation refers to the means through which one individual seeks support in one domain in order to fulfill a lack in the other (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). For example, when autonomy is missing at work, one can look for activities other than work enabling one to be autonomous. Compensation may be reactive when one remediates in the satisfying to undesirable experiences occurring in dissatisfying domain.

Spillover

Spillover is a process by which workers' experiences in one domain affects their experiences in another domain (Hart, 1999). It refers to the effects of work and family on one another that generate similarities between the two domains. These similarities are usually described in terms of work and family effect, values (i.e. the importance ascribed to work and family pursuits), skills, and overt behaviours. Spillover occurs when the events of one environment affect the other (Glowinkowski & Cooper, 1986). According to Spillover Theory, workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and

behaviours from their work role into their family life and vice versa (Lambert, 1990). Theoretically, spillover can be perceived as positive and negative (Lambert, 1990). On one hand, it can be characterised as similarity between a construct in the work sphere and a distinct but related construct in the family sphere and exemplified by a positive association between work and family satisfaction. On the other hand, spillover may be described as experiences transferred intact between spheres as when work fatigue is displayed at home.

Looking over the three concepts, it is evident that compensation and spillover are in opposition to segmentation (see Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). As compensation and spillover acknowledge that work/non-work domains are interdependent and related. Such interdependency may lead to one domain influencing the other. The two theories explain how influence takes place considering that one domain (often work) is depletive or unsatisfying and the other (often non-work) is restorative or satisfying.

These three concepts suggest a relationship exists between the work and non-work spheres as a result of looking at whether the boundaries of work and non-work interact. As such, they remain the main concepts used in the literature to theorise the relationship between work and non-work life. Specifically, Spillover Theory is the predominant conceptualisation used to explain the work/non-work conflict which will be discussed in Section 2.2.4.2. Overall, work and non-work life are not separated but make a whole. Both may be demanding and restorative. However, understanding how boundaries interact requires a more comprehensive account of the complex interplay of interests, expectations, opportunities, personal choices and material constraints which shape the relationship between work and non-work life which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.4 Work/Non-Work Relations

The notion of 'work/non-work' relations is extensively used in the literature with its different collocations, i.e. work-life balance (WLB), work-life conflict (WLC), work-life integration (WLI) (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001; Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Milliken & Dunn-Jensen, 2005; Blyton *et al.*, 2005). The notion of 'work/non-work' relations recognises that there are more than work and non-work domains in people's lives. Thus, this section discusses how work/non-work domains relationships have been conceptualised.

2.2.4.1 Work-Life Balance (WLB)

The term 'work-life balance' is widely used in the press, in public discussion, and by organisations attempting to be 'family friendly' (Greenhaus *et al.,* 2003; OECD, 2001). For many authors, the term refers to a harmonious interface between different life spheres (Frone, 2003). The most common definition is '… a lack of conflict or interference between work and family roles' (Frone, 2003: 145). WLB has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002:255). The articulation of work and life, cast as WLB, has become a key feature of much current government, practitioner and academic debate (Eikhof *et al.*, 2007). It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal life's roles (Broers, 2005). Dundas (2008:7) argues that work-life balance is about 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. The ability to balance between workplace's needs and personal life's needs is perceived as an important issue among workers globally.

In theory, however, the construct of 'balance' is not clear as it seems (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Balance refers first to an absence of conflict or quasi absence of it, which when conducting measurement is not simple to define the minimum level of conflict. Then, it refers to the notion of equality in time and efforts that one uses and displays in both domains. This relates to the definition of WLB as the 'extent to which individual equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family roles' (Greenhaus *et al*., 2003:513). However, research shows that seeking balance is rare and that imbalance between the different roles does not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction. Ford and Collinson's (2011: 269) study of UK public sector managers found that 'in contemporary WLB debates tensions arising from conflicting demands, pressures and anxieties are not given sufficient consideration'. Their study suggested that contradictions emerge because work, home and other responsibilities are so often inter-connected that attempts to separate and compartmentalise them are highly unlikely to be successful and may even be counter-productive. As such, they report that the notion of WLB does not exist for a number of respondents in their study, because they are obsessed by work and career progress. For some, work is a drain on their lives and they need it to change. Consequently, a series of jolts from life-changing events caused a number of respondents to move in one direction or the other: either towards greater levels of involvement with their family and social lives or with more attention to work and longer hours.

Some workers experience work and life as separate and balanceable (Eikhof *et al*., 2007). For other workers, work and life are intertwined, even amalgamated, so that they cannot or do not want to distinguish and disentangle work and life (see for example Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006; Warhurst *et al*., 2008). Generally, the WLB debate assumes that individuals have too much rather than too little work - a debilitating long working hours culture is said to be pervasive and as such work is claimed not just ruling but ruining workers' lives (Warhurst *et al*., 2008). Work is assumed to have a negative impact on life. However, closer examination of the central concern, lengthening working hours, indicates that this assumption is too simplistic. Importantly,

it should be recognised that the premise of a harmful long hours culture is misconceived; even more so when worker attitudes to any long working hours are examined. Analyses of working hours suggest that work might be a source of satisfaction for some workers, or at least positive gain. Many workers who do work long hours do so because they want to, regarding work not as debilitating but affirming (Cowling, 2005; Isles, 2004). Despite some of the claims made, Warhurst *et al.* (2008) argue that workplace practices feature remarkably little in current WLB debates. Instead, the solution is said to be rolling back work in order to provide remedial opportunity for workers to recover from work. The common premise is that WLB provisions are introduced to help employees reconcile what they want to do (care) with what they have to do (work). However, WLB programmes ignore the possibility that work can also be a source of satisfaction and self-fulfillment and some workers are looking to devote more time to non-work activities and interests, including their families and leisure time (Warhurst *et al.*, 2008; MacInnes, 2005).

Based on the overview of some of the issues overlooked in the WLB debate, a more nuanced approach to conceptualising work and life is required – of the complex relationship between work and non-work life that goes beyond the current assumptions of WLB.

2.2.4.2 Work/Non-Work Conflict

When the emotional and behavioural demands of work and non-work roles are incompatible, participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). According to Spillover Theory, a positive relationship is proposed between work and non-work roles to the extent that satisfaction or dissatisfaction in one role spills over into the other (Bond *et al.*, 1998). However, the awareness that the interface between the two domains of work and non-work may constitute a major problem for workers, families, organisations and societies has grown since the industrialisation period (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). Industrialisation

resulted in a major segregation of roles between workers and non-workers, with 'work' being spatially, temporally and, to some extent, socially distinct from 'non-work' (e.g. family, community, religion, politics and education) (Wilensky, 1960). Such segregation creates assumptions around commitment and competence that impede not only work/non-work integration but also work effectiveness.

As paid work is increasingly invasive in contemporary Western societies (Taylor, 2002; Lewis *et al*., 2003), and is spreading progressively to non-Western societies with globalisation the challenges of meeting the incompatible demands of work and non-work life can result in work/non-work conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The degree of work and non-work conflict has been particularly evident in employees with caring responsibilities in Western societies (Bond, 2004) as well as Asian countries (see Aryee, 1992; Ahmad, 1996). In these cases, employees are unable to meet the increasing demands of their work responsibilities and their non-paid caring commitments. There is a large body of literature examining the predictors and outcomes of work-life conflict based on the definition given by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985: 77): 'a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect'. This definition stresses the bidirectional relationship. Family can interfere with work and work can interfere with private life. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), there are three specific types of conflict: time-based, when involvement in one role is impeded by time pressures in the other; strain-based, when performance in one role is affected by tension in the other; and behaviour-based, when fulfillment of the requirements of one role is made more difficult by the behaviour required in the other. Work/non-work conflict also increases as a result of unsupportive organisational policies and cultures (Collinson & Collinson, 1997), high work expectations, and excessive long working hours (Craig & Powell, 2011; Bohle *et al*., 2004). If an organisation supports the segmentation culture, paid work and non-work responsibilities are seen as separate entities and without organisational support, it will create conflict for workers.

Work/non-work conflict occurs when an individual has to perform multiple roles that require time, energy and commitment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). One of the consequences of the inability to integrate work and non-work demands is the increasing level of work/non-work conflict experienced by parents in employment (Erickson *et al.*, 2010). The study by Ren and Foster (2011), for example, examined the work/non-work conflict experienced by female cabin crew in a Chinese airline. Drawing on questionnaires and interviews with female employees and managers, Ren and Foster explore work–family conflict and gendered organisational perceptions of women's needs. Their findings suggest that work rather than family-related factors are the most influential causes of conflict for Chinese women. Traditional family roles and paternalistic cultures that shape familial relationships prove important in explaining these differences, but they also highlight the significant role played by gendered organisational cultures.

Whereas, a cross-cultural study of work/non-work conflict and wellbeing between Taiwan and the UK by Lu *et al.* (2005) demonstrates the influence of national contexts. The study found that there was a stronger relation between workload, sharing household chores and work/non-work conflict among British than for Taiwanese. With globalisation, many multi-national corporations have invested in Taiwan and workers are becoming more exposed to stressful Western and industrialised work situations. With rising women's labour participation, more Taiwanese are experiencing conflict between the demands of work and family, especially as family life is traditionally highly valued in Chinese society. Meanwhile, Yang *et al.* (2000) conducted a comparative work/non-work study and found that Americans and Chinese view work and non-work differently, due in large part to differences in societal conceptions according to the spectrum of individualism-collectivism. Despite the significant contribution of comparative work, the importance the inter-play between macro- and meso levels influences are rarely included in these studies.

In Malaysia, research related to work/non-work life, for example, the impact of marital status on work/non-work life has not been thoroughly investigated, since studies often

include married workers only (Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2008; Samad, 2006), or single parents (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Ngah *et al*., 2009). The study by Ngah *et al.* (2009) found that single mothers aged 40 years or above experienced less work/non-work conflict as childcare responsibilities decreased with children's increase in age. Meanwhile, a study by Samad (2006) on married working women in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia also found that family and job satisfaction tended to decrease workers' work/non-work conflict. However, the limitation of these studies is that the authors only examined women and focused on marital status (such as single worker with or without dependent), and yet important features of Malaysian society such as ethnicity and religion were not discussed. Furthermore, by looking at the individual perceptions per se is not sufficient to explain the complex relationship of work/non-work integration.

A more contemporary viewpoint holds that 'work' and 'non-work' are no longer separate domains but are interrelated. Despite this changing perspective of work/non-work spheres is related to the changing composition of the workforce, many workers still experience work/non-work conflict (Blyton *et al*., 2006; Gignac *et al*., 1996). This would suggest that the relationship between work and non-work requires further examination.

2.2.4.3 Work/Non-Work Integration (WLI)

Recognising the preoccupation with conflict perspectives within the work/non-work literature has heralded increased interest in exploring the positive interactions between work/non-work roles as the neglected side of the work/non-work interface (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Grzywacz *et al.*, 2007, Hill *et al*., 2007; Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011). Some scholars criticise the concept of balance and prefer the concept of work and personal life integration or interaction (e.g. Warhurst *et al*., 2008). They argue that the term WLB implies that work and life are distinct spheres and that time should be split equally between work and private life. Rapoport *et al*. (2002) point out that people

may have differing priorities in that regard, and that the aim is not always an even balance between the two. It can therefore be contended that WLI is 'employment based on emergent new values, which does not discriminate against those with caring or other non-work responsibilities, and which provides an opportunity for people to realise their full potential in work and non-work domains' (Lewis, 1996:1). WLI is also perceived as "individuals 'successfully' segmenting or integrating 'life' and work so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less strain or stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands" (Blunsdon *et al*., 2006:2). For example, Clark (2000) notes that not everyone wants to integrate the domains of work and family/personal life. On the contrary, some people balance their work and personal life by keeping the two strictly separate. As such, positive family-to-life spillover may be greater during certain life stages, such as the early years of marriage or when children start school. Recently, work-family enrichment and work-life facilitation concepts have stressed the positive interdependencies between work and life, noting that work can also benefit private life and vice versa (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

Beyond the definitions and conceptualisation of work/non-work life domains and to understand the relationships between both domains, it is crucial to review how work/non-work domains managed. It seems that the WLB debate perceives work as negative, with long working hours a particular problem and that non-work life can be equated with caring responsibilities, most particularly childcare, with the result that women are the primary target of work/non-work provisions. Additionally, it is highly questionable whether work and non-work life do constitute separated spheres; rather, there is mutuality between the two. Thus, this study adopts the term of 'work/non-work integration' (WLI) whereby the process to achieve it can be facilitated and/or conflicted (work/non-work conflict) in order to achieve a satisfying quality of life.

A range of supports to allow the integration of work and home include familial (family and spouse), communal (neighbour and private help) and organisational (employer /

immediate superior and provisions provided by the employer) (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011; Md-Sidin *et al*., 2010; Van Daalen *et al*., 2006; Dale, 2005; Huang, 2006). Thus, examining these 'supports' are important because they contribute to how workers experience potential conflict or a more integrated approach to work and non-work life (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011; Warhurst *et al*., 2008; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1988) and influence how workers' pattern their work and non-work lives. In order to understand how workers manage their work/non-work lives, it is necessary to examine workers' work/non-work patterns – the structural factors that shape them.

According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), structural factors can influence individual's work/non-work lives – such as the employment relationship, markets, and industries, can influence individuals' work/non-work lives and be both enabling as well as constraining. These factors provide a framework for indicating how workers accommodate work and non/work life. Firstly, work/non-work patterns depend on the economic, cultural and social supports of an individual. An individual's monetary support, for instance, can buy additional time for work (for example by hiring a nanny) or, for non-work life (for example by enabling part-time employment). An individual's cultural resources such as educational attainment can also affect work/non-work patterns through employment opportunities. Additionally, social supports such as extended families or social networks shape work/non-work patterns through, for example, meeting childcare needs. Secondly, the structural context of paid work also influences work/non-work patterns through the terms and conditions of employment, such as flexible working time or shift working hours. According to Hyman and Mark (2008) and Henninger and Papouschek (2008), such working time can create precarious work/non-work patterns and negative work/non-work experiences. As such, the availability or absence of work/non-work arrangements can also affect work/non-work patterns. Thus, how workers manage their work/non-work life depends on a number of structural factors which are largely absent from the current work/non-work literature.

Prominent in the research on non-work life support are studies on spousal support. In the non-work sphere, support comes from various sources, such as spouse, extended family members and friends, to enable individual workers to manage their work/non-work spheres (Md-Sidin *et al.,* 2010). A study by Md-Sidin *et al.* (2010) on quality of life in Malaysia, found that the role of social supports such as supports from spouse and supervisor have a significant positive relationship with quality of life. However, other factors such as organisational supports (other than supervisor support), the role of management to enhance the implementation of work/non-work provision and the implication on workers' work/non-work integration are not discussed and analysed. In order to be able to achieve work/non-work integration, support from the family is significantly important (Dale, 2005; Huang, 2006). A study of Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers in the UK by Dale (2005) and Taiwanese workers by Huang (2006) indicated that their societies' collectivistic culture made it easier for them to obtain support from family member who tended to have a sense of obligation to support and assist other family members. Other sources of support, such as help from grandparents, friends, neighbours and paid domestic help, are a less frequent topic of research (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011). This raises a question: to what extent do organisational and social supports aid the work/non-work integration among multi-ethnic and multi-religious workers in Malaysia?

2.2.4.4 Alternation to Work/Non-Work Life

According to Warhurst *et al* (2008), workers alternate the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. For example, Coffey (1994) indicated that the pressure to demonstrate commitment by working long hours was strongest in the early stages of a career. As such, the concept of alternation focuses on the different work and life priorities which can change specifically across the life-cycle and can be influenced by different logics. For example, Warhurst *et al.* (2008) suggest that the relationship between work/non-work life can be examined by looking at context specific logics – for work this is likely to be the importance of work for earning a wage,

but for life there can be a multitude of logics such as friendship and the unconditional love of family members. This approach helps us understand how workers' work/non-work lives are shaped through alternation. According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), depending on the work and its context, the logics of work and non-work can coexist without interference, allowing workers a fairly frictionless alternation between the two distinct spheres. Hence, an understanding of different life-cycles and the range of priorities to work and/or non-work is crucial in this study. Life-cycle is viewed as 'the dynamic nature of family roles and circumstances as families and individuals move through their lives' and 'the changes in roles, relationships and responsibilities over time produce corresponding changes in family needs, resources and vulnerabilities' (Higgins *et al.*, 1994:144). Thus, analysing the life-cycle stages of workers will indicate their differing needs to integrate their work/non-work lives.

In the West, so-called 'empty-nest'[1] workers have been found to be performing meaningful work but do not want to work long hours or expose themselves to inflexible demands in their work role responsibilities (Bond *et al.*, 2005; Moen *et al.*, 2000) and thus seek flexible work hours (Erickson *et al.*, 2010). In a study conducted by Higgins *et al.* (1994), workers' life-cycle stages were categorised according to how many dependent children they had of specific ages. Workers without care responsibility were not included in the categorisation as they were expected to have less work/non-work conflict compared to workers with children, particularly young children. It was assumed that having no care commitment, workers would be able to manage their work/non-work life. Meanwhile, in a study by Erickson *et al.* (2010), workers were compared across the full spectrum of family life except those with parental/sibling care. 'Workers with parental and sibling commitments' is a categorisation not found in Erickson *et al.* (2010) and Higgins *et al.* (1994). Although studies by Higgins *et al.* (1994) and Erickson *et al.* (2010) indicated that family structure influenced the way workers managed their work/non-work lives, their studies did not consider single

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[1] Empty nest is a situation when parents or guardians may feel lonely when one or more of their grown up children leave home (Erickson *et al.*, 2010).

workers as they were assumed to have less work/non-work conflict. This raises the question of whether workers without children do not experience work and non-work life conflict. Is there any difference in the way this group perceives and experiences work/non-work life compared to other groups?

The next section will discuss on how people's lifestyles i.e. religious and cultural values can influence workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work management.

2.3 MANAGING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MICRO LEVEL – INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

This section will discuss how individual workers at the micro level experience their work/non-work lives. As such, this section will emphasise the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work lives.

2.3.1 Attitudes to Work/Non-Work Life

This section will discuss how individual workers at the micro level experience work and non-work and discuss how religious and cultural perspectives inform employees' attitudes to and management of their work/non-work lives.

Although the literature on work/non-work life and its relationship with religious values is under-researched in the West, the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) portrays work as a means of gaining salvation and workers are expected to act selflessly for a greater good (Parboteeah *et al*., 2009; Chusmir & Koberg, 1988). A study by Reed and Blunsdon (2006) investigated whether religion affects attitudes to work/non-work roles, particularly beliefs about the appropriateness of mothers engaging in employment outside the home. Drawing from a large set of international data from 34 countries, Reed and Blunsdon found religion affects attitudes to work/non-work roles. They also found that attitudes affect behaviour, with more traditional attitudes associated with a tendency for women not to engage in outside employment. In Malaysia, while there is a

diversity of religions, the majority of the people are Muslim. The limitation of the existing literature is that religious and cultural influences are not given consideration and thus, a multi-faith context presents an opportunity to investigate whether religious values influence workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work lives.

In Malaysia, most national policies concerned with human resource and productivity, particularly among public sector workers, are not only based on economic development per se but also on positive values infused by religious beliefs. This can be seen from the Malaysian Government's efforts to emphasise a positive work ethic, efficiency, productivity and discipline in public sector organisations through its national policies and approaches, such as the New Economic Policy, National Development Policy, Vision 2020 Policy, the 'Inculcation of Islamic Values' programme, Islam Hadhari and the most recent '1Malaysia'[2]. Such policies and approaches are also accompanied by the emphasis on positive family and non-work life values espoused in the 'Happy Family', 'Family First – Bring Your Heart Home' and 'My House My Paradise' campaigns.

Following the Malaysian 'Inculcation of Islamic Values' national policy and Islam Hadhari in public administration which emphasises the need for balance in physical and spiritual development, most organisations hold frequent religious talks and promote Islamic awareness and ethical values among workers. Through the 'Inculcation of Islamic Values' policy, workers in the public sector are encouraged to emphasise the core values of trustworthiness, responsibility, sincerity, dedication, diligence, clean conduct[3], cooperativeness, moderation, honour and gratitude in order to uphold integrity, efficiency and performance at work (Endot, 1995). These values stem from religious teachings, particularly Islam. Islam Hadhari emphasises civilisation, consistent with the tenets of Islam, with a focus on enhancing the quality of life through

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[2] '1Malaysia' is a concept introduced on September 16, 2008, under Malaysia's sixth Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, which strongly emphasises national unity, ethnic tolerance, and government efficiency. The eight values of 1Malaysia as articulated by him are perseverance, a culture of excellence, acceptance, loyalty, education, humility, integrity, and meritocracy.

[3] 'Clean' from any wrong doing.

mastery of knowledge and the development (physical and spiritual) of the individual and the nation as a whole. The Malaysian Government through its '1Malaysia' policy, also promotes a positive work ethic among workers, encouraging them to be conscientious and loyal to the employing organisation. Additionally, the implementation of work and non-work policies, e.g. free annual ticket for workers and their family to visit their home town (*balik kampung* policy) if working outside the region of origin, indicates that the Government seeks to promote the values of loyalty to family member among workers, not only to encourage their productivity at work but also to produce a caring society. Such policies also show how the Government integrates religious and social values with notions of organisational citizenship in order to encourage workers to be conscientious and loyal to their employer and family. This creates a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context whereby job features are imbued with religious, social and cultural and economic values. However, how Government policies impact on workers' attitudes towards their work and non-work spheres is still unknown.

Hofstede (1994) described the Malaysian national culture as collectivist. Collectivism focuses on group-oriented relationships, activities and goals, whereas humane orientation emphasises taking care of other people's needs. Indeed, Malaysia was ranked first in terms of humane orientation in the Global Leadership and Organisational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study (Javidan & House, 2001). These cultural values have profound influences in molding Malaysians' characteristics, which are group-oriented, valuing group harmony, avoiding confrontation, and respecting the elderly and authority (Abdullah, 1996). These cultural values may also influence how Malaysian workers perceive and experience work/non-work lives. However, Jones (2007) and McSweeney (2002) have illustrated that Hofstede's work is static and provides an over-generalised account of national qualities which does not take into account the diversity of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society like Malaysia (Asma & Lim, 2001; Md. Zabid *et al*, 1997). As such, Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) note that we must be aware that not all individuals or even regions with

subcultures fit into this characterisation. Thus, this study seeks to develop a more complex examination of the motivations of Malaysian workers which accepts diversity in terms of age, gender and life-cycle position. Additionally, this research examines whether employees' management of work and home are influenced by their religious and cultural values.

According to Casper *et al*. (2007), the work/non-work literature has over-emphasised the individual level of analysis and as a result, we have little understanding of how meso and macro level influences individual workers' work/non-work lives. Therefore, the next section will discuss the role of organisations and trade unions in influencing workers' work/non-work lives.

2.4 MANAGING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MESO LEVEL – THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE UNIONS

This section will discuss the role of organisations and trade unions at meso level in the light of work/non-work life agenda.

2.4.1 The Role of the Organisations

The ability to manage work/non-work interactions is crucially influenced by a number of factors that include how working time is organised, the nature and provision of policies to facilitate work and life, and the way in which organisational cultures influence the potential take-up of these policies. Hence, organisational factors are important to ensure the integration of workers' work/non-work lives. These factors will now be assessed in turn.

Working Hours

The issue of work and non-work integration is influenced by the increase in women's labour market activity, dual-earner parents, childcare responsibilities conflicting with employment demands (MacInnes, 2008), the increase in long work hours and additional hours worked at home (MacInnes, 2008; Blyton & Dastmalchian, 2006), and

unpredictable overtime to meet extended work schedules (Hyman *et al.*, 2003). There are many reasons for long work hours, for example, the need to earn a living, attachment to work, job commitments, job security, career advancements, an organisational 'long work hours' culture, an increase in workers' expectations, and a growth in workload and work pressure. Additionally, some working hours are not recorded as work time since they are worked at home. When work is brought home, this not only contributes to long working hours but also blurs the boundaries between work and non-work spheres (Blyton & Dastmalchian, 2006). Moreover, when roles in the work and non-work spheres are perceived as separate entities, the tendency for conflict between roles in both spheres is higher. In Asia, although studies by Ren and Foster (2011) suggest that work rather than family-related factors were the most influential causes of conflict for workers, Hassan *et al.*'s (2010) study found family interference with work is higher among workers. Malaysia is perceived as a high collectivistic society whereby work life is usually supported by family members.

In many developed countries, to support employees achieve a better fit between work and non-work lives, work/non-work arrangements have been established such as flexible working time, homeworking, part-time working hours and state assisted nursery places. According to OECD (2001), one of the key indicators used to indicate work/non-work integration is the opportunity for workers to elect to work less than full time. Thus, part-time hours are one option to deal with the double load of childcare responsibilities and work responsibilities. In Australia, it has, however, been reported that working part-time often brings with it a loss of control over working hours that does not confer work/non-work flexibility. It can, on the contrary, result in unpredictable long working hours (Pocock, 2001). This shows that despite efforts to design work/non-work arrangements to fit people's lives around work, such efforts may in fact, result in workers working long hours.

For the individual, working long hours can mean an increase in stress, and potentially create work/non-work conflict. Long work hours cultures are said to be pervasive and as such work is claimed to be ruining workers' lives instead of ruling (Warhurst *et al.*,

2008). The amount of time that people spend at work will have a strong influence on work/non-work integration. The more time spent at work the less time available for participation in non-working life. Long working hours reduce the opportunities for socially productive leisure by restricting time available 'for being an effective marriage partner, parent and citizen' (Golden & Figart, 2000: 26). Existing research indicates that long weekly hours and involuntary overtime have a negative effect on work–life balance (Berg *et al.*, 2003) as it reduces the quality and quantity of workers' participation in family and social life (Pocock, 2001; Pocock & Clarke, 2004). People working long hours report lower levels of satisfaction with their hours of work and their work–life balance than other workers (Watson *et al.*, 2003: 87). However, closer examination of the central concern, lengthening working hours, indicates that this assumption is too simplistic. Importantly, it should be recognised that the premise of a harmful long hours culture is misconceived; even more so when worker attitudes to any long working hours are examined. Analyses of working hours suggest that work might be a source of satisfaction for some workers, or at least positive gain. Many workers who do work long hours do so because they want to, regarding work not as debilitating but affirming (Cowling, 2005; Isles, 2004). Hence, to what extent the interaction between work/non-work life integration and hours worked and workload pressure in the Malaysian context has yet need to be investigated.

Significantly, research on full-time shift workers indicate that it is the low control over work hours which leads to greater work/non-work conflict (Pisarski *et al.,* 2002). There is evidence indicating that work/non-work conflict arising from long or socially undesirable working hours, particularly in the evening or on weekends, has negative effects on health (Cowling, 2005; Bohle & Tilley, 1989). Bohle *et al*. (2004) contended that work intensification was an issue for permanent workers who work inconsistent hours. Additionally, Bohle and his colleagues also contended that more stable and more controllable working hours appeared to diminish work/non-work conflict. However, the extent to which longer working hours and managerial control over workers' working

hours affect the way workers' manage their work/non-work life has yet to be empirically investigated in the Malaysian context.

Organisational cultures

Work/non-work conflict also increases as a result of unsupportive organisational policies and cultures, high work expectations, and excessive long working hours. The increase in time spent in work results in a decrease in time spent with children (Glass & Estes, 1997). However, if an employing organisation through its working and organisational culture supports workers' caring responsibilities despite high work requirements, it will help to reduce work/non-work conflict. This is where the structural factors can be a barrier or enable work/non-work lives to be accommodated. To what extent do workplaces enable employees to accommodate their work/non-work lives depends on how successful the integration of work/non-work spheres at workplace level. Evidence indicates that policies designed to assist work/non-work conflict can promote employee behaviour that is beneficial to the firm. For example, researchers have found that 'family-friendly' policies can result in improvements in return to work after childbirth (Squirchuk & Bourke, 1999), retention rates (Squirchuk & Bourke, 1999), morale and productivity (McCampbell, 1996) and absenteeism (Kossek & Nichol, 1992).

Lewis, (1997; 2001) argues that organisational cultures are a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness of work/non-work policies. Researchers (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Bond, 2004) demonstrate that work/non-work conflict is reduced when the organisational culture is supportive. Supportive organisational cultures accommodate workers' work/non-work lives through variety of supports namely: organisational support, e.g. work/non-work policies and practices, supportive superiors and co-workers; occupational support, e.g. flexible jobs (Thompson, *et al*., 1999; Clark, 2001; Allen, 2001; Md-Sidin *et al*., 2010). These supports are considered an essential resource or coping mechanism since it is able to reduce the negative effects of stressors and work/non-work conflict.

Although the most common source of support at work originates from supervisors, co-workers and organisational policies (Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2010), according to Glass and Estes (1997), the provision of an on-site creche appears to have little effect on either family or organisational functioning and does not affect absenteeism, depression or work/non-work conflict. In contrast, the adoption of work/non-work policies such as schedule flexibility reduces tardiness, absenteeism and turnover (Coussey, 2000). Flexitime typically requires working throughout the core hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Workers must also obtain supervisors' consent before they change their start and finish work hour. As many organisations strive to develop more supportive cultures through the implementation of work/non-work policies, it is the immediate superior's attitudes and behaviours that often determine workers' perceptions of organisational support. Moreover, a sympathetic supervisor is shown to have positive effects on workers, decreasing health problems and work/non-work conflict (Valcour & Hunter, 2005). House (1981) shows that a supportive organisational culture can enhance health and well-being directly, regardless of stress levels. The assumption that support has a direct effect proposes that everybody benefits from high levels of support (House, 1981). Furthermore, supportive cultures can help employees cope with job demands such as long hours, shift work, frequent travel or job pressure (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Examples of private-life demands are care responsibilities for older relatives and children. These demands are not necessarily negative when adequate supports exist to meet them (Moen & Chermack, 2005; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). 'Social support could mitigate or buffer the effect of potentially stressful objective situations (such as a boring job, heavy workloads, unemployment) by causing people initially to perceive the situation as less threatening or stressful' (House, 1981: 37–38).

Allen (2001) suggested that the availability of family supportive benefits might be indirectly related to work/non-work conflict through the perceived family supportiveness of the organisation. Her results indicate that workers who perceived the organisation as less family supportive experienced more work/non-work conflict and

less job satisfaction than employees who perceived their organisation as more family supportive. However, research by Bond (2004) found that while the level of perceived availability did not have an impact on WLB, organisational culture such as supportive superior was significantly associated. She found that a more supportive organisational culture was associated with less work/non-work conflict for workers. Increased take-up of work/non-work life policies was associated with increased work/non-work conflict. Her findings indicate that policy provision is not adequate enough to alleviate work/non-work conflict since even where take-up of provision is good, work/non-work conflict is still experienced. This indicates that without a supportive work/non-work life organisational culture, the provision of arrangements in themselves will not necessarily lead to better WLB outcomes. These findings are also confirmed by Allan *et al.'s* (2007) study which found work/non-work conflict increased as a result of unsupportive organisational cultures where there are high workload pressures and long working hours, and where employees have weak control over their workload and are unable to take time off. The culture of long working hours which characterises many organisations and occupations is one of the causes of work/non-work conflict (Lewis, 1997; Frone *et al*., 1997; Piotrkowski *et al*., 1987). In Malaysia, average working hours per week in 2004 was 47.4 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2005). Meanwhile in 2011, a study by Regus, of the world's largest provider of flexible workplaces, found that 32 per cent of Malaysian workers worked on average 9 to 11 hours per day and 15 per cent of workers worked more than 11 hours continuously per day (The Borneo Post, 2011). This suggests that organisational cultures play an important role in influencing Malaysian workers ability to integrate their work/non-work lives.

As a whole, work/non-work life policies at work help employees to combine paid work and non-work life responsibilities. They enable individuals to cope with multiple demands to limit work/non-work conflict. From an organisational viewpoint, it is not only a way to reduce stress and increase employee satisfaction and commitment but also a means to attract and retain employees (Sutton & Noe, 2005). The previous overviews show that organisational cultures can both enable and constrain workers'

access to work/non-work integration (Grzywacz *et al.,* 2007; Warhurst *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it is important to analyse how organisational structures and cultures can support or impede Malaysian workers' integration of their work/non-work lives and how workers manage their work/non-work differently.

2.4.2 Trade Union Involvement

Although Gregory and Milner (2009) contended that unions are relatively marginal actors in the process of introducing and implementing the work/non-work agenda, and that employer-led initiatives often place them in a defensive position, research (Heery, 2006; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Turnbull, 2003) in the West has demonstrated that the existence of a trade union can improve the provision of work/non-work practices. Workplaces with one or more recognised trade union were significantly more likely to have parental leave, paid family leave, childcare and job sharing policies than workplaces with no recognised union (Budd & Mumford, 2004). Research by Dex and Smith (2002) indicated that workplaces with a recognised union were more likely to have adopted work/non-work working arrangements, especially those of parental leave, paternity leave, job share, flexi-time, workplace crèche and emergency leave, than those with no recognised union. Additionally, Bardoel *et al*. (1999) and Glass and Fujimoto (1995) found unions to be associated with several work/non-work benefits. The explanation for this lies in the increased bargaining power which enables trade unions to negotiate on work/non-work issues. These studies demonstrate how strongly unionised workplaces have a greater frequency of work/non-work policies and trade unions facilitate workers' knowledge and use of existing benefits by providing them with information through various channels.

However, the role of trade unions in developing the work/non-work agenda in developing countries, particularly Malaysia, still needs to be investigated especially since the union movement in Malaysia is somewhat restricted by legislation (Aminuddin, 2009; Kuruvilla, 1996). Although the trade union movement in Malaysia is considered strong by Southeast Asian standards (Sharma, 1996), unionism is

suppressed due to State policy (Aminuddin, 2009; Kuruvilla, 1996). A country's industrialisation strategy for economic development profoundly influences its industrial relations (IR) and human resource (HR) policy goals. Kuruvilla's (1996) study on four Asian countries, namely, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and India, found that import substitution industrialisation[4] (ISI) was associated with IR and HR policy goals of pluralism and stability, while a low cost export-oriented industrialisation (EOI) strategy was associated with IR and HR policy goals of cost containment and union suppression. In Malaysia, IR stability is linked with political stability, and union federations are not permitted to engage in political action (Kuruvilla & Erickson, 2002). There are basically three categories of unions in Malaysia: public sector employees' unions, private sector employees' unions, and employers' unions. In the private sector, legislation restricts the role of Malaysian unions in collective bargaining and the Industrial Relations Act prohibits workers from negotiating items deemed managerial prerogative, i.e. transfers, promotions, layoffs, retrenchments and job assignments (Aminuddin, 2009; Ramasamy & Rowley, 2008; Kuruvilla, 1996), which ensures that disputes regarding these subjects do not result in conflict.

The public sector consists of the civil service, statutory bodies and local authorities. The public sector is large, and problems tend to be specific to a particular department or ministry. Wages and other terms of service are discussed at the national level between the government and the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Service (CUEPACS). One significant difference between public sector unions in Malaysia and their counterpart in the private sector is that they are not involved in collective bargaining. This process of negotiation between unions and employers to improve the terms and conditions of workers' service does not apply in the public sector. Instead, terms and conditions of service for public sector workers are made

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[4] ISI is a trade or economic policy that advocates replacing imports with domestic production, on the principle that countries should reduce their foreign dependency through local production of industrialised products to create self-sufficient economies (Kuruvilla & Erickson, 2002; Kuruvilla, 1996).

through unilateral action by the Public Services Department and the Salaries Commissions (Aminuddin, 2009). To aid the government's decision-making, the government has appointed Special Commissions and Committees from time to time e.g. Salaries Commissions. Additionally, the 'Management-Labour Council' (*Majlis Bersama Jabatan* – MBJ) was established organisationally and nationally as a mode of negotiation among workers' representative in the public sector and employers in order to discuss any other matter related to workers' welfare and benefits, but the so-called management prerogative is not to be discussed.

Given the Government's restriction of trade unions, this research is motivated to find out to what extent unions, particularly in the public sector, play a role in supporting the work/non-work agenda. Additionally, few studies have examined the role of unions in relation to work/non-work issues in the Malaysian public sector. Although Yusuf and Ahmad (2009) examined the involvement of the Sabah Union of Telecom Employees (SUTE) on collective bargaining arrangements and suggested that management imposed flexi-time to enable workers to integrate their work/non-work lives and thus reduce work/non-work conflict, there has not been extensive research on the range of different public sector unions' influence on the development of a work and non-work agenda.

The next section will discuss the influences of the State at the macro level on workers' work/non-work management.

2.5 MANAGING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MACRO LEVEL - THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Predominantly, research on work and non-work life issues have been analysed from a 'single' level perspective. A single-level focus insufficiently addresses the complex interaction of work/non-work life which requires a multi-level perspective. A multi-level approach has the potential to contribute to an improved conceptualisation and understanding of how work and non-work lives are experienced differently and the range of influences on these experiences. Grzywacz *et al.* (2007) and Warhurst *et al.*

(2008) contend that a multi-layered approach is most appropriate for examining how workers manage their work/non-work lives in a national context as the relationships between individual workers (micro level), organisations/ (meso level) and the State (macro level) are inter-related and interdependent. Thus, it is the aim of this study to examine how Malaysian public sector workers manage their work and non-work lives and how this is influenced by the interaction of these three levels. The advantage of a multi-level perspective is that it captures the range of influences and interactions at different levels in order to examine the complexity of work/non-work relations. Thus, the section below will examine the role of the State in order to understand the nature of managing work/non-work spheres at the macro level.

State policies on work/non-work provisions can play an important role in determining the way workers manage their work/non-work lives (Den Dulk *et al*., 1999; Poelmans *et al.*, 2003). There are different State approaches and these tend to vary according to different theories of State intervention. Factors such as social expectations about men's and women's roles, overall approaches to State–market–family relationships; and family-, gender-, and employment-supportive policies (such as public provisions for maternity and parental leave and benefits, family leave, and tax policies and social programmes that include publicly funded childcare) were found to be important in influencing the way workers managed their work/non-work lives (Korabic *et al*., 2003). According to Korabic *et al.* (2003), a country's gender role ideology has an important role to play in determining their commitment to work/non-work life provisions. They expect that institutional support (i.e. organisational support and governmental support) will be more readily available and extended family support systems less available in countries that are higher on individualism and egalitarian gender–role ideologies. They argued that people in countries with high levels of individualism and more egalitarian gender role ideologies have an enhanced sense of entitlement such that they expect support from their organisations and countries in the form of work/non-work life policies. As Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004: 417) state, "Incongruencies between the country´s involvement in family affairs and companies' apathy for the same issue are

likely to result in frustrated expectations and higher levels of work-family conflict, especially among individuals with a strong sense of entitlement". Hence, the suggestion is that people in collectivistic[5] countries do not expect support from their organisations and instead expect support from their family. This assumption will be examined in the study.

Work-family issues are found in the policy discourse of most Western nations and expressions such as 'family-friendly workplaces', 'flexible workplaces' and 'work-life balance' are now commonplace in the lexicon of industrial relations and welfare policy (Blunsdon & McNeil, 2006). Although some countries already have an established integrated family and employment policy, for example, France and Sweden (Fagnani, 2005; Hardman, 1998), in Malaysia, so-called work/non-work policies are still in their infancy. The Malaysian Government launched the 'Family First' campaign in 2003. One of the major drivers behind the introduction of work/non-work arrangements at the state level in the UK, for example, has been the increased participation of women in paid employment (Dex and Smith, 2002). Work/non-work arrangements are therefore expected to be more available in workplaces with a higher proportion of women. Women have become increasingly involved in paid employment and men have become more involved with the care of the family. In many countries, the increasing labour force participation of women means that the working couple is emerging as the norm rather than the exception. In addition, changes in marriage and divorce patterns are increasing the number of single parents who are the main breadwinners for families. In the Malaysian context, women form a substantial force in the labour market.

In the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) (Economic Planning Unit, 2006), efforts were undertaken to provide an enabling environment to ensure more effective participation of women in national development. Women were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to be more competitive and versatile to meet the

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[5] Collectivistic indicates the degree of social/community integration and indigenous nations tend to be collective where the original culture has not become fractured (Hofstede, 1980). In collectivist cultures, the family is viewed as the most important in-group.

challenges of a knowledge-based economy. Although women's labour market participation in Malaysia has been increasing, from a mere 30 per cent in 1970 (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010) to 49 per cent by 2011 (Economic Planning Unit, 2011), according to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Malaysia is one of the few countries in the Asia-Pacific, where women are still under-represented in the labour market (UNESCAP, 2007; Malaysia Department of Statistic, 2011). Under-utilisation and under-representation of women's participation is influenced by the prevailing societal culture and religious traditions (Omar & Davidson, 2001) whereby cultural norms and traditions influence women to prioritise family commitments (Rowley *et al*., 2010). Hence, the Malaysian Government continuously endeavours to encourage greater female participation in the labour force and socio-economic development of the country. As women's labour market participation is much lower in Malaysia compared to other countries, this may suggest that work/non-work life integration is achieved within households by women working in the domestic sphere.

As the greater involvement of women in the labour market requires a better integration of work and non-work responsibilities, effective labour market policies encompass more than job creation. In Malaysia, measures have been introduced to ensure the provision of necessary support facilities to enable women to enter the labour market. However, despite the Government's effort to attract women to the labour market through the establishment of, for example, flexi-time, extended maternity leave, and extended paternity leave, and encouragement for employers to establish on-site crèches, Subramaniam and Selvaratnam's (2010) study on workers' perception of work/non-work arrangements found a gap still exists between workers' practical needs and the availability of work/non-work arrangements in Malaysia. Due to the single-layered approach in their study, the interaction between the State as policy maker and workplaces as the implementer of work/non-work arrangements was not examined. Hence, the question is raised: to what extent does the State as employer and policy-

maker support and influence the emergence and development of work/non-work arrangements in Malaysia?

Several studies map the instrumental support at a national level, that is, the level and nature of public work/non-work policies: childcare facilities, leave arrangements and policies regarding working hours (Den Dulk, 2001; Kovacheva *et al*., 2007; Saraceno *et al*., 2005). However, less is known about their impact on workers' work/non-work integration. Raghuram *et al.* (2001) found that national differences relating to cultural values impact on the structure of work and adoption of flexible work arrangements. For instance, part-time work is more prevalent in low-power distance (the degree to which unequal distribution of power and wealth is tolerated) and individualistic countries, whereas telecommuting is found more frequently in low masculinity countries such as Norway and Sweden. Additionally, shiftwork has been found to be systematically related with cultural values (low uncertainty avoidance, high power distance, high collectivism), whereas temporary work has not been related with any value orientation (Raghuram *et al.*, 2001). In many developed countries, State policies relating to work/non-work arrangements, such as flexible working hours, job sharing, on-site crèche, longer maternity and paternity leaves, career break, and working from home have been found to help workers' successfully integrate their work/non-work roles and responsibilities (Thornthwaite, 2004, Coussey, 2000, Glass & Estes, 1997). In Malaysia, given the increase in dual-earner households and women's participation in the labour market, the Government as a State-employer provides standard work/non-work provisions to all public sector organisations (see Chapter Four for the details of State's work/non-work provisions) to cater to such groups' work/non-work needs in order to maintain their active contribution to the economy. This raises the question: to what extent does the Government as a State-employer in Malaysia support public sector workers integration of work/non-work spheres?

Work/non-work life management can be manifested through various patterns (Warhurst *et al.,* 2008). Work/non-work integration can be achieved should all the necessary supports be available for workers. Additionally, work/non-work integration also can be

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hindered due to work/non-work conflict. As such, workers can alternate the different needs of their work/non-work spheres at different life-cycle stages. Thus, it is important to analyse how structural factors – the State, organisations, trade unions, range of familial, communal and institutional supports available, can support or impede Malaysian workers' integration of their work/non-work lives and how workers manage their work/non-work differently. Hence, this can be analysed by using multi-level approaches at macro-, meso- and micro level which will be discussed in the next section.

2.6 WORK/NON-WORK STUDY: A NEED FOR MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH

Scholars have produced a substantial body of literature on the intersection of work and non-work lives (Barling & Sorensen, 1997; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Faced with an increasing representation of dual-earner partners and single parents in the workforce, a blurring of gender roles and employee values (Greenhaus & Singh, 2004), researchers have sought to explain the numerous ways in which work and non-work roles are interdependent (Barnett, 1998, 1999; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Lambert, 1990). Edwards and Rothbard (2000) contend that previous overviews have not adequately characterised the nature of the relationship between work and non-work, and rarely are the compelling forces behind various work/non-work linkages specified. As such, this section will discuss work/non-work lives moving from an individual level unit of analysis to a multi-level approach by including meso- and macro level factors. Additionally, a multi-level approach has the potential to contribute to understanding why individuals experience and manage their work and non-work lives in many different ways.

Most studies which have analysed work/non-work issues have employed a single-layered approach - the focus has been either on the micro-, meso- or the macro-level, but not the interaction of these three levels (Ren & Foster, 2011; Craig & Powell, 2011; Daud, 2010; Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010; Md-Sidin *et al*., 2010; Hassan *et al*., 2010; K.Y. Sabariah & Ahmad, 2009; Hill *et al.,* 2007; Samad, 2006; Lu *et al*., 2005;

Bohle *et al*., 2004). As many scholars have observed, the work/non-work literature has over-emphasised the individual level of analysis (see Casper *et al*., 2007). Consequently, we have little understanding of how macro and meso level influences individual workers' work/non-work lives in the Malaysian context. This is relevant given that an individual's work/non-work life can be influenced and facilitated by the role of the State, the nature of the organisations in which they are employed as well as the degree of social supports they can draw upon.

Understanding complex phenomena such the potential for workers' to manage their work and non-work lives requires moving beyond the individual level of analysis (Warhurst *et al*., 2008; Grzywacz *et al.,* 2007). Individuals' work/non-work facilitation is posited to occur when individuals exploit available resources to adapt and accommodate to individual perturbations. Thus, work/non-work integration is conceptualised as a process through which individual and social group development takes place. Additionally, research in non-Western countries remains under-developed. Despite the rising interest of work/non-work research in the Asian context, this topic is under-researched in Malaysia. There is a need for more research in countries with diverse cultural contexts (Poelmans, 2005). As Poelmans (2005) noted, qualitative research in the the study of work/non-work relations is still under-developed.

Generally, studies on work/non-work issues in Malaysia can be classified into two categories: firstly, work/non-work issues from a micro perspective emphasises individual workers' attitudes and; secondly, studies which focus on organisational and trade union policies in relation to work/non-work life integration. However, none of the studies in Malaysia have analysed work/non-work issues at the macro level involving the role of the State in providing work/non-work policies. Although Subramaniam & Selvaratnam (2010) discuss work/non-work policies in Malaysia, their main focus was the availability of such policies at workplace level particularly flexible working arrangements. Although studies of the relationship between work/non-work in Malaysia tends to be conducted at the micro level, there are also studies examining this issue at

the meso level, looking at the role of the workplace (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2011) and union's involvement in WLB (Yusuf & Ahmad, 2009). Study by Subramaniam & Selvaratnam (2011) on 175 employees in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, found that there is still a gap between employees' practical needs and the availability of family-friendly policies at the workplace level. Similarly, Yusuf & Ahmad's study (2009) which was based on meso-level analysis looking at union's involvement in the telecommunication industry found unions to be accommodative to employees WLB. Literature in Malaysia also demonstrates the growing interest in the work-non/work conflict perspective (Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2010; Hassan *et al.*, 2010; Samad, 2006; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2009; Ngah *et al.*, 2009) requires a more nuanced approach with focus on work/non-work integration. Moreover, the influence of religious values in relation to work/non-work is under-researched. How influential religious values can be in relation to the management of workers' work/non-work lives at the micro level is also unclear. Currently, research has not considered the influence of religious values within the adoption and implementation of work/non-work policies at the State and organisational levels and whether these values influence the way workers manage their work/non-work lives.

To analyse the complexity of work/non-work lives requires a multi-layered approach to provide a comprehensive account of the interplay and interaction of macro-, meso- and micro levels. This involves: 1) State influence; 2) organisational level influences such as the organisation of working time, the facilitation of work/non-work in organisational policies, practices and cultures as well as trade unions involvement and; 3) individual level – workers' attitudes to work/non work lives and work/non-work life management.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the overemphasis on the individual level of analysis in the work/non-work literatures (to name a few), both in the Western countries and Asian, including Malaysia.

Figure 2.1

Western and Asian Literatures on Work/Non-Work Relationship and Their Level of Analysis

Micro level
(Erickson *et al.*, 2010; Blunsdon, 2006; Dale, 2006; Higgins *et al.*, 1994)

Meso level
(Heery, 2006; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Bond, 2004; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995)

Macro level
(Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011; Fagnani, 2005; Ackers, 2003)

WESTERN COUNTRIES

Work/non-work Relationship

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Micro level
(Ren & Foster, 2010; Md-Sidin *et al.*, 2010; Hassan *et al.*, 2010; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2009; Ngah *et al.*, 2009; Lu *et al.*,2005)

Meso level
(Subramaniam & Subramaniam, 2010; Yusuf & Ahmad, 2009)

Studies of the relationship between work and non-work tend to focus more on an individual level of analysis or, at the organisational level and/or the State. Hence, a tripartite approach which consists of all actors at the multi-level (i.e. employee, employer/organisation, trade union and the state) in the employment relations system is

deem needed (Aminuddin, 2009). A multi-level analysis consists of examining the micro (individual perspective), meso (organisational perspective) and macro (State perspective) influences on work and non-working lives is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2:

A multi-level perspective on factors influence work/non-work integration
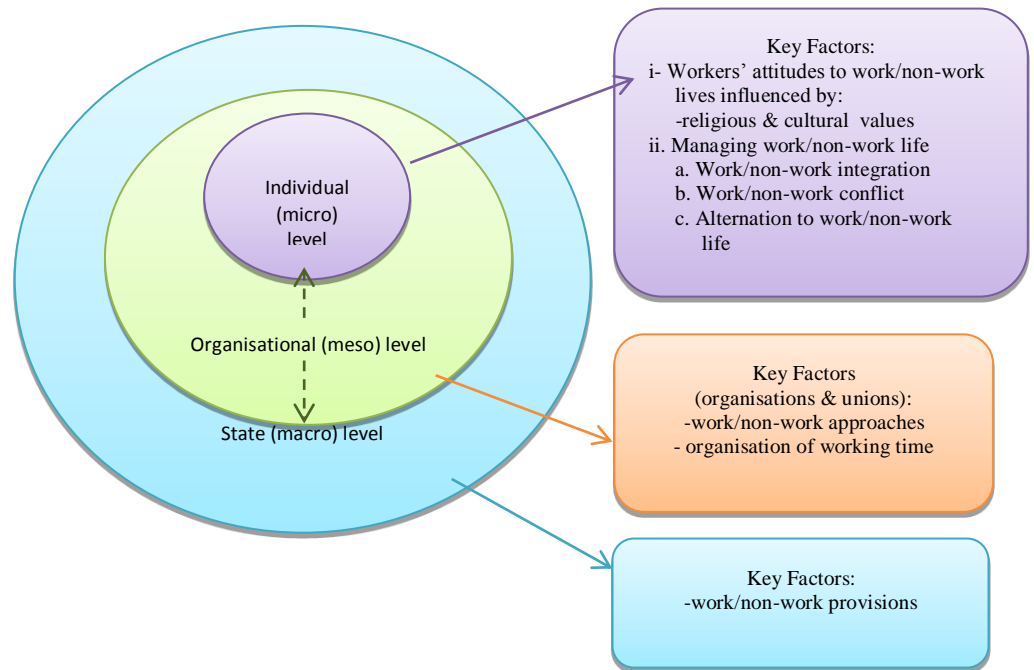
As can be seen from Figure 2.2, the relationships between individual workers, organisation/union and the state are inter-related and interdependent with key influential factors on work/non-work integration at every level. The interaction between the macro level (the role of the State), meso (the role of trade unions and organisations with the key organisational factors) and micro level (individual perspectives through key factors: religious and cultural values influences on workers' attitudes to work/non-work lives; and managing work/non-work life through variety of patterns) – will provide an understanding of work/non-work lives in the Malaysian public sector context which single-layered approach could not provide. Hence, this multi-level perspective will be employed in this study in order to explain the complex nature of

work/non-work management in a multi-ethnic country like Malaysia. Such an approach provides a more in-depth detailed understanding of the influences on Malaysian public sector workers' work/non-work lives than a single-layered approach because the role of the State has been reported to be significant in implementing work/non-work arrangements to cater to the needs of dual-earner households, increased female labour participation as well as to the enhancement of work/non-work integration at the organisational level (Valcour & Hunter, 2005).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide new insights into how Malaysian public sector employees manage their work/non-work lives by using a multi-level approach to examine the interaction of macro-, meso- and micro levels to understand how employees manage their work and non-working lives. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology used to investigate these interactions in Malaysia.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain the qualitative research approach adopted for the study of work/non-work life integration in the context of the Malaysian public sector, discuss the choice of a case study research design and detail the research methods utilised. Additionally, this chapter provides an open account of the realities of collecting data in this context and explains how the data was analysed. Finally, the chapter examines the methodological and ethical considerations raised by the study.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to Bryman and Bell (2003), qualitative researchers express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study. Therefore, qualitative research is concerned with individuals' descriptive accounts of their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things, as well as their behaviour. A qualitative case study design was employed in this study which emphasises the researcher's role as an *active learner* telling the story from the views of participants in the case organisations rather than as an 'expert' passing judgment on participants. The epistemology underlying qualitative research involves two central tenets. Firstly, that face to face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being, and secondly, the researcher must participate in the mind of another human being to acquire social knowledge (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). In the context of this research, how people manage their work and non-work domains and what they perceive their work/non-work life to be depends on the internal and external factors influencing them. In order to gain an understanding of work/non-work lives in a diverse context like Malaysia, it is

necessary to speak to people in their workplace contexts in order to understand how they deal with their work and non-work spheres and compare their reality with existing theory.

Given that the aims of the research were to examine the relationship between the work and non-work lives' of employees in the Malaysian public sector, to elicit the attitude of public sector workers towards work/non-work arrangements, and investigate the influence of beliefs and values on the way they managed their work/non-work lives, I considered these aims could only be successfully accomplished by a qualitative approach to research. Most literature on work/non-work integration are based on research conducted in Western countries, of which a variety of research approaches, designs and methods are used. Research by Bond (2004), Bond *et al*. (2002), Dex and Smith (2002) and Dex and Scheibl (2002) reveals that work/non-work research often utilises a quantitative methods approach employing workplace surveys and independent variable regression analysis more than case studies. However, Bond (2004) states that certain issues like work-family culture are difficult to examine using statistical research. In this study, I was interested in examining people's understandings and interpretations as well as underlying value systems of their work/non-work life management. The question of how many work/non-work life arrangements were provided in organisations could have been answered using statistical / census data. However, qualitative methods is more suited to provide depth answers to understand human experience and their 'story' of work/non-work life as well as the value systems of their work/non-work life management. Furthermore, using a qualitative approach, such as in-depth interviews with key informants, allows the examination of a wider range of issues related to work/non-work practices at the organisation case study level. This is particularly pertinent in this study in order to capture the diversity of the Malaysian workforce which requires an in-depth examination of people's understandings of work and non-working lives and the factors which influence how these spheres are managed.

3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As discussed in Chapter Two, the work/non-work literature has over-emphasised the individual level of analysis (see Casper *et al*., 2007) and studies tends to predominate in Western countries (Bardoel *et al*., 2008). Consequently, we have a limited understanding of how Malaysian employees manage the relationships between work/non-work life and how this is influenced by macro and meso level factors; the State and organisations respectively. In Malaysia, the initial implementation of work/non-work arrangements throughout all public sector organisations nationwide was based on the 'family-first campaign' launched in 2003. As the largest employers in the country, public sector organisations have pioneered work/non-work arrangements for private sector organisations to follow. As such arrangements are still in the early stage, organisations' as well as workers' awareness of them and work/non-work related issues is also believed to be at a rudimentary level. Further, as work/non-work management in Malaysia is an under-researched area, it is the aim of this study to gain an understanding of the present situation of work/non-work life among workers in the Malaysian public sector context. Moreover, since the Malaysian Government first focused on the implementation of work/non-work policies in the public sector there is a need for more research on countries with diverse cultural contexts (Poelmans, 2005). The objectives of this study is to examine how and to what extent have the Government as an employer, as well as how trade unions and organisations in the public sector have influenced the development of work/non-work policies; to investigate how these factors have affected employees' relationship to and management of work and non-work lives, and to explore to what extent cultural and religious values influence workers' attitude to their work/non-work roles and responsibilities within this diverse context.

The study aims to obtain answers to the following research questions:

1.   To what extent have the State, unions and management influenced the emergence and the development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector organisations under investigation?

2. How do organisational factors such as the nature of work demand and the organisation of working time affect workers' work and non-work patterns?

3. To what extent do cultural and religious values as well as diversity across gender and life-cycle influence workers' views and attitudes to their work/non-working responsibilities?

4. How do workers manage their work/non-work lives? What factors influence the different degrees of prioritisation and integration?

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Research Approach

This research study adopts an iterative approach to theory. This requires the flexible interplay between the existing literature on work and non-work lives but allows for new insights to emerge which is sensitive to the Malaysian context. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) note that the role of iteration, not as a repetitive mechanical task but as a deeply reflexive process and as such was appropriate for the study to sparking insight and developing meaning. Reflexive iteration is at the heart of visiting and revisiting the data and connecting them with emerging insights, progressively leading to refined focus and understandings. Such an approach may better illustrate how workers in the research context cope with their work/non-work spheres and indicate to what extent the findings are consistent with or, differ from those reported in previous studies conducted in developed countries. The study of work and non-work life in Malaysia requires an account of the wider social context, including the society's values regarding work/non-work responsibilities in order to make sense of the ways in which workers manage their work/non-work lives. Therefore, external factors such as cultural and religious values are an important consideration in order to provide new insights into how people perceive, understand and cope with work/non-work issues in their everyday lives.

Given these objectives, the research problem under investigation is 'exploratory' - the aim is to explore the relationship between work/non-work life in Malaysian public sector organisations. According to Saunders *et al*. (1993), exploratory studies are a valuable means of finding out what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light. Hence, this study aims to obtain in-depth information about how employees manage their work and non-work lives and the role and influence of organisations in how employees manage the relationship between work and home. Thus, the exploratory nature of research makes a case study design highly suitable. According to Yin (2009) and Hakim (1987), exploratory-based research is best researched using case study design. A case study design emphasises the importance of understanding social phenomenon in context and as this is a core aim of this study, the next section shall examine the features of the research design in more detail.

3.4.2 Case Study Design

The research adopted a qualitative case study research design of three organisations; data collection was based on the integration of semi-structured interviews and organisational documents to examine the relationship between employees' work and non-work lives in the Malaysian context including the macro-, meso- and individual levels. It is necessary to take into account the organisational level features which are central to the research questions that is to examine the influence of organisations in how employees manage the relationship between work and home. Qualitative case study designs are suitable to study work and non-work lives because the main features of this design include understanding phenomenon in a real-life context as well as exploring processes, activities and events (Yin, 2009). The key feature of a case study approach is not the method of data used but the emphasis on understanding processes as they occur in their context (Hartley, 1994). A qualitative case study design is appropriate for this study of work and non-working lives in Malaysia because a case study enables the investigation to be 'more rounded, holistic study than any other design' (Hakim, 1987:61). The advantage of the case study design is that it facilitates

the detailed and intensive analysis of organisational cases. The case study design is also concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question (Stake, 1995). According to Yin (2009) and Hartley (2004), the case study approach is appropriate for describing, analysing and understanding formal and informal processes in organisations. Yin (2003:5) also indicates that '*a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used*'.

Therefore, as this study sought to obtain in-depth information of the three case organisations under study, their work/non-work policies and the experiences of employees in managing their work and non-work lives, the case study design provided an insight into important internal contextual features of the organisation such as the organisational culture, the nature of work and the organisation of working time. Another feature of case study designs is that they allow external organisational features to be taken into consideration. In the context of this examination one aspect of the research is to consider how each organisation interprets State policy in order to assess how the external context influences organisational practices relating to work and non-work life. Additionally, Yin (2009) contends that multiple case study designs have distinct advantages and disadvantages in comparison with a single case design. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and yields more robustness to the conclusions from the study whereby the conclusions from one case should be compared and contrasted with the results from the other case(s).

The emphasis on context and the opportunity to examine an organisation holistically means that several previous researchers have used the case study design to examine work/non-work issues. Such studies include case studies on work/non-work and organisational cultures (Lewis, 1997; Lewis 2001; Callan, 2007), the meaning of work/non-work (Lewis *et al*., 2007), and the implementation and implications of work/non-work (Coussey, 2000; Manfredi and Holliday, 2004; Hall and Liddicoat, 2005). Case study designs are also useful to provide a more richly detailed and precise

account of the processes at work (Hakim, 1987:62). For example, Lewis (2001) used the case study design in her research to enable her to examine assumptions about the ideal worker and the value of pluralistic working arrangements for men as well as women. Such designs also identified emergent issues in the research context. Callan (2007) used case studies in her research to identify salient aspects of the culture of two organisations and to examine the extent to which changes in culture resulted from the implementation of work/non-work policies. She also investigated whether any change in the construction of an 'ideal worker' type could be considered a significant indicator of cultural change.

Whilst the detailed examination of the case studies will be presented in Chapter Four, the next sub-section will discuss the case study selection.

Case Study Selection

The fieldwork was conducted in two stages from November 2008 until the middle of April 2009. The first phase of the study was linked directly to Research Question 1 which focuses on the role of the State, involvement of the trade unions and how public sector organisations within the Malaysian region of Sabah were approaching work and non-work arrangements. Public sector organisations were selected for the purpose of this study because they are more likely to have statutory requirements of work/non-work arrangements in place (for example, flexible start and finish time, maternity/paternity/parental/bereavement leave, and childcare assistance) as a result of the launch of the 'Family-First campaign' in 2003 and the implementation of work/non-work arrangements in public sector organisations nationwide.

To gain access to public sector organisations, I took a tripartite approach. Firstly, letters were sent to ten public sector organisations in the state of Sabah – the available Government organisations in the state of Sabah. These include the services of education, licensing/transportation, registration, media/broadcasting, revenue/tax related agency, employees' provident, health provider, internal security, defence and

custom. Six organisations responded positively, two declined to participate, and the remainder did not reply. Secondly, for those who responded positively, telephone calls were made to arrange interviews. The third step included further follow up telephone calls and letters to HR managers to arrange appointments with them. For those organisations which did not reply, upon my return to Malaysia in November 2008, I met their HR managers to personally explain the objectives of and the rationale for the study. I also provided a sample of questions as required but the outcome was disappointing. Despite my additional efforts, only six organisations expressed an interest in participating in the study. Five organisations were unionised and one organisation had worker representatives on the *Majlis Bersama Jabatan* (MBJ) (Management-Labour Joint Council). Given pseudonyms as requested in order to keep the confidentiality, the six public sector organisations which agreed to participate in the preliminary study were: a) Unico – a higher learning institution, b) Hospico – a health service provider, c) Custco – a revenue collector, d) Roadco – a licensing department, e) Broadco – a media institution, and f) Incomco – a tax related agency.

This first phase of the study involved interviews with senior Human Resource (HR) managers and trade unions from six public sector organisations to gain an insight into the level of awareness of work/non-work life issues and the nature of work/non-work policies and provisions as well as the workforce composition and role of the union. Following from this preliminary phase, the second stage of fieldwork involved three detailed case studies based on the public sector organisations which had taken part in the preliminary phase. Stake (2003) contends that for case study selection it is important that researchers should lean towards those cases that appear to offer the opportunity to learn the most. Conducting the study in Malaysia, a culturally diverse country, would enable the researcher to obtain more dynamic and diverse data and new insights from a national/cultural context with predominant values differing from those in Western developed nations. The three case studies were chosen because they had different facets of diversity and were willing to participate in the study. To reflect diversity – each organisation had different workforce compositions in terms of gender,

ethnic groups, age range, range of occupations and religious backgrounds (see Table 3.3). Initially, Unico, Hospico and Incomco were chosen as the case study organisations. However, due to lack of feedback from Incomco, it was replaced by Custco which possessed similar characteristics such as work/non-work practices and workforce diversity in terms of ethnic and religious background. Preliminary data revealed that Unico had a diverse workforce composition in terms of ethnicity, religious background, age and gender. Although Hospico employed mostly female workers, they came from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. Custco, on the other hand, was a male dominated organisation but workers possessed a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. These characteristics were important in order to answer the research questions relating to the extent to which religious and cultural values influenced workers' attitudes, experiences and management of work/non-work patterns; and how workers at different life-cycle stages managed their work/non-work lives. The data collected using the case studies provided important insights into work/non-work policies and practices in a multi-racial, developing country.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

This section will discuss the methods used in this study to accomplish the research aims and objectives. The primary data collection method in this study was semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher develops an interview schedule based on a number of themes pertinent to the subject area but these are adapted flexibly so that the interview flow like a conversation (Bryman, 2008a: 438). Semi-structured interviewing is a data collection method relied on extensively by qualitative researchers, and in this study it was used to gain insights into employees' attitudes to their work and non-work lives and how these may be influenced by religious and cultural values, how they managed their work/non-work lives and their experience of work. In this study, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to have control over time, content and the sequence of questions and thereby give interviewees freedom to respond to the questions. In addition, the researcher was able to control which

questions participants answered based on their skill or mode of task, which advantage other methods do not possess. Importantly, the qualitative research interview is ideally suited to examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored (King, 1994: 14).

3.5.1 Interviews

The interview schedules integrated key themes from the literature. Interviews were conducted with Human Resource Managers and union officials in order to map the components of work/non-work provisions and to investigate the reasons for adopting work/non-work policies. Semi-structured interviews were employed as a primary method to collect data in the research context, and to investigate how workers viewed and understood the concept of work/non-work lives and to what extent work/non-work practices offered within the organisations met workers' needs. As the research had two data collection phases, interviews were conducted with six HR managers and four union officials in the preliminary phase and 71 workers in the in-depth case study phase.

For the HR managers' interview schedule, questions related to key factual information about the workforce's characteristics relating to gender, age, marital status, level of occupation, religion and ethnicity and the organisational work/non-work arrangements provided, including the take up among workers in the organisation. Additionally, questions sought to examine the implications of work/non-work arrangements to the organisation as well as the Human Resource Managers' opinions of work/non-work issues in general.

It was important to interview HR managers and trade union officials across the public sector in order to address **Research Question 1** (what extent have the state, unions and management influenced the emergence and the development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector organisations involved in this study?). Questions such as

"why have work/non-work policies been implemented (in the organisation)? Was the development of these policies influenced by any other party i.e. government regulations, business case, union involvement, demographic trend and/or organisational culture?" were asked to HR managers (see Appendix 4). The answers given were used to justify to what extent the emergence and the development of work/non-work provisions and policies were influenced by any other party.

Meanwhile, for union and union-related officials, the interview schedule focused on questions related to key information about the union's roles in promoting and enhancing the work/non-work agenda within the workplace for workers and the society at large as well as the role of the union representative and their views on work/non-work matters in the organisation. In order to answer Research Question 1, for example, union officials were interviewed to identify their roles in promoting work/non-work life agenda with the management. Hence, question such as "has the trade union brought up any issue related to work/non-work life with the management" (see Appendix 5) was needed as the answers given could explain the extent whether the unions have influenced towards the emergence and the development of work/non-work policies and provisions in their organisations.

Meanwhile, the interview schedule for workers focused on a number of core themes. These themes integrated factual information about workers' background, i.e. age, marital status, ethnicity, religion and occupation level as well as examining their attitudes to working practices and the provision of work/non-work policies. Workers' views on general issues related to work/non-work within their work-life surroundings were also asked (see Appendix 6). Depending on the context, themes were expanded or emphasis changed. For example, a question asked 'Who handles caring responsibilities?' Depending on the answer, a probe question: "Which is given priority – work or non-work responsibilities?" was then asked followed by the question: "how do you draw the boundary line between the two in the real-life context?" (See Appendix 6).

Each interview commenced with a discussion about the aims and objectives of the study, and interviewees were assured of absolute confidentiality as well as thanked for their time. Following this, interviewees were asked detailed questions regarding their perception of work/non-work practices in Malaysia, their evaluation of current work/non-work policies in their workplace as well as their opinion on the future direction of such policies. In most cases, the questions followed a specific order; however, in several instances the order depended largely on the context and on what additional or related issues interviewees wished to discuss. During all interviews, the researcher made every effort to make interviewees feel relaxed by allowing them to talk informally.

Besides the primary data obtained from in-depth semi-structured interviews, this study also sought data from secondary sources. The collection of secondary data within the cases was extremely valuable. For example, information on work/non-work policies implemented by the organisations gave an indication of how organisations approached work/non-work issues. The study benefited from the variety of documents made available by organisations' HR Managers. Data from formal documentation such as staff handbooks, annual reports, statistical data and documents on number of workers employed by gender, ethnicity, occupation and religious background; average working hours and working pattern; and organisation missions, goals and objectives provided additional information on the implementation of work/non-work policies at the workplace. It should be noted that not all of these documents were in a compiled form; rather, I had to inspect and extract the data that were relevant to the requirements of the research. These documents were also useful in providing additional information on the organisations investigated (Rose, 2002).

This section has discussed the interview schedules used in this study to accomplish the research aims and objectives. The next sub-section will briefly discuss sampling process and the data gathering process.

3.5.2 Sampling

This sub-section will discuss the sampling process conducted in two stages namely Stage One – Preliminary Phase and Stage Two – Case Study Phase.

Stage One – Preliminary Phase

At the preliminary phase, out of ten available public sector organisations identified, only six public sector organisations participated in the research which was aimed at identifying the range of work and non-work provisions and policies offered to employees, the workforce composition and union involvement in the development of these provisions.

Table 3.1: Participants in the Preliminary Phase - HR manager and Union Official

Organisation	Number of participants	
	HR Manager	Union Official
Unico	1	1
Hospico	1	1
Custco	1	1
Roadco	1	-
Incomco	1	-
Broadco	1	1
Total	**6**	**4**

As illustrated in Table 3.1, participants in the preliminary stage were chosen from among six HR managers and four union officials from six organisations namely Unico, Hospico, Custco, Roadco, Incomco and Broadco.

Stage Two – Case Study Phase

Meanwhile, in Stage Two, out of six organisations in the preliminary phase, only three organisations namely Unico, Custco and Hospico were in the case study phase for further analysis on the basis of each organisation having different facets of diversity

and willingness to participate in the study. Seventy one employees from Unico, Hospico and Custco were interviewed during the case study phase. The interviews conducted among employee participants in total were: 20 from Unico, 25 from Hospico, and 26 from Custco. This is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Employee Participants in Stage Two - the Case Study Phase

Case Organisation	Employee Participants
Unico	20
Hospico	25
Custco	26
Total	**71**

For employees, as the interviews were conducted during working hours, they were chosen based on their availability (that is not too busy with work and with the permission of the Head of Unit/Department) and willingness to participate in interviews from a variety of departments in the three organisational cases. To address Research Questions 2 (how do organisational factors such as the nature of work demand and the organisation of working time affect workers' work/non-work patterns?); Research Question 3 (to what extent do cultural and religious values as well as diversity across gender and life-cycle stage influence workers' views and attitudes towards their work/non-work responsibilities?) and; Research Question 4 (how do workers manage their work/non-work spheres? What are the factors that influence the different degrees of prioritisation and integration?), relating to workers' management of their work/non-work lives and the influence of religious and cultural values, it was important to use in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Hence, employees were interviewed to gain their insights into the influence of religious and cultural values on their attitudes towards their work/non-work lives. Additionally, employees were interviewed to understand how age, gender, marital status and occupation characteristics influenced their perceptions and experiences in managing their work/non-work patterns at different life-cycle stages. Hence, employees were chosen from a variety of ethnic groups among Sabah *bumiputera*, and also representative of Sabah's multicultural society.

Table 3.3 presents the profiles of the employee participants in the three case studies. As can be seen, they represented a diversity of backgrounds in terms of gender, age, marital status, religion, ethnicity, length of service and tenure.

Table 3.3: Profiles of Employee Participants from the Three Case Studies

PROFILES	ORGANISATIONS			
	UNICO	CUSTCO	HOSPICO	TOTAL
Gender				
Female	10	8	16	**34**
Male	10	18	9	**37**
Age				
Below 29 years	2	3	6	**11**
30-39 years	10	4	11	**25**
40-49 years	7	10	6	**23**
50 years and above	1	9	2	**12**
Marital Status				
Single without dependant	2	2	3	**7**
Single with dependant	2	4	3	**9**
Married (with dependant)	15	20	18	**53**
Married (without dependant)	1	-	1	**2**
Religion				
Islam	15	15	12	**42**
Christianity	5	11	13	**29**
Ethnic Background				
Sabah *Bumiputera*	13	20	24	**57**
Chinese*	2	2	1	**5**
Other *Bumiputera*	3	4	-	**7**
Indian	1	-	-	**1**
Other	1	-	-	**1**
Length of Service				
Less than 5 years	1	3	7	**11**
5-10 years	12	2	8	**22**
10-15 years	7	5	3	**15**
15-20 years	-	3	2	**5**
20-25 years	-	4	1	**5**
More than 25 years	-	9	4	**13**
Tenure				
Life-time (permanent) employment	18	26	25	**69**
Contract (renewable in every 2 years)	2	-	-	**2**

Notes: *Bumiputera* – 'son of the soil' (native).

Sabah *bumiputera* include the KadazanDusun, Rungus, Bajau, Suluk, Kadayan, Iban, Bisaya, Murut, Sungai, Lundayeh, Idahan, Malay Brunei ethnic groups etc.

Other *Bumiputera* include Malays from Peninsular Malaysia and other ethnic groups from Sarawak.

* Four respondents from Unico and Custco were of Chinese mixed heritage.

In terms of gender, the female workforce population in Unico was 45 per cent and 55 per cent male (see Chapter Four). Out of this total workforce, Table 3.3 illustrated that there were ten female and ten male participants interviewed in Unico for the case study phase. Meanwhile in Custco, eight female participants were interviewed out of 29 per cent of the female workforce population and 18 male participants were interviewed out of 71 per cent of the workforce. In Hospico, there were 16 female participants interviewed out of 80 female total workforce and nine male participants interviewed out of 20 male total workforce.

As for the diversity of ethnic background, Sabah is known for its 32 officially recognised ethnic groups which contribute to the multiracial society of Malaysia. This is different from Peninsular Malaysia which only known for three major ethnic groups namely Malay, Chinese and Indians. Therefore, the composition of ethnic background as illustrated in Table 3.3 shows the diversity in terms of participants interviewed. There were 13 Sabah *Bumiputera* participants interviewed out of 55 per cent of Sabah *Bumiputera* total workforce in Unico (see Chapter Four). This was followed by two Chinese participants out of five per cent of total Chinese workforce. In Custco, the total Sabah *Bumiputera* population was 59 per cent, other bumiputera was 35 per cent, Chinese was five per cent and others was one per cent (see Chapter Four). Out of this total workforce, Table 3.3 illustrated that there were 20 *Sabah Bumiputera,* two Chinese and four other *bumiputera* participants interviewed. Meanwhile in Hospico, the total workforce for *Sabah Bumiputera* was 70 per cent, Chinese 20 per cent, other bumiputera (Malay from Peninsular Malaysia and/or Sarawak) was seven per cent and Indian was three per cent. Out of this total workforce, there were 24 participants from *Sabah Bumiputera* background interviewed as well as one Chinese participants.

Meanwhile, Table 3.4 illustrates employees' level of care commitment. In this study, there were seven employees without care commitments – these were mostly single, regardless of age. Meanwhile, 21 employees had grown up children and these were mostly above 39 years of age and either established in their career or had been working for more than 10 years. Table 3.4 also shows ten employees with parental and sibling commitments – these consist of single workers who had either full or partial responsibility for their parents and siblings. Finally, 33 employees had young children.

Table 3.4: Employees' Level of Care Commitment

	Employees with no care commitment	Employees with grown up children**	Employees with parent and sibling commitment	Employees with young children*
CUSTCO	2	12	4	8
HOSPICO	3	5	4	13
UNICO	2	4	2	12
TOTAL	7	21	10	33

Notes: * Young children are those between infancy and primary school age who are expected to be dependent and rely fully on parents or grown ups to look after them.
** Grown up children are those from the teenage years who are in secondary school to adulthood who are more independent and can look after themselves.

Employees' level of care commitment is vital in this study as analysing the life-cycle stages of employees will indicate their differing needs to integrate their work/non-work lives as well as to enable identifying what influenced the in/ability to manage their work and non-work responsibilities.

3.5.3 Conducting Research

The groups from whom data were collected were: HR managers or officers in-charge of personnel matters, employees from the managerial and non-managerial level, and union representatives directly involved in managing and implementing work/non-work arrangements in the workplace. How the data were collected from these groups is discussed in this sub-section.

Gathering Data

Interviews with participants were recorded. Generally, perhaps due to being a local Sabahan, access to most organisations under study was easily gained. I also had no difficulty in convincing most participants to allow me to tape record the interviews. However, because the interview sessions were conducted during working hours, frequent interruptions occurred and caused some difficulties. There were, at times, more than five interruptions during the interview process and it therefore took more than one hour to finish the interview session. My interviews with several workers took longer to complete than anticipated as they worked in a busy department. On one occasion my interview with a HR manager took two days to complete. There were also times when I had to wait to interview participants after they had completed their work tasks. As a result, the interview period was prolonged. On occasion, more than two people were interviewed consecutively in a day, particularly in Hospico and Custco. Appointments with potential interviewees had to be flexible to fit in with their work demands. On a few occasions, when an appointment had been set for interview, the participant in question was unavailable for interview due to work demands and thus unable to participate in the research. When this happened, other available participants were sought with the permission of the Head of the Department/Unit.

Most interviews took place on work premises. There were times when the Head of Department allotted a meeting room or vacant room for some privacy. However, there were occasions when interviews had to be conducted in a more open area and this contributed to uneasiness among some participants and the noise from the surroundings resulted at times in poor quality recording.

In this study, most managerial, non-managerial and union officials came from multi ethnic and multi religious groups. My knowledge of Malay, English and the Sabah dialect enabled me to conduct the interview sessions without any language difficulty. Participants were free to discuss and voice their opinions in their preferred language. I managed to develop a rapport with participants and they provided me with a lot of

information during the interview sessions. In fact, several workers in Custco and Hospico expressed their feelings quite openly about long working hours and increased workload as a result of labour shortages, work/non-work conflict and work/non-work provisions. Some viewed me as a middle person who could take their problems to management and thereby their problems might be solved.

Small souvenirs (bought from the United Kingdom) were given to participants as a token of appreciation for their time. Ryen (2004) and Parasuraman (2008) acted in the same way in order to establish a good relationship with their participants.

Most researchers enter a field with some past experience or some pre-existing ideas that may affect their view of an organisation. In the tradition of reflexive qualitative research it is important to acknowledge these pre-conceived rather than to deny them. As such, to suppose that their presence will not exert an influence on the data is equally unrealistic (Strong, 1979:229). In my case, as an employee in Unico, I accepted that my working experiences in the Unico would influence what I saw and the possible bias, but I could not predict 'how' or to what extent. In this sense, data produced by the respondents were a mutual production which also involved myself as a researcher. I was also aware of feeling more accepted as the interviews in Unico progressed. Hence, it was relatively easy for me to gain access to workers in Unico as I knew the HR manager on an official basis. The HR manager was very helpful, although the time he could spend with me was intermittent due to work responsibilities and his appointments schedule. It took two days (on and off) to complete the interview session with him. When he had completed the interview, with the help of subordinates he provided me with much useful information regarding the workforce composition and other relevant documentation. He gave me permission to conduct further interview sessions with Unico workers, particularly in one department. As a result, I was able to gain access to workers from a variety of backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, occupation level, gender, marital status and religion. Although some workers refused to participate in the interview process, generally, participation among workers in Unico was high. The only problem conducting interviews with workers in Unico was their availability as they

were approaching the holiday season (semester break) and I had to fit in with their hectic work schedules as they were busy writing student reports and completing study tasks.

As in Unico, my experience of conducting interviews in Hospico was generally positive. Being a local, my communication with Hospico workers went well and I was able to communicate in a more informal way with some participants. Hence, the interview process became more relaxed and comfortable and these participants provided full responses to questions posed. The interview with the HR manager was fruitful as she was particularly interested in the study topic and gave me valuable advice and encouragement. She suggested I write a formal application letter to the Director to obtain permission to interview Hospico workers from all levels of occupation and departments for the in-depth case study. Through assistance from her I was able to find workers willing to participate in interviews from a variety of departments. Moreover, after I had received a letter of approval from the Director to conduct my interviews at a wider level, she distributed the letter to heads of departments and, as a result, several dates and times for interviews were arranged in quick succession. She also introduced me to the union official with whom I arranged an appointment to conduct an interview at a later date.

Following up on prearranged in-depth interview appointments, I started with the Radiology Department. After I had introduced myself and explained the objectives of the study, the person-in-charge of the department warmly welcomed me and was very helpful. As a result, people in this department were willing to participate in interviews, including the person-in-charge and workers from a variety of ethnic groups, occupation level, gender, age, marital status and religious backgrounds expressed a willingness to be interviewed. I received the same level of cooperation from other departments in Hospico. I normally introduced myself to the Heads of Departments or the person-in-charge (if the head of department was not available) and they then took me to meet various workers who wanted to participate. However, I found it challenging when I initially approached certain heads of departments who were reluctant to participate. But

as soon as I explained the objectives and rationale for my study (although they had already been mentioned in the letter of approval from the Director), the heads of departments gave me a list of personnel that might be interviewed and called them to inform them about the intended interview. Fortunately, the workers gave me their full cooperation and willingly participated in the interview process.

Although I received full co-operation from most participants, I also encountered several obstacles. On one occasion I interviewed a Head of Department in an extremely busy unit and it took me more than an hour to complete the interview process as she was needed for more urgent matters involving patients who were referred to her from time to time. While I waited patiently for her to return, I used the opportunity to look around the workplace to gain insight into working conditions. Another obstacle I encountered in the fieldwork was that sometimes when the Head of Department named someone to participate in the interview process, that person was not always happy to do so. One potential participant confessed she felt nervous about being interviewed and was afraid to participate in the study. One of the reasons I believe was because the interview was to take place in an open area and her colleagues would be nearby performing their work tasks. I did my best to persuade and convince her of the importance of her participation to the research outcome and assured that her identity would not be revealed if she participated in the study. In the end, she was sufficiently confident to participate in the interview session.

The third organisation chosen for a case study was Custco. Interviews with the HR manager and union official went well. The HR manager was not only helpful in the interview session, he also scheduled several in-depth interviews with workers and lent me documents he thought might be relevant to my study. He also gave me a contact number for the Union President which accelerated the interview process. However, a difficulty arose when I was about to embark on the interview schedule with workers. Although permission to interview them had been granted, the official written notification to all departments in Custco had not yet been issued hence I could not

conduct in-depth interviews at the department level. The HR manager was by that time away on his annual leave and other officers were unable to deal with the problem. It is important to point out that conducting research in the public sector in Malaysia requires written approval and involves a lengthy bureaucratic process. Fortunately, I eventually managed to contact the HR manager and he then instructed his chief officer to notify all heads of department about my study and the intended interviews to be notified to all workers. Upon discussion with the officer, I chose a few departments to start with and gave him some tentative dates to conduct in-depth interviews with workers. Meanwhile, the interview with Custco's union official was informative as he shared his experiences as a union activist organisationally and in the national context. He was known as someone vocal and influential in the arena of union activities. As his involvement in the union was not limited to the organisational level but established in a wider context, his experiences and knowledge about the union were very useful and insightful.

Interviews in Custco's departments generally went well as most participants were cooperative and helpful. However, conducting interviews with workers who worked in the airport area was problematic as only authorised personnel were allowed to enter the airport premises. I had to wait several hours before official documentation was prepared which authorised my presence in the airport area to conduct interviews with workers there. With help from a Custco officer at the airport, I managed to obtain a temporary pass and was thus able to conduct interviews. Another obstacle to conducting interviews with workers in the airport area was timing. As most workers worked a shift hour pattern and their tasks were based on flight schedules, I had to ensure that interview times did not clash with flight arrivals or departures or were not set to take place just before shifts ended. I therefore had to carefully plan interviews between flight arrivals and departures. On one occasion, although interviews had been scheduled to take place in certain departments at times arranged and agreed with the Custco HR office, when I arrived at the work premises I was told that most workers were away since they were conducting emergency raid operations. Thus, I had to reschedule those

interview appointments and utilise the time elsewhere. I was given authorisation to commence interview sessions in another department.

Interview Process and Transcription

Although English was used as a medium of communication with those respondents who preferred to be interviewed in the English language, interviews were also conducted with participants in their primary language, i.e. Malay, so their ability to communicate effectively was not impaired by having to speak in a language with which they were less familiar (Bryman, 2003). Interviewees were informed that interviews results would be discussed in general, in confidence, and used for research purposes only. This assurance was necessary to encourage interviewees to participate in interviews and to improve the quality of responses. Interviews took place in participants' workplaces and lasted between 40 minutes and two and a half hours. All interviews were digitally recorded except for 13 interviews, since five participants refused to be recorded and the digital recorder malfunctioned during the interviews with eight participants. For interviews not recorded, detailed notes were made. Feedback received suggested that interviewees enjoyed being interviewed, and, in some cases found it helped them to clarify their thoughts on the work/non-work topic. Overall, 81 interviews were conducted (10 interviews during the preliminary phase and 71 interviews during the case study phase) but only 68 interviews were recorded.

As Bryman (2003) notes the problem with transcribing interviews is that it is time consuming, hence, it is worth taking Lofland and Lofland's (1995) advice that the analysis of qualitative data should not be left until all the interviews have been completed and transcribed. To procrastinate may result in a monumental task. Hence, interviews were transcribed soon after the interviewing process to retain data, particularly that from the unrecorded interviews. The interview was first transcribed in the language spoken during the interview and then for those interviewed in Malay, the transcript was translated into English, into the language that would be used when it

came to analysing the data and writing up the findings. Differences in the meaning of words between the two languages may have resulted in some distortion of data in the translation process. To overcome this, the transcript in the primary language was back-translated and then compared with the English version, noting any discrepancies.

3.5.4 Data Analysis

It has long been argued that 'there are no formal, universal rules to follow in analysing, interpreting and evaluating qualitative data' (Patton, 1980:268). For case study research, analysis consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, Stake (1995) advocates categorical aggregation and direct interpretation of data analysis and interpretation in case study research to seek a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge. Meanwhile, Yin (2009) advocates cross-case synthesis as an analytic technique when the researcher studies two or more cases. This helps the researcher develops naturalistic generalisations from analysing the data, generalisations that people can learn from the case either for themselves or to apply to a population of cases. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) advance thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data'. In this case, the researcher's judgment is necessary to determine what a theme is. It involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that have been analysed, and the analysis of the data that have been produced. They contend that thematic analysis is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it is more iterative, where movement is back and forth as needed, through the phases.

Following Stake (1995), Yin (2009) and Braun and Clarke (2006), this research adopted a combination of categorical aggregation, cross-case synthesis and thematic analysis to develop generalisations as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The Data Analysis Spiral

Coding

Direct interpretation

Categorical aggregation

Categorising

Cross-case synthesis

Thematic analysis

Pattern

Generalisations
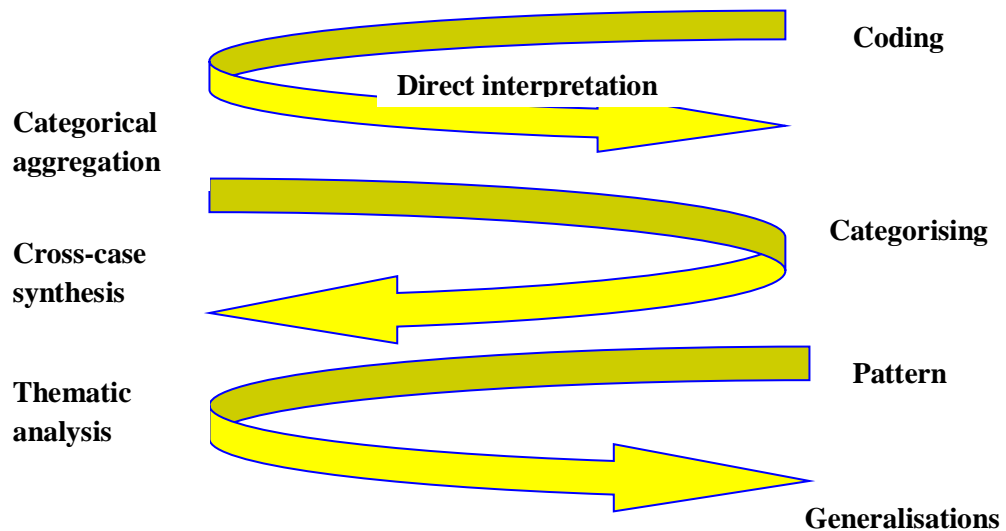
Source: Adapted and adjusted from Creswell (2009)

To analyse the data, the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach. One enters with textual data and exits with an account or a narrative. In between, several facets of analysis touch and circle around and around. At an early stage in the analysis, the researcher used Atlas.ti to assist the coding process. This window-based program enables text, graphic and visual data files to be organised and can code, annotate and compare segments of information. Codes can be dragged and dropped within an interactive margin screen. The program can rapidly search, retrieve and browse all data segments and notes relevant to an idea and, importantly, build unique visual networks that

allow passages, memos and codes to be connected visually in a concept map. The process used by a computer program for qualitative data analysis is the same for manual coding. The researcher identifies a text segment, assigns a code label, and then searches through the database for all text segments that have the same code label. In this process, the researcher, not the computer program, does the coding and categorising. Patton (1980: 268) indicates that 'analysis is the process of ordering the data, organising what is there into patterns, categories and basic description units. Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns and looking for relationships and linkages'. The process of analysis and interpretation is iterative and continuous. Thus, it engages in a process of noting patterns and themes, making contrasts and comparisons.

As shown in Figure 3.2, a template for coding data obtained from the case studies followed Creswell (2009) and a list of codes was established (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.2: Template for Coding Multiple Case Studies

In-depth Portrait of Cases

Case context   Case description   Within-case   Cross-case
Assertions &

Generalisations   Theme Analysis   Theme Analysis

Case 1 Case 2 Case 3   Similarities   Differences

Case 1 Themes   Case 2 Themes   Case 3 Themes
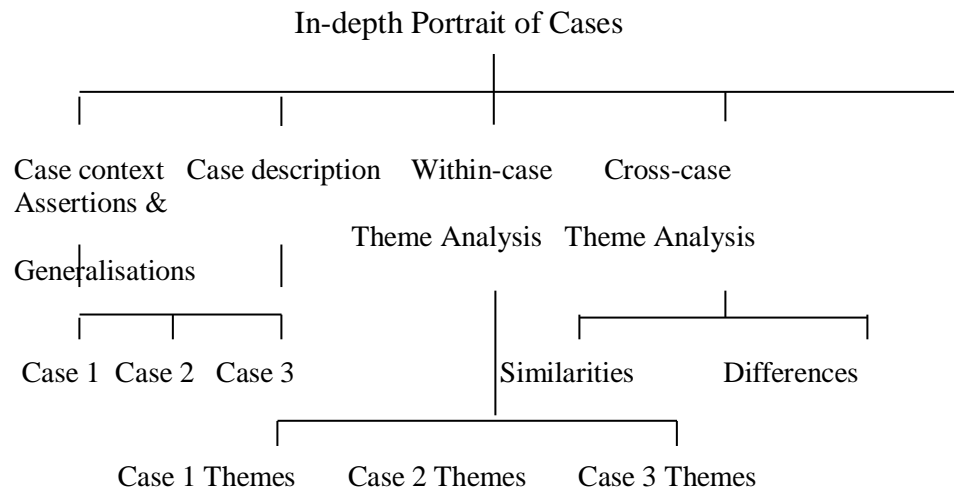
Source: Creswell (2007: 172)

Figure 3.3: List of Codes and Sub-Codes
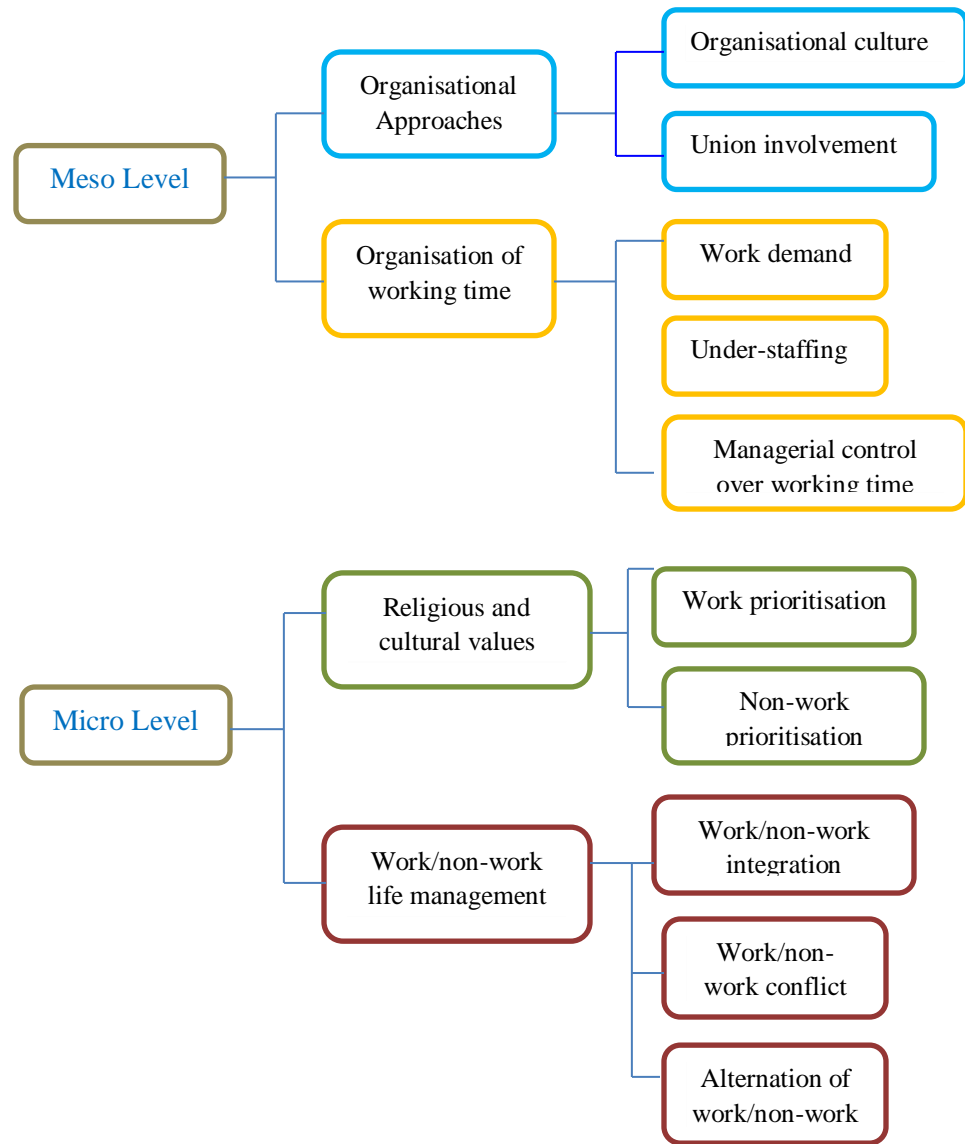
As illustrated in Figure 3.3, the codes were classified into meso- and micro-level. At the meso level, two codes were established namely organisational approaches and the organisation of working time. Under the code of 'organisational approaches', two sub-codes were identified: organisational cultures and union involvement. Meanwhile, under the codes of 'the organisation of working time', three sub-codes were identified: work demand, under-staffing and managerial control over working time. At the micro level, two codes were established namely religious and cultural

values and workers' management of work/non-work lives. Religious and cultural values were found to influence workers' attitudes to both work and non-work priorities. Whilst, workers' work/non-work pattern was classified into work/non-work integration as a continuum and this includes work/non-work integration, work/non-work conflict and alternation to work/non-work life. Additionally, as the research was iterative in nature, codes for the interview text were established. Then, as data were reviewed during computer analysis, they were coded.

For each case, codes existed for the context and description of the case. Then, codes for themes within each case and for themes that were similar and different in cross-case analysis were identified.

This section has described how the data for answering the research questions were collected. The following section will focus on methodological considerations.

3.6 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Within case study research designs findings are not necessarily meant to infer statistical generalisations. This research only focused on three public sector organisations in Sabah, Malaysia. It was, therefore, not the aim of this study to make generalisations to other sectors or industries as the relatively small number of participants could not be taken as representative of a broader population. Instead, this study seeks to make broader connections to the existing literature on work/non-work management and patterns of work/non-work life by attempting a degree of analytic generalisation. Also called theoretical elaboration, this is a type of generalisation in which the researcher attempts to link findings from a particular case to theory (Yin, 2009). This research sought to make a contribution to the literature and theory on work/non-work lives by examining the Malaysian context and offering insights into the importance of a multi-level analysis and by emphasising the importance of examining diversity.

The goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in a study (Yin, 1994: 36). Therefore, to minimise the errors and bias in this research, it was necessary to document the research procedures, i.e. the use of the case study protocol and the development of the case study database, to allow the repeating of other case studies.

Workers' knowledge and exposure to work/non-work issues was expected to be limited, due to the 'infant' stage of work/non-work implementation in Malaysia and workers' relatively recent exposure to it. This situation was expected to impact on participants' willingness to volunteer to be interviewed and the quality of their responses. To overcome these anticipated limitations the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the research issues in greater depth. Additionally, as interactions between the researcher and respondents can be subject to bias, which would affect the validity of the data, particularly the interview data. In order to reduce the bias, probe questions during interviews were used to elicit more particulars when inconsistencies surfaced.

Patton (2002) believes that the strategy of the 'Known Sponsor Approach'- study funding has been secured by an organisation, is the most successful method of securing entry in most cases. Therefore, as a worker in Unico, experience of researching in my own organisation was relatively easy as support at the executive level was critical to the success in gaining access and gaining some data without any restrictions. Hence, participants regardless of their gender, ethnic and religious backgrounds speak more freely as I knew most of them on official basis. Despite the acceptance as the interview in Unico progressed, I admitted there were possible bias. During interviews, I demonstrated and developed a reciprocal professional relationship between myself as a researcher and the participants, maintained an open and honest perspectives. Hence, data produced by the participants were a mutual production.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The basic principles of research ethics revolve around privacy and confidentiality, accuracy, relevance, accountability, honesty, respect for human dignity and minimising harm (Sanjay and Ayob, 2003). Research must be conducted under the highest standards of honesty and integrity of data. Procedures and findings must be properly and thoroughly documented.

A core tenet of ethical practice is that research respondents have a right to privacy so that the researcher will have to accept any refusal to take part in the study (Emory and Cooper, 1991). It is also the responsibility of the researcher to give sufficient information to potential participants to enable them to decide whether they wish to participate in the research or not - hence making provisions for informed consent (Thomas, 2004). Once access has been granted, the research should remain within the aims of the research project outlined with the intended participants (Zikmund, 1994). Further, all participating organisations and respondents names should not be identified to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. As a researcher, it is an obligation to take all possible steps to protect the identity of any person in the anticipation of any information being used for purposes other than those intended (May, 2001:60).

In this study, approval from Cardiff Business School Research Ethics Committee was gained on the 24th September 2008 as a requirement to undertake research involving human participation (see Appendix 1). As the researcher sought access to organisations and to individuals to collect, analyse and report data, ethical concerns emerged, particularly when seeking initial access. Participating organisations were informed of the objectives of the research and the role of the researchers. Three important issues relating to ethical considerations need to be clarified.

1. Consent

As interviews were employed as the primary research method, informed consent was crucial. Consent letters were sent to the selected organisations to gain access. During

the preliminary stage, a brief amount of information was provided with the request letter (see Appendix 2) to the organisations concerning the subject area to which the study related and the purpose of the study. An explanation of the purpose of interviews was also provided to encourage their workers' participation and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity also given. Clarification was given to the HR Manager in each organisation that participation in the research had to be voluntary and that each and every participant taking part in the research had the ability to withdraw at anytime. Once a case study was selected, access was negotiated with every participant individually and all participants were informed about the research topic and told their participation had to be voluntary. It was also the responsibility of the researcher to give sufficient information to individual participants to enable them to decide whether they wished to participate in the research. Consent was also gained through communication with trade union or union-related body officials.

2. Deception and harm

Participants were also informed about the broad objectives of the research (see Appendix 3). Since none of the organisations involved in this research requested any feedback, no feedback to organisations was provided. Hence, no information which might risk or harm participants in anyway was provided to the organisation studied.

3. Privacy and Confidentiality

To protect the privacy and identity of research subjects, assurances of confidentiality were taken seriously. Hence, for people and organisations, pseudonyms were used at all times. Additionally, no actual names of individuals or organisations on all transcriptions of interviews were ever documented.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Given that the aims of the research were to examine how employees managed their work and non-work lives in the Malaysian public sector workplace, to elicit the

attitude of public sector workers towards work/non-work arrangements, and investigate the influence of beliefs and values on the way they managed their work/non-work lives, I considered these aims could only be successfully accomplished by such a qualitative approach. Additionally, a case study research design and using qualitative interviews were logical choices to address the research objectives and questions. In the following chapters, the profile of the case studies will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND THE ORGANISATIONAL PROFILES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Work/non-work integration is an important issue in the West as academic scholars, policy makers, employers as well as unions and individual workers are showing an increasing interest in it and the factors affecting it. However, whether there is the same interest in the East, particularly in Malaysia, is still unknown. This chapter will focus on the role of the state as a policy maker in the emergence and development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector organisations. This will be followed with the presentation of the landscape of the public organisations chosen as the domains for this research. Specifically, this chapter will provide an in-depth profile of the three case studies from the public organisations chosen as case studies. The profile of unions in the organisational case studies will also be described.

4.2 THE ROLE OF THE STATE TOWARDS THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF WORK/NON-WORK POLICIES

In 1991, the Malaysian Government declared its objective to become a developed nation by 2020. The aim was to achieve an industrialised and fully developed nation status by sustaining growth of seven per cent per annum and initiating structural changes in the economy as well as within the manufacturing sector. The key to the attainment of a fully developed nation is responding to the nine strategic challenges presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: The Nine Challenges of Malaysia Vision 2020

First	Establishing a united Malaysian nation made up of one *bangsa* Malaysia
Second	Creating a psychologically liberated, secure and developed Malaysian society
Third	Fostering and developing a mature democratic society
Fourth	Establishing a fully moral and ethical society
Fifth	Establishing a matured liberal and tolerant society
Sixth	Establishing a scientific and progressive society
Seventh	Establishing a fully caring society
Eight	Establishing an economically just society, in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the nation's wealth
Ninth	Establishing a prosperous society with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient

Source: Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010 in Economic Planning Unit (2006)

One of the central strategic challenges is the challenge of establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which the society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system. Accordingly, several policy instruments identified in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) include more flexible working arrangements, community childcare and nursery centres, and re-training opportunities to boost labour force participation, particularly female (Chapter 13, Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010), in order to encourage females to participate in the labour market without neglecting the importance of the family institution.

In light of Vision 2020 and recognition of the importance of a united national effort to ensure its achievement, the 9MP theme is set as 'Together Towards Excellence, Glory and Distribution'. All Malaysians have a stake in the nation building process – the private sector as the engine of growth, the public sector as facilitator and regulator, and the civil society and others as partners in development. Hence, human capital should be upgraded in terms of skills and capability as it is a key determinant in the achievement

of the 9MP goals and objectives. Moreover, the need to improve quality of life has become an important issue and Malaysian quality of life, as measured by the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (MQLI) improved during the 1990-2004 and 1990-2008 periods, increasing by 10.9 and 15.9 points respectively, as shown in Table 4.2 below. Apart from public safety and the environment, all components of the MQLI made good progress, including working life and family life – the important domains for workers and a central issue in this research.

Table 4.2: The Malaysian Quality of Life Index (MQLI)

Components	% Change 1990/2004	% Change 1990/2008
Transport & Communications	18.1	22.9
Working Life	**22.1**	**32.2**
Education	15.9	30.6
Housing	18.9	33.9
Health	18.1	29.1
Culture and Leisure	21.2	8.1
Social Participation	6.6	11.9
Income and Distribution	8.0	24.3
Family Life	**4.2**	**5.5**
Environment	-0.3	-5.9
Public Safety	-21.5	-17.2
	MQLI 10.9	**MQLI 15.9**

Notes: - The MQLI is an aggregate measure of the quality of life using forty-two indicators, representing eleven components of life.
Source: Economic Planning Unit (http://www.epu.gov.my accessed on 20 September 2009).

Table 4.2 above shows a percentage improvement of 22.1 per cent in working life between 1990-2004, whilst family life improved 4.2 per cent during the same period. Compared to 1990, working life had improved by 32.2 per cent in 2008, whilst family life had improved by 5.5 per cent. Both components therefore showed continued progress.

4.2.1 Labour Force Participation

In accord with the goal to involve equal female participation in the Vision 2020, during the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) period (2000-2005), females continued to make tangible contributions towards the social and economic development of the nation. Females attained higher levels of education, increased their participation in the labour force, and were involved in various business activities. As regards the 9MP (2006-2010), efforts have been undertaken to provide an enabling environment to ensure more effective participation of females in national development by ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to be more competitive and versatile to meet the challenges of a knowledge-based economy. As shown in Table 4.3, female labour participation rate increased from 44.4 per cent in 2001 to 49.0 per cent in 2011 (Economic Planning Unit, 2011).

Table 4.3 Malaysian Labour Participation Rates by Gender (2001-2011)

Year	Female Labour Participation (%)	Male Labour Participation (%)
2001	44.4	84.7
2005	45.7	79.0
2010	48.0	79.8
2011	49.0	80.0

Source: Economic Planning Unit (2011).

The Malaysian Government continues to encourage greater female participation in the labour force and contribution towards socio-economic development of the country. Since the greater involvement of females in the labour market will require creating a better integration between unpaid work and paid labour, effective labour market policies encompass more than job creation. Towards this end, the number of dual earner parents is increasing and measures have been introduced to ensure the provision of necessary support facilities to enable female to enter the labour market. These include the introduction of work/non-work practices and the provision of appropriate training

programmes. Community childcare and nursery centres are also being established in selected housing areas to ensure the availability of affordable quality care.

The private sector is also being encouraged to facilitate greater female participation in the labour market through the provision of more conducive working arrangements that take into account the multiple roles and responsibilities of females. These include new and flexible working arrangements such as teleworking, part time work, and job sharing. In addition, efforts are being undertaken to implement the concept of the home as office to encourage females to embark on small businesses.

4.2.2 The Malaysian States and Work/Non-Work Policies

The Malaysian Civil or Public Service in Malaysia is a legacy from the British who colonised the country for almost two centuries (Kumar & Che Rose, 2010). In Malaysia, the 'Family First' campaign was launched at the national and State level in 2003 among civil servants to better integrate work/non-work roles and responsibilities. The Malaysian Government through its 9MP (2006-2010) Chapter 15 urges society throughout the nation to uphold the values of caring for family and community. Its aim is to recognise the family as a social priority and a basic unit in the society that needs to be protected and supported by the community and nation. Table 4.4 shows the Government awareness of the need to integrate work/non-work responsibilities when the Government emphasised workers' quality of work/non-work life through Hajj leave[6]. Following that, the number of work/non-work arrangements provided to fulfil workers' needs and desires to better manage their work/non-work spheres increased. This demonstrated the Malaysian Government's awareness of the non-work sphere being equal in importance to the work sphere. Since then, although the development of work/non-work arrangements has been relatively slow, it has improved over four

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[6]Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia. It is the fifth pillar of Islam, a religious duty that must be carried out at least once in a lifetime by every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to do so.

decades. Table 4.4 shows the standard provisions related to work/non-work arrangements that all public sector organisations should implement.

Table 4.4: Work/Non-Work Standard Provisions by the State for Malaysian Public Sector Workers

STANDARD PROVISIONS
Five working day week[7]
60 days paid maternity leave[8] (under Budget 2011 extended to 90 days[9])
7 days paid paternity leave[10]
Parental leave (up to 5 years)[11]
40 days Hajj leave[12]
3 days bereavement leave (unrecorded leave)[13]
Longer lunch break on Friday
Leave to take examinations[14]
Leave for sports involvement[15]
Flexible start and finish time[16]
Annual air fares for officers to visit hometown ('balik kampung') if working in another state / region (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah or Sarawak)[17]
Financial assistance for childcare at public sector working premises[18]

The Government has implemented various work/non-work benefits for its civil servants. This includes the implementation of a five day working week to enable working parents to have more quality time with their family; extended paternity leave

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[7] Service Circular No.13, 2005

[8] Service Circular No. 2, 1998, General Order 25, 26 and 54 Chapter 'C'

[9] Budget 2011 at http://www.treasury.gov.my accessed on 15 October 2010.

[10] Service Circular No. 9, 2002 (effective 1 January 2003)

[11] Service Circular No. 15, 2007, Service Circular No. 9, 1991, Service Circular No. 2, 1998

[12] General order 34, 35 and 55 Chapter 'C', Service Circular No.4, 1984, Service Circular No. 9, 1991

[13] Enacted under Service Circular No. 10, 2002 (effective 1 January 2003), this provision was introduced to allows workers to pay their last respects and assist at their immediate family member's funeral.

[14] The purpose of this leave is to enable workers to take any examination that can enhance their quality of life. It is enacted under General Order 44 and 57 Chapter 'C' and Service Circular No. 9, 1991 (effective 1 January 1992)

[15] Enacted under General Order 46 and 57 Chapter 'C', Service Circular No. 11, 1980, Service Circular No. 5, 1985 (effective 18 December 1980), this provision is introduced to enable workers to participate in sports.

[16] Service Circular No. 2, 2007

[17] Service circular No. 22, 2008

[18] Service Circular No.4, 2007

from three days to seven days; extended unpaid parental leave up to five years; and special bereavement leave provision for three days for funeral arrangements for immediate family death.

Under the 9MP, the Childcare Centre Act 1984 was amended to ensure a minimum standard of childcare provision in the workplace and to increase the quality of childcare centres on workplace premises. Both public and private sectors were encouraged to establish on-site crèches through various incentives such as direct assistance and tax rebate.

On February 2, 2007, the Women, Family and Community Development (WFCD) Ministry established the childcare subsidy details for civil servants. The subsidy is for children up to age four. The details were worked out with the Treasury and the Public Service Department. At the same time, the WFCD Ministry's mission for the year 2007 was to create family-friendly workplaces around the country. On April 1, 2007, civil servants whose household income was RM1,200.00 and below became entitled to the provision of childcare services at the workplace. Meanwhile, on April 25, 2007, RM80,000.00 was given to government agencies to establish childcare centres at the workplace. On July 18, 2007, in the state of Sabah, the Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS) (Community Development Department) established a childcare centre at the Administrative Complex of the Federal Government, operating from 7.30 a.m. until 5.30 p.m.

In the private sector, labour costs are low relative to those in industrialised countries, while productivity remains high. Basic wage rates vary according to location and industrial sector. Supplementary benefits, which can include bonus, free uniforms, free or subsidised transport, performance incentives and other benefits, vary from company to company. Salary rates and fringe benefits offered for management and executive level personnel also vary according to the industry and employment policy. In addition to salaries, most companies also provide fringe benefits, such as free medical treatment,

personal accident and life insurance coverage, free or subsidised transport, annual bonus, retirement benefits and enhanced contributions to the Employees' Provident Fund.

Generally, workers in Peninsular Malaysia are covered by the Employment Act 1955 and workers in Sabah and Sarawak are covered by the Sabah Labour Ordinance and Sarawak Labour Ordinance, respectively. However, these laws and regulations are meant for workers working in the private sector. Regulations regarding the work/non-work elements provided by the Government have been enforced to all civil servants throughout the country. This chapter will focus on the rules and regulations related to work/non-work policies under Malaysian Government agencies.

General Order (GO), a public sector services handbook containing rules and regulations related to human resource and the Service Circular (SC) have been established to provide guidelines for implementing terms and conditions of employment specified by government. The SC is issued every year to indicate additional provisions, amendments or cancellations. The Letter of Service Circular (LSC) is also issued from time to time as an additional provision. There are several work/non-work provisions provided either through the SC or LSC:

1. Leave Provision
(a) Maternity Leave (SC No. 2 1998)
Maternity has been extended from 42 days to 60 days. Women staff may receive this benefits five times during their service in the public sector. Under the 2011 Budget of the 10th Malaysia Plan announced by the sixth Malaysian Prime Minister, maternity leave has been extended to 90 days (Budget 2011 Speech Para 76 from http://www.treasury.gov.my accessed on 15 October 2010) which allows more time for working mothers to recover after giving birth and to breastfeed before returning to work.
(b) Paternity Leave (SC No. 9 2002)

Generally, this provision is imposed on all state services and local authorities. This provision has increased the paternity leave from three days to seven days so as to prioritise the family (Family-First). Paternity leave is seven days unrecorded leave to all male public sector workers and is limited to five times during their services. The extension of paternity leave from 3 days to 7 days also indicates the government's awareness of working fathers' need to integrate their work and non-work responsibilities.

(c) Parental Leave (Service Circular No. 15 2007)

Parental leave (unpaid) is also provided and can be taken up after maternity leave. The aim of this provision is to enable female workers to care for and breastfeed their babies consistently with the intention to strengthen and inculcate the caring society culture imposed by the government. With the latest regulation, the government has increased unpaid parental leave up to five years. Under this new provision, Heads of Departments (or immediate superiors) can consider any female member who wants to take up this leave, provided:

i. It is unpaid leave.

ii. The total of parental leave taken does not exceed 1,825 days (five years).

iii. It is taken up at one time or partially.

iv. If it is taken up all at one time, the worker does not have anymore parental leave left for future children.

The Government increased unpaid parental leave from 90 days to the maximum five years on September 3, 2007. Workers can opt to take an accumulation of five years unpaid leave from work to take care of their children. The increase in parental leave up to five years reflects the importance of parenting among working citizens and the government's support of it. The five year provision was imposed because longer absence from work would affect public sector workers' competency and labour planning.

As a result of the Women Summit held in Kuala Lumpur on August 1ˢᵗ, 2007, the Malaysian Public Service Department offers female public sector workers the opportunity to temporarily quit the job market to focus on the family in order to avoid mass resignation. This is not only for the betterment of the family but also to strengthen female labour participation in an attempt to boost Malaysia's capability in the era of globalisation.

(d) Bereavement Leave (SC No. 10 2002)

Effective from 1 January 2003, this provision provides workers with the opportunity to arrange anything related to a death amongst immediate family members. Previously, all public sector workers who experienced death amongst immediate family members needed to take annual leave to arrange a funeral. However, since the government has put 'Family-First' as a priority, it is now agreed that this special leave can be taken for three days as unrecorded leave. 'Immediate family members' in this provision refer to husband/wife, child, mother and father.

(e) Hajj Leave (Service Circular No. 4 1984)

As the majority of Malaysians are Muslim, the Malaysian Government also provides Hajj leave to all Government workers who wish to perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to Makkah for 40 days, including weekends and public holidays. However, this leave can only be taken up once in a worker's service time. Also, a worker's service must be not less than four years and their service must be confirmed.

2. Working Practices
(a) Implementation of the Five Day Working Week (SC No. 13 2005)
This provision aims to increase productivity and to disseminate services and encourage a continuous-learning culture for life-time self development. This provision also intends to give opportunities to civil servants to spend more time with their family, to enhance the domestic tourism industry, and to facilitate interaction between departments at the state and federal levels. This provision replaces the six day working week implemented

earlier. However, this provision is only applicable to those who work office hours and not shift hours. Nevertheless, the immediate superior can show flexibility towards shift workers by adjusting working hours according to the needs of work tasks and the organisation. For continuous operation of counter services within office working hours, the head of the department can make adjustments to the worker's recess hour, provided the working hours are replaced. For counter services that need to be operated on Saturday, the head of department must ensure the counter services are open on that day and follow office working hours with officers working in rotation. Such job rotation aims to offer facilities to customers to pay bills, renew licences or to make use of other services as well as to give more flexibility to workers.

b) Staggered Flexible Start and Finish time (SC No. 2 2007)

This provision was first implemented among Federal Government agencies in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and then extended to the Federal Territory of Putrajaya in 1999. Through Service Circular No. 2 2007, this provision has been extended to all federal government agencies throughout the country. Table 4.5 below shows the staggered working day and hours in Malaysia's public sector agencies.

Table 4.5: Staggered Working Day and Hours in Malaysia's Public Sector Agencies

States	Day	Working hour (in a day)
Sabah, Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Sarawak And Federal Territories (Kuala Lumpur, Labuan & Purajaya)	Monday to Thursday	9 hours
	Friday	7 hours 30 minutes
Kedah, Kelantan & Terengganu*	Monday to Thursday	9 hours
	Sunday	7 hours 30 minutes

* Weekend Rest Days for these states are Friday and Saturday.
Source: Service Circular No. 2 2007.

Table 4.6 below provides details of staggered flexitime working hours in Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan. Workers must plan their staggered flexitime by choosing option ST1, ST2 or ST3 for every month in a year with the approval of their immediate superior. This provision commenced 1 June 2007.

Table 4.6: Details of staggered flexitime

Staggered Time	Day	Working Hours	Break	Working Hours
ST1	Monday - Thursday	7.30 am – 1pm	1pm – 2pm	2pm-4.30pm
	Friday	7.30 am – 11.30am	11.30am – 2pm	2pm-4.30pm
ST2	Monday - Thursday	8.00am-1pm	1pm-2pm	2pm-5pm
	Friday	8.00am-11.30am	11.30am-2pm	2pm-5pm
ST3	Monday - Thursday	8.30am-1pm	1pm-2pm	2pm-5.30pm
	Friday	8.30am-11.30am	1pm-2pm	2pm-5.30pm

Notes: ST- Staggered Time by week.

Source: Service Circular No. 2 2007.

3. Other Related Work/Non-Work Programmes

Under Budget 2011 announced by the Malaysian Prime Minister, a tax rebate of up to RM5,000 is eligible to be reimbursed to individual workers for medical expenses spent for their parents (http://www.treasury.gov.my accessed on 15 October 2010). Moreover, the Government's efforts to strengthen and improve workers' quality of life are seen in the introduction of annual free air tickets for workers and their immediate families to visit their hometown if working in another region (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah or Sarawak). Before 2008, the provision for workers to visit their hometown if working in another region was every two years. The change in provision to every year signifies the Government's recognition of the importance of 'balik kampung' among Malaysians, the tradition of visiting one's hometown and family members. The reason for the Government's support of this tradition is to enable workers who might be

working away from their families (immediate and extended) to maintain a close relationship with them, to remind them of the importance of the family institution, and to enhance a sense of belonging. In other words, this provision will remind workers of their obligation towards their family as well as their responsibilities at work.

The Government has also introduced special unrecorded leave for workers involved in representing their organisation in inter-organisation sports tournament and workers who need to take part in examinations for better performance, better qualifications, and to improve their quality of life. In addition, the implementation of a long lunch break on Friday not only enables Muslim workers to attend the Friday congregation prayer but also enables non-Muslims to deal with personal matters. The Government has also introduced once in a lifetime 40 days service leave to enable Muslim workers to go on Hajj and fulfil their religious obligations.

4.3 PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

This section presents the landscape of the public organisations chosen for this research study. Specifically, this section will provide an in-depth profile of the three case studies from the public organisations chosen as case studies. The profile of unions in the organisational case studies will also be described.

The research was based on public sector organisations all located in Kota Kinabalu, in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. This section will present background details relating to the case of public sector organisations, including their geographical location. It will describe the six organisations which formed the preliminary phase and the three case studies in the second phase of the research study.

4.3.1 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah

Sabah is the Malaysian state located in the northern part of the island of Borneo. It is the second largest state in Malaysia after Sarawak, which it borders on its south-west. The people of Sabah are divided into 32 officially recognised ethnic groups which contribute to the multiracial society of Malaysia. The largest indigenous ethnic groups are the KadazanDusun, followed by the Bajau. Other indigenous ethnic groups are known as the 'bumiputera' (the sons of the soil) among whom are the Rungus, Kadayan, Iban, Bisaya, Murut, Bidayuh, Sungai, Dayak, Kayan, Lundayeh, Melanau, and Idahan, etc. There are small numbers of Indians and other South Asian ethnic groups. Chinese ethnic groups can be found concentrated primarily in the major cities in Sabah. Malay is the national language spoken across ethnicities, although the spoken Sabahan dialect of Malay differs in inflection and intonation from the Peninsular Malaysian version.

As the capital city of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu plays an important role it is the main industrial and commercial centre in Sabah. Many state-level, national-level and international commercial banks as well as some insurance companies have their headquarters or branches here. A number of industrial and manufacturing companies also have plants here, especially in the industrial districts of Likas, Kolombong and Inanam. An 8,320-acre Kota Kinabalu Industrial Park (KKIP) in nearby Kota Kinabalu is intended to boost the city's industrial and commercial activity, making it a major growth centre in East Malaysia, and the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).

4.3.2 Public Sector Organisations in the Preliminary Phase of the Research

In the preliminary research phase, data were collected from six organisations, namely, Unico, Custco, Hospico, Broadco, Incomco and Roadco which had agreed to participate in the research. These organisations generally had standard work/non-work policies as promoted by the Government. These include extended 90 days maternity leave,

extended seven days paternity leave, three days bereavement leave, Hajj leave, a five day working week, staggered flexible start and finish time, extended lunch break on Friday, free fare to visit workers' region of origin as well as organisational discretion to allow married female Muslim workers to finish earlier in the month of Ramadhan provided they have worked throughout the lunch hour (this excludes workers who work shift hours). Additionally, each organisation has its own work/non-work related arrangements imposed by management.

Details relating to Unico, Custco and Hospico will be provided later in this chapter. Incomco, a large public agency collecting tax revenue from salaries and businesses, had 472 workers at its Sabah Headquarters at the time of the study. Incomco's workforce was made up of Malays (45 per cent), Sabah *bumiputera* (45 per cent), Chinese (nine per cent) and Indian (one per cent). Female workers made up 58 per cent of the workforce as compared to male workers 42 per cent. Seventy per cent of workers were Muslim, 20 per cent were Christian, nine per cent were Buddhist and one per cent were Hindu. Incomco had introduced some work/non-work policies in the workplace such as a two hour free outing during working hours to deal with personal matters once a month, on-site crèche, breastfeeding room at the childcare centre, prayer room, fitness centre, Friday religious talks and Quranic classes, family day, prayer for the day (everyday before starting work), a free English language course to improve workers' competency, and a half day off before every major festival event.

Broadco, is a Government department that runs broadcasting activities. At the time of the study, Broadco employed 597 workers of whom 90 per cent were Sabah *bumiputera*, five per cent were Chinese, and three per cent and two per cent were *bumiputera* from Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia, respectively. Female and male workers comprised 60 per cent and 40 per cent of the workforce respectively. Seventy per cent of the workforces were Muslim, 25 per cent were Christian, four per cent were Buddhist, and one per cent were Hindu. As well as the standard work/non-work policies issued by the government, Broadco also provided several work/non-work related arrangements such as a prayer room, housing quarters for some workers, adjustable

shift pattern particularly to continuity workers as well as a 'Joint-Raya' celebration that merged most major festivals, such as Eid, Christmas, Divali, and Gong Xi Fa Cai. During the research interview with Broadco's Assistant Human Resource Manager on 6 November 2008, Broadco was in the middle of preparing the 'Joint-Raya' Celebration and had invited all workers and their families to participate in the events planned for the day. The cheerful, work-life friendly environment was reflected in the colourful stage made for such events. However, Broadco did not have any in-house union like most other public sector organisations and workers were represented by a workers' representative elected by the management to negotiate with the top management.

Roadco, another public sector organisation selected for research purposes in the preliminary stage of this study, had 449 workers at the time of the study. Roadco, one of a federal ministries department at Sabah, was an enforcer of road and transportation regulations as well as dealt with vehicle licensing. The majority of its workers (74 per cent) were male, 50 per cent were Muslim, 45 per cent were Christian, and five per cent were Buddhist. No information on workforce composition by ethnicity was provided by Roadco, however, it did provide information on workers' state of origin which indicated that 93 per cent of workers of workers came from Sabah and Sarawak compared to seven per cent from Peninsular Malaysia. The work/non-work policies practised in Roadco did not differ much from those of other organisations in this research. Roadco had introduced basic work/non-work provisions and several other arrangements such as an adjustable shift pattern for enforcement officers, prayer rooms, periodic religious talks, front desk workers' ability to take an early morning break for breakfast as the counter service opened at 7.30 am and to change their turn of duty provided it was covered by another colleague, approved by the immediate superior, and did not jeopardise services' provisions. Table 4.7 presents the profiles of the six public sector organisations selected for the preliminary stage of the research and located in Kota Kinabalu.

**Table 4.7: Profiles of the Six Selected Public Sector Organisations
in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia**

Organisation	Size (by workforce)	Workforce Composition by Ethnicity (%)	Workforce Composition By Gender (%)	Workforce Composition by Religion (%)	Nature of the Organisation involved in	Standardised work/non-work policies for public sector	Other work/non-work practices	Union Involvement
UNICO	1599	Malay 35% Chinese 5% Indian 3% Other Sabah 55% bumiputera Other 2%	Male 55% Female 45%	Muslim 55% Christian 35% Buddhist 7% Hindu 3%	higher education teaching , research and administration	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break on Friday - 40 days Leave for Haj (once)	- unwritten flexi hours for academicians - childcare centre - fitness and sports facilities - mosque & prayer rooms - shift working hours for security officers and librarians - sabbatical leave - term-time working - part-time working - working from home - -early finish time for married Muslim women during Ramadan (but have to work through lunch hour)	MBJ – Joint council consists of management and workers through three Union-related bodies and represents Academicians and professional Workers, Assistant Registars and in-house union representing non-professional workers
HOSPICO	1076	Malay 7% Chinese 20% Indian 3% Other Sabah Bumiputera 70%	Male 20% Female 80%	Muslim 70% Christian 20% Buddhist 7% Hindu 3%	Provider of medical and health services	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break on Friday - 40 days leave for Haj (once)	- staggered flexible start and finish time for admin staff - shift working hours for medical and clinical staff - prayer room - -early finish time for married Muslim women during Ramadan (but have to work through lunch hour)	Union was under the umbrella of the national union (CUEPACS)
ROADCO	449	No specific info on ethnicity but by origin. Peninsular Malaysia 6.68% Sabah & Sarawak 93.32%	Male 74% Female 26%	Muslim 50% Christian 45% Buddhist 5%	Involved in enforcing road and transportation regulations as well as dealing with vehicle licensing	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break during Friday - 40 days leave for Haj (once)	- staggered flexible start and finish times - shift working pattern for enforcement officer - prayer rooms - periodic religious talk - -early finish time for married Muslim women during Ramadan (but have to work through lunch hour)	Has union but no info available
CUSTCO	752	Malay 35% Chinese 5% Sabah Bumiputera 59%	Male 71% Female 29%	Muslim 73.2% Christian 24.1% Buddhist 2.3% Sikh 0.1%	Responsible for tax collection from import and export duties as well as	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular	- staggered flexible start and finish times - housing quarters for staff complete with childcare	Yes. agenda related to work/non-work agenda i.e. longer paternity leave &

		Other non-bumiputera 1%		Others 0.3%	enforcement preventing illegal smuggling activities	Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break during Friday - 40 days leave for Haj (once)	centre, fitness and sports centre, tuition centre, mosque/ prayer room as well as community hall - Friday religious recitation at work - prayer rooms at workplace --early finish time for married muslim women during Ramadhan (but have to work through lunch hour) - Family Day	3 days compassionate leave (negotiated by union through MBJ and brought before the Ministry was fruitful & successful and imposed nationwide)
INCOMCO	472	Malay 45% Chinese 9% Indian 1% Other Sabah bumiputera 45%	Male 42% Female 58%	Muslim 70% Christian 20% Buddhist 9% Hindu 1%	Responsible for tax collection from salaries and other businesses	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break during Friday - 40 days leave for Haj (once)	- staggered flexible start and finish times - 2 hours free outing during working hours every month for personal matters - on-site childcare centre - breastfeeding room at the childcare centre - prayer rooms - fitness centre - Friday religious talk & Quranic classes - Family Day - English language Course - half day off before every major festival event -early finish time for married Muslim women during Ramadan (but have to work through lunch hour)	Has union but no further information allowed
BROADCO	597	Sabah bumiputera 90% Chinese 5% Other bumiputera 3% Other 2%	Male 40% Female 60%	Muslim 70% Christian 25% Buddhist 4% Hindu 1%	Involved in broad casting activities and administration	-60 days maternity leave -7 days paternity leave -paternal leave - staff from Peninsular Malaysia entitled to annual free ticket to their hometown in the Peninsular - extended lunch break during Friday - 40 days Leave for Haj (once)	- staggered flexible start and finish times for admin staff - prayer room - housing quarters for staff - shift working for continuity staff - -early finish time for married Muslim women during Ramadan (but have to work through lunch hour)	Workers' representative through MBJ.

Notes:
1. *Bumiputera* – 'sons of the soil' (native). Other *bumiputera* include the KadazanDusun, Rungus, Bajau, Suluk, Kadayan, Iban, Bisaya, Murut, Bidayuh, Sungai, Dayak, Kayan, Lundayeh, Melanau, Idahan ethnic groups, etc. Malays are also considered as *Bumiputera* and for the purpose of this study, this includes Malay from Peninsular Malaysia, Malay Brunei from Sabah and Malay from Sarawak.
2. MBJ – Joint-Council

Based on Table 4.7, the provisions of work/non-work practices and policies by the six organisations under study were found to be on a superficial level as other than the standard provisions required by the State, additional work/non-work arrangements provided in most of the organisations were still limited in scope. Work/non-work provisions, such as staggered start and finish flexi-time, prayer room, early finish time for Muslim married women during the month of Ramadhan and fitness centre (except Broadco) were found to be the common additional provisions provided in all six organisations. Additionally, out of six organisations, only Incomco provided an on-site crèche complete with breast-feeding room. Work/non-work provisions provided in Incomco also catered most of all workers' needs i.e. working mother with younger child, personal outing time during work, religious-, family- and fitness requirements as well as personal development needs. This made Incomco to be the most compliant organisation out of six workplaces in this study. This was followed by Custco, an organisation that sought to develop more progressive policies whereby crèche, fitness facilities, transportation, prayer rooms/mosque and housing quarters were provided. However, most of the arrangements were located at the housing area. Meanwhile, Unico was found to be merely compliant with the Government's work/non-work policies as crèche, fitness and religious-facilities as well as flexible working patterns were provided. However, the crèche provided was not within the working area.

It can be seen from Table 4.7 that Hospico, Roadco and Broadco were the least compliant organisations as most additional work/non-work arrangements provided were basic and superficial such as staggered start and finish time, prayer room and early finish time for Muslim married women during Ramadhan. This suggests that despite the influence of the legislative requirements by the State, work and non-work arrangements remain in their infancy. Indeed any of the additional work/non-work provisions provided in the organisations tended to focus on religious facilities and observation such as prayer rooms and early finish time for female workers during the month of Ramadhan. Additionally, provisions derived from the demand for caring responsibility through the establishment of on-site crèche and living quarters for workers in some of the organisations were absent.

4.4 THE PROFILES OF THE THREE CASE STUDIES

After the preliminary data collection phase, three organisations were selected for the case study research, namely: Unico, Custco and Hospico. This section will present a profile of each case study, describing the organisational background, workforce composition and working practices related to work/non-work arrangements.

4.4.1 Case Study 1: Unico

The Background

Established in 1994, Unico is one of the teaching-based public universities located in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. It is the vision of Unico to be an innovative university of global standing. Therefore, Unico strives to achieve academic excellence in various fields by gaining international recognition through learning and teaching, research and publication, social services and a balanced specialisation of knowledge and the personality development of students, resulting in high productivity and quality in the context of the society and the nation. 'Strive to Excel' is its motto, thus, Unico enhances its excellence based on the provision of an education that is based upon the principle of believing in God and in the development of students who are progressive, disciplined, integrated and balanced in their intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual outlook, and who will contribute to the well-being of the society and the nation. Unico's vision is to look for opportunities to promote the economic development of Malaysia to attain Vision 2020 and achieve the status of a developed country. Unico's main focus is to impart knowledge and skills and instil in students an understanding of the global context in academic strategies. The main role of Unico is to produce a competent workforce equipped with skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviour to meet the demands of the high technology era.

Workforce Composition

At the time of the study, Unico employed 1599 academic and non-academic (management/professional and support groups) workers. 731 academic workers comprised

various levels of occupation ranging from Professors in JUSA[19] A, B, and C categories, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Language Teachers and Tutors. They made up 46 per cent of total workers. Table 4.8 shows Unico's workforce composition by occupation level.

Table 4.8:
Unico's Workforce Composition by Occupation Level as of 3 November 2008

Group	Academic	Non-Academic
JUSA A	1	-
JUSA B	5	-
JUSA C	30	1
Associate Professor	86	-
Senior Lecturer	127	-
Lecturer	386	-
Language Teacher	15	-
Tutor	81	-
Management & Professional	-	150
Support 1	-	502
Support 2	-	215
TOTAL	**731 (46%)**	**868 (54%)**

Source: Unico's Human Resource Unit, Unpublished data (2008)

Of the total number of workers in Unico, more than half were local Sabah *bumiputera* (55 per cent), 35 per cent were Malay, five per cent were Chinese, three per cent were Indian, and two per cent were from other ethnic groups. Male workers made up 55 per cent of the total workforce. More than half of workers (55 per cent) were Muslim, just over a third (35 per cent) were Christian, seven per cent were Buddhist, and three per cent were Hindu.

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[19] JUSA refers to main position in the public sector

Workforce composition by gender, ethnicity and religion is shown in Table 4.9. However, this study was unable to show the fraction of occupational level by gender as no such data were available at the organisational level.

Table 4.9:
Unico's Workforce Composition by Ethnicity, Gender and Religion

Workforce Composition	Percentage
Ethnicity	
Sabah *Bumiputera*	55
Malay	35
Chinese	5
Indian	3
Others	2
Total	**100**
Gender	
Male	55
Female	45
Total	**100**
Religion	
Muslim	55
Christian	35
Buddhist	7
Hindu	3
Total	**100**

Working Practices

The standard minimum working hours per day for every level of worker in Unico is eight hours. There was at the time of the study an unwritten rule that flexible working hours applied to academic workers (interview with Human Resource Manager on 10 November 2008) but this had yet to be implemented officially, Unico's HR manager state, *"as a*

Government employer, Unico abides by government regulations but can be flexible when it comes to working hours, i.e. academics can come to work late but must work at least eight hours after they arrive." Unlike academic workers who had unwritten flexible working hours, the non-academic workers worked office hours from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. However, according to Unico Human Resource Manager, the Human Resource Unit was planning to introduce a staggered flexible start and finish time in the near future to non-academic workers to allow them some flexibility like their academic colleagues.

As a provider of higher learning education and as a research centre for the people of Sabah and the nearby regions, Unico, had formulated a motto 'a happy, secure and healthy campus' and work/non-work policies in Unico, according to the HR manager, were based on the business case agenda to increase the productivity of workers and to maintain the quality of their work/non-work spheres. In turn, Unico's management expected workers to produce work of a high quality as a result of promoting God-fearing and humanistic values across the organisation.

The most widely available work/non-work policies in Unico were maternity leave, parental leave, and flexitime – which were particularly appropriate for 'married workers with children' as compared to other groups of workers. Apart from the 'annual *balik kampung* package', there was no work/non-work arrangement provided to cater for workers that had parent and sibling care commitment. Table 4.10 demonstrates the additional work/non-work provisions available at Unico. Although the State encourages all Government departments to provide an on-site crèche, not all organisations do so. At Unico, although crèches are provided for their employees, they are not located within the working premises. Additionally, the crèche is run by one of the academic departments in Unico and Unico's Female Staff and Wives Association under Unico management and not directly run by the HR Unit.

Table 4.10 : Work/Non-Work Provisions by Unico

WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS UNDER ORGANISATIONAL DISCRETION
Crèche[+]
Fitness centre / sports facilities
Fitness-related activities
Prayer room/ Mosque
Religious-related activities
Adjustable shift working hour*
Flexitime*
Early finish time in the month of Ramadan[20] for Muslim married women**
Family involvement related activities

Notes:
[+] not located on the site
* applicable only to certain occupations / jobs
** not applicable to those who work shift hours

Apart from standard policies imposed by the Federal Government such as maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, bereavement leave and Hajj leave, Unico also has its own working practices and culture. Unico allows working from home where academic workers can mark papers and key in the marks on the website provided for this purpose. In relation to working time measures, Unico has introduced flexible working time, for example, for the teaching staff in Unico, enabling such workers to start and finish work at times of their choosing as long as they work at least eight hours a day. As well as full-time and contract workers who work on a full-time basis either flexibile working hours or fixed working hours, Unico also provides adjustable shift patterns, particularly for security workers and librarians.

To promote wellness and wellbeing, Unico provides fitness centres to facilitate healthy citizens who are expected to work in a happy and productive way. The slogan of 'a happy, secure and healthy campus' has inspired Unico's management to create and open a fitness trail which includes a 600 metre climb to the top of a nearby hill. There is not just breathtaking scenery for those who can reach its peak, the aim is also to promote a healthy

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[20] Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar when all Muslims are required to fast from dawn to dusk (during the daylight hours of this month).

lifestyle by encouraging workers and students at Unico and the society at large to climb the peak and be healthy and happy through this non-work activity. Moreover, to ensure its workers remain healthy and happy, there is an aerobic physical fitness club held weekly for all workers interested in joining it. Unico also organises sport activities from time to time, including friendly football matches, golf tournaments, bowling, badminton and tennis, in which all workers, both academic and non-academic, are invited to participate. Unico's Sports Unit also provides a fitness centre open to all members of Unico and there is a sports stadium complete with a jogging and running area.

Surrounded by the South China Sea and the majestic Mount Kinabalu which can be seen from the workplace, Unico has its own 'out door development centre' for activities involving workers and their families. To strengthen the inter- and intra-relationship between workers and their families, Unico organises a family day and a joint celebration of major festivals which gathers together workers from various ethnic groups and religions. This is the 'kongsi-raya' celebration which is a shared celebration of Eid for Muslims, Christmas for Christians, Divali for Hindus, Gong Xi Fa Chai for Buddhists or Chinese, and *Tadau Kamaatan* for the KadazanDusun ethnic group to celebrate the harvest festival. Celebrations are intended to strengthen the rapport between workers and their colleagues from other departments, units and/or divisions.

Unico is a large organisation and since the majority of its citizens, both workers and students, are Muslim, it has a mosque on its premises for Friday worship and daily prayer to accommodate mass congregations or religious-related social events which are open to all, including the public. A small prayer room is provided in each main building in the workplace area to enable workers who are Muslim to perform their prayers during working hours. This allows individual Muslims to fulfil their spiritual obligations and encourages them to be responsible workers. Unico also organises religious-related activities at the workplace. During Ramadan, Muslim female married workers who live at a distance from the workplace are allowed to finish their working day early to enable them to prepare the break fast meal for eating after sunset. However, they must work continuously through the

lunch break. Such allowances are intended to help workers better manage their non-work sphere.

In Unico, the academic union-related body is known as UNTES[21]. Registered under the Registrar of Society (ROS), as an association for academicians, UNTES is considered an infant union-related body as it was established in the year 2006 and has 423 members only. Amongst main roles played by UNTES are taking care of workers' career development and welfare as well as supporting management in policy making.

4.4.2 Case Study 2: Custco

The Background

As a federal agency, Custco can be found in most states in Malaysia, but for this research, only Custco in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, was chosen as one of the case studies. Custco is a Government agency responsible for administrating the nation's tax revenue policy. As the main revenue collector, Custco not only must continue to contribute to but also to increase revenue collection annually. This is done with a delicate balancing act so as not to jeopardise the performance of the industrial sector. In fact, the department has to ensure that whilst its control on the related industries is minimal but effective, it is also there to lend a helping hand and push and prod industries to develop and prosper. At the same time, preventive work, especially stopping the entry of negative elements that can threaten the country's security or those that bring moral decay, must be executed continuously.

Thus, implementation of the major services of revenue collector and preventor is Custco's mission. Custco's vision is 'to be a respected, recognised and world class administration' and its mission is also 'to collect taxes and provide customs facilitation to the industrial sector whilst improving compliance with legislations to protect the nation's economic, social and security interests'. Custco's ethic, on the other hand, is to provide 'trustworthy services, sincere and dedicated (ABID)'.

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[21] UNTES is a pseudonym for Unico's Union-related Body for Teaching Staff

As one of the main public sector organisations contributing to the financial strength of the country, Custco normally sets an annual achievement target to indicate its yearly performance. For example, in the year 2007, the objective was to accumulate taxes of RM264,461,891.00 and Custco successfully achieved RM287,707,103.14 (Custco Human Resource Unit, 2009), an increase of 18.95 per cent compared to its tax revenue for the year 2006. Generally, Custco's accumulation of tax revenue depends on three factors:

a.   Changes in the country's economy in line with global economy changes.
b.   Changes in government policy, particularly tax policy.
c.   Custco's effort and efficiency level in implementing government policy

Custco also launched a Custco Strategic Action Plan for the year 2009 as a job implementation guideline to be followed and achieved by all. This action plan is based on an 'easy to understand, easy to implement, easy to achieve' approach and the ICTR Development Policy Holistic Approach (2000-2010) which consists of four elements – Integrity, Core-business, Technology and Rakyat (People) for strategic planning purposes and to enhance to capability to provide the best services to the society. Recognising that its workers are ultimately responsible for the success of Custco's vision, mission and objectives, Custco organises programmes that are balanced, planned and continuous in order to produce an integrated workforce possessing charisma, knowledge, positive attitudes and adaptability to global changes.

Workforce Composition

Custco had 752 workforces (as of November 2008) of whom 71 per cent were male. Almost three-quarters (73. 2 per cent) of the total workforce were Muslim, and the rest were Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and of other religious persuasions. As regards ethnic background, 59 per cent of workers were Sabah *bumiputera*, 35 per cent were Malay (mostly from Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak), five per cent were Chinese, and one per cent were from other ethnic groups. The majority of Custco's workers were aged 40 and

above and had long work experience with the organisation. Table 4.11 shows the composition of Custco's workforce by gender, religion and ethnic background.

Table 4.11: Custco's Workforce Composition by gender, religion and ethnic background

Composition by	Percentage
Gender	
Male	71
Female	29
Total	**100**
Religion	
Muslim	73.2
Christian	24.1
Buddhist	2.3
Sikh	0.1
Others	0.3
Total	**100**
Ethnicity	
Sabah *bumiputera*	59
Malay	35
Chinese	5
Others	1
Total	**100**

Working Practices

Custco is perceived as a progressive organisation because it has implemented many work/non-work policies. Most of the standard work/non-work policies are gazetted through Government General Orders and Circulars. Additionally, Custco like other public sector organisations has its own authority and discretion to improvise the policies, in order to meet its workers' needs and demands as well as its business case purposes. Custco provides staggered flexi-time (staggered start and finish times) for its workers who work office hours and an adjustable shift pattern for shift-based workers. Flexi-time was introduced in Custco in 2003 to improve the efficiency of organisational counter services as well as to cater for workers' personal needs. This flexi-time has been introduced according to the standard regulated by the State, with three different schedules: 7.30 am to 4.30 pm; 8.00 am

to 5.00 pm; and 8.30 am to 5.30 pm. This staggered flexi-time only applies to those who work fixed working hours.

Workers attached to the Preventive Unit and Intelligence Unit and Airport work adjustable shifts. Those required to perform raid operations are on 'on-call' which requires them to be available at anytime and anywhere requested by their superior. As for the adjustable shift pattern, there are three shifts in Custco, namely: shift A from 6.00 am to 2.00 pm; shift B from 2.00 pm to 10.00 pm; and shift C from 10.00 pm to 6.00 am (on the following day). These shifts are mainly for Custco officers. However, due insufficient numbers of Superintendent Officers, only two shifts are available i.e. from Monday to Friday 8.00 am to 5.00 pm and from 5.00 pm to 12 midnight. At the weekend, the shift is rotational and according to mutual agreement between the officers concerned. The adjustable shift pattern is only available to those who work at the Airport Unit. Most workers who work in the Preventive Unit usually work office hours but are also on standby mode as they may be required to participate in both scheduled and unscheduled raids and investigations for the Intelligence Unit. Hence, most workers' working time during such operations is spent outside the work premises, either in the marine coastal zone area (for the Marine Prevention Unit) or remote mainland location (for the Preventive Unit), to prevent smuggling and other illegal activities related to their job scope. If there is no raid operation scheduled for a particular day, workers are obliged to come to work on an office hour basis. However, they have to be always ready to be called at anytime when they are needed for an immediate or urgent task related to their job, especially when urgent information is received on certain related matters.

As well as the standard work/non-work arrangements provided by the State, Table 4.12 shows the work/non-work provisions also available in Custco. Although the State encourages all Government departments to provide an on-site crèche, like Unico, Custco also does not do so. In the case of Custco, the crèche is located at the housing quarters rather than at the workplace because Custco's departments are scattered around the city of Kota Kinabalu and it is impossible to provide an on-site crèche in each department.

Table 4.12 Work/Non-Work Provisions by Custco

WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS UNDER ORGANISATIONAL DISCRETION
Crèche[*]
Fitness centre / sports facilities
Fitness-related activities
Prayer room/ Mosque
Religious-related activities
Adjustable shift working hour[**]
Flexitime: Staggered start and finish time[**]
Early finish time in the month of Ramadan for Muslim married women[***]
Workers' housing quarters[+]
Family involvement related activities

Notes:
[*]   located at workers' housing area
[**] applicable only to certain occupations / jobs
[***] not applicable to those who work shift hours
[+]   limited unit

For the purpose of meeting workers' personal spiritual needs, prayer rooms are provided on the premises at Custco for its Muslim workers who are required by their religion to perform their daily prayers at set hours.

Apart from the management initiative in promoting work/non-work arrangements, CUSTWU[22], Custco's house union has played a significant role in the emergence of workplace work/non-work policies in Malaysia. The successful negotiations of CUSTWU with the Ministry of Finance have not only benefited Custco's workers but all public organisations nationwide. Under its union's effective leadership, seven days paternity leave and three days bereavement leave have been imposed on all public sector organisations. CUSTWU covers all Custco workers, except those at the professional and managerial level who have their own union-related body. CUSTWU as a trade union for Custco's workers comes under the umbrella of the National Union of the Congress Union of Employees in Public Civil Services (CUEPACS). Established in 1967 and registered under the Trade Union Act, CUSTWU is among the oldest registered unions in Sabah, with a registration

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[22] CUSTWU is a pseudonym for Custco's Workers Union

number of 2. Despite its long establishment, its membership of 500 over the state of Sabah is relatively low.

CUSTWU plays in important role in dealing with and taking care of workers' rights as well as their welfare. CUSTWU's President described the union's experiences in fighting for workers' rights, mainly work/non-work arrangements. For example, being an influential union, CUSTWU had successfully brought forward the work/non-work agenda nationwide.

As well as flexible working hours, Custco also provides other work/non-work arrangements, for example, workers are allowed to take half a day off at every major festival, i.e. Eid, Christmas, Divali; religious talks are held for all workers at Custco's Headquarters and most other Custco working premises; housing areas are provided for workers with creche facilities and a fitness centre; prayer rooms are provided in the workplace; a family day and sports day are held in the year; aerobic and other fitness related activities are provided; Knowledge-Skills-Ability talks are held in the workplace; recitation of the Yassin Verse takes place on Fridays; and there is a Karaoke room for lunch break sessions at some of Custco's units. In order to be seen to be putting customers and the society first, Custco takes pride in its provision of friendly counter services and tax payment services. 'Custco people-friendly' programmes are also organised. Customers are provided with physical facilities such as prayer room, pleasant waiting areas, adequate parking spaces, customer counters, a help desk at Kota Kinabalu International Airport, security control, an e-learning centre and IT room. Workers appear to be treated like customers in that they are provided with a recreational room, pleasant working areas, a library, gymnasium, Internet connection, and sport field.

Custco also emphasise safety and health among its workers. General Order No. 101, for example, emphasises the importance of creating a pleasant working environment by providing workplace facilities that are clean and hygienic. Custco also provides a coffee corner for workers complete with kitchen amenities, adequate parking spaces, a lounge, free transportation from workers' housing area to Custco's Headquarters, and a changing room and waiting room for guests. Custco focuses on its workers' health and safety by

arranging programmes related to health care, running healthy lifestyle campaign, offering regular health check-ups for officers who are aged 40 or more, and providing protective working tools to officers who work on high risk assignments to ensure their safety, such as walkie-talkies and bullet proof jackets.

4.4.3 Case Study 3: Hospico

The Background

As one of the main hospitals in the state of Sabah, Hospico is a centre of specialist services for women and children in the state of Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan. Hospico also provides emergency services, specialist clinics, daily specialist treatment services as well as supportive services it operates a 24 hours service to cover all emergency cases. Patients referred from other public and private hospitals are treated at the Specialist Clinic. Such patients may require obstetrics and gynaecological (O&G), paediatric or oncological services, radiotherapy, paediatric dental surgery, general surgery or an anaesthetic. Daily specialist treatment services include haemodialysis, thalassaemia, chemotherapy, paediatric dental surgery, and O&G. Support Units include a laboratory diagnostic imaging, a pharmacy, counselling, dietetic health promotion, and medical records. Hospico, as an essential agency providing health-based services, is known for its 'we are always here to help you' motto. Its workers are always ready to work, whenever they are needed, especially when an unexpected disaster occurs. They are always 'ready for disaster', to provide health based services to the public and the society at large whenever these are required.

Workforce Composition

Hospico, which was established in 2004, had 1076 workers as of November 2008. Females made up 80 per cent of the total workforce. Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of the total workforce were 40 years old or above, indicating that three-quarters of the workforce were 39 years old or below. The percentage of workers at the management and professional level (which included medical officers, specialists, pharmacists, pathologists, chemists,

physicists, forensic officers and other related occupations) was 11 per cent compared to 89 per cent for the supportive groups (consisting of assistant administrative officers, assistant accountants, diagnostic radiologists, radiotherapy, nurses, medical laboratory technologists and other related occupations). Sabah *bumiputera* workers comprised 70 per cent of the total workforce compared to Malays (7 per cent), Chinese (20 per cent) and Indians (3 per cent). Composition by religious background was Muslim (70 per cent), Christian (20 per cent), Hindu (3 per cent), and Buddhist (7 per cent). Table 4.13 shows Hospico's workforce composition by gender, ethnic background, religious background and occupation level.

Table 4.13: Hospico's workforce composition by gender, ethnic background, religious background and occupation level.

Composition by	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Female	80
Male	20
Total	**100**
Ethnic background	
Sabah *bumiputera*	70
Chinese	20
Malay	07
India	03
Total	**100**
Religion background	
Muslim	70
Christian	20
Hindu	03
Buddhist	07
Total	**100**
Level of occupation	
Management & Professional	11
Support groups	89
Total	**100**

Working Practices

Since 2003, Hospico has implemented flexi-time in working premises, although it is only offered only to workers who work fixed office hours. Flexible working hours in Hospico are staggered to three different times as shown in Table 4.4. This flexi-time has been introduced according to the standard regulated by the State, with three different schedules: 7.30 am to 4.30 pm; 8.00 am to 5.00 pm; and 8.30 am to 5.30 pm. Although the main purpose of having flexible staggered working hours is to enable patients to obtain the services they require, Hospico has its own reason for implementing such flexitime. According to Hospico's HR manager, it is sensible to cater to workers' personal needs, i.e. allowing them to deal with necessary personal matters before embarking on work, such as taking their children to school, as this frees their energies to fully concentrate on their job tasks. Moreover, flexi-time enables workers to avoid traffic jams in the morning which may delay their arrival at the workplace and also leave them feeling stressed when they do arrive. Given the nature of Hospico's service provision to the public, the majority of its workers work an adjustable shift hour pattern. There are three types of shift pattern, i.e. 7.00 am to 2.00 pm, 2.00 pm to 10.00 pm, and 10.00 pm to 7.00 am, and all these shifts are based on rotation. Nurses, doctors and other clinical staff normally work an adjustable shift pattern. Medical officers are also entitled to do locum work, i.e. part-time work in other health care clinics if they wish. Nurses and other clinical staff as well as medical officers are also entitled to one day off each time they work night shifts two days consecutively. In Hospico, most clinical workers worked an adjustable shift pattern depending on the department to which they were attached.

Like Unico, Hospico also implemented all the standard work/non-work provisions. Table 4.14 shows the work/non-work provisions available in Hospico. Although the state encourages all government departments to provide an on-site crèche, Hospico does not provide one due to lack of space within the working area. Hence, most of Hospico workers rely on a private crèche or other supportive parties, such as spouse, parents, relatives or neighbours to mind their children.

Table 4.14: Work/Non-Work Provisions by Hospico

WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS UNDER ORGANISATIONAL DISCRETION
Fitness-related activities
Prayer room
Religious-related activities
Adjustable shift working hour*
Flexitime-   Staggered start and finish time*
Early finish time in the month of Ramadan for Muslim married women**
Workers' housing quarters°
Family involvement related activities
Well-being and health-related activities

Notes:
* applicable only to certain occupations / jobs
** not applicable to those who work shift hours
° limited unit and only to certain medical officers and/or single clinical workers

To promote wellness and wellbeing, Hospico, offered fitness-related and well-being/health-related activities were arranged for workers such as an obesity clinic, exercise-based dance, and so forth to help workers enjoy their non-working sphere, particularly after long tiring working hours or during the lunch break.

For the purpose of meeting workers' personal spiritual needs, prayer rooms are provided on the premises at Hospico for its Muslim workers who are required by their religion to perform their daily prayers at set hours. Additionally, in promoting and enhancing services for the public as well as looking after their workers' welfare, Hospico provides workers' housing quarters for specialists, clinical workers and, single workers. Although charges apply, they are very low to help workers with the cost of accommodation. They are far lower than rental charges outside.

As in other public sector organisations, an extended lunch break on Friday is applicable to workers who work set hours, and most of whom are in administrative positions. Additionally, during the month of Ramadhan when all Muslims are fasting, Hospico allows female Muslim married and single workers who work set hours to finish their working time early, provided they work throughout their lunch hour. This is to enable them to prepare the

iftar for their families at home, i.e. the meal that is eaten after sunset. This arrangement is at the management's discretion. Hospico also organises family-related activities such as a family day (which includes family fun and games etc), annual dinner (attended by spouses) and the Joint-Raya celebration are jointly celebrated. These activities are designed to encourage inter-relationships among workers and their families and strengthen the rapport between workers and their colleagues from other departments, units and/or divisions.

Additionally, Hospico has a Muslim Welfare Club, Staff Nurse Association and Women's Association. On the workplace premises there are also a workers' sports club, fitness centre, prayer room, pantry, and breastfeeding room. Workers are also able to participate in a variety of activities, for example, the family day, annual dinner, sports day, soft skills courses, Quranic classes for Muslims, and fitness and body mass index activities.

Union plays an important role as a mediator between workers and management. Thus, as workers' representatives, union usually deal with workers' rights as well as their welfare. HOCWU[23], a union for clinical workers at Hospico is under the umbrella of CUEPACS. Established in the 1960s, HOCWU covers all workers who work in medical services, including nurses, Assistant Medical Officers (AMO) and so forth who work in the public hospital in Sabah but excludes medical officers who belong to their own Association of Medical Officers and Surgeons. Registered under the Trade Union Act, HOCWU has more than 5000 members over the state of Sabah.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The State at the macro level, has been playing its role in developing work/non-work arrangements as mechanisms to improve workers' quality of life, in both the work and non-work spheres, as well as to increase economic activity rates of women by encouraging them to work. This suggests that the role of the State through its work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector is an important factor to enable workers' attempts at work/non-work integration. However, every public sector organisation has the autonomy to

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[23] HOCWU is a pseudonym for Hospico's Clinical Workers' Union.

implement additional work/non-work arrangements in order to enhance and combine work and home demands. Such arrangements might vary from one organisation to another depending on the nature and the background of the organisation. Meanwhile, the private sector has no compulsion to develop these policies. This chapter has also presented the profiles of the organisations under study. Specifically, the in-depth profiles of the three case studies were also presented. The profiles of the three unions in the organisational case studies were also described.

The next chapter will discuss work/non-work policies and practices in Unico at the organisational level as well as work/non-work experiences among workers at the individual level.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXAMINING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT UNICO

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine work/non-work life at Unico, a university in Sabah, Malaysia. In line with a multi-level perspective, this chapter considers the interaction of three levels - the macro context examines the influence of the state with regard to the nature of work/non-work provisions. The meso-level focuses on the role of the specific organisation by examining the nature of work demand and the organisation of working time. The micro level assesses the attitudes and behaviour of employees with respect to how these contexts, as well as how religious and cultural values influence the way employees view, manage and organise their work and non-work lives.

5.2 WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES IN UNICO

As the research literature highlights, the implementation of work and non-work provisions is often influenced by the business case agenda (Coussey, 2000). However, despite the fact that the business case rationale does not seem to correspond to public sector organisations, at Unico, the HR manager stressed that the motivation to provide a number of additional practices to facilitate work and non-work life was to enhance employee productivity. This is seen in the quote below from Adel, Unico's HR manager who associated work/non-work arrangements with workers' loyalty and productivity. Providing a comfortable and relaxed working environment for workers will generate happy workers who, in turn, will produce greater productivity for the organisation. This will have a positive effect on workers, their families, and the society at large. Adel, the HR manager stated:

"A happy worker will feel comfortable and relaxed in the workplace and will be productive and loyal to the organisation. S(he) will have a sense of belonging to the organisation and work hard, which will benefit both the organisation and the wider society. In some workplaces, workers are very productive but not happy. That's not balance. Workers must have a conducive working environment and all the facilities necessary to make them happy. If these do not exist, they may accept the situation but will not be entirely fulfilled to the detriment of their work and non-work spheres."

Adel's view was supported by UNTES, Unico union-related body as Daud, UNTES' President said:

"I want all staff to be happy and get promotion. If they are happy, they perform well at work."

Interviews with the representative of the union-related body, UNTES, at Unico helped to achieve greater understanding of how the union in each context perceived, understood and dealt with work/non-work issues in the workplace. As workers' representatives, the union is responsible for enhancing workers' quality of life. Despite the standard provisions by the State, the work/non-work arrangements provided in Unico were found to be more on recreational basis in line with Unico motto 'healthy workers, happy workers'. This was also an agenda pursued by UNTES as its 'Ideal Package' of work/non-work arrangements (see Table 5.1). This explains that the relationship between UNTES and Unico's management was reflective of a unitarist logic, as the union sought to support management practices as the President believed that the Union and the employer has the same interest in promoting employee wellbeing and productivity.

Table 5.1 UNTES 'Ideal Package' of Work/Non-Work Arrangements

1. Recreational club for activities after working hours
2. Promotion
3. Reduce bureaucracy at work
4. All staff able to fulfil all the requirements emphasised by management

Although Unico promotes and enhances work/non-work arrangements, Adel the HR manager viewed that the most important role to ensure work and non-work integration is the Government as policy maker. When asked if he considered it necessary to have work/non-work arrangements in the workplace, Adel stated that he had reservations about the workability of work/non-work arrangements in public sector organisations.

"I think work/non-work arrangements should be compulsory otherwise they will not be implemented in the public sector. As a government institution, we are limited to what the government policy makers decide, but anything within my power to change to assist workers' work/non-work integration will be done. I will not hold back from doing what I consider to be in the best interests of the workers. I view work/non-work arrangements as workers' rights as long as there are written rules/regulations to support them. Although we have work/non-work provisions as part of organisational policy, as a public institution, our ability to make major improvements is limited compared to the private sector's ability to do so. We are a government servant and our ability to make major improvements is constrained by the Government as our employer. But we can try to obtain more. As an organisation, Unico is simply an implementor of Government policy and we can only implement what we have been instructed to implement by Government. We cannot do more because we don't make the policy."

Adel's comments suggest that the Government can be used as an excuse for a piece-meal and restricted approach to work/non-work policies at the organisational level. Additionally, UNTES unawareness of the importance of work/non-work agenda also contributed to a relatively limited work/non-work approach at Unico. Despite the Government's 'Family First' initiative, the terminology 'work-life balance' or 'work/non-work integration' is not yet assimilated into work organisations in Malaysia. Unico's union members and UNTES' President were unfamiliar with the terminology. When asked if he had heard the terms 'work-life balance' or 'work-life integration' before and what he understood by it, the UNTES President answered:

"I've never heard the term before. In my view, management shouldn't focus on work only but consider workers' general welfare by organising non-work activities such as retreats, golf, football, in fact, any activity not based on the actual job. As academicians, our job roles and responsibilities are quite stressful, so management needs to establish a recreational club (for example), to build better social networking among staff. This is necessary for the organisational's success as if the management only stresses work per se

and the social wellbeing of the staff is not looked after, the organisation will not be able to achieve or maintain its reputation for excellence."

The President's understanding of the concept of work/non-work was limited in scope and applied predominantly to sports, recreational-based activities, and activity outside paid work. This demonstrates that UNTES' struggle for workers' work/non-work life betterment would appear to be somewhat superficial as it primarily favours the introduction of recreational-based arrangements to enable workers to spend time relaxing and socialising with other workers after working hours. The emphasis on recreational activities could also be linked to management's desire to engender a team spirit within the relatively individualistic working practices of academia. Additionally, Daud expressed concern with the level of bureaucracy in Unico and suggested that its reduction would improve workers' work/non-work life quality. Finally, Daud stated that workers should show their willingness to co-operate with management by fulfilling all the requirements requested by management. Daud stated:

"The relationship between employees, union and the management is like a continuum. Thus, all of us need to compromise and co-operate. Workers without the union will not be heard by the management… For me, the management's level of cooperation is high. Thus, employees need to appreciate this and it is better if they give cooperation (to the management). I would also like if the management use subtle approach by reducing their level of bureaucracy such as by allowing more recreational facilities for the betterment of employees' well-being. Thus, it will be more to win-win situation."

From the management's perspective, efforts to increase workers' dedication to work are viewed as of paramount importance to achieve high productivity. Adel, HR Manager explained how moral values and principles are instilled in workers through religious teachings and benefit both workers and the organisation.

"Work/non-work arrangements play a significant role in productivity and maintaining workers' morale. All of us must endeavour to work to our best ability as this is what religion requires of us. It teaches us to be honest, responsible, accountable and to show

integrity. Experience shows that there's a relationship between happy workers and increased productivity."

Meanwhile, in term of working practices, UNTES had successfully negotiated with management working practices to support work/non-work relations including flexi-time for academics. Daud explained:

"Through Management-Labour Joint Council (MBJ) negotiations held recently, we proposed the implementation of several work/non-work practices which were agreed by management. First, we fought for management to introduce flexible working hours for academic workers to be endorsed in a written regulation. The government allows eight working hours per day (40 hours per week) and flexible working hours were implemented formally from 1st January 2009. However, the punch card system is still in operation for monitoring purposes. Despite the flexitime arrangement, the latest staff can come to work is 10.00 am."

The existence of the punch card system to monitor flexi-time demonstrates low-trust working relations at Unico. Additionally, the relationship between UNTES and Unico's management was reflective of a unitarist logic whereby the union promoted management's policies and practices restricted interpretation of work/non-work life integration centring predominantly on recreational activities.

5.3 THE ROLE OF THE ORGANISATION

It is an important factor to examine the role of the organisation at the meso level in the light of multi-level analysis (Warhurst *et al*., 2008; Grzywacz *et al.,* 2007). Hence, the organisational features such as the nature of work and the organisation of working time will be examined in this section.

Workers in Malaysia's public sector normally work eight hours per day on average. However, due to job requirements in certain occupations, working hours can vary depending on work requirements and services needed. The average number of working hours of academics in Unico is 45 hours per week, but this amount varies. Specifically,

two elements were found to influence the working time arrangements in Unico – the nature of the work demand and the control of working time. Significantly, these factors contributed to a long working hours culture at Unico.

5.3.1 Work Demand

Generally, academics worked inconsistent and unpredictable long working hours due to work demand in Unico. Working hours varied across the year, due to pressure of marking and conducting research and resulted employees to work longer hours in order to complete important tasks. Rahim, 33 years old, an academic in Unico, married with children, marked students' papers and exam scripts and often took his work home to meet work deadlines:

"I will normally stay at the office until I finish all my tasks, but the latest I can stay is 10.00 p.m. Sometimes, therefore, I take my work home to finish it, especially when I have to mark final exam papers or assignments within a given deadline."

This quote suggests that the pressure of job demands imposes a degree of rigidity in terms of where and how long employee works for. Additionally, work demands also meant they had to be contactable by the management whenever required which was made possible with modern technology such as e-mails and mobile phone. This resulted in frequent interruptions of academics privacy and long, inconsistent working hours. Indirectly, these work practice increased the permeability of the boundary between work and home causing workers to conduct work-related activities in the time reserved for non-work or family activities (Milliken & Dunn-Jensen, 2005). Mike, 39 years old, a senior academic in Unico, married with young children commented:

"I can start work late, I can choose my own time when to go back to work after lunch or just disappear. I think it is most important that you are contactable and available. I (normally) switch on my mobile 24 hours and am available for any appointment (with students) at any time."

The flexibility given to lecturers gave them the freedom to manage their work life sphere in many different ways. They could work longer hours and take work home to complete which meant they could spend more time with their family (Noon & Blyton, 2007), as indicated by Ian, 41 years old, an Associate Professor, married with young children:

"Normally, as a lecturer, I work between 17-18 hours a day. However, these hours include time spent working at home. I may work 10-12 hours at the university and then work at home or work mostly at home in front of the computer. It depends on my workload. An office worker would normally work eight hours a day, but I myself work longer hours out of choice. I may start work as early as 6.00 a.m. at home. Working in my home environment enables me to see more of my family."

Kirana, 32 years old, a married lecturer and expectant mother, also pointed to her long working hours as a result of work demand and revealed that at times she found her job stressful:

'... the start and finish time may be flexible but in terms of working hours I may find myself working up to 9 to 10 hours a day. On one occasion, I started some work at work which had to be completed within a deadline and found myself working on it at home until midnight and I had to continue working on it the next day to finish it. If I cannot finish work at the office, I will take it home to complete. So far, I'm willing to work on demand because I like my job and feel a responsibility towards my students. At certain times, however, my job is stressful, especially during the final exam grading. I'm often so busy I don't have time to do my laundry."

Apart from teaching and other core-business tasks required by the management, workers also had other work demands such as administration. Such multi-tasking requires a high commitment from workers. Mamat, 34 years old, Head of Programmes, shared his experience of working continuously to ensure his work was completed on time:

'The maximum I can stay at the office is 10 hours. If management wants work done urgently I will work at home, often until midnight, working at my computer. I have experienced working 24 hours non-stop as Head of Programmes and it is exhausting."

Evidences indicate that there was range of work demands faced by academics. In Unico, job duties associated with teaching and research i.e. marking time and research projects contributed to academics working longer hours, particularly during certain periods. Consequently, most academics may desire flexibility to manage their working time. Although there is flexi-time which suggests that workers work a fixed number of hours per day and week, evidences show that some respondents working hours extended beyond these core hours. The evidence indicates that relationship between work and non-work life is complex and is significantly influenced by the nature of the job demand in the organisation. The next section will examine how management attempt to regulate working time by both the flexitime and punch card system.

5.3.2 Managerial Control over Working Time

This section will examine how working time is organised in Unico. The introduction of flexible working hours at Unico was accompanied by the implementation of a system to monitor all employees' working time. This took the form of a 'clocking-in' system and was referred to as the 'punch card system'. This system was implemented to ensure that employees did not misuse flexi-time. Mamat, an academic, explained the main reasons for implementing the punch card system as follows:

"Flexible working time caused a 'missing in action' problem among workers and work was thus delayed. It also caused difficulty gathering all staff together at certain times and this created tension between lecturers and the students who wanted to meet them."

Adel, the HR Manager indicated that the punch card is used as a monitoring device to trace workers' whereabouts:

"One way to improve the productivity of workers in public sector organisations is by introducing the punch card system. While the government has not forced organisations to introduce it, it encourages some form of monitoring of staff which organisations implement in different ways. In this organisation we have introduced the punch card system to monitor academic and non-academic staff. If academicians start work late they must work not less than eight hours. The punch card system has not been introduced to

ensure academicians stay in the office but to trace their whereabouts when they're working away from the office."

Thus, despite implementing flexi-time, management desired to control workers time. Hence, while the idea of having flexible working time was to allow some flexibility, the punch card system resulted in restricted flexibility and workers' dissatisfaction with it as illustrated in the following comment from Anita, 55 years old, an Associate Professor, married with grown up children:

"I think the punch card system needs to be liberalised a little bit. I'm not against it as a record needs to be kept so that people don't go missing in action. But I think it should be more flexible. When you start work late you can make up your hours later on. That is the benefit of flexitime. I feel the punch card system is more suitable for admin staff as they tend to work in the same environment throughout the day. We academic staff move about more, for example, we visit the library or attend meetings outside, yet we are still performing our work duties. The system should take this into account. On one occasion I was asked where I was. I was at the library in the museum. As I was still performing my work duties I had not punched my card. I was asked to go back to punch my card to indicate I had left the university's premises. That seemed to me ridiculous. The time I took travelling back to do so could have been spent working and I wasted both fuel and money on what I viewed as an unnecessary journey. So, in my view, the punch card system needs to be more flexible."

Julia, 32 years old lecturer, married with a young child, also criticised the inflexibility of the punch card system:

"I like flexi-time because it allows me to adjust my work schedule and arrange my time accordingly. The punch card system really restricts my movement."

The rules and regulations of the punch card system contrast significantly with the flexibility of the flexi-time arrangements. It demonstrates the lack control employees exercise over their work time, Khalid, 45 years old single and a senior academic, found it stressful to continually have to punch his card before a certain time if he didn't want it stamped 'red' and be viewed as 'tardy'. He said when interviewed:

"Although in theory I don't have a problem with the punch card system since I can see there is a need for it, I would prefer that I didn't have to use it. I feel it is not fair to

impose it on me as I live far away from the organisation and have to leave home early to ensure my card is punched before a certain time. It is stressful to have to rush to come to work. With the flexitime system if I arrive late to work I can work longer in the evening to make my hours up."

The punch card system not only restricted and monitored workers' movements, it also suggested that management had low trust in the professionals to manage their own working time. Moreover, it was used to 'restrict' career advancement as time records were used in consideration of academics' performance in the formal appraisal process. As such, the punch-card system was embedded in the social and organisational structure of Unico and built into work rules, promotion procedure, disciplinary action, definitions of responsibilities and the like (Edwards, 1979). Managerial control established the impersonal force of 'organisational policy' as the basis for control. Some workers commented that using the punch card system as one of the indicators of their work performance seemed unfair, as the following quote from Mike, 39 years old, a senior academic in Unico demonstrates,

"Top management ask workers to select their three best punch cards. Although they say they don't, they use the 'red' punch card as a measurement not to promote workers. This seems unfair as flexitime exists alongside the punch card system. So the punch card system should not be the only basis for measuring workers' performance and deciding whether they merit promotion. The flexitime system allows workers to start work early or late and finish early or late according to the work need and their personal needs. Surely, the most important factor to take into consideration when considering someone for promotion is not when they start or finish work but the quality of the work they actually produce when at work. When a worker is at work and is seemingly working but is not, in fact, performing any work tasks, they are cheating management because they are being paid for doing nothing which, of course, is to their advantage. While I support the punch card system for regulating the attendance of workers, it should never be used as a performance index."

His view would appear to be supported by the experience of Ian, an Associate Professor. He revealed that he had gone through the promotion process and his poor punch card record appeared not to have been taken into account as he continuously performed well. He stated:

"In my view, lecturers must be given freedom. I don't believe in the punch card system. I prefer lecturers to be free to work whenever they need to. To be able to come to work at whatever time for core-tasks, i.e. meetings with colleagues, appointments with students. What is most important at the end of the day is what you produce – how many articles you had published, the research you've undertaken etc. The punch card system is important for workers in administration because they work set hours. Once they've worked their office hours they can go home and there are no other administrative tasks waiting for them there. But lecturers, we need flexibility. I have been told the latest I can come to work is 10.00 o'clock and I must make my time up. I was told to bring my punch card to the promotion interview and it was mostly 'red' because I tend to come work late rather than early in the morning. But this wasn't held against me as I have produced (performed well). I prefer to come here to work only if have to. I like working at home as I can concentrate better there due to far fewer distractions. When I'm working at home or at another location other than my office at Unico I have to inform the Dean by filling in a form or log book so that if someone wants to contact me they know where I am."

In Ian's view, managerial control over working time contributed to additional problems such as led to rigidities of having to attend work. The 'invisible force' of management through the existence of the punch card system as a device for monitoring workers' working time not only led to workers staying behind to work unnecessary long hours, but also limited workers' time with the family. He commented:

"I wish management wouldn't make it mandatory to work until 5pm because then you get caught in traffic jams when you leave work. To avoid traffic jams staff would prefer to work longer in the office and leave work at a later time. Also, in Sabah it gets dark early so by the time you reach home you've already missed the opportunity to play outside with your children or take them to the park. At the weekend they have religious classes and go to the church. So, again, there is limited time to play with them. Far better to start work early and leave work relatively early in the afternoon."

Although flexible working hours can enable workers to deal with their non-work responsibilities during work time, the punch card system has become a barrier to flexibility. Unico's management had confessed that the rationale for the implementation of the punch card system was to 'trace workers whereabouts'. As such, the punch card system contributed to the existence of a 'presenteeism' culture in Unico. When workers are afraid of being away from the workplace, 'presenteeism' can take its toll (Lewis & Cooper, 1999). Simpson (2000:157) defines presenteeism as 'being at work when you should be at home either because you are ill or because you are working such long hours

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that you are no longer effective'. In Unico, the 'presenteeism' culture not only indirectly allowed workers to use 'face time' to suggest to their superiors that they were 'committed' to their work but also allowed them to use their time inefficiently as they may or may not have had work to do at the specified 'clock in' time, which would be disadvantageous to the organisation and not a true reflection of workers' commitment to the organisation (Perlow, 1999). As Warhurst *et al.* (2008) suggest, work practices affect workers' adaptation of work/non-work life, this study found the management control over working time through the implementation of 'punch card system' shapes people into more organisational-oriented individuals. This is due, in part, to the fact that the criteria for evaluating academics' performance concentrated on behavioural attributes and personal traits. Additionally, many academics believed that by spending time at work for the sake of 'face time' they would maximise the probability of being promoted, particularly when 'presenteeism' was used as an index for performance. In this case, the explanation for long work hours was not just due to work demand, but also an outcome of the management control of working time.

At the meso level, Unico was found to have a high level of management's desire to control workers' working time. Additionally, high work demand contributed to workers working long hours and yet, to some extent, the work/non-work provisions in Unico were not fully provided to accommodate the long working hours. The evidence presented shows how the structural context of paid labour can both enable and constrain workers' effort to integrate their work and non-work lives. Both the work demand and the implementation of a punch card system shaped workers' work/non-work patterns. Demonstrating how organisational provisions can both create work/non-work conflict and negative work experience, and also facilitate and support workers to integrate work/non-work spheres. Section 5.5 illustrates how academics adapted their work/non-work life patterns to these working practices. The next section will examine workers' attitudes based on the influences of religious and cultural values at the micro level.

5.4 EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK/NON-WORK LIVES

In addition to the influence of the organisation on employees' ability to manage work and non-working lives, the next section will examine how religious values and socio-cultural aspects influence employees' attitudes towards dual commitment to their work/non-work lives and thus, facilitate their work/non-work integration.

5.4.1 The Influence of Religious Values on Employees' Attitudes Towards Work and Non-Work Life

Although most research suggests that religion is largely irrelevant to attitudes to work, and has little or no bearing on the way people view work (Lorence & Mortimer, 1985; Lorence, 1987). Research by Chusmir and Koberg (1988) and Davidson and Cardell (1994) found that religious values influence people's working lives has been overlooked in many studies. In the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE), work is portrayed as a means of gaining salvation and workers are expected to act selflessly for a greater good. Work and employment are viewed not as irksome necessities but as positive actions for the glory of God and the preservation of the soul. Moreover, work by Chusmir & Koberg (1988) has shown that there are no significant differences among religions with respect to work-related attitudes. Such research indicates that most religions view work as an important obligation that adherents must fulfil to live the pious life. Similarly, research by Kumar and Rose (2008), Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), Ali (2001) and Tayeb (1997) has shown that Islam, like many other religions, plays a significant part in the cultural make up of those nations where it is a dominant factor influencing workers' attitudes to work, hence the Islamic work ethic (IWE) is inculcated at workplaces.

In the present research, irrespective of religious affiliation, religious values were found to influence the way workers viewed their work and non-work and played an important role in influencing workers' attitude towards their dual commitments on work and non-work responsibilities.

At Unico, regardless of the prevailing religion, work was viewed as an obligation given by God and it was the individual's duty to actively engage in work. Khalid, a Muslim, Unico Senior Lecturer and single, stated that being a god-fearing person had made him a more responsible worker. He said:

"If I do not have a responsible attitude to my work, it is sinful. If I am not honest in my dealings with others in work or have a careless attitude to tasks, that is considered a small sin. Religion plays an important role in my life, especially at work."

The work commitment philosophy was also shared among workers regardless of their religion. 'Reporting to God' was a significant indicator of work commitment and impelled workers to be more accountable for their actions as a responsible attitude would ensure a permanent reward in the hereafter. Work commitment was perceived by most Muslim workers as 'amanah', an obligation entrusted to human beings by God. Thus, commitment to work as an indication of one's commitment to God was as important as 'reporting to' or obeying the superior in the workplace. Atan, Muslim, a Senior Lecturer in Unico, explained the concept of 'amanah' as follows:

" 'Amanah' means that when we work we have an obligation to report to our employer. To uphold the concept of 'amanah' comes from our understanding of our religion."

Additionally, religious values boosted workers' motivation to be committed to work. Believing that God was watching them inspired workers to perform to the best of their ability. For some workers, whether they were promoted or not was not an issue, what was important was to complete a task to the best of their ability because they viewed themselves as ultimately working for God. Anita, a Christian, and Associate Professor in Unico, demonstrated this when she said:

"I believe in God. God is watching. If I had no God, if I didn't know God, I might just think of myself. For me, whatever I do is for Him. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if I get a promotion or not, the important thing is, I have completed the task. Because, ultimately I am working for Him…completely, I am working for Him. So whatever I do, I'll do the best for Him. Definitely!"

The transmission of positive values was not limited to the individual's micro role but extended to a wider context, that is to say, to the wider society and public level. Hence, commitment to work also involved a desire to improve the surrounding community and the wider society (Ali, 2001). Abu, a Muslim and Senior Lecturer at Unico, expressed the view that work should be viewed as an activity which God obliges us to perform to benefit both ourselves and the wider community:

"I believe that when I am given a job, it is both a source of income from God and a test from God. We are given certain tasks and problems and the challenge is how we deal with them. We cannot ignore the responsibility given to us to deal with them. As we deal with problems and challenges we must also remember that it is our duty to help the wider society."

Religious values deeply influenced workers' accountability to their employing organisation and to God and, thus, had become a 'way of life' to them, since religious values not only governed but also guided their lives. Siti, a Muslim, a senior academic, and single parent with young children, explained how emphasising the 'halal' concept in daily life helped to manage her life, particularly in sustaining the 'halal' life through paid work:

"I believe that you should gain an income that is halal – there is a halal way of getting and securing your money to give to your children and to your parents. To do what is halal not just in terms of what you eat (slaughtered food) but in your work means that you work the time you are supposed to work. You deliver and you do your work, task, as required. That's the thing I really stick to. If you take a certain amount of money that is not halal and does not belong to you, it will get into your blood and into your children and you will not bring them up in a halal way. When you work as a lecturer, you are required to be at work a certain number of hours (to be with your students, to supervise their theses). If you do not do these things, you are falling short in performing your obligations, you are not being trustworthy in what you are supposed to be doing."

It is evident that religious affiliation stresses the importance of a dual commitment to work and home. For example, other than work commitment, the process of bringing children up in a 'halal' way is a major 'amanah' that a devout Muslim strives to fulfil. The concept of 'halal' was seen to influence workers' daily life. The quote above illustrates how earning an income in a permissible way should be achieved and such

income should be delivered not just to the immediate family but to the extended family. Thus, the quote also shows how religious values played an important role in workers' conceptualisation of how to manage their way of life in all its varied aspects.

It is clear that the attitudes towards work shown by research participants were not only analogous to the Islamic values (Endot, 1995) and Islam Hadhari endorsed by the Government to emphasise and enhance positive work ethics - IWE, but were also a reflection of PWE upheld by Christian workers. Commitment to work became a priority to those who endeavoured to uphold such values and contributed to the existence of a strong public sector ethos among workers as work norms and values were influenced by their religious beliefs. They viewed their commitment to work as a duty and themselves accountable to their superiors and duty bound to perform good productive works as a form of devotion and worship to God.

Religious beliefs were found to significantly influence workers' attitudes specifically in relation to their commitment to work and non-work lives – that is not to sacrifice home for work. Regardless of their gender, workers emphasised the importance of viewing their performance of their work as a form of worship to their God. Thus, they were encouraged to give their full commitment to any work they performed. These influences have critical implications for workers' commitment to work, since performance of work is viewed as a vocation and this has created a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context as a result of the influence of religious values on work norms and values.

Religious values also emphasised workers' responsibility to their family and helped them to manage their lives so that family members and other non-work life aspects were not neglected thus achieving harmony between work and non-work lives. Thus, although work commitment was viewed as important, respondents indicated that they believed the non-work domain should not be neglected. Siti, a Senior Lecturer in Unico, believed family responsibility to be a lifelong obligation. She viewed being a mother as a reward given by God and therefore irreplaceable by anything else. Moreover, she endeavoured to ensure that nothing from her work domain spilled over to negatively affect her non-work

domain since if anything went wrong in her non-work life it would inevitably affect her performance of her work. She said when interviewed:

"I gain most satisfaction from my non-work life. Being a mother is better than anything else in this world. If I were to identify myself, I would identify myself first as a mother and second as a lecturer, as someone in the academic field. My priority is my non-work responsibility as I am sole breadwinner, a single mother, and my family and children will be with me forever. Your working life stops when you stop working, when you retire. Being a mother there is no such word as 'retired'. Once you become a mother, you are a mother for life. That's what I always remember. Being a mother is a gift that God has given me. Work is also a 'reward' from God but you can choose the type of work you want to do. You cannot choose whether you become a mother or not. I can choose not to be a lecturer, for example, I could choose to become a lawyer. Motherhood is something that I have no choice over, it is what I treasure most. I appreciate my family and my responsibility for its members given to me by God. That is why my responsibility to my family is my priority in life. My family is God given. However, if anything goes wrong in my non-work life it will undoubtedly affect my working life. I therefore have to make sure that nothing goes wrong in my non-working life so that I can perform my working life to the best of my ability."

The quote above reveals that how religious values informed Siti's attitude to family responsibilities and paid work responsibilities. In the quote presented, fulfilling family responsibilities was clearly more important than fulfilling paid work responsibilities since harmony in the non-work sphere spilled over to the work sphere. No matter whether workers are segmentors or integrators, religious values were found influenced workers' attitudes towards work/non-work lives within their lifestyles where they tend to view the blurring of work and non-work life as positive and beneficial. It is evident that regardless of religious affiliation, employees in Unico viewed their dual commitments to work and non-work responsibilities seriously.

5.4.2 The Influence of Cultural Values on Employees' Attitudes to Work and Non-Work Lives

In a society where the family and the institution of marriage are important, strengthening the cultural tradition that emphasises the value of family responsibility is vital. Despite the dedication to paid work, responsibility to the family, both immediate and extended family members, were still viewed as important. The culture of loyalty to the employers

is also emphasised among Malaysian workers. This loyalty would appear to be transmitted to children by their parents in the childhood period. It is similar to the loyalty children are obligated to show to their parents based on religious teachings. Such loyalty is the result of the strong relationship and connection the individual has with their parents. While loyalty to parents is viewed in some cultures as paternalistic and to exist as a tool of management to control workers (Wray, 1996), in Malaysia it reflects the value the society places on showing respect to one's elders, who include parents and seniors. Acts of respect and loyalty are perceived as expressions of gratitude to the parent rather than blind compliance with parental wishes. Anne, a lecturer in Unico, viewed the loyalty shown to parents as a symbol of gratefulness:

"In Malaysian working culture, workers are expected to comply with their employer's wishes and do not dare to act against them. In other words, the Malaysian is loyal to his/her employer. We are all educated to be loyal. The value of being loyal has been inculcated in me since I was small. My bond with my parents therefore remains strong to this day and I always comply with what they say. I fear that if I go against what they say, I will be viewed as an ungrateful child."

Alongside the respectfulness, loyalty and obligation towards parents is the tradition of 'balik kampung'. 'Balik kampung' is the culture of frequently visiting one's hometown and family members. This culture not only gives workers a break from their work, it also reminds them of the obligation not to neglect family members. Abu, Senior Lecturer, married with grown up children, emphasised the importance of 'balik kampung':

"I need to spend more time with my family members and get things better organised to have family gatherings and get togethers. In fact, I should 'balik kampung' (go back home to my parents' house) more often. It is important that we maintain contact with each other to keep the bond that ties us together intact."

Not only do religious values influence the relationship between work and non-work responsibilities, but also the reciprocal relationship between the individual and their family. This shows the influence of the society and cultural tradition on workers' obligation to integrate their work/non-work lives. This research revealed that it was customary for workers to ensure that societal culture with its good values was practised,

not just for the individual's good but for the betterment of the family, extended family and the society at large. In turn, the ties that linked to their employing organisations and their family members and the society at large were strengthened and remained intact. From the Western perspective, it could be considered that religion and cultural acts as a form of constraint as it supports a high level of commitment to work and their employers (Parboteeah *et. al.*, 2009; Chusmir & Koberg, 1988). The research findings also reveal that religious and cultural values ensured that as well as employees demonstrating their commitment to work, at the same time they do not neglect their family commitments – demonstrate how these attitudes potentially influence the way workers manage their work/non-work lives which is the focus of the next section.

5.5 MANAGING WORK/NON-WORKING LIVES

This section examines how academics patterned their work and non-working lives in Unico and how a range of supports can influence these different approaches. Evidences in the previous section revealed that religious and cultural values influenced employees' attitudes towards their dual commitments to work/non-work lives and thus, facilitate their work/non-work integration. Work/non-work integration is perceived as "individuals 'successfully' segmenting or integrating 'life' and work so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less strain or stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands" (Blunsdon *et al.*, 2006:2). The variation of 'individuals successfully segmenting or integrating' work/non-work life, therefore, can result people achieve partial to full satisfaction, and segmented to conflictual relations of their work/non-work lives. Thus, the variations of work/non-work integration are best viewed as a continuum. This section will discuss this continuum based on range of work/non-work patterns found in this study namely: work/non-work integration, work/non-work conflict and alternation to work/non-work life.

5.5.1 Work/Non-Work Integration

In order to achieve work/non-work integration, Friedman & Greenhaus (2000) found that some workers were fortunate to benefit from social support provided by other individuals and by institutions. In this thesis, social support i.e. family, spouse, employer / immediate superior, and other private help was found to help and accommodate workers cope with the pressures of integrating their work and non-work lives, thereby enabling them to work without distraction. Viewing work/non-work integration as a continuum, variations between workers can be identified – such that some are more successful and satisfied in achieving integration than others. As such, some workers found to be partially integrated their work/non-work lives leading to their satisfaction. This can be seen in the case of Siti, a Senior Lecturer and single parent with young children, who described the many non-work roles she had besides her work role and how Unico as an employer accommodated her role as a single parent. She said:

"Working in Unico suits my non-work life. As a single parent with two young children, my children depend on me. So, I need to take care of my needs as well as their needs. I find it relaxing working here because the flexi hours allow me to do what I need to do, like being their mother, being their driver, being their feeder. I also need to be home if my washing machine needs fixing. I'm the one who needs to be there to take care of that problem. And if anything else needs doing I can just go and do it. My colleagues and my superior are very understanding of my situation and are very supportive, which is a blessing."

She then added:

"My routine here suits me very well because it doesn't prevent me from doing other things I need to do. Instead, it helps me as a mother, as a homemaker. I manage to do a lot of things in the day that I need to do in my role as mother, carer, etc. I might need to spend all day at my workplace but I can still deal with my personal affairs such as paying bills at the bank. Unico enables me to prosper and to function as a mother because of the flexible hours that I'm entitled to work. Flexitime helps me career wise. If I worked in another firm or in the private sector, I don't think I'd have the 'luxury' of being able to be with my children whenever the need arises. Even if I worked in other organisations in the public sector, I think I'd be unable to do all the things I do now because I'd be bogged down with a 8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. schedule and I'd need to be in the office regardless of whether I had work to do or not."

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In some cases employees are able to negotiate a degree of informal flexibility because of a supportive manager. Understanding superior and colleagues helped Siti, for example, to better manage her work and non-work domains according to her needs. Moreover, as a civil servant, she received privileges not given to those working in other organisations, particularly those in the private sector. Similarly, as a primary source of support, family members also have a unique opportunity to provide both emotional support and instrumental support to the worker outside the work environment. This can be seen from the experience of Putih, an academic in Unico, married with a young child, reported that the social support she received i.e. from her parents, a 24 hour private crèche and relatives, helped her to partially integrate her work/non-work responsibilities:

"I have a childminding problem as I could be considered a single parent who has to do everything as my husband is away working and living somewhere else. Fortunately, I receive support from my parents most of the time. I send my son to their house when I am working. Sometimes, if I have to attend urgent job activities in the evening I leave my child at a 24 hour crèche or send him to a relative's house or ask my parents to stay with my son at my home until I return home from work."

Teaching, research, consultation, community service and administration are among the core tasks that academics must fulfil in the organisation. Additionally, despite Unico's management attempting to control working time and some workers are able to achieve informal flexibility depending on the nature of workers' specific role - leading to full satisfaction of fully work/non-work integration. For example, as an Anthropologist who spent most of his time in the field, Mike found it useful to bring together his family:

"I love research because I can take my family along with me as I do it. I cannot take my family with me if I'm teaching. Whenever I go on my fieldwork, I take my family with me when it is convenient and appropriate. I can spend time with my family and at the same time fulfil my work responsibilities – I can kill two birds with one stone!"

Similarly, Khalid, 45 years old, a senior academic who was single, indicated that flexitime gave him more freedom to do what he wanted. For some academics, flexible working hours was perceived as enabling them to gain some control over their working time:

"Flexible working practice is heaven to me. In contrast to other professions, being a lecturer and working flexi hours enables me to better manage my work and non-work life. For instance, when I'm not teaching I will be doing work on my computer at my own pace. I really like my present working arrangement – it is far better than that in my old job, when I worked fixed hours."

While the nature of academic work enabled workers in the field to integrate work/non-work spheres, not all features of work allowed workers to do this. For those who felt they were able to integrate work and home, it brought benefits to individual workers as well as their employing organisations as it enabled them to be more productive and also benefits their family members since they are able to spend more time with them. Whether workers had multiple roles or not, flexitime enabled some control over their working time. In the case of Unico, for example, despite the restrictive flexibility practiced by the management, some workers are able to achieve flexibility depending on the nature of their specific job requirement, and the support received from the superiors as well as family and paid help.

Apart from supports available that enhanced workers' work/non-work life integration, workers in the research context also found to experience work/non-work conflict due to insufficient support received by certain group of workers. Thus, it is the focus of the next section.

5.5.2 Work/Non-Work Conflict

The section above demonstrates how some employees are able to achieve a degree of integration in the relationship between work and non-work and how religion and culture is an important dimension in the role of the family in Malaysia. In this section, it is evident that single employees with obligations to family, experience work and non-work conflict. Single employees with parent/siblings commitment is a group ignored in other studies. Research by Erickson *et al.* (2010) and Higgins *et al*. (1994) excluded single employees from their studies as they assumed that employees having no care commitment would be able to manage their work/non-work life. As such, workers were

compared across the full spectrum of family life except those with parental/sibling care (Erickson *et al.*, 2010). This study found that workers with parental/sibling care commitment were found to be juggling between work and home responsibilities. Despite being young and single, Ayu, an Administration officer in Unico, experienced restrictions on her time due to both work responsibilities and family demands. Being the eldest in the family, she felt it her responsibility to look after and take care of her siblings in order to show respect and loyalty to her parents. She said:

"My time is always tight and is normally spent fulfilling work demands as well as fulfilling family needs especially those of my siblings. As the eldest in the family, I have to prepare meals first for my siblings as my parents are busy with their business. I would say that of my time, 10% is spent on myself, 10% on friends, 30% on family and 50% on fulfilling work demands. I don't even have time to pamper myself with lotion due to my need to fulfil my job and family responsibilities as a child to my parents, as an elder sister to my younger siblings and as a worker to my employer.'

Lilly, a Christian, single, and an administrative assistant in Unico, also found it difficult endeavouring to fulfil her work duties and to look after her sick mother. She said:

"During the school graduation night, we were asked to attend the dinner as it was compulsory but at that time, my mom was on chemotherapy treatment and it was my turn to look after her. So, I didn't go and the next day, I (and others who didn't go) were summoned to explain the failure to attend. For me, my mother came first because I felt it was my duty to be with her and look after her. I love her and she needed me because the chemotherapy treatment always makes her feel ill afterwards. My mother has been looking after me for 27 years and supported me in whatever I've done. Now it's my turn to look after her in her hours of need. In Christianity, we are taught to love and respect our parents."

Ayu and Lilly's comments indicate that fulfilling work and family responsibilities was important to them. Work demands left Ayu exhausted and with little time for herself. For Lilly, despite work demands, being grateful and showing love to her mother was more important than her paid work responsibility. Ayu also felt responsible for her siblings. In a society where the family institution is significantly important, caring for parents and siblings is viewed as a desirable quality to maintain good relationships in the family.

The evidence shows that workers with parental/sibling commitments were also concerned about their work/non-work integration. Without social and organisational support, workers will continue to struggle to integrate their work/non-work lives and experience conflict between work and family life responsibilities. This can be seen from the case of Ayu and Lilly.

Apart from work/non-work life integration and work/non-work conflict, workers at the micro level also experienced alternation to work life as 'compensation to their lost time'. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.5.3 Alternation to Work Life

Depending on the work and its context, the logics of work and non-work can coexist without interference, allowing workers a fairly frictionless alternation between the two distinct spheres (Warhurst *et al.*, 2008). Workers alternated the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. As such, at different life-cycle stages workers have different ways of managing and prioritising their work/non-work lives. In this study, when workers reached certain life-cycle stages, such as when they had no care commitment or when their children were grown up, they did not show a tendency to seek a more integrated work and non-work lives, instead the alternation in work or non-work life was preferable.

Based on Warhurst *et al.*'s (2008) feature of work/non-work patterns alternation, the present study in Unico found that workers with grown up children not seeking work/non-work integration and instead alternated to prioritise work. The present study found that workers in the 'post-conflict' stage, represented by mature and middle-aged workers, had developed effective mechanisms to cope with work/non-work conflict. This was due to a lifetime of communicating, solving problems and integrating knowledge with practical experience (Baltes & Young, 2007; Sterns & Huyck, 2001).

To some extent, when workers reached a certain number of years of service and had an established family, they had a tendency to view the current period as compensation for the time when they had been less able to focus on their career due to bringing up young children. Hence, in their current life-cycle, the focus was more on commitment to work. For example, Abu, Unico Senior Academic, married with grown up children commented:

"As my children are all grown up and independent, I don't think I need the flexitime anymore. As I get older and career advanced, I am more committed to work because there are less things (at home and personal) to worry about."

He gave the reason why workers with grown up children were involved in longer working hours as follows:

"To me, personally and basically, the most difficult time in life is when you are starting your career with a small salary and small kids and little experience. This needs a work/non-work support system. It is really needed. But when you reach a certain level with a big salary and grown up children and become stronger in life, you need less support of work/non-work arrangements as you may have less to worry about in terms of finance, home, etc."

Sturges and Guest (2004) indicated that work/non-work conflict can undermine commitment early in a career, a crucial time for establishing organisational commitment. However, at a later life-cycle stage, for example, the 'post-conflict' stage, commitment to work is often seen to increase as workers have fewer parental responsibilities and are therefore more able to build a strong work ethic.

Anita, an Associate Professor, married with grown up children, also agreed with Abu that those with young children needed flexitime more than those with grown up children. She said:

"I work long hours and when my children were still here I brought work home and did it here. I still do that sometimes. I usually do it when I've finished eating and I've put the washing in the machine. I then work on my computer. Now that I work longer hours, I stay at work until 6.00 p.m. to avoid the traffic jams. If I had small children, I would probably leave earlier to pick them up. When my children were at school I used to worry

about leaving work late as I didn't like the idea of my children hanging around the school gates waiting for me to pick them up when everyone else had gone home. It was too dangerous. It was my priority not to let my children wait hours and hours for me to pick them up while I was in the office or at a meeting. I would therefore often pick them up and bring them back to work with me, either sit them down during a meeting and give them something to draw with, or leave them in my office. Increasing numbers of young women with children are having to work. The flexitime system would enable them to pick their children up from school as soon as school hours have finished. There would then be no problem with children waiting for parents alone outside the school gates."

Salim, 49 years old, a lecturer with eight years of service and married with grown up children, stated that flexitime gave him the option to work at any hour he preferred. His willingness to work long hours demonstrated his dedication to his job but he also admitted that his personal circumstances allowed him to do so. All his children were grown up and therefore did not require so much of his time and attention as they had done when they were small. He said:

"I work on average 7-8 hours per day. My ability to choose my own working hours suits me very well as my work involves teaching media production and then assessing students' work. It takes long hours of concentration to do this fairly and thoroughly. I choose to work long hours, even after 5.00 p.m., so that I can work unhurriedly and at my own pace. I don't feel pressurised and therefore have a relaxed attitude to my work. Consequently, my assessment of students' work contains many constructive comments since I can give it my full and undivided attention. Another factor that allows me to work long hours is my children are all now grown up. They don't require as much of my attention as they did when they were small. I prefer to work after 5.00 p.m. because there is less disturbance, no incoming calls. My work schedule is not rigid, I can work wherever I want to and for as long as I please to get the job done."

Salim's comments show a conscientiousness and diligence towards the performance of his job and a willingness to give up time that could be spent pursuing personal interests to his students to further their academic development. His conscientiousness suggested working longer hour is not a problem to him as he viewed his job as a vocation and reflected a selfless spirit willing to assist his students whatever the personal cost.

In this study, the strong work ethic and work prioritisation demonstrated at certain life-cycle stages, i.e. when workers' children were all grown up, were not consistent with

findings reported in studies carried out in the West. For example, Coffey (1994) indicated that the pressure to demonstrate commitment by working long hours was strongest in the early stages of a career. However, this study found that not just workers in the early career stage but also workers already established in their career demonstrated alternation in work prioritisation, and thus successfully segment home, so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life and less stress from having to juggle conflicting role demands (Blunsdon *et al.,* 2006).

The evidence shows the economic capital can buy additional time for work, for example, by hiring a nanny (Warhurst *et al*., 2008). In addition, social resources, such as extended families, spouse, extended family or help from a private crèche or paid helper and social networks, such as neighbours, shape work/non-work patterns and influence work/non-work life experiences by, meeting childcare needs. However, private support arrangements, i.e. paid helper and private crèche, required financial means which only wealthier professionals could afford. This study also found that support received from the employing institution and superiors enabled workers to better handle their work/non-work responsibilities. Additionally, the structural context of paid labour influences work/non-work patterns whereby the supportive superiors can create an integrative work/non-work life. It is evident that when work demand was high or when workers had to work away from home, various ways of handling non-work responsibilities were observed in the research context leading to variations of work/non-work integration. Hence, the evidence discussed above demonstrated how work/non-work integration can be best thought of as a 'continuum'. It is evident that the variations of work/non-work integration identified among workers in the study demonstrated that some achieved partial to full integration, segmented and conflictual work/non-work life relations, according to the strategies which workers adopt.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Despite the Government's proclamation of the 'Family First' and work/non-work provisions provided at the macro level, the influence of the organisation is significant

when assessing how employees manage the relationship between their work and non-working lives. The evidence indicates that in line with a business case logic, Unico sought to develop policies to promote a healthy, happy and productive workforce. As such, the priority for management as well as UNTES was to provide recreational facilities. Furthermore, UNTES' unawareness of the importance of work/non-work integration and management's scepticism of the practicalities of work/non-work provisions demonstrated that supporting work/non-work integration for employees was not an organisational priority.

Additionally, the study highlighted how organisational level factors such as the nature of the work demand and managerial control over working time resulted in a long hours working culture at Unico. Unico was found to have a high level of management's desire to control workers' working time. Additionally, high work demand contributed to workers working long hours and yet, to some extent, the work/non-work provisions in Unico were not fully provided to accommodate the long working hours. Both the work demand and the implementation of a punch card system at the meso-level shaped workers' work/non-work patterns.

Workers' attitudes to work and non-work life was found to be greatly influenced by religious and cultural values. Irrespective of religious affiliation, employees' attitudes in Unico were found to have a dual commitment to work and non-work lives. Moreover, religious values were seen to support cultural values. For example, the custom of 'balik kampung' was widely practised by workers in the research context. Through such practice, supported by Government policy, workers were able to maintain ties of kinship and fulfil their filial duties to older family members and siblings. As such, religion and culture influence how Unico's workers think and feel about their dual obligations.

At the micro level, a range of supports including familial, communal and organisational were found to influence the way workers patterned their work/non-work lives. This study found that employees' work/non-work management in Unico best viewed as a continuum which includes variations of integration - such that some achieved partial whereas others

were able to fully integrate work and home to their satisfaction; some felts work/non-work life relations resulted in conflict and; some employees of a specific life-cycle who were in senior position in their career with grown up children were happy to prioritise their work lives and segmented non-work lives. These variations of integration were classified into three categories namely: work/non-work integration; work/non-work conflict and; alternation of work life. Additionally, although work/non-work conflict tends to focus on employees with younger children (Higgins *et al*., 1994; Erickson *et al.*, 2010), employees with parents/siblings care commitments were also found to be juggling work/non-work responsibilities. The exclusion of this group of employees from research on life-cycle and work/non-work integration in the West (Erickson *et al*., 2010; Higgins *et al*., 1994), made this finding significant. In Malaysian society, the family institution and family responsibility are strongly upheld. The most widely available work/non-work policies in Unico were maternity leave, parental leave, and flexi-time – which were particularly appropriate for 'married employees with children' as compared to other groups of employees. Apart from the 'annual *balik kampung* package', there was no work/non-work arrangement provided to cater for employees that had parent and sibling care commitment. Moreover, the inclusion of elder care referral services or leave to provide elder care are still absent from the national agenda. Thirdly, the strong work ethic and work prioritisation demonstrated at certain life-cycle stages, i.e. when employees' children were all grown up, were not consistent with findings reported in studies carried out in the West (Coffey, 1994). This study found workers in Unico with grown up children were not seeking to integrate both their work/non-work lives and instead alternated to prioritise work.

The next chapter will examine work/non-work life in Custco at the organisational level as well as work/non-work experiences among workers at the individual level.

CHAPTER SIX

EXAMINING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT HOSPICO

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the discussion revolved around work/non-work life at Unico. In this chapter the work/non-work life situation among the employees at Hospico, a Hospital in Sabah, Malaysia, will be explored. The chapter will begin with the examination of the influence of the policies and practices promoted and implemented by the organisation on the nature and degree of support for work and non-work integration among their employees. This will be followed by an assessment of the role of the organisation specifically in relation to the organisation of working time. Subsequently, the influence of religious and social values in Malaysia on workers' attitudes towards working and non-working life will be examined. The chapter concludes with a detailed examination of the manner in which Hospico employees manage these two spheres.

6.2 WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES IN HOSPICO

The separation between work and non-work life spheres is deemed necessary by the management due to the nature of most jobs in Hospico particularly that of the clinical workers who are frequently involved in life and death situations. Despite the Government's 'Family-First' campaign, Hospico encourages inculcation of a 'work-first' culture with the motto 'Ready for disaster', implying that a worker's job responsibilities are more important than their family responsibilities. This is because Hospico is a referral centre which provides specialised services for women and children, including emergency treatment, specialist clinics, daycare and health care support. Thus workers, particularly clinical workers, are expected to show dedication to their work, and the support and understanding of the family is also sought. Rachel, Hospico's HR manager described the situation as follows:

"It is necessary for the individual to arrange his/her work and family balance. There is no need to integrate them. Working time is working time and should not involve family matters. Work must be finished before family issues are considered. The family must understand this. A hospital provides services to the public. Critical support staff especially, need to dedicate their time to the hospital."

Interestingly, Rachel admitted that work/non-work integration was not a priority in the organisation. She explained that while the provisions made for the work/non-work sphere were in accordance with the Government's standard policies, they were viewed as being 'a privilege' for the workers and not as their 'right'. Accordingly, workers were expected to be ready to work at any time, wherever needed, as work roles and responsibilities were viewed as the priority, over and above any other consideration.

"Work is a priority. Therefore, the work/non-work issue is not significant in this organisation. All arrangements provided are not considered as workers' rights but as a 'privilege'. When it comes to leave, for example, if workers are required to come to work immediately, they must come to work. Otherwise, the person concerned can be charged with misconduct as they are not obeying 'Aku Janji'. 'Aku Janji' is a declaration provided by the Government and made for public service workers. They must sign and agree to the terms and conditions provided in the 'Aku Janji' and once signed they are obliged to comply with them."

Given this emphasis on prioritisation of work, Rachel, the HR manager, was queried on whether work/non-work arrangements or work/non-work issues were considered as being necessary in Hospico. The answer given below indicates that the individual's attitude was considered to be of more significance and work/non-work responsibilities were seen as being separate:

"Yes, we need work/non-work arrangements but they need to be carefully planned and work and non-work roles and responsibilities should be divided equally. It all depends how the individual worker goes about it. Individuals are responsible for how they separate their work/non-work spheres. No matter what the organisation and the Government provide, if the individual cannot balance their work/non-work roles and responsibilities, it will all be pointless."

This comment suggests that to better manage their work/non-work spheres, workers should keep both domains separate, particularly in view of the nature of most jobs in

Hospico. Similarly, HOCWU, an employees' union in Hospico, did not seen to place much emphasis on the work/non-work integration agenda. It was however more vocal on the issue of promoting equal quality of life for workers in Sabah similar to that enjoyed by their counterparts in the Peninsular. Economic related elements are deemed to be more important to improve the workers' lives (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 HOCWU 'Ideal Package' of Work/Non-Work Arrangements

1. Increased housing allowance
2. Hardship allowance for those working in remote areas
   without electricity, water supply, etc.
3. On-site crèche
4. Group insurance
5. Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)
6. Region Resettlement Allowance (EPW)
7. More workers' housing quarters

Among others, increased housing allowances, implementation of a hardship allowance scheme, cost of living allowance (COLA) as well as a regional settlement allowance (EPW) are considered necessary to be provided by the organisation/Government. The Deputy Secretary for HOCWU, Hardy, commented:

"COLA should be implemented in Sabah as the cost of living is so expensive here. But what can we do? We are the government's servants and we are still fighting through CUEPACS. EPW is another allowance introduced for working outside your region of origin but we don't get it. It should be introduced for all workers in Sabah not just those in the Peninsular."

Although unaware of the 'work/non-work integration' concept, HOCWU's union officials believe that the existence of work/non-work arrangements can help enhance workers' productivity. For example, having an on-site crèche and breastfeeding room reduces workers' work/non-work conflict. Additionally, the HOCWU Deputy Secretary, Hardy, felt that the lack of an on-site crèche exacerbated work/non-work conflict among

workers, particularly female nurses with young children whereby the resultant pressures could spillover into the work sphere. Consequently, HOCWU had been helping the management to identify possible locations to establish an on-site crèche.

"HOCWU has negotiated with the management to get a breastfeeding room or a crèche (childcare centre) similar to that provided in other hospitals. We will help the management to find the location for the crèche. Without a crèche, workers, particularly female nurses with young children will find it difficult to fulfil their job demands."

HOCWU also wants the organisation to provide life insurance coverage for the workers, particularly those involved in risky and hazardous jobs. Hardy, commented:

'*For the time being, it is up to individuals to get their own insurance but we as a union want the government to pay for our insurance for our health and safety. As this organisation is a referral centre for oncology patients, we use nuclear therapy oncology treatment to diagnose patients who have potential cancer. The question is, once workers are exposed to radiation while carrying out their dutes, are they covered by insurance?"*

He added,

"The organisation/employer should cover workers' health, i.e. paramedics, ambulance drivers need to be insured, flying doctors who go to remote areas by helicopter also need to be insured. HOCWU is also looking forward to the organisation providing more housing units to cater for the increase in worker numbers."

When asked whether HOCWU played any role in the introduction and promotion of work/non-work arrangements in the workplace, the quote below shows that HOCWU has done its best to ensure that workers' rights in Hospico were equal to those of their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia:

"Yes, we always play a role in negotiations on the work/non-work issue. For example, anaesthetists here did not have a post-basic incentive allowance like their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia yet all Assistant Medical Officers (AMOs) carry out anaesthetics. It was a sort of abuse of the position of AMO. Thank God nothing bad has ever happened. We follow the rules, if a doctor forces us to do an anaesthetic and we don't think it advisable, we refuse to do so because if anything happens we are responsible. Doctors do not always show responsible attitudes. If you are careless the patient can die. Thus, we

need to carefully follow procedures. Hence we fought for the allowance and got it. Now we are preparing the paperwork for getting a five per cent basic incentive allowance. In the Peninsular, a worker taking care of a dying patient is getting a RM100 allowance and we also deal with life and death situations."

Hardy, the HOCWU Deputy Secretary is of the view that the state, as the largest employer, should treat the workers the same as those of workers in Peninsular Malaysia in terms of their remuneration and allowances. Although HOCWU's agenda is to improve workers' quality of life, no attempt has ever been made to ensure the integration of workers' work/non-work spheres, particularly in view of Hospico's 'work first' culture.

While the Government is currently promoting the 'Family-First' campaign, Hospico is promoting a 'work-first' culture through its motto, 'Ready for Disaster', which emphasises that their workers' first obligation is to their job duties and responsibilities. The workers are expected to perform their duties altruistically, for the public good. The Hospico management also believes that their employees would be better able to manage their work and non-work spheres if they kept them separate. The management's and union's awareness of work/non-work issues are relatively weak and the provision of work/non-work support, arrangements and policies are also limited.

6.3 THE ROLE OF THE ORGANISATION

In Hospico, workers who are tasked with certain clinical jobs have to work an average of 60 hours per week. Additionally, some jobs require the workers to work on rotational shift duty, generally divided into three periods of time, i.e. 7.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., 2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., and 10.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m., as Hospico is a referral centre which provides specialist services for women and children 24 hours a day. Besides staggered flexible start and finish times, most Hospico workers, i.e. nurses, doctors and other clinical staff, normally work on adjustable shift duty which involves 'on-call duty' and is based on the urgency of tasks and a roster system. Additionally, each unit and department organises its shift hours according to work demand.

In Hospico, long working hours is the norm and work tends to gradually encroach on personal and family time. Two specific elements were found to influence the working time arrangements in Hospico, namely, work demand and the lack of staff. These issues are the focus in the following sections.

6.3.1 Work Demand

Hospico operates on a 24 hour basis with most clinical workers and specialists in Hospico adhering to the Hospital motto - 'Ready for Disaster' which implies that the workers have to be ready to report for duty at any time. It is therefore common for clinical workers in Hospico to work irregular and unpredictable hours due to the nature of their work. Since the workers are required to perform their duties whenever called upon to do so, working life and non-work life are predominantly subject to the demands of the job. This is indicated in the statement of a staff member as shown below:

"The medical service differs from other service sectors. It is mandatory to perform on demand, whether you like it or not. It is the nature of our jobs here to be always ready. For example, during a disaster, our phone must be always switched on. We must always be ready, just like the army." (Ali, a male Senior Radiographer, with 26 years of service in Hospico)

"The principle underlying this job is 'always be ready for disaster', a motto from the Health Ministry. Even though you are on holiday or whatever, as long as you are nearby, you are required to come to work." (John, a Radiographer with five years service in Hospico)

"Here, we always have to be ready for a disaster. If the disaster plan is activated, we have to come to work and help. No question about it, unless at that time you are ill." (Limah, a female Senior Radiographer with 13 years service as a Radiographer in Hospico,)

As an organisation which provides critical medical services to the public, many jobs in Hospico involve life or death situations and thus commitment to work is vital. This view is reiterated by Sister Milla, a female Senior Nursing Staff in the Obstetrics and

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Gynaecology (O&G) ward with 23 years of service with Hospico, a single parent with grown up children. She pointed out during the interview:

"I think my responsibility at Hospico is enormous because I deal with life and death situations. I have to ensure that my patients receive the highest standard of care to prolong their life and its quality. I work to earn money. My life is complicated because I have to balance my work and personal life. To do this successfully I have to inculcate self-discipline at work and at home with my children."

Dealing with emergency situations is difficult and the nature of such tasks requires high commitment, dedication, and personal sacrifice. It also means long working hours for most of the clinical workers. That is why Hospico strives to ensure the inculcation of the 'work first' ethic among its staff members. Sister Milla, went on further to state that although her job required her to work long hours, her working hours suited her:

"38.5 hours must be worked in a week, but sometimes I work up to 45 hours in a week. In a month I have three claimable hours if I work a weekend. Basically, I work 8 hours a day from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and arrive home at 7.00 p.m. I don't have a problem with the working hours as they suit me. My immediate superior is very considerate, especially when I have to deal with personal matters, like sending my children to school. Then I use my claimable hours."

The findings of this study show that most Hospico employees work long hours. Moreover, Hospico's reactive nature in dealing with emergencies, i.e. on-call duty and adjustable shift hours, has further contributed to their having to work irregular and inconsistent hours. The study also found that under-staffing has further exacerbated employees' long working hours and also contributed to work intensification.

6.3.2 Under-Staffing

How under-staffing results in work intensification for employees in Hospico is evident in situations where certain staff members are absent or on statutory leave. In such cases, another staff member from the same department has to take on additional responsibilities and work extra hours to cover those who are unavailable, due to absence or leave.

Employee workloads can increase substantially in such situations. Dr. Hannah, Head of the Emergency Unit, who is married with young children, pointed out:

"If more than two workers take their holiday at the same time, it means that workloads are greater and someone will be overburdened."

This was supported by Evan, a Senior Assistant Pharmacist in Hospico. Evan's reply when asked whether the take up of work/non-work arrangements generated any tension at work indicated that under-staffing caused stress at work:

"Yes, when one of the workers takes emergency leave or doesn't turn up, there is a need to find someone else to cover for that person. Since we are already short of staff, it is quite stressful when things like that happen – to find staff to cover."

Thus, a shortage of workers can result in other workers having to work longer hours. Some workers in Hospico found themselves working continuous shifts. Since Hospico was experiencing an under-staffing problem at the time of the study, John, a Radiographer with five years of service, and married with a young child, found himself trapped in working one hundred hours per week due to the lack of staff. He had no choice but to carry on with his regular tasks in addition to his colleagues' tasks resulting in having to work extremely long hours. The quote below shows the predicament John had to face on a regular basis, working long hours in addition to being on-call duty, the latter being based on a 'roster system'. Although every clinical worker working the midnight shift would normally be given a day off the following day, due to lack of staff, all radiographers in his department, including John, did not have this privilege. Continuously working longer hours was the norm:

"I work 100 hours a week. I work shift hours alternately with fixed office hours. For example, if today I work office hours 8.00 a.m. till 5.00 p.m., I will do shift duty from 8.00 a.m. until 2.00 p.m. the next day and then 2.00 p.m. until 10.00 p.m. The following day I will work from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. On the weekend I work from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and another duty from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. As this department is short-staffed, I don't have a day off after the night shift like clinical staff in other departments. We are on-call duty at any time based on a roster system and work weekends as well. I have to cover for and perform someone else's duty if they are unable to work."

Working long hours can affect workers' well-being and contribute to 'work creep' which affects work performance (Milliken & Dunn-Jensen, 2005). Most importantly, it also affects workers' non-work life, as indicated by Sister Milla, the Senior Nursing Staff in the O&G ward, a single parent with grown up children:

"For shift duty there is a schedule, but an emergency can happen at any time and if one does occur, it causes us difficulties as we lack staff. In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), if a worker is unable to work, their duties must be covered by somebody else. If there is no other worker, I or someone else will have to cover for them. After a double shift, when you reach home you are so tired and stressed that you don't feel like spending time with the family. In the ICU, the ratio for worker and patient is ideally 1:1, but here (O&G ward) it is 1:3. So, no one can expect to take leave when an emergency occurs, whatever their personal situation. There would not be a problem if we had enough workers and everyone fully cooperated."

In a busy Emergency Department, a shortage of workers results in increased workloads for all staff members. Dr. Hannah, a Medical Officer and Head of the Emergency Unit in Hospico, married with young children, confirmed this scenario when she shared her experience of working under pressure in the unit.

"As a Medical officer in this department I have to deal with emergency cases. Here, we have three shifts per day. Previously there were only three Medical Officers (MOs) available to cover three shifts. Shift hours are from 8.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., 3.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., and 10.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. Each MO has to cover one shift every day, but if one MO is on leave, this means one of the two remaining MOs has to do a double shift. In general, we should in theory work a total of 49 hours per week but the working hours differ each week. There are MOs who work for more than 49 hours per week. For example, Dr. Jasse has already worked 60 hours this week."

Dr. Hannah went on to state that due to the shortage in skilled labour she had to work continuously long hours and this has affected her emotional well-being and caused stress due to lack of rest:

"I once cried when I had to work non-stop every other shift. At the time there were lots of patients and they kept on complaining as they wanted to be treated quickly. They were not critical cases but there were only two MOs working at the time due to staff shortages.

Because I was working non-stop I lacked rest and this caused stress. I cried because I felt burdened by the heavy workload."

Given the permeability of the boundary between work and home and the frequency of work-related activities intruding into the time reserved for non-work or family activities, workers were found to be constantly putting their personal interests aside and working altruistically for the public good. In fact, medical work is often presented as a vocation which requires workers to display altruistic behaviour and self-sacrifice. Here it is demonstrated that the structural context of the work role has a significant influence on workers' ability to integrate their work/non-work lives.

The next section will examine the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards work/non-work live at the micro level.

6.4 EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK/NON-WORK LIVE

This section aims to specifically examine workers' attitudes resulting from the influence of religious and cultural values**.** This section will examine how religious values and socio-cultural aspects influence employees' attitudes towards dual commitments to both their work/non-work lives and facilitate integration of their work/non-work spheres.

6.4.1 The Influence of Religious Values on Employees' Attitudes Towards Work and Non-Work Life

In this study religious values were found to influence the way employees viewed their work and play an important role in influencing employees' attitudes towards work/non-work lives, irrespective of the religion followed. The section below focuses on how religious values influence employees' attitudes in managing their work/non-work lives.

In the present research it was seen that, regardless of the religion followed, work was viewed as an obligation imposed by God and thus it was the individual's duty to engage in some kind of work activities. For example, Megan, who is single, a Christian and a

Laboratory Technologist with two years of service dealing with patients' blood tests in Hospico, relates the quality of her job to the religious teachings of her faith. She states that her faith influenced the way she carried out her job and had a positive effect on her dealings with patients:

"My religion does influence me, for example, it has taught me to be responsible and honest when doing my work. It has made me do my job more responsibly which has had a positive impact on the way I deal with my patients. I do my best to ensure they don't have to wait too long for their blood test results."

The two main responsibilities of the workers, as found in this research, were to 'report to the manager' and 'to report to God'. These responsibilities were viewed as being part of the obligations of a god-fearing person in this so-called 'temporary' world. The general view of the employees was that seeking a 'permanent reward' was far more precious than any reward acquired in this 'temporary world', and being committed to one's work was perceived as being a 'stepping stone' to obtaining 'permanent' rewards in the hereafter. Jude, an Assistant Medical officer with 22 years of service, endorsed this belief when he commented:

"As a Christian, I must follow the teachings of the Christian religion, in my case, that of the Seventh Day Adventists. Jesus is important in a Christian's life. He taught us that our life in this world is temporary. The purpose of following the teachings of my religion is to attain the permanent reward of paradise in the hereafter where I will find true peace and security. If you follow the teachings, you'll be guaranteed a place in heaven. The Bible says, 'You must follow the religion as best as you can'."

Jude further explained how religion had made him an appreciative, thankful person who was committed to work:

"When I work, I work for God. God has given me a good life and I must be thankful. So when I do something or sacrifice something, I don't ask for a reward or ask for something in return."

Religious values as embodied by dedication, trustworthiness and honesty also influenced the way workers viewed their work. In Islam, work is obligatory and while one's loyalty

revolves around self and family, within the workplace, loyalty to one's superior is deemed necessary for an organisation to survive. Christian workers also viewed work as an obligation and this view influenced their work commitment and their sense of responsibility towards their organisation and those with whom they came into contact with in the course of their working day. Joyce, a Staff Nurse in Hospico, commented:

"In my religion, we have to work honestly. If we believe in God we cannot play around. We have to behave responsibly to all with whom we come into contact."

In the research context, positive values, such as sincerity, honesty, and trustworthiness, which are emphasised in all religious teachings (regardless of religion), were seen to have influenced the workers' views on how they should manage their work responsibilities. When the workers were asked about the extent to which their religion influenced whatever they did, Sister Milla, who is a Muslim and a Senior Nursing Staff in Hospico, said:

"Religion has taught me to work with sincerity. I believe that if you do good deeds, you will be rewarded with good deeds. Sincerity is important, so whatever I do, I do it with a willing heart and don't feel I'm being forced to do it. We should all act with the purest of intentions."

While according to Uddin (2003), such values and ethics govern the lives of Muslims in particular, in this study, it was found to also govern the lives of Christians. Sally, a Christian Staff Nurse in Hospico, had a similar comment:

"Whenever I do any work I do it with earnestness and eagerness as I believe that everything will be rewarded or punished, I'm afraid that if I don't work sincerely I will be punished by God."

Affiliation to a religion was also seen to have a positive impact on individuals in stressful situations such as when having to work long hours. Dr. Hannah, a female Muslim Medical Officer, married with young children, found that remembering God helped her to calm down when she was called upon to work long hours, especially when also subjected to heavy workload and stress at work. Feeling grateful to God for all the good things she

experienced in life filled her with a sense of tranquillity. As the main reason she had sought employment was due to her believe in her obligation to God, she worked with sincerity and honesty. By submitting to God and endeavouring to apply all the positive values emphasised in Islamic religious teachings in her work routine, she found that she experienced inner peace despite the stressful nature of her work.

"I always try to remember that work is sent to us by God. This stops me complaining about what I am doing, especially when I'm dealing with a heavy workload. Because I remember God all the time I calm down when I begin to feel stressed. I am then able to perform my work duties sincerely and diligently."

It is clear that the research participants' attitudes towards work were not only emphasis an enhancement of positive work ethics – IWE, but also a reflection of PWE, as upheld by Christian workers (Endot, 1995). Attitudes towards commitment to work, among those who endeavoured to uphold such values, was mainly due to the influence of their religious beliefs. These employees viewed their commitment to work as a duty and held themselves accountable to their superiors and duty bound to perform good productive works, as a form of devotion and worship of God.

Regardless of gender and religion, the workers were generally found to emphasise on the importance of viewing their performance at work as a form of worship of their God. Thus, they were encouraged to be fully committed to any work that they performed. These influences have critical implications for workers' commitment to work, since performance of work is viewed as a vocation and this has created a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context, as a result of the influence of religious values on work norms and values. The job obligation culture has also been observed in other organisations within the Malaysian public sector, similarly associated with the nature of the job. For example, in Hospico most of the jobs are related to the medical vocation and the duty of care to patients in life and death situations. Thus, the nature of the work responsibilities is another reason for the workers' view of commitment to their work. In this study the workers were seen to process and uphold strong work ethics as they viewed their work as a vocation due to the religious values inculcated in them from

childhood. This finding is significant as it offers an interesting new angle from which to view the public sector ethos.

Religious values were also found to influence workers' attitudes towards their non-work life spheres. Although work commitment was generally viewed as being important by the research participants, they also indicated their believe that at the same time, the non-work domain should not be neglected. Ahmad, a Muslim Assistant Medical Officer in Hospico, who is married with young children, indicated that the teachings of his religion permeated everything he did and taught him to develop a considered approach to time management so that he was able to fulfil his obligations to God. His religion had also made him more disciplined in terms of managing his work and non-work responsibilities. He said:

"The way I organise my work, the time I work I never forget the obligation to worship my God. We have 24 hours in a day and it is up to us to arrange our time, our work and personal life, so that we never fail to fulfil our religious obligations to our God."

This shows that integrating work/non-work spheres is not limited to just integrating the spheres of paid work and family life responsibility but also extends to fulfilling personal obligations to God. In addition to encouraging commitment to work, the workers reported that their religious values also helped them to better manage their non-work lives. Religious values as a 'a way of life' or 'lifestyle' integrated within workers' lives was practised on a daily basis by the workers, as illustrated by the following comments from Limah, a Muslim female Senior Radiographer with 13 years of service, and married with young children:

"My religion encourages me to adjust myself to family needs and work responsibilities. As a working mother I have to develop time discipline and self-discipline to ensure I spend time with my children and do not neglect the need to pray five times a day."

The research evidence also showed that the workers believed that their relationship with the supreme power – God – required them to behave in the best possible manner towards their fellow humans. Further, respect for the family institution was vitally important from the religious perspective (Carolan *et al*., 2000). Sister Jane, a Christian Senior Nursing

Staff member in Hospico, revealed how important her religion was to her and how its teachings helped her to manage her work and non-work spheres:

"I go to church every Sunday and listen to the sermon given by the priest. I always relate the teachings to my daily life, that is to say, I try to give my best in whatever situation I find myself (at work or at home with the family). I try to put into practice the teachings from the Bible, using Jesus as my exemplar."

These quotes reveal that regardless of religious affiliation, religious values found to influence Hospico male and female workers' attitudes towards dual commitment to work responsibilities and non-work responsibilities.

6.4.2 The Influence of Cultural Values on Employees' Attitudes Towards Work/Non-Work Lives

Another element found to influence workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work spheres was the influence of cultural values. It is important to note that in Hospico, the relationship between economic motivation and family responsibility and work/non-work prioritisation was crucial. According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), work/non-work patterns depend on the economic resources of an individual. This would suggest that religion and cultural values do not just operate at the meso level but also exert influence at the micro level. This study found that cultural values influenced Hospico workers' attitudes towards prioritisation of their work and non-work spheres. The income earned from being employed was essential to support family members and fulfil family responsibilities as shown by the comments from Limah, a Senior Radiographer in Hospico, whose husband worked in another region and who therefore acted as a single parent most of the time:

"From work, I earn an income to support my family. As a breadwinner I am able to give them a roof over their heads and put food on the table. I am able to provide them with the best."

According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), an individual's lifestyle encompasses values, beliefs and perceptions related to work and employment. In this research study, other than economic necessity, the breadwinner ideology was also found to be influenced by

cultural traditions. It was significant that the workers felt a sense of responsibility towards their family. This is an important social feature in the Malaysian context. The responsibility of supporting the family extended not only to immediate family members but also encompassed extended family members. The need to support extended family members was found to be the reason why economic motivation was a priority for some workers in this study. Ninna, a Radiographer, newly married and working long hours in Hospico, was asked how often she took leave to take a break or go for a holiday. Her response indicated that, given her situation of being newly married, she wanted to earn as much money as possible to be able to put aside some money in anticipation of the time when she would have a family:

"When I feel tired I think about going on leave and a holiday but most of the time I think about saving money so I think about work. For the time being I just work, I forget about taking leave as I want to save as much money as I can while I'm able to work and haven't yet started a family."

Apart from it being the main source of revenue for the family and to supply necessities essential for survival, some workers also worked over time to save for the future, even though this might mean working for prolonged hours. Ninna revealed that the extra hours she worked and the extra income she earned also helped to support her extended family:

"Although weekend duty makes me unhappy I've grown to accept it as I need to save money for the future. I'm also a breadwinner for my extended family, I have to help them."

The comments above indicate that economic motivation is applicable even to those without children. This shows how the 'power of money' influences attitudes towards work commitment. In the literature, Burgess (1997) and Schor (1992) contend that economic motivation is the primary reason why workers in the West work long hours.

The breadwinner ideology in Malaysian society has been demonstrated to be based on economic support of the extended family and is not only limited to men but also includes women. In the UK, in the 20th century, the breadwinner ideology was considered an

expression of masculinity and a resource used by men and trade union representatives to support claims for improvement in wages for men to support the nuclear family (Ackers, 2003; Turnbull, 2003; Heery, 2006). In Malaysia, economic support for the extended family is reported to be an important feature of the commitment to work, for both women as well as men.

The findings from this study showed that the emphasis on caring for and looking after parents and showing them respect was the norm and the tradition practised across Hospico. Family responsibilities were influenced by the cultural acceptance of reciprocal relations. While caring for and showing respect to parents were important factors, so too was 'paying them back' for all that they had done in the past. While remittance was one way of providing economic help to elderly parents, emotional support was seen to be far more important. Sally, a Hospico Staff Nurse with 13 years of service, married with a young child, expressed the view that helping her parents was important not only to make her parents happy but also to set a good example for her daughter. She said:

"I work to help and assist the family, my husband as well as my parents. I still give my parents some money and visit them every weekend, which makes them happy. It is my principle to make them happy as I am indebted to them. Every month I'll give them money or buy them groceries, food etc. In the future, I'll be like them, old and I want my daughter to see what I am doing for my parents to set her a good example."

The quote above shows the value placed on being a role model for the next generation. The good behaviour demonstrated by parents will be followed by the next generation and this process will continue as long as people are aware of the advantage of practising it. Despite their obvious dedication to their paid work, the research subjects viewed their responsibility to the family, both immediate and extended family members, as being important.

In a society where the family and the institution of marriage are considered important, strengthening the cultural traditions that emphasise on the value of family responsibilities is vital. Religious values influenced not only the workers' prioritisation of work over

non-work responsibilities, but also their values in relation to family responsibilities and reciprocal relationships. This shows the influence of the social and cultural traditions on workers' integration of their work/non-work lives.

'Balik kampung', the tradition of frequently visiting one's hometown and family members was also found to be prevalent among the Hospico employees. This traditional practice not only gives workers a break from work, but also serves to remind them of their obligation to family members. Sean, Hospico's Science officer who is single, explained the 'balik kampung' tradition as follows:

"Everyone has their work time and family time but they need to balance the two. Although I'm single, I need to balance the time I spend with my immediate family (my mother and other siblings) and the time I spend at work. I need to spend time with my immediate family at least once a week. I 'balik kampung' to spend time with them."

Annual leave, public holidays and weekends can be used to 'balik kampung' and consequently improve both work and non-work lives. Regardless of marital status, whether single or married, with or without dependants, the 'balik kampung' tradition was found to be widely practiced by Hospico employees. As stated by Megan, Hospico's Laboratory Technologist, who is single:

"I'm more than satisfied with the leave entitlement I have, especially since I have 25 days annual leave and we have lots of public holidays in Malaysia. We don't need to work over the weekend if there is no overtime, and we can use the free time we have to 'balik kampung', visit parents in the hometown, and meet the rest of the family at least once a month."

It is evident that religious and cultural values have influenced how employees in Hospico think and feel about their dual obligations - commitment to work and non-work responsibilities. Having examined the roles that religious affiliation and cultural values play in influencing workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work spheres, the next section will focus on how workers manage their work/non-work lives.

6.5 MANAGING WORK AND NON-WORKING LIVES

This section explores how the workers' need to integrate their work/non-work spheres is supported by various sources, e.g. through public arrangements - the public sector as an employer establishing work/non-work life policies and supportive superiors; or private arrangements - a spouse or other private help, i.e. an extended family member, neighbour and/or a private crèche; or support from a combination of both private and public arrangements. This section aims specifically to examine how Hospico workers organised their work and non-working lives and how the availability of supports can influence the different approaches adopted. In Hospico, some workers achieved partial whereas others were able to fully integrate work and home to their satisfaction; some felts work/non-work life relations resulted in conflict and; some employees of a specific life-cycle were happy to prioritise their work lives and segmented non-work lives. This section will thus encompass discussion on the variations of work/non-work integration identified in this study, namely, work/non-work integration, work/non-work conflict and alternation of work life.

6.5.1 Work/Non-Work Integration

The findings in the previous section revealed that religious and cultural values influenced employees' attitudes towards dual commitments, both to their work and non-work lives and thus facilitated the integration of their work/non-work spheres. In Hospico, the degree of integration of the workers' work/non-work integration was varied depending on the range of support available to them. For some workers, the integration was achieved through informal flexibility, for instance, workers who worked on flexitime basis managed to integrate both their work and non-work spheres flexibly as in the case of Evan, an Assistant Senior Pharmacist in the Pharmacy Unit, who is married with five young children. Evan found flexitime working hours and other organisational work/non-work policies to be helpful in integrating his work and non-work responsibilities. He states:

"The flexi hour system is useful because if I start work at 7.30 p.m. I can take the children to school on the way and then when I finish work at 4.30 p.m. I can avoid the traffic jams on the way home. The flexi hour arrangement also enables me to go back home early and start preparing dinner (I do the cooking) while waiting for my wife to come back from work. In the morning, we normally don't have much time to do things such as tidy up the house or cook as we're always in a rush. The long Friday lunch break allows me to go to the bank to pay bills, etc. Working five days only also allows us to spend time together as a family during the weekend."

This view is supported by Alana, a 25 year old female Pharmacist who had just joined Hospico three months earlier:

"This flexi working hours suits me as I can avoid the traffic jam and I like to wake up early. As the finish time is 4.30 pm, it suits me as I can reach home earlier for shopping (with my mother) and spend the rest of the day with my family. I like it very much."

Although limited to those who worked fixed working hours in non-emergency departments, the flexitime privilege provided by Hospico appears to have assisted workers in managing their work/non-work spheres.

In addition to the nature of the work role, Hospico employees were aided by a range of supports in the integration of work/non-work spheres. Prominent among the non-work sources of social support was the support of family members. Family members have the unique ability to provide support to the worker outside the work environment (Friedmann & Greenhaus, 2000). Support from a spouse was also found to be particularly important in enabling workers to manage their work/non-work life spheres harmoniously. While several workers found flexitime working hours to be useful and helpful in integrating their work and non-work lives, other workers who worked shift hours found this particular work pattern to be accommodative, particularly when they also received support and assistance from their spouse, which enabled them to work without distractions. Joyce, a Staff Nurse in the O&G ward, married with four children aged 14 to eight years, commented:

"The shift hours enable me to be with the family, to do the household chores and, assist my children with their school work. Morning shift is the most preferable since late night

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shift is a bit difficult. If I need to work the late night shift on consecutive days, it makes me feel sleepy at work. However, my husband understands this shift pattern and gives me his support.'

The benefit of support through private arrangements to workers was confirmed in a study by Md-Sidin *et al.* (2010), who found that such support, particularly from a spouse, has a significant positive relationship to their quality of life.

Dr. Hannah juggled long working hours and experienced work intensification as a medical officer and a mother of two young children, aged three years and two months, with a husband who was on study leave abroad. However, as she lived in the staff quarters located in close proximity to her workplace, integration of work/non-work responsibilities was made easier. Dr. Hannah, who had a paid helper to look after her baby and do the household chores while she was working, reported how this enabled her to see her baby during her lunch breaks or deal with any unexpected family emergencies relatively quickly. The availability of a private crèche facility also made her working life less difficult:

"I prefer office hours, to work from 8am until 5pm, so that I can spend time with my children. I requested management not to allocate me the night shift as I have to perform all the household duties with my husband being away. I sometimes have to do a double shift which means I work non-stop. When this happens, by the time I reach home I am so tired I don't feel like entertaining the children who often behave badly to get my attention. Fortunately, I have a good maid. Without a paid helper my life would be extremely difficult as my baby is just two months old and my other child is three years old. I send my toddler to the private crèche to reduce my maid's duties. I am also fortunate in that I live near my workplace in the quarters provided by my employer, so if anything untoward occurs I can go straight home and promptly deal with the situation."

Dr. Hannah went on to explain how she managed both her work and non-work life responsibilities during situations where either she, her children or maid were taken ill. She was also appreciative of the support Hospico provided to make her life easier. She also stressed on the importance of the support of her extended family which enabled her to integrate her work/non-work responsibilities. She said:

"I am a medical officer so when my children are sick, I will call my maid every hour to monitor their condition. On one occasion my maid was sick so I treated her myself to ensure she soon became well enough to look after my children. Unfortunately, at the same time, I was admitted to hospital with a gallstone problem and had to ask my mother-in-law to come to help look after my baby. I should have had an operation but I was worried about my newborn baby and my other small child since it would have taken some time for me to recover from an operation so I never had the operation but received alternative medical treatment to resolve the problem. On another occasion when I had returned to work after the birth of my baby, my maid was ill and there was no one else to look after my baby. What I did was ask an ambulance driver to take me home to give my maid some injections and then asked the ambulance driver to take me back to the emergency unit in the hospital as I was 'on-duty'. Fortunately, the hospital is very close to where I live so it was easy for me to go home to ensure everyone was well. Then, I returned to work and performed my duties with peace of mind."

The evidence shows that economic capital can buy additional time for work, for example, by hiring a nanny (Warhurst *et al*., 2008). In addition, social resources, such as extended families; organisational support; and social networks, such as neighbours, shape work/non-work patterns and influence work/non-work life experiences. Support was particularly important in Hospico, since workers had specific responsibilities towards their patients. Mindful of their specific work responsibilities in Hospico, workers voiced their concerns about their ability to integrate their work/non-work responsibilities in order to achieve a harmonious work/non-work life. The evidence discussed above demonstrates how work/non-work integration can be conceptualised as a 'continuum'. It is evident that the variations of work/non-work integration identified among workers in the study demonstrated that some achieve partial, whilst others are more able to attain full integration.

Apart from supports available that enhanced workers' work/non-work life integration, workers in the research context also found to experience work/non-work conflict due to insufficient support received by certain group of workers. Thus, it is the focus of the next section.

6.5.2 Work/Non-Work Conflict

Despite their concerns related to integration of their work/non-work spheres, conflict occurs when their work demands and non-work responsibilities clash. In their study, Erickson *et al*., (2010) found that the group of workers with young children experienced a 'double bind' since they were not as established, both financially and occupationally and, thus felt pressure to provide for their families and work long hours. Consistent with studies by Erickson *et al*. (2010), Ngah *et al.* (2009) and Bond (2004), this study also found that work/non-work conflict tends to be mostly experienced by workers with young children.

Malaysian Government policies that encourage the implementation of the 'Family First' concept in the public sector workplace and emphasise on the provision of childcare facilities can, in fact, exacerbate conflict between work/non-work spheres. When the nature of their work requires workers to work long hours and the necessary work/non-work provisions are not in place to support them, there can be conflict between the work and home spheres. For example, in Hospico, the HR Manager indicated that due to the 'work first' culture, the work and non-work spheres had become two independent domains, each with its own pressing demands. This shows that factors in the work world could affect family life and vice versa (Greenhaus & Powell, 2002). This is known as work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. One of the three main manifestations of conflict between the spheres of work and non-work activity is time-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when time spent in one sphere results in less time being available for the other spheres. Having to spend long hours at work, for example, will make it difficult to fulfil domestic obligations at home. This was a common occurrence among employees at Hospico, as many of the workers spent more time at work than with their family or in pursuing personal interests. As John, a Radiographer, married with a young child, states:

"I don't think my work and non-work lives are integrated because at the moment I spend more time at work than I do with my family due to heavy work demands. The drawback of

the roster duty is that I have to work longer hours. Thus, I have no time for myself or my family. If I want to deal with personal matters, for example, draw money from the bank, I have to take the day off to do so, and that day will be deducted from my annual leave."

Due to the long and inconsistent working hour culture in Hospico, workers in certain departments had to bring their children to the workplace, especially if their spouse had to work during the same hours. John described how continuously working long hours affected his non-work life and resulted in conflict between his work/non-work spheres. He commented:

"As my wife also works as a radiographer in this department and doesn't drive, and we live some distance away from the workplace, normally one of us has to wait for the other one to finish their shift duty. Sometimes we stay here at work 24 hours. Frequently, we have to bring our daughter who is three and a half years old here, as most of our time is spent at the workplace. For example, during the weekend on-call duty, my wife's shift is from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and mine from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. so between us we work 24 hours continuously. The hospital has become like our home due to our long working hours and our daughter has more or less grown up here since she was a baby. On certain occasions, I have only three hours sleep at home before I have to return to the workplace to pick up my wife after her shift. We buy meals from the canteen and other colleagues know our daughter."

John further explained how his long working hours affected his life in general:

"Long working hours can contribute to a stressful personal life and less time for the family. I don't have time for myself – no time to enjoy my life. Working longer hours is gradually taking away and eroding my personal life because my working life takes up so much time."

In John's case, the lack of organisational support resulted in work creep and conflict between work and non-work spheres. The experience of Nora, a Radiographer, married with a young child, showed how the strain from her work role made it difficult to fulfil her caring responsibilities. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) refer to this as strain-based conflict. Nora said:

"At the moment, it is difficult to work at night or during public holidays as I have a problem finding suitable childcare provisions. The childcare centre to which I used to

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send my child has closed. When I was single, I didn't have that problem, now my problem is the difficulty in finding appropriate childcare. If I send my child to a 24 hour childcare centre then I need to pay extra money. My husband works as an Assistant Medical officer so if both of us find ourselves having to work shifts, we have no alternative but to send our child to a 24 hour childcare centre. However, last Christmas holiday both of us worked at night and the childcare centre was closed. We had no other option but to bring our child here (to the workplace) and take turns to look after him in the rest room."

The fact that both John and Nora had to take their children to their workplace shows that there was limited or no childcare facilities available to them and also that the time they spent with their partners and children was fragmented. Dr. Hannah, a Medical Officer in Hospico, emphasised the importance of Hospico providing 24 hour childcare facilities particularly for those working on night shifts. She commented:

"This organisation must have a crèche which is open 24 hours a day where those who work late night shifts can leave their children without worrying about their safety. Without this facility, parents may have to leave their children alone at home without adult supervision and this can lead to all kinds of anxieties and tensions."

In their study, Md-Sidin *et al*. (2010), found that Malaysians will do everything possible to ensure that work/non-work conflict does not adversely impact their non-work domain as the quality of their non-work life, particularly family relationships, was very important to them. They found that a harmonious family life and stress free family relations were a priority. However, the findings from this research show that for some workers, time-based and strain-based conflict occurs when they are unable to integrate their work/non-work spheres.

Apart from work/non-work integration and work/non-work conflict, at the individual level, the workers also experienced alternation of work/non-work life as being a 'compensation for their lost time'. This is discussed in the next section.

6.5.3 Alternation of Work Life

When workers reached a certain number of years of service and had an established family, they had a tendency to view the current period as being compensation for the time

when they had been less able to focus on their career due to their responsibilities of bringing up young children. Hence, their focus was now on commitment to work. Sister Milla, a female Senior Nursing Staff in Hospico, with 23 years of service, one of the three single parents interviewed in this research, shared her experience of how the advantage of having grown up children enabled her to help her colleague at work who had young children:

"I feel obligated to my work and don't like to take leave or have a day off because this hospital needs me. The junior staff member who is doing the same work as me in this department has to take leave one day a week every week as she needs to mind her child. Since I don't have a child minding problem (all my children are big now) I can cover her duty. We both cannot take leave as one of us must be here to take care of the ward. When my children were small, I experienced the same situation as I had no one to help look after them when I worked. I had to ask for help from my neighbour or sometimes leave them with my parents. Now they are all grown up and know how to handle themselves."

In this study the workers without care commitments were seen to demonstrate willingness to work long hours to reduce the work/non-work conflict of workers with family responsibilities. Megan, who had two years of service as a Laboratory Technologist in Hospico, explained how being single enabled her to help colleagues with children fulfil their non-work responsibilities:

"Sometimes the opportunities for over time are so plentiful that is difficult to find time to pursue my personal interests. However, here, normally those who are single are willing to give up their free time for those who have family responsibilities and do more overtime to enable them to spend time with their families."

It is evident that strong work ethics and work prioritisation is demonstrated at certain stages of an individual's life-cycle, i.e. when the workers' children were all grown up and when workers were still single and had less family commitments. This study also found that both workers at the early stage of their careers and also workers who were already established in their careers demonstrated alternation in work prioritisation, the latter group to make up for the 'lost time' when their children were young.

It is clear that the availability of social resources, such as extended family members and social networks, such as neighbours, can contribute to shaping work/non-work patterns and influence work/non-work life experiences, for example, in meeting childcare needs. Support from the employing institution, spouse, extended family or from a private crèche or paid helper, enabled workers to better handle their work/non-work responsibilities. However, private support arrangements, i.e. paid helper and private crèche, requires having adequate financial means which is usually only available to wealthier professionals. The availability of support systems is particularly important for Hospico employees as these workers have specific responsibilities towards their patients. Mindful of their specific work responsibilities in Hospico, the workers voiced concern about their ability to integrate their work/non-work responsibilities in order to achieve a harmonious balance of both spheres. The findings from the discussion above demonstrate how work/non-work integration can be conceptualised as a 'continuum'. In this study, the variations in the Hospico employees' work/non-work spheres integration demonstrate that while some were only able to achieve partial integration, others were more able to achieve full integration. Whilst some were segmented their work/non-work life and some experienced conflictual work/non-work relations.

6.6 CONCLUSION

In Hospico, the management views the separation of work and non-work life spheres as necessary due to its focus on provision of emergency care. At the meso level in Hospico, it is evident that while there was high demand placed on working time however, there was low emphasis on work/non-work provisions as there was no on-site crèche in either the workers' housing quarters or in the workplace. The lack on knowledge on the part of HOCWU's about work/non-work integration also contributed to the lack of emphasis on provisions related to work/non-work spheres at Hospico. Without such support workers were left to manage their work and non-work spheres at the individual level. At the meso level, the culture of long working hours was pervasive in Hospico. Two elements responsible for the working time arrangements in Hospico were work demand and under-staffing. The reactive nature of work demand at Hospico, due to the 'work first' culture

meant that workers often had to work unpredictable and long hours, exacerbated further by under-staffing and thus resulting in work intensification.

The study also shows how religious and cultural values influenced workers' attitudes towards their dual commitments to work and non-work lives. Affiliation to a religion was seen to have a positive impact on individuals working in stressful situations. In addition to encouraging workers to be committed to their work, the workers' religious values also informed and helped them better manage their non-work lives. This study also shows that workers believed that their relationship with the supreme power – God – required them to behave in the best possible manner towards their fellow humans, particularly their family. Additionally, the values related to the breadwinner ideology, 'balik kampung' tradition and family responsibilities were found to influence the way workers' managed their work/non-work lives. The study also reveals how the 'power of money' influenced attitudes towards work commitment. Additionally, the emphasis on caring for and looking after parents and showing them respect was also a norm and a tradition practised by Hospico employees.

At the micro level, the availability of a range of support encompassing familial, communal and organisational supports, was found to influence the way workers arranged their work/non-work lives. The degree of support available is of particular importance to Hospico employees as they have specific responsibilities towards their patients and particularly the workers with young children. Social support i.e. spouse, parents and other private help was found to help the workers to cope with the pressures of integrating work and non-work lives, enabling them to work without being distracted.

Variations in work/non-work integration as experienced by employees in Hospico is best viewed as a continuum as some achieved partial and others full integration. Additionally, some workers alternated their work/non-work prioritisation differently at different stages of their life-cycle. It is evident in this study that it is not just workers in the early career stage but also workers who are already established in their careers who demonstrated alternation in work prioritisation, the latter group to make up for the 'lost time' when

their children were young. However, the study found that conflict occurred when workers experienced a clash between their work demands and non-work responsibilities and thus found it difficult to handle both at the same time. Consistent with the findings of Erickson *et al.* (2010), this was found to affect particularly workers with young children who received no support in coping with the conflict. When the nature of their work requires workers to work long hours and the necessary work/non-work provisions such as on-site crèches are not in place to support them, this can lead to conflict between the spheres of work and non-work activities.

The next chapter will discuss work/non-work policies and practices in Custco at the organisational level as well as the work/non-work experiences of workers at the individual level.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXAMINING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT CUSTCO

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, the discussion revolved around work/non-work integration in Unico and Hospico. This chapter discusses the interaction of the organisation and the influence of religious and social values on Custco employees' attitudes to work and non-working life and assesses how they manage these spheres as a consequence. Firstly, the chapter will assess the influence of the organisation with respect to the nature and degree of support for work and non-work integration in the policies and practices promoted and implemented, as well as the ways in which working time is organised at Custco. Secondly, an examination of employees' attitudes regarding work and non-working life is explored by addressing the influence of religious and social values in Malaysia. Finally, the chapter details how employees at Custco manage these two spheres.

7.2 WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES IN CUSTCO

In Custco, management perceived work/non-work arrangements as 'workers' welfare'. Work/non-work life integration was seen as an important agenda in Custco with the emphasis on spiritual matters and family welfare. Hence, various arrangements and activities related to work and non-work life were provided, not just for the workers but also for their spouses and children. Custco's HR Manager, Jim commented:

"Work/non-work is important. Other than work per se, management also need to look after their employees' welfare especially spiritual matters and, family welfare by providing living quarters and transportation for their children if they have 'study-visit trips."

The provision of work/non-work arrangements are expected to produce not only a conducive working environment but also happy and motivated individual workers and enhance productivity. Custco's HR Manager, Jim commented:

"When the organisation provides all the facilities i.e. housing quarters/accommodation, fitness and wellbeing centres, programmes involving their families – these can motivate workers and indirectly boost their productivity. Workers are more happy with their personal life if they join all the programmes provided at their housing quarters and workplaces and these can produce happy workers at work. This, in turn, will increase staff morale as workers' working and personal lives are taken care of. As human beings, if all our needs are satisfied we feel happy."

He added,

"Without perfect working tools, how do you expect workers can perform? So, by providing these working tools (work/non-work arrangements), workers are expected to work fast and efficient."

The quotes demonstrate that work/non-work arrangements, for example, housing quarters, fitness centre and transportation provided, are beneficial for organisation's business case agenda - to enhance productivity. As such, Custco was perceived as a good employer by CUSTWU, Custco's union, as many work/non-work arrangements had been implemented without requiring union negotiation. CUSTWU President, Yusuf explained that CUSTWU needed to move forward to ensure workers' needs were accommodated in a rapidly changing world,

"Our organisation has a very caring management and is a good employer. We don't have to deal much with the management to get things done for the benefit of workers' welfare. For example, the organisation provides housing quarters for the staff complete with community hall services, prayer hall, fitness and sports centre, tuition centre, crèche, religious classes, and transportation to work. Our union has suggested management add more (housing) quarters for the staff in the future. We need to have a paradigm shift. We cannot be satisfied with what we have achieved so far, we need to move forward according to the rapidly changing world scene. "

Yusuf added,

"The union has to bring forward work/non-work issues and deal with workers' life enhancement. The government sometimes forgets workers' welfare when it imposes certain policies. Our role is to fight against this to achieve a win-win situation for both parties."

When interviewed, CUSTWU's President, Yusuf, described that the union's experiences in fighting for workers' rights, revolved around the provision of work/non-work arrangements. For example, being an influential union, CUSTWU had successfully brought forward the work/non-work agenda nationwide as indicated below:

"Three work/non-work arrangements have so far been implemented nationwide. The first is the retirement salary for the wife after the death of the retired husband. Previously, the wife would not be paid the retirement salary if she remarried, but, now, since our union brought up the issue, the wife can receive the salary, even if she remarries. This issue was brought to the attention of the CUEPACS and the Ministry approved it. The second issue brought up by our union members from other branches and taken to the MBJ for approval and then imposed nationwide was the extension of paternity leave from 3 days to 7 days. The third issue was bereavement leave if any close family member passes away. There is another issue we are still waiting approval for, that is, laundry allowance. Here in this organisation we are uniformed staff, we need to wear a uniform everyday and we need to wear a clean uniform.'

Although housing quarters already provided by Custco, CUSTWU pursued housing as a priority in order to promote better work/non-work life. As Custco's motto is 'stay alert and always be ready to work', male workers were required to participate in emergency raid operations. To enable efficient raid operations, all workers were required to gather at Custco's academy located at the housing area, particularly during night time. Thus, staying within the housing area will be convenient for workers to prepare themselves for work as well as for their family if called for a raid operation, especially during a moment notice. Thus, more houses are needed to cater for workers particularly those who involved in emergency raid operation. This also demonstrates that while not all CUSTWU demands are met or negotiated with management, an 'ideal package' of work/non-work arrangements is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: CUSTWU 'Ideal Package' of Work/Non-Work Arrangements

> *1. Convenient and comfortable working facilities*
> *2. Workers' housing complete with infrastructure, especially football field*
> *3. Harmonious employment relationships*
> *4. Reasonable salary according to current economic situation*

CUSTWU was maintaining its reputation as a union well-known for struggling for workers' work/non-work betterment. A harmonious employment relationship was believed to improve the quality of workers' work/non-work lives. At the time of the study, CUSTWU was also concerned about the level of salary received by workers given the high cost of living in Sabah. Improving workers' salaries would directly improve workers' quality of life. Moreover, it was CUSTWU's intention to see more units in the workers' housing area complete with all essential infrastructure.

The work/non-work provisions implemented by management (see Chapter Four for the details) and an 'ideal package' of work/non-work arrangements pursued by CUSTWU demonstrates that both management and CUSTWU shared similar interest, particularly in pursuing housing quarters and fitness-based arrangements. Although management's implementation of work/non-work provisions was more on business case, CUSTWU, on the other hand, interested in promoting workers' wellbeing. The work/non-work provisions were important for the management to ensure morale and productivity among workers increased as productive, efficient and effective workers were expected. As many work/non-work arrangements already had been implemented by Custco, CUSTWU did not need to expend extra effort to fight for workers' rights. However, both the management and CUSTWU overlooked the absence of on-site crèche that needed by most working mother with young children. This indicates two explanations: that work/non-work provisions implemented at Custco were more than compliance to

what the Government expected them to do and; as a male dominated workforce, the work/non-work provisions at Custco was gendered. The next section will discuss the influence of the organisation of working time in shaping work/non-work life in Custco at the meso level.

7.3 THE ROLE OF THE ORGANISATION

According to Grzywacz *et al.* (2007) and Warhurst *et al.* (2008), an analysis of the organisation at the meso-level is appropriate for examining how workers manage their work/non-work lives in a national context specifically. Thus, this section will focus on how workers in Custco worked inconsistent and unpredictable long working hours due to work demand and under-staffing.

7.3.1 Work Demand

In Custco, workers work on average 60 hours per week. However, this is depends on the unit or department to which they are assigned. There are various working patterns which include a flexible staggered start and finish time as well as an adjustable shift patterns. The shift pattern involves on-call duty particularly among those who work in the Preventive Unit, Intelligence Unit and Airport Unit who are required to 'stay alert' and 'always be ready' to work. Since the ultimate objective of Custco is to prevent smuggling as well as accumulate revenue, commitment, dedication and attention to work are required from workers. When workers are on-call, they must be ready to work any time during the day and night and are on standby mode. This means that workers often spend less time with the family. Some workers reported how family get-togethers are often interrupted by immediate superiors contacting and communicating with them via mobile technology, such as mobile phone, to inform them that they are required to come immediately to work. Chief Aled, a Senior Officer, married with grown up children had been working 31 years for Custco, shared his experience:

"...Sometimes when we are shopping with the children I will get a call to attend an emergency raid operation. I have to leave them and go."

Workers employed by Custco are therefore expected to show a willingness to work on demand due to the nature of the job as indicated by Amir, an Officer in the Marine Preventive Unit:

"I am always prepared and ready to go to work because the nature of my job requires that, even after official working hours. We have to ensure our mobile is always on so the superior can call us at any time when there is an operation/job."

This was supported by Sam, an officer with 13 years of service and based in the Intelligence Unit, married with five young children, explained how he had to be ready to work on a 24 hour basis:

"I work from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. But most of the time I work 24 hours on standby mode, even though I might be on holiday or it's the weekend. If I am required to go to work I have to go immediately."

Another example of working inconsistent hours was provided by an officer working in the Intelligence Unit. Tuan[24] Talib's tasks included eliciting information from informants in order to monitor smuggling activity. He had been working with Custco for 12 years, his job consisted of undercover duties as well as observation. As well as inconsistent working hours, he was expected to work fixed office hours from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. during non-operational activity. However, because of the varied nature of his work duties, Tuan Talib did not find the inconsistent working hours irksome, in fact, when interviewed he implied he found his job stimulating:

"I work inconsistent working hours. It is difficult to quantify my working time as we work 24 hours around the clock. We work based on information from informants and

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[24] In Custco, both female and male Custco officers with three pips and a crown are addressed as 'Chief'. 'Tuan' is a title addressed to a male high ranking officer and 'Puan' or Madam a title addressed to a female high ranking officer.

networking. We work anytime. So far I have no problem working like this. It is flexible and lively and it is not rigid working hours. "

This suggests that if a worker finds their job sufficiently stimulating and enjoyable, long and inconsistent working hours can be accommodated. This was supported by Chief Aled as he also perceived working long and inconsistent hours can be enjoyable for someone who loves the nature of the job. As a Senior Officer, married with grown up children, had been working 31 years for Custco, 10 of which had been spent working in the Preventive Unit, Chief Aled dealt with investigation cases and prosecutions, and was also involved in raid operations. He had worked unlimited hours since being assigned to the Preventive Unit. Chief Aled indicated that he needed to be ready to work at a moment's notice during the day or night. He commented:

"There is no limit to working hours in this unit. I am on standby 24 hours a day. If there is any public complaint or information, even in the middle of the night, I have to deal with it straight away. A raid operation is usually carried out outside official working hours… I actually find my job enjoyable in the Preventive Unit as I don't work in one place but move around to different locations to achieve the objectives of the job. It's a job full of the unexpected. There are no routine tasks since one has to react to continually changing situations. Other than regular scheduled operations, my job cannot be planned as it is based on information received from the public and this can come at any time. Mine is such an enjoyable job as I work everywhere in the state, the east coast, west coast, everywhere. I have got used to the nature of the job and love it."

The empirical evidence from Custco suggests that workers like Chief Aled and Tuan Talib had a strong work ethic and viewed their job as a vocation (Noon & Blyton, 2007). They were therefore willing to accept the long working hours imposed by management. Additionally, after working for the organisation for some time, they get used to working long hours as demonstrated by Mohad's experience. He was an Officer, married with a young child, and worked in the Marine Preventive Unit. His working hours were inconsistent as he was on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including public holidays. He had been working for Custco for 28 years and had recently been involved in 50 preventive operations within the nearby coastal zone. His long years of service had accustomed him to working long, irregular hours. He stated:

"I don't have a choice as I need to work to support my family. If I had a choice I'd prefer more regular working hours. However, I've got used to working long hours over the 28 years I've been working for Custco."

While working long hours could not be avoided in certain cases, the willingness to work long hours was viewed as a sign of respect towards the superior assigning them as indicated by Chief Omar, married with grown up children, 20 years in service as an Officer:

"Basically, I work 8 hours a day, from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Sometimes I have to work overtime which means I find myself working 24 hours continuously every other day. I have to adjust myself to accept the responsibility given, whether I like it or not, because you have no choice but to show respect to your superior and be obliging."

Meanwhile, adjustable shift hours implemented at the Airport Unit were found to be unsuitable for workers with young children. Madam Mary's task as a Superintendent Officer and Head of the Baggage Screening Unit at the airport involved supervising other senior and lower rank officers. Her presence during baggage examination was therefore mandatory. Her working hours were becoming increasingly difficult as she had three young children, including an eight month old baby still being breastfed. The quote below shows that Madam Mary felt she had no choice but to work as requested by her superior:

"The shift system has made me less happy since I was assigned to this department. But I don't have a choice, I have to accept it. It does affect me but I have to overcome my negative feelings in order to do my job well."

The demands on shift workers are higher than those on workers who need only to go to work at fixed regular hours. Inconsistent and prolonged working hours influence the way people manage their work and non-work domains. An interview with Ramlee, an Officer, married with a baby son and working in the Preventive Unit, a department known for its irregular hectic working hours, revealed that the inconsistent working hours limited the time he was able to spend with his family:

"My working hours are inconsistent, sometimes I am on 24 hour standby. I don't work every night, it depends on the situation, so I have time to rest but very limited time to be with the family. The working hours are not a problem for me as I enjoy my job. But the nature of my job is such that there have been instances at work of wives divorcing their husbands because they have no time for them."

The long working hours in the cases demonstrated that the nature of certain job types required high work commitment. A strong work ethic motivated workers' commitment to their work (Noon & Blyton, 2007). Workers worked long hours not only because of a strong work ethic but because working long hour was rewarding and enjoyable. It is evident that many of the workers enjoy their work and do not have difficulty with their working patterns. The fact that evidences found in Custco, a male dominated organisation, suggests that if a worker finds their job sufficiently stimulating and enjoyable, long and inconsistent working hours can be accommodated. Additionally, this demonstrates that workers had a strong work ethic and viewed their job as a vocation. Like Hospico, Custco also experienced under-staffing problems which will be discussed in the next section.

7.3.2 Under-Staffing

In Custco, under-staffing resulted in workers working long working hours. For example, when interviewed, Chief David, a Senior Officer, 29 years of service, married with grown up children, revealed that one of his dislikes of working long hours was having to work even more hours to replace/cover other people during their absence. Although he disliked having to do this when asked by his superior, he felt he had no choice,

"A conflict arises when someone has to cover somebody else's work if that person is on leave. It means that the person covering their job has a double workload. I dislike the situation but I don't have a choice as I have to take on the additional responsibility when requested to do so by my superior."

The above quotes suggest that the problem of work intensification would not arise if Custco had sufficient numbers of staff. Moreover, the insufficient number of qualified workers prevented most workers from taking their annual leave when they wanted to do so. When someone managed to take their annual leave or take a day off, someone else in the department had to do their job and work extra hours, resulting in a double workload for them. Chief Aled explained:

"When I am on leave, my workload will be handed over to another colleague to do. In the Unit, there are only three Investigations Officers to cover all cases, so if one officer takes a day off the other two have to perform his duties. The workload is already extremely heavy and becomes even more burdensome when only two officers are left to cover everything, particularly if we are called to take part in a raid operation."

In another unit, the problem of long working hours arose because the unit was a 'one man department', that is to say, the unit was run by just one employee. This fact highlighted the problem of under-staffing and pressured the worker to work long hours to complete all the tasks by himself. Chief Shahrum, 28 years service with Custco, married with grown up children, who had been appointed to run the narcotic unit a year ago at the Airport Unit, expressed his feelings about having to work alone in the unit as follows:

"I work 9 hours a day, from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., fixed office hours. At present, I am the only one doing all the tasks involved in narcotic cases in the unit, that is, examining drug related cases in Terminal 1, Terminal 2, cargo and Transmile Terminal. I always have to be ready to work 24 hours if an emergency arises. I would prefer to work from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. but the job I am doing depends on the number of flight arrivals and transit flights. I need workers to cover me if I am unable to come to work. I feel frustrated working in this unit as I have to work alone and the workload is heavy."

Another factor that triggers the amount of workload is the global. Tuan Ashley, 28 years of service and Custco Assistant Director of the Export and Import Unit, married with grown up children, indicated that the economic situation influenced the workload level, because workload depended on the amount of import and export transactions. In a busy period, the limited number of qualified staff increased the workload level and resulted in work intensification and longer working hours. He said:

"Here, in the unit, the workload level is seasonal. There are certain periods when the workload is increased. The tax payment period is from 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. All tasks are based on the number of containers carried by incoming ships. Currently, the global economy is not good, which affects business, and the number of containers being transported has declined which, in turn, means the number of transaction approval forms has also decreased. In times of economic prosperity, in a good week, one ship will have a minimum of 300 containers, which means there are 300 forms to be checked and approved. If 10 ships arrive with 300 containers each that means we need to process 3,000 forms. With only three of us to process such a large amount of forms, myself as assistant director, one superintendent, and one assistant superintendent, you can imagine how hard we have to work on a daily basis. The job has to be done and we have to stay until it is done."

Madam Winnie, single, a Superintendent Officer in the Export and Import Unit under Tuan Ashley's supervision, described the nature of the work in the Export and Import Unit in further detail:

"Workload in a day involves about 20-30 declarations, depending on the economic situation locally and globally. The length of time required to process each one depends on the supporting documents attached as well as the complexity of the declaration. In general, each declaration takes about 30 minutes to process."

Long working hours affect workers' health and leave very little time for family or personal interests. Continuously working late nights leads to low physical energy and mental exhaustion, which can be dangerous as pointed out by Madam Melly, 46 years old with 22 years of service and a Superintendent Officer at the Airport Unit, married with four children:

"We don't have a choice, we have to work shifts because of a shortage of workers. We work long hours and our workload is always heavy. For example, two of the officers have to work two shifts (8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m.) and a roster duty at the weekend when one officer will be in charge of seven workers between 6.00 a.m. till 3.00 p.m. and the other will be in charge of seven workers between 3.00 p.m. till 12 midnight. We are always working, we have very little rest time, and the long working hours affect my health and my concentration level. When it's my turn to do the midnight shift my family always worry about me as I have to drive back to my home which is 60 kilometres away when I am feeling very sleepy."

Some workers complained that their long working hours and heavy workload could be alleviated if the Government allowed Custco to recruit more workers. Chief David, a Senior Officer contended that the Government needed to intervene in the issue of work/non-work integration:

"It is Government regulation that allows new recruitment. With more workers, somebody else could do the day shift, night or emergency shift, not the same person who has to do everything and work non-stop on consecutive days. Working long hours ultimately affects work performance and quality of work, and increases stress."

The long working hour culture was exacerbated by the understaffing problem which also contributed to work intensification. Given the permeability of the boundary between work and home and work-related activities intruding into the time reserved for non-work or family activities, workers were found to be putting aside their personal interests and working altruistically for the public good.

The next section will examine workers' attitudes based on the influences of religious and cultural values at the micro level.

7.4 EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK/NON-WORK LIVES

This section specifically aims to examine employees' attitudes based on the influences of religious and cultural values**.** Thus, this section will examine how religious values and cultural aspects influence workers' attitudes towards their dual commitments to work and non-work responsibilities and thus, facilitate their work/non-work integration.

7.4.1 The Influence of Religious Values on Employees' Attitudes Towards Work and Non-Work Lives

Irrespective of the religion, religious values were found to influence the way employees viewed their work and played an important role in influencing workers' attitude towards work/non-work prioritisation. Thus, the section below will discuss how religious values inform employees how to manage their work/non-work lives.

Work was viewed by most employees as an obligation given by God and it was the individual's duty to engage in some kind of work. Commitment to religious values was seen as a 'catalyst' for employees to give their wholehearted commitment to their work. Additionally, religious affiliation also appeared to encourage employees to perceive a good work performance as akin to worship. Management appeared to support this as they placed great emphasis on worship and provided prayer rooms to fulfil workers' spiritual and emotional needs, particularly for the majority of Muslim employees. This created a 'worship friendly' workplace. As seen during the research fieldwork, the practice of supplication (doa) in some of the organisations under study, for example Custco, was conducted daily before working hours and prayer meetings (through 'Yassin' verse recitation every Friday morning) provided the ritual cultural acts that encouraged workers to develop emotional attachment to their work. Management urged their subordinates to understand that they were accountable for their work not only to the employing organisation, but to God, and that their work was to be considered, particularly amongst Muslims, as a form of worship. Due to perceiving work as worship, self- and time management were important in ensuring both work and non-work spheres were well integrated. In other research, worship has been found to be linked to doing a 'good deed', 'to gain blessings from the Almighty' (Ali and Al-Owaihan, 2008), and Muslim workers are encouraged to undertake all tasks diligently and conscientiously (Ali, 2001).

In Custco, the work commitment philosophy was mutually shared among workers regardless of their religion. 'Reporting to God' was a significant indicator of work commitment and impelled workers to be more accountable for their actions as a responsible attitude would ensure a permanent reward in the hereafter. Work commitment was perceived by most Muslim workers as 'amanah', an obligation entrusted to human beings by God. Thus, commitment to work as an indication of one's commitment to God was as important as 'reporting to' or obeying the superior in the workplace. Tuan Talib, a Superintendent Officer in Custco, stated:

"I cannot live without religion. I firmly believe in the concept of a relationship with God, the necessity for us to report to God. It is our duty to be accountable to God. Be it in good or bad times, we have to accept whatever happens to us and should not view it as a burden. All tests are from God."

Religious values such as dedication, trustworthiness and honesty also influenced the way workers viewed their work. In Islam, work is obligatory and while one's loyalty revolves around self and family, within the workplace, loyalty to one's superior is necessary for an organisation to survive. It is a religious duty for a Muslim to produce good work as faith is considered incomplete without good productive works (Uddin, 2003). Awang, an Officer, supported this view:

"Working means that I must be ready to give my services to the organisation. Islam has taught me to work hard and give my full commitment to the job assigned to me."

Tuan Adib, a Senior Officer, expressed a similar attitude:

"In Islam, we are taught to obey our superior and work with sincerity, trustworthiness and dedication, and be accountable for our actions."

Describing work as the best form of worship, Ali (2005) and Ali & Al-Owaihan (2008) posited that moral and legitimate foundations must be inherent in economic activities, discipline and commitment must be the essence of work, and work should sustain confidence and self-reliance. The conceptualisation of work as worship not only associates work with God but also implies that its performance is a means to obtain life in the hereafter. Managing work life in a positive way is therefore encouraged as part of the individual's rendering of worship to God. Hence, everything must be done with good intention, good means, and will definitely bring about good ends. One of the fundamental assumptions in Islam is that intention rather than result is the criterion upon which work is evaluated in terms of benefits to the community (Ali, 2005). Chief Shahrum, a male Muslim, and Senior Officer, emphasised the importance of being 'clean' from any wrong doing at work:

"Work is worship. Every good work we do is worship. Besides receiving pay and allowances, I feel sinful if I take these without doing my job to the best of my ability."

Chief Farid, a male Muslim and single, a Senior Officer, also regarded work as a form of worship and viewed the pay he received for it here as a forerunner of the 'permanent reward' he would receive in the life hereafter. He said:

"Work is considered worship. As well as working to contribute to the organisation and receiving an income, work is considered a form of worship because we get something (pay) in this life but will be more greatly rewarded for our efforts in the life hereafter. God willing."

As in any religion, particularly Islam, bribery and greed for example, are strongly condemned and considered threats to social and economic justice (Ali, 2005). Chief Farid further explained how religious values not only influenced his attitude to his work but also generated in him a positive attitude to life in general:

"I feel satisfied with whatever I get and am therefore comfortable and happy with the work I am doing. The religious values inculcated in me as a child have resulted in me being free from the negative attitudes of greediness, hatred, or whatsoever. Everybody has to avoid such attitudes. This is what my religion has taught me."

The solidarity and unity among different faiths seen in the research context, suggests that religion is not a barrier and constraint to building the so-called '1Malaysia', a new vision introduced by Malaysia's sixth Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. The uniqueness of people and workers in the state of Sabah is their ability to tolerate the many different cultures and religions among them. This can be seen in the comments of Madam Valerie, a female Superintendent Officer with 16 years of service, who indicated that she had learned positive values from other religions as well as Christianity:

"I've been influenced not only by Christianity but also by the positive values and teachings espoused by other faiths. Why do I feel I should display a responsible attitude in my job? Because I've learnt that this is what is expected of me. I am not only answerable to my superiors for what I do, but also, more importantly, answerable to

God for the way I conduct myself both in my work and non-work life. Life is a learning process; we do not stop learning until the day we die. That's one of the positive elements I've gained through Islamic teaching. Also in Christianity we are taught to give and take, to be tolerant of others and to show a self-sacrificing spirit, like Jesus when he gave his life on our behalf."

Religious values were also found to influence and inform how workers should manage their non-work life spheres. Although work commitment was viewed as important, research participants still indicated that they believed the non-work domain should not be neglected. One had a duty to look after family members because this was required by God. Tuan Talib, Muslim, a Superintendent Officer in Custco, married with a grown up child, said:

"If we work we shouldn't work so much that we forget our family. Work/non-work integration is also about our relationship with the Almighty and our relationship with other human beings. We have a responsibility to work well and also a responsibility to other people. We cannot be careless and forget our responsibilities. There are people who proudly boast they are able to work around the clock, but they neglect their families."

It is evident that religious values not just informed workers how to manage their work life but also their non-work life. Accordingly, the religious teachings and requirements of their religion had become a 'way of life' or 'lifestyle' to workers. Religion was found to govern every aspect of workers' lives: their public life in the workplace and their private life at home. In other words, their religious beliefs and practices were uppermost in their minds in whatever situation they found themselves. Chief Amir, Muslim, Custco Senior Officer, demonstrated that he integrated the requirements of his religion with his working life when he referred to the Muslim mandatory daily prayer five times a day:

"I have always been careful when I am working not to miss one of my prayers. If I did I would feel very uncomfortable doing my job. I am used to the working situation and ensure that both work and religious requirements are integrated."

Madam Valerie, Christian, Superintendent Officer with Custco, married with teenage children and expecting a newborn baby, indicated that she viewed her family sphere as more important than her work sphere since she viewed it as an obligation entrusted to him by God to do the best for her family (Stivens, 2006):

"My priority is my family, because even if there is an emergency at work, somebody can cover for me. But why my family first? Because no matter how deeply I love my work, unless personal/family matters are settled, I won't have 'peace of mind' and won't be able to concentrate on my work. I am ambitious in my work life because I want to be able to provide my children with a good education to improve themselves. In Christianity, we are taught that we have a duty of care and responsibility to our children. We must do the best for them. I cannot neglect my responsibilities towards my children especially my teenage children in this challenging world. They need guidance more than ever with all the temptations that surround them."

To be able to fulfil her work responsibilities, Madam Valerie's comments show that fulfilment of her family roles as a mother was important to achieve this. Thus, harmony between her work/non-work spheres was essential. Tuan Talib, a male Muslim, and a Superintendent Officer, also considered his family responsibilities far more important than his work responsibilities:

"My family is my responsibility and my priority. It is a far more important 'amanah' (obligation) and responsibility than my accountability to my work superior. My work situation can change, I may not have any work or suddenly become unemployed whereas my obligation towards my family will still need to be continued."

The evidences shown that religious beliefs and cultural values were found to significantly informed workers how to manage and be committed towards both their work and non-work life lives. Religious values and cultural values were not just emphasised workers' responsibility to their work but also their family and helped them to manage their lives so that family members and other non-work life aspects were not neglected thus achieving harmony between work and non-work lives. Workers were encouraged to give their full commitment to their non-work responsibilities as well as emphasised the importance of viewing their performance of their work as a form of worship to their God.

7.4.2. The Influence of Cultural Values on Employees' Attitudes Towards Work and Non-Work Lives

Other elements found to influence workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work spheres were cultural values. It is important to note that the relationship between economic motivation and family responsibility and work/non-work commitment was crucial as the following section will show.

The 'power of money' influenced the attitude to work commitment. In the literature, Burgess (1997) and Schor (1992) contend that economic motivation is the primary reason why workers in the West work long hours. The income earned from working life was essential to support family members and fulfil family responsibilities as shown in the comments from Ramlee, an Officer, married with young children, revealed the importance of earning an income to provide for his family:

"My family don't have anyone but me to support them financially. Thus, my family comes first as long as my work runs smoothly."

The comment below from Awang, an Officer, single, shows the important role the need for money played in the way workers managed their work life, especially when they played a caring role in providing for immediate family members:

"As I'm single I handle everything on my own and work to support myself. However, I also help my parents by sending them a monthly remittance. As such, work is my priority as without work I cannot support or help my family."

For some workers, economic needs were also fulfilled through choice of working pattern and working hours. For example, Kyle, 27 years old, an Officer and single, indicated that he preferred working a shift pattern because the probability of working extra hours was high, enabling him to earn extra money. He said, *"I prefer to work shifts as I can do overtime and gain an extra income."* However, the purpose of Kyle working extra hours was to enable him to look after his parents as they grew older. The

breadwinner ideology in Malaysian society was demonstrated to be based on the economic support of the nuclear family as well as to the wider extended family. This can be seen when the breadwinner ideology not only considered as an obligation for married workers but also a resource used by single workers for their parents and siblings through monthly remittance. In Malaysia, the economic support for the extended family was also reported to be an important feature for workers' commitment to work.

In a society where the family and the institution of marriage are important, strengthening the cultural tradition that emphasises the value of family responsibility is vital. The emphasis on caring for and looking after parents and showing respect to them was a norm and tradition practised in the research context, as reflected by Kyle, who stated that he had a responsibility to help his parents and, at the same time, return the kindness they had shown to him:

"It is time for me to pay my parents back for all they have done for me. They have raised me and now it is my turn to look after them as they grow older."

Reciprocal relationships closely related to family responsibility was strongly upheld in Malaysian society. While caring for and showing respect to parents were important, so too was 'paying them back' for all they had done in the past.

Not only did religious values inform how workers manage their work/non-work lives, but also cultural values relating to family responsibility and reciprocal relations to look after the 'water face'[25] of the family. To maintain a good 'water face', it is essential for the individual to keep up good works and deeds in their work and non-work lives. Sam, an Officer, with a Bajau ethnic background, one of the native ethnic groups in Sabah, indicated that the values inculcated in him as a child based on his ethnic background had remained with him throughout his entire life. He said:

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[25] 'Water face' in the research context means maintaining a good reputation or image.

"Psychologically speaking, my upbringing has nurtured my personality. My ethnic background and my family encouraged me to take pride in myself and what I do. This means I seek to continually produce good work and deeds in order to maintain the good 'water face' of myself and my family."

This is supported by Madam Melly, 46 years old with 22 years of service with Custco and a female Superintendent Officer at the Airport Unit, married with four children:

"… all the work discipline and the way I work come from my innerself and nothing to do with my ethnic background or my religion. It is more to the upbringing values that encouraged me to love my family. The sense of togetherness with the family really influenced what I think, what I do and my opinions."

This research revealed that it was customary for workers to ensure that societal culture with its good values was practised, not just for the individual's good but for the betterment of the family, extended family and the society at large. In turn, the ties that linked individuals to their employing organisations and their family members and the society at large were strengthened and remained intact. Thus, it is evident that religious and cultural values influenced Custco's employees' attitudes towards their dual commitments to both work and non-work responsibilities. Having examined the role religious affiliation, social and cultural values play in explaining workers' attitudes towards the work/non-work spheres, the next section will focus on workers' work/non-work patterns.

7.5 MANAGING WORK AND NON-WORK LIFE

This section is specifically aims to examine how the workers in Custco patterned their work and non-working lives and how supports and organisational level influences can influence these different approaches. Work/non-work integration is perceived as "individuals 'successfully' segmenting or integrating 'life' and work so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less strain or stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands" (Blunsdon *et al*., 2006:2). The variation of

'individuals successfully segmenting or integrating' work/non-work life, therefore, can result people achieve partial to full satisfaction, and segmented to conflictual relations of their work/non-work lives. Thus, the variations of work/non-work integration are best viewed as a continuum. This section will discuss this continuum based on range of work/non-work patterns found in this study namely: work/non-work integration, work/non-work conflict and alternation to work/non-work life.

7.5.1 Work/Non-Work Integration

In Custco, social support i.e. from spouse and parents were found to help workers cope with the pressures of their work demand, thereby enabling them to partially integrate their work and non-work responsibilities without distraction. Sam, an officer with 13 years of service and based in the Intelligence Unit, married with five young children, stated:

"Both work and non-work responsibilities are my priority. Working is enjoyable so does family life. I do cook for my family and sometimes my wife also helps me out for my work. Thus, I gain satisfaction from both domains."

Meanwhile, juggling long and inconsistent working hours and experiencing work intensification in the Marine Prevention Unit and being a father of a new born baby was not easy for Mohad. However, social support he received from his mother ensured his new born baby and his wife who was in confinement were looked after and the household chores were done while he was working. Mohad, a male officer for 28 years, stated:

"The seven days paternity leave was not sufficient. Fortunately, my mother helps me to look after my baby and my wife. Thank God!"

Furthermore, this study found that the structural context of paid labour such as terms and conditions of employment i.e. flexi-time, was found to create an integrated work/non-work life. This was pointed out by Chief Farid, single who worked in the Export and Import Unit with 24 years of service,

"The flexi hours enable me to plan my time ahead, to strategise my work and arrange my non-working life. I choose to start work at 7.30 a.m. to avoid the traffic as I live a long way from my workplace. I don't have a problem with starting work early. I can arrive in relative comfort as I haven't had to cope with traffic jams on the way. I am less stressed and ready to do the job. Working flexi hours allows me to arrive at work and to be at home at a time of my own choosing. It reduces my stress level and allows me to plan my time according to my own needs."

The ability to select their staggered start and finish working hours implies that workers have some control over their jobs and their work time. A flexible start and finish time offers many benefits to workers like Chief Farid who lived far away from his work place. It not only enabled him to adjust his travel time to suit his own needs but also reduced his stress level as he travelled to work when there was less traffic on the roads.

The evidences demonstrated that work/non-work integration experienced by employees was due to range of supports available, such as organisational supports i.e. flexitime working practices; as well as supports from family and spouse. Apart from the integration of work/non-work life, workers in Custco also found to experience work/non-work conflict due to insufficient support received by certain group of workers. Thus, it is the focus of the next section.

7.5.2 Work/Non-Work Conflict

In their study, Erickson *et al*., (2010) found conflict occurred when workers' work demands and non-work responsibilities clashed. This was the case for workers with young children who received no support to cope with the conflict. When the nature of their work requires workers to work long hours yet the necessary work/non-work provisions are not offered to support this, this can lead to conflict between the spheres of work and non-work activity. A combination of time-based and strain-based conflict in managing work/non-work life spheres was found in Custco. The absence of on-site crèche provision and other social support from e.g. a full-time paid helper or nanny (not everyone who worked fulltime could afford a paid helper), spouse, other family

member, contributed to conflict between work/non-work life demands. For example, as a high ranking officer, Madam Mary, a Custco Superintendent Officer in the Screening Baggage Section in the Airport Unit, married with three younger children aged eight years to eight months old, had to do two shifts that involved a morning shift from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and an afternoon shift from 1.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. every Monday to Friday alternately with her colleague. Additionally, both she and her colleague had to do the overtime roster shift over the weekend. Since they were the only two superintendent officers, one had to do all the shifts if the other was on leave. Over the weekend, one of these two officers needed to be in charge and to work a shift of 14 continuous hours. Consequently, Madam Mary's non-work life was almost non-existent. She experienced difficulty in integrating her work/non-work life spheres despite having a maid. The encroachment of long working hours on Madam Mary's non-work life was vividly described by her:

"Practically, my working hours are not suitable for me as I have a baby aged eight months. I work everyday from Monday to Friday, and also over the weekend. So time spent with my family is little. That's why sometimes I don't go to work on Saturday and cannot claim overtime pay. It is also tiring. When I work from 8.00 a.m. till 10.00 p.m. straight and my husband who works for a private company has to go out, I have to find someone to look after my children (as my maid only works half a day), including my baby. I have to pick up my older children from school, take them back to the house, leave them with the child minder and then return to work. It's so tiring, working from morning until evening. When I get back home, I can feel that my little baby is sulking and sad, and sometimes my other children have already gone to bed so I don't see them."

Hence, she contended that organisational provision to support work/non-work integration, such as an on-site crèche, must be provided despite operational difficulties. She said:

"An on-site crèche is needed but this organisation has so many departments scattered everywhere, hence the lack of a crèche facility."

The most common source of support at work originates from supervisors, co-workers and organisational policies (Md-Sidin et al., 2010). Organisational social support is

considered an essential resource or coping mechanism since it is able to reduce the negative effects of stressors and work/non-work conflict. Thus, a supportive superior is deemed needed to enhance workers' work/non-work integration. However, this is not happened to Chief Bernard, 43 years old, a male Custco Officer with 15 years of service, as he found his unsupportive superior led his work/non-work life into conflict.

"I was once commanded by my superior to come to work on Good Friday but I refused as I already planned to go to the church. I didn't mean to disobey but it really put me in dilemma. The task was not urgent. It was just an ordinary operational duty and it was not even a raid operation. Consequently, I was transferred to another station. And definitely after that, my relationship with my immediate superior is not close as before."

An on-site crèche provides workers with the opportunity to have their children close to their job site and allows them to check on their children throughout the working day. Flexitime allows workers to schedule the start and finish of their work days and enables them to take care of family obligations and still be physically present in the workplace (Kossek, 2005). Thus, lack of structural factor such as, organisational support, e.g. lack of crèche facilities and understanding superior, leads to increasing work/non-work conflict among workers at the individual level.

Apart from work/non-work integration and work/non-work conflict, workers at the individual level also experienced alternation of work/non-work life as 'compensation to their lost time'. This will be discussed in the next section.

7.5.3 Alternation of Work/Non-Work Life

According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), depending on the work and its context, the logics of work and non-work can co-exist without interference, allowing workers a fairly frictionless alternation between the two distinct spheres. This section will discuss how workers successfully segmented their work and non-work lives and thus, alternate their work and non-work priorities as a reflection of life-cycle changes.

Alternation to Work Life

Clark (2000) notes that not everyone wants to integrate both work and family/personal life. This is the case of Custco whereby some workers seek work/non-work integration differently from other workers due to changes in their life-cycle. In Custco, the nature of work influenced the way workers manage their lives. This reflects how some workers in this male dominated organisation demonstrated their passion and commitment towards their jobs. Chief Aled, a Senior Officer, married with grown up children had been working 31 years for Custco, noted:

"I don't have problem with my job and family responsibilities as my wife is very supportive especially when it comes to work. Our job cannot be planned as it is merely based on information. It is such an enjoyable job as we will go around the places and everywhere and I am used to the nature of this job. This is my priority."

Similar satisfaction and prioritisation towards work life was also supported by his colleagues in the Prevention Unit:

"I don't feel stress although the workload is intensified and always under pressure. Working outside the typical office environment helps me to release tension as we can find new experience each time we go out to work. I love this job." (Chief Vince, a Senior Officer with 29 years of service).

"The working hour is inconsistent in this unit but it suits me as I used to this type of work. I like this job." (Jaideh, an Officer in Marine Prevention Unit, with 17 years of service)

"...although we are working (to look for any potential smuggling case), but at the same time it is kind a leisure to me, to sail around the sea." (Amzy, an Officer with 28 years of experiences in maritime work).

The quotes above demonstrate that when workers reached senior positions in their work lives and have been working for a lengthy period of time whereby their jobs required an urgent response, they were happy to prioritise work and thus, segment home.

Alternation to Non-Work Life

Workers who had experienced work creep due to work intensification and the nature of their job vocation and had put family life aside, particularly when their children were young, were now found to be focusing more on non-work responsibilities due to rearrangement at work. Such workers were enjoying the change in their prioritisation and spending more time with their family members.

Tuan Ashley, an Assistant Director in the Import/Export Unit, showed a tendency to prioritise and increase family commitment, as soon as the opportunity arose to do so. Due to the reactive nature of tasks to protect citizens from criminal activities, and long working hours, most workers in certain departments in Custco, for example, the Preventive Unit, Intelligence Unit and those who worked 'on-call duty' were found to prioritise their non-work life as soon as they transferred to 'less hectic' departments and when their children were all grown up. The nature of the work carried out in Custco demanded rigorous segmentation as a standard operating procedure in order to increase efficiency, carry out raid operations when required, and act immediately on information received. Most workers in Custco who worked shift and inconsistent hours were found to more rigidly segment their work/non-work spheres than those who worked flexi and set working hours. The impact of different work patterns on non-work life was vividly portrayed by Tuan Ashley, when he said:

"Previously, when I was attached to the Prevention department, there was a conflict between my work and non-work life. I didn't have time for my family as I worked 24 hours a day. During that time, my children didn't know their father; in fact, at one point, my son complained and said to me, 'from the time I was in Year 1 until high school, or even on Father's Day or when I was having an exam, you never took a day off for me.' When I worked in the Prevention Unit, I had no time for my wife or children. Only my wife was committed to parenting. But now, the scenario has changed.

Not only are my children now grown up, I have transferred to the Import/Export unit and work flexi hours from 8.00 am to 5.00 p.m. I spend more time with the family, I go jogging and we go on family outings together. Since I was transferred to this unit, I can plan my holiday with my family. That is the advantage of working here. When I come to work, I'm in a good mood. I'm not stressed and my work flows more smoothly. For some people, if they have a problem at home, it affects their work performance. Working in this scenario, in this unit, I feel less burdened and less stressful and I'm more comfortable to be around."

This was supported by Madam Melly, Custco Superitendent Officer with 22 years of service:

"It was stressful when I was assigned to the Preventive Operational Unit before, as the workload was so intensified and the working hour was longer. I had no time for myself and my family especially my four little kids. Now, not only my children are grown up but since I attached here in the Airport Unit, I can spend more time with them. I gain satisfaction from my non-working life - to be with my children as they are valuable assets. If the children were neglected and don't become a good citizen, they can be a liability to the parents as well as to the nation."

Workers with different job vocations and with grown up children exhibited different ways of managing their work-life spheres. For some workers, having grown up children meant they could concentrate more on their work responsibilities than when their children were younger. They could now make up for 'lost time' and devote far more effort to their work sphere. The nature of work also influenced workers prioritisation and passion to work particularly when they reached senior positions in their work. On the other hand, some workers in Custco for example, found their work life far less demanding when their children were grown up. For such workers, it was as though they were discovering a 'lost life' and prioritising family life over paid work was more meaningful and rewarding.

In Custco, a male dominated workforce where many staff worked 'on demand' and 'on call' and with inconsistent working hours, it is obvious that these types of workers sought work/non-work integration differently – that is successfully segmenting and integrating work/non-work life so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands

(Blunsdon *et al*., 2006:2). The evidence demonstrated that there were varieties of work/non-work integration experienced by employees. It was due to different factors – the nature of work demand, the organisation of working time and range of supports available, such as organisational supports i.e. flexitime working practices; as well as supports from family and spouse. The evidence demonstrated that the type of work/non-work integration found in Custco was predominantly influenced by work demand and the organisation of working time. As such, these influences have critical implications for workers' commitment to work, since performance of work is viewed as a vocation. This has also created a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context as a result of the influence of religious values on work norms and values. Job obligation in Custco, for example, was due to the nature of the job tasks performed in that organisation, i.e. their function was to protect citizens from harmful criminal activities. Hence, this shows that it is best to consider managing work/non-work integration on a continuum whereby some employees achieved partial to full integration, conflictual work/non-work relations as well as successfully segmenting or integrating their work/non-work lives.

7.6 CONCLUSION

Custco's management viewed the relationship between work and non-work as an important workplace agenda and placed emphasis on spiritual matters and family welfare. As such, Custco was perceived as a good employer by CUSTWU, Custco Workers' Union, as many work/non-work arrangements had been implemented before the union needed to negotiate with management to get them. Given that certain jobs in Custco required high work demands, management took care of workers' work and non-work spheres providing and implementing work/non-work arrangements. This suggests that Custco's approach to work and non-work was progressive compared to the other cases. This can be seen from various work/non-work arrangements provided both at the workplace and workers' housing area. However, the nature of most jobs and under-staffing in Custco contributed to workers' work intensification and working long hours and restrained management's ability to enhance worker's work/non-work integration.

Despite the work demand that required workers to 'stay alert' and 'always be ready to work', some workers found their work to be stimulating and enjoyable. This suggests that due to work demand at the meso level, workers in Custco had a strong work ethic and viewed their job as a vocation. These factors contributed to the explanation of the existence of varieties of work/non-work integration patterns experienced by employees who were influenced by different factors – the nature of work demand, the organisation of working time and range of supports available, such as organisational supports i.e. flexitime working practices; as well as supports from family and spouse.

The variation of workers' work/non-work integration can be classified into three patterns namely: work/non-work integration; work/non-work conflict and; alternation of work/non-work life. These variations of 'individuals successfully segmenting or integrating' work/non-work life, therefore, can result people achieve partial to full satisfaction, and segmented to conflictual relations of their work/non-work lives. Firstly, the social support i.e. from spouse and parents were found to help workers to integrate their work/non-work lives – some achieved partial and others full integration. Additionally, work/non-work conflict also occurred in Custco when workers found their work demands and non-work responsibilities clashed and workers found it difficult to handle both at the same time. This happened particularly to workers with young children who received no support to cope with the conflict. A combination of time-based and strain-based conflict in managing work-life spheres was found in Custco. The absence of on-site crèche provision and other social support from e.g. a full-time paid helper or nanny (not everyone who worked fulltime could afford a paid helper), spouse, other family member, as well as supportive superior, contributed to conflict between work/non-work life demands. Finally, this study found that workers integrated the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. Some workers when they reached senior positions in their work lives and have been working for a lengthy period of time whereby their jobs required an urgent response, they were happy to prioritise work and thus, segment home. On the other hand, some workers in certain departments in Custco, for example, the Preventive Unit, Intelligence Unit and those who worked 'on-call duty', were found to prioritise their

non-work life as soon as they transferred to 'less hectic' departments and when their children were all grown up and hence, segmented work. Supporting findings from the West (Bond *et al.*, 2005; Moen *et al.*, 2000; Erickson *et al.*, 2010), the so-called 'post-conflict' workers in Custco show a tendency to seek a more approach to non-work lives to 'compensate their lost time' when the children were young.

Evidence also indicated the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards their dual commitments to their work/non-work responsibilities. Moreover, for some workers, religion was not viewed as a barrier to build 'IMalaysia' as ability to tolerate the many different cultures within the workplace helped to enhance harmonious working environment. Additionally, values of breadwinner ideology, family responsibility and upbringing values were found influenced workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work integration. The breadwinner ideology was an important feature of the social culture and underpinned economic motivation. It was the impetus for workers to provide financial security to immediate and extended family members, not only those workers who had large families (immediate or extended) but also single and married workers. Moreover, workers needed to work to earn money to support themselves and family members and this explained why workers were willing to work long hours.

The next chapter will analyse an overview of the thesis by discussing the findings obtained from the multi-level examination of work/non-work life in a Malaysian context.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ANALYSING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE IN THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT: A DISCUSSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The qualitative inquiry methodology is adopted in this study to examine how Malaysian public sector employees' approach their work and non-work lives. Multi-level analysis was conducted focused on examining the interaction between the macro level (role of the State), meso level (the role of the organisation and union), and micro level influences (such as the individual's religious and cultural values) and how, in turn, these factors affect the ways in which employees organise their work and non-working lives. A multi-level perspective demonstrates how structural factors are significant when examining how actors are either enabled or constrained in their ability to manage the relationship between their work and non-work domains. This chapter will discuss the key findings from across the three organisations studied.

8.2 WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MACRO LEVEL

The initial implementation of work/non-work arrangements in the Malaysian public sector was based on the Government's 'Family-First campaign' launched in 2003. The State, as the largest employer in the country, pioneered work/non-work arrangements – with the aim of encouraging private sector organisations to adopt these practices. Despite the Government's initiatives work and non-work arrangements in Malaysia are still at an early stage of development while the level of awareness amongst managers in organisations and unions officials was found to be partial and rudimentary. Further, as the work/non-work management field is an under-researched area in Malaysia, it is the aim of this study to provide better understanding of how Malaysian public sector employees organise their work and non-work lives.

The State as a policy maker is the main provider of official work/non-work arrangements for public sector workers. While the initial work/non-work provisions by the Malaysian Government were considered less generous as compared to those in some other countries (i.e. Sweden and Norway), the Malaysian Government has since made several improvements in order to fulfil workers' needs and desires to better manage their work/non-work spheres. This includes enhancement of maternity leave provisions from 42 days, as provided before the year 1998, to 90 days (announced under Budget 2011), which allows working mothers more time to recover and to breastfeed their infants after giving birth and before returning to work. Further, the extension of paternity leave from three days to seven days indicates the Government's awareness of working fathers' need to integrate their work and non-work responsibilities. In addition, the increase in parental leave by up to five years is also indicative of the Government's recognition and support of the importance of parenting responsibilities among its working citizens. The Malaysian Government's efforts to strengthen and improve workers' quality of life is also evident with the move to provide annual free air tickets for all workers and their immediate families to visit their hometown. This is aimed specifically at those posted to regions far from their hometown (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah or Sarawak). Before 2008, this provision was only available once every two years. The decision to now provide this incentive on an annual basis is an indication of the Government's recognition of the importance of the 'balik kampung' tradition among Malaysians, i.e. the tradition of visiting one's hometown and family members. The Government's support of this tradition is to enable workers who might be working away from their families to maintain a close relationship with them, to remind them of the importance of the family institution, and to enhance their sense of belonging. In other words, this provision will remind workers of their obligations towards their family as well as their responsibilities at work.

It is evident that the role of the State is important not just in providing work/non-work leave provisions such as maternity, paternity and parental leave, but also in implementing and supporting work practices and arrangements i.e. flexitime and on-site crèches. These arrangements were found to be beneficial, particularly for workers with

younger children, in integrating their work/non-work lives. This study found that not having institutional, familial and communal supports and the absence of on-site crèche, elderly-care leave and national working time directives resulted in work/non-work conflict.

In Malaysian society, the family institution and family responsibilities are strongly upheld. The most widely applied work/non-work policies in Malaysian public sector organisations are those related to maternity leave, parental leave, and flexitime arrangements – which are particularly useful for 'married employees with children' as compared to other groups of employees. The priorities of the State in introducing and providing these work/non-work arrangements suggest that the Government is trying to attract and increase female participation in the labour market, particularly in the public sector. This implies that the State's work/non-work provisions were gender biased and that this strategy was aimed to encourage women with children to continue working or to return to work after childbirth. The Government's over-emphasis on attracting and retaining working mothers has resulted in an imbalance in provisions for other groups of workers. For example, apart from the 'annual *balik kampung* package', there are no other work/non-work arrangements provided for employees with parent and/or sibling care commitments. Furthermore, provisions for elder care referral services or leave to provide elder care are neglected in the national agenda. The State, as a policy maker, needs to ensure that all groups of workers, regardless of gender or status, are catered for when it comes to enhancing and implementing work/non-work arrangements.

8.3 WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MESO LEVEL

8.3.1 Work/Non-Work Approaches

This section will assess approaches to work/non-work issues in the three organisational cases from the management and union's perspectives. In addition to the statutory provision of work and non-work arrangement as outlined by the Government, public sector organisations are able to implement additional work/non-work arrangements. In

some cases, this means that they offer extra provisions for employees to aid the management of employees' work and non-work lives. These arrangements vary from one organisation to another depending on the nature and the background of the organisation (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Work/Non-Work Provisions by Organisations

WORK/NON-WORK PROVISIONS UNDER ORGANISATIONAL DISCRETION	AVAILABILITY IN THE CASE STUDIES		
	UNICO	HOSPICO	CUSTCO
Crèche	√[+]	-	√[++]
Fitness centre / sports facilities	√	-	√
Fitness-related activities	√	√	√
Prayer room/ Mosque	√	√	√
Religious-related activities	√	√	√
Adjustable shift working hour*	√	√	√

Flexitime:
   Staggered start and finish time*
   Flexible working time*
	√	√	√

Early finish time in the month of Ramadan for Muslim married women**	√	√	√
Workers' housing quarters	-	√[°]	√[°°]
Family involvement related activities	√	√	√

Notes:
[+] not located on the site
[++] located at workers' housing area
* applicable only to certain occupations / jobs
** not applicable to those who work shift hours
° limited unit and only to certain medical officers and/or single clinical workers
°° limited unit

As illustrated in Table 8.1, although the State encourages all Government departments to provide an on-site crèche, a number of factors impede the effective implementation of an on-site crèche. In Unico and Custco, for example, although crèches are provided for their workers, they are not located within the working premises. In Unico, the location is not the only issue, the crèche is run by Unico's Female Staff and Wives Association instead of directly under the Human Resource Department. In the case of Custco, the crèche is located at the housing quarters rather than at the workplace because Custco's departments are scattered around the region and it is impossible to

provide an on-site crèche in each department. Moreover, as Custco is dominated by male workers, an on-site crèche was not raised as a priority for employees or the union. Meanwhile, Hospico does not provide a crèche due to lack of space within the working area although female workers dominated. Hence, most of workers in the three cases rely on a private crèche or other supportive parties, such as spouse, parents, relatives or neighbours to mind their children.

To promote wellness and wellbeing, Unico and Custco have provided fitness centres as well as sport and fitness-related activities. Such facilities are important due to the aim of the organisation to produce healthy citizens who are expected to work in a healthy, happy and productive way. In Hospico, although there was no fitness centre provided, fitness-related activities were arranged for workers such as an obesity clinic, exercise-based dance, and so forth to help workers enjoy their non-working sphere, particularly after long tiring working hours or during the lunch break. It seems that all the three cases focused on sports and recreational facilities as the prime provision to enhance work/non-work life.

Each organisation had its own approach to managing human resources. Management in Unico, for example, emphasised the provision of a conducive workplace in order to produce happy workers who, in turn, would be more productive. Although the HR manager played an important role in the decision to promote and enhance work/non-work arrangements, management claimed there was a limitation as the standard of work/non-work enhancement came from the government. Despite the standard provisions by the state, the work/non-work arrangements provided in Unico were found to be more on recreational basis in line with Unico motto 'healthy workers, happy workers'. This was also an agenda pursued by UNTES, Unico union-related body. UNTES highlighted the importance of having recreational facilities to enable workers to spend time relaxing and socialising with other workers after working hours. This demonstrates the need to engender a team spirit as an important agenda as the nature of work in Unico is individualistic. Additionally, UNTES is supposedly responsible for enhancing workers' quality of work/non-work lives. However, in the research context,

UNTES' role in promoting the enhancement of work/non-work life agenda is questionable. Despite UNTES' success in getting flexitime formally endorsed in January 2009, UNTES' lack of academics' collective power did not get the punch card system rescinded, implying that its influence over the implementation of work/non-work arrangements is limited and thus leaving its role as a 'watchdog' questionable.

Hospico's management, on the other hand, viewed the separation of work and non-work spheres as necessary due to the nature of work in Hospico, specifically the emergency medical care. Despite the Government 'Family-First' campaign, Hospico inculcated a 'work-first' culture through its motto 'Ready for Disaster'. Additionally, HOCWU, the Hospico union, still pursued 'basic' demands at work and as such, the importance of work/non-work arrangements was not their priority. This showed that management's awareness of work/non-work life issues and HOCWU's role in developing work/non-work policies were relatively weak. Hence, the work/non-work provisions provided were not sufficient to fulfill workers' work/non-work needs especially those who need them most i.e. workers with young children who required to work night shifts.

In contrast, Custco's management viewed work/non-work issues as an important issue and placed an emphasis on spiritual matters and family welfare. Given that certain jobs in Custco required high work demands, management took care of workers' work and non-working spheres providing and implementing work/non-work arrangements. This reflecting an image of Custco as compliant to the Government's policy as various arrangements and activities related to work and non-work life were provided, not just for workers but also for their spouse and children. However, despite efforts to fulfill workers' needs in work and non-working responsibilities, restrictions on staffing level (in critical working area such as Prevention and Airport Units) leading to workers' work intensification resulted in management's role in enhancing worker's work/non-work integration being limited. However, compared with management at Unico and Hospico, Custco's HR manager is more enlightened on the need of workers' work/non-work integration. The evidence presented shows how management as a structural factor

can be both enabling as well as constraining in workers' efforts to integrate their work and non-work life. On the other hand, CUSTWU in Custco pursued housing as a priority. Although Custco provided housing for the workers, its availability was restricted. As Custco's motto is 'stay alert and always be ready to work', male workers were required to participate in emergency raid operations. To enable efficient raid operations, all workers were required to gather at Custco's academy located at the housing area, particularly during night time. Thus, staying within the housing area will be convenient for workers to prepare themselves for work as well as for their family if called for a raid operation, especially at a moment's notice. Thus, more houses are needed to cater for workers particularly those who involved in emergency raid operation.

As many work/non-work arrangements had been implemented by Custco before the union needed to negotiate with management to get them, CUSTWU did not need to expend extra effort to fight for workers' rights. However, as one of the most influential unions in Malaysia, there were two significant contributions of CUSTWU in work/non-work agenda namely: the ability to promote the issue of the extension of paternity leave from three days to seven days and bereavement leave for approval and implemented nationwide. This indicates CUSTWU's role in promoting work/non-work issue is relatively progressive as compared to the other two unions.

It is evident that although the Government as policy maker has introduced and promoted the idea of implementing work/non-work policies, the unions in this study, with the exception of CUSTWU, were found not to be proactive enough in negotiating the work/non-work agenda for workers. Trade unions' roles in the emergence and development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector are relatively suppressed by the government (Kuruvilla, 1996) and their efforts to help workers achieve better work/non-work integration are therefore restricted. However, such restriction was not the only reason why in this research trade unions, particularly UNTES and HOCWU, were found not to be dealing more successfully with the work/non-work agenda. Their low level of awareness of work/non-work issues was also

a contributing factor. Thus structural factors such as the failure of trade unions as workers' representatives to play their role efficiently and effectively can impede workers from integrating their work/non-work lives.

Additionally, despite most workers working longer hours in certain works, units and departments in the cases (see the details at 8.3.2 below), none of the three unions in the study has brought up such issue to the management – leaving it unsolved. In addition to management's unwillingness to resolve working long hour culture, the absence of a working time directive at the national level makes the problem even worse. Thus, to integrate both work and non-work life, support or appropriate provisions from an organisation are needed, as well as relevant national employment policies at the State level, such as the five day working week, flexitime as well as a national working time directive. This demonstrates that despite being progressive in introducing work/non-work agenda at work, unions' role in enhancing the implementation of better work/non-work integration is still limited.

8.3.2 The Organisational Factors

The ability to manage work/non-work interactions is crucially influenced by the availability or absence of provisions at work. Hence, organisational factors are important to ensure the integration of workers' work/non-work lives. These factors include how working time is organised, and the way in which organisational cultures influence the potential take-up of these policies. In the research context, it is evident that the three organisational cases provide some important contextual dimensions whereby the organisation of working time contributed most to workers working long hours. The reason why workers worked long hours and experienced work intensification was due to the nature of work demands – reactive and unpredictable time demand; under-staffing; as well as different management approaches to working time.

The evidence from the cases shows that the nature of work demand at the organisational level meant that working time was often reactive and unpredictable to different extents in all three cases. For instance, Hospico's reactive nature of dealing with emergencies, i.e. on-call duty and adjustable shift hours, contributed to workers' irregular and inconsistent working hours. Since it operates on a 24 hour basis, most clinical workers and specialists in Hospico work on the basis of 'ready for disaster'. This implies workers are required to be ready to work at any time. Since workers are required to perform their duties whenever called upon to do so, working life and non-working life are predominantly influenced by the nature of the job. Dealing with life or death situations requires high commitment, dedication, and personal sacrifice and led to many employees working excessive hours.

Similar patterns occurred amongst workers in Preventive and Airport units at Custco, where the work demand requiring workers to 'stay alert' and 'always be ready to work' contributed to workers' irregular, inconsistent and long working hours. Since the ultimate objective of Custco is to prevent smuggling as well as accumulate revenue, commitment, dedication and attention to the work are required from workers. Employees work shifts and are also on-call and must be ready to work any time during the day and night. The demands on shift workers are higher than those on workers who need only to go to work at fixed regular hours. Thus, inconsistent and prolonged working hours influence the way people manage their work and non-work domains.

Meanwhile, the evidence from Unico demonstrates that as a University, at certain times of the year, working time can be unpredictable when academics have to assess student performance and undertake research. Although the flexibility given to academics gave them the freedom to manage their work life spheres in many different ways, they could take work home to complete which meant they could spend more time with their families. Additionally, apart from teaching and other core-business tasks required by the management, some workers also had other work demands such as administration. Such multi-tasking requires a high commitment from workers. As well as introducing flexi-time to assist academics' work/non-work integration, Unico had also implemented

a monitoring system which surveys the working time of teaching staff. This suggested a low level of trust in academics' and showed management was the most powerful party in the employment relationship. The empirical evidence from Unico suggests that the policy of flexitime and a punch card system is contradictory. Whilst flexitime allows academics some flexibility to control their work and non-work life, on the other hand, such flexibility has been restrained by enforcement of the punch card system. The introduction of a system to monitor working time with a flexi-time system resulted in restricted flexibility.

Another reason why workers worked long hours and experienced work intensification was due to under-staffing. The findings from Hospico and Custco demonstrate that restrictions on staffing levels lead to work intensification which resulted in most workers working long hours. Consequently, workers were found to be putting aside their personal interests and working altruistically for the public good. In the West, holiday entitlement is generally regarded as a core element of a person's terms and conditions of employment and workers usually feel able to take contractual leave available to them (Coussey, 2000). Like other public sector organisations in Malaysia, Custco and Hospico also generally offered workers 30 days annual paid leave. Under-staffing and work intensification, however, had created circumstances where many workers were regarded as 'irreplaceable' and in some departments staff were prevented from taking leave in one go.

Job duties associated with teaching and research as well as flexible working hours contributed to academics working longer hours, particularly during certain periods, i.e. marking time and research projects. Additionally, Unico management attempted to control employees' working time. The research found that working practices in Unico, for example the working demand and the implementation of the punch card system, shape workers' work/non-work lives. Although the case studies of Hospico and Custco demonstrated how under-staffing led to work intensification, in the case of Unico, the explanation for long work hours was not necessarily increased workload. It was managerial power over workers that gave them limited control over their working time.

The evidence provided in the research not only suggests that work practices can influence workers' work/non-work lives, but it was also indicated that workers' work/non-work lives can also be affected by organisational characteristics.

8.3.3 The Role of Religion and Culture

This section will discuss the influences of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards work and non-work responsibilities. Despite the long hours culture, workers' attitudes demonstrated a public sector work ethos which was influenced by religious and cultural values. The public-sector ethos in the West is defined as public servants dedicating themselves to 'altruistically work for the public good' (O'Toole, 1993:3). In Malaysia, however, the dedication to work is based on national policies. For example, the 'Inculcation of Islamic Values' initiative emphasises the core values that come from religious teachings, particularly Islam, and this study found workers tended to regard work as a vocation and their strong work ethic was significantly associated with the religious dimension. Their commitment to work and obligation to their employer were perceived as performing good deeds, being respectful, showing loyalty to their employer, part of their accountability to and worship of God, and obtaining the permanent reward of a place in heaven. Most participants had a strong work ethic which led them to view their work as a prioritisation and as a vocation. This ethic was significantly influenced by the religious dimension. The research findings indicated that most people demonstrated their attitudes towards commitment to work as a vocation and this had created a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context as a result of the influence of religious, social and cultural values. Religion also played an important role in influencing workers' conceptualisation of how to manage their work as well as workers' integration of work/non-work lives within lifestyle. Religious affiliation (regardless of religion) was seen as a 'catalyst' for workers to give wholehearted commitment to their work. Consistent with Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008)

and Tayeb (1997), this study found that religious affiliation encouraged workers to perceive a good work performance as akin to an act of worship to their God, not just Muslim workers but also Christian workers. This was because of the concept of 'amanah' when workers view themselves as being accountable to God for the performance of their work. Moreover, good productive works were perceived as a means to obtain life in the hereafter, thus managing work life in a positive way and showing commitment to the organisation were encouraged.

Further, workers needed to work to earn money to support themselves and family members and this explained why workers were willing to work long hours. The breadwinner ideology was an important feature of the culture and underpinned economic motivation. It was the impetus for workers to provide financial security to immediate and extended family members, not only those workers who had large families (immediate or extended) but also single and married workers. This indicates that emotional support and maintaining kinship ties were also significantly important to workers' attitudes towards work/non-work integration. In the West, the breadwinner ideology is associated with masculinity and used by men to improve wages in order to support the nuclear family and endorsed by unions which play an important role in promoting work/non-work integration within the economy (Heery, 2006; Ackers, 2003; Turnbull, 2003). In the research context, the breadwinner ideology was not limited to the nuclear family and to male workers only but also found to be an important feature of how women view their commitment to work to support their extended families. Factors other than economic motivation were also found to influence workers' attitudes to dedication to work. In this study, responsibility towards parents and siblings were also factors influencing their attitudes to be dedicated to work. However, the 'good values' infused from religious and cultural values were not just limited to how workers viewed their commitment to work, but also influenced workers' attitudes towards their non-work lives i.e. family responsibilities – nuclear and extended family and spiritual wellbeing. Despite workers' attitudes towards sole commitment to the work sphere, commitment to non-work roles and responsibilities i.e. family, extended family (parents and siblings) and spiritual obligations, inculcated by religious and cultural factors, were

not neglected. These reminded workers of their duty not to neglect/abandon their non-work duties. In other words, despite the pressure to separate work/non-work spheres imposed by organisational factors such as the nature of the job, understaffing and management control, workers' attitudes in prioritising their work/non-work spheres was moderated by religious and cultural values.

Religious affiliation and beliefs not only influenced workers' attitudes towards work/non-work responsibilities but also influenced their attitudes towards those to whom they were providing a public service. Moreover, religious affiliation and values were seen to support social and cultural values. For example, the custom of 'balik kampung' was widely practised by workers in the research context. Through such practice, supported by Government policy, workers were able to maintain ties of kinship and fulfil their filial duties to older family members and siblings. In the research context, workers whose lifestyle revolved around both work and non-work spheres tended to more successfully integrate the two spheres. The research context contributes to an understanding on how such integration was supported by cultural values and government policy. For example, the custom of '*balik kampung'* was encouraged by Government and established as a Government policy. The research findings from the three organisational cases also suggest that both male and female workers viewed their filial duties very seriously. The research findings also indicated that both male and female workers' attitudes were dedicated to their work due to organisational factors and also a strong sense of religious duty to fulfil their work responsibilities to the very highest standard. The evidence indicated the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work patterns, providing self-fulfilment in their work/non-work lives. It showed how love to God and family relationships remain within the organisational and occupational community whereby workers viewed the blurring of work and non-work as positive and beneficial. In turn, the ties that linked individuals to their employing organisations and their family members and the society at large were strengthened and remained intact.

The findings from this study show that, across the three organisational cases, religion and cultural values were seen to be important dimensions, a key finding from this

study. It is evident in the research context that workers' attitudes are deeply influenced by their religious believes whereby in Malaysian society both religious and cultural values place great emphasis on the importance of both work and non-work life as a dual responsibilities and obligations of the individual. In other words, in the Malaysian context, the societal importance placed on upholding loyalty to parents and employers ensures that the citizens do not neglect their family obligations or their responsibility to work. As such, religion and cultural values influence how Malaysians think and feel about their dual obligations to work and home. As religion and culture form a fundamental feature of Malaysians' value systems it gives added impetus to workers in their attempts to integrate work and home and not to neglect one sphere for the sake of the other. The equal importance placed on their dual obligations puts additional burden on Malaysian employees as compared to their Western counterparts.

8.4 MANAGING WORK/NON-WORK LIFE AT THE MICRO LEVEL

Work/non-work life approaches vary at the meso level because of the different organisational contexts. The nature of the relationship between the work and non-work spheres of employees also vary according to the strategies they adopt. This is also very much dependent upon the nature of their informal relationships such as having supportive colleagues and managers, their life-cycle position, the extent of work demands, and the degree of family support received. This section explores the variations and diversity across and within cases and how these variations in work/non-work integration can be best viewed as a continuum. Blunsdon *et al.* (2006:2) define work/non-work integration as "individuals 'successfully' segmenting or integrating 'life' and work so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less strain or stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands". Over and beyond this definition, in order to understand the relationships between work and non-work life, it is crucial to understand that variations in the workers' work/non-work integration modes in this research context can be best considered as a continuum.

9.4.1 Work/Non-Work Integration as a Continuum

Consideration of the management of work and non-work life as a continuum includes whether workers achieved partial or full integration, from segmented to conflictual and whether employees were satisfied or dissatisfied with the relationship between their work and non-work lives. The workers' capacity to integrate both spheres is dependent on their work position, life-cycle position, organisational support (both formal and informal), family help and paid support. By viewing work/non-work integration as a continuum, variations between workers can be identified – such as that some are more successful and satisfied in achieving integration than others. Hence, work/non-work integration can be best thought of as a 'continuum', rather than as an 'on' (present) or 'off' (absent) phenomenon. This is illustrated in Figure 8.1 below.

Figure 8.1: Work/non-work integration as a continuum
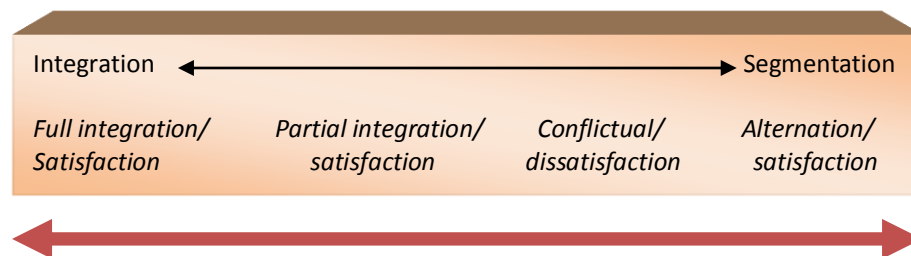
Full to Partial Work/Non-Work Integration

Evidence indicates that there are variations and diversity in the way workers' manage their work/non-work lives across the cases studied, as well as within each case. In Unico for example, despite management attempts to control working time and the resulting constraints on smooth integration of work and non-work spheres, some workers were able to achieve informal flexibility depending on the nature of their specific roles - leading to full satisfaction and integration. This is seen in the case of some academics in Unico, for example the case of Mike, an Anthropologist who found his job useful as he could bring his family to the field. Similarly, some employees such as Pharmacists in Hospico who do not face reactive demand on their job, also

experienced full satisfaction in integration of the two spheres as flexitime and other organisational work/non-work policies were helpful for integrating their work and non-work responsibilities. Similarly, Khalid, a single senior academic in Unico and Chief Farid, a single officer from Custco found that flexitime gave them more freedom to do what they wanted, indicating that they had control over their working time. It is evident that the nature of the workers' specific roles at work, being single and organisational flexi-time policies resulted in seven workers, across the organisational cases studied, achieving better integration than the others, where two of them were from Unico and four from Hospico and one from Custco.

The evidence indicates that the nature of the workers' work/non-work relationships varied according to the strategies they adopted. In some cases, respondents had supports in place to help cope with and develop strategies to deal with work intrusions on the other spheres of their life. These were in the form of informal flexibility provided by understanding managers at the organisational level, or a helpful spouse and family/extended family members and also includes paid support. The provision of flexible working arrangements, for example, enabled workers to have control over their working time. In the case of Unico, for example, despite the restrictive flexibility practices of the management, some workers were able to achieve flexibility depending on the nature of their jobs, and the support received from superiors as well as family and paid support. Although, as previously highlighted, the management operates a punch card system to monitor working time which can restrict flexibility, in some cases workers were able to negotiate a degree of informal flexibility through a supportive superior and colleagues. The privileges provided by the Government in the form of flexitime and leniency and understanding from immediate superiors/supervisors appear to have assisted workers in managing their work/non-work spheres, as in the case of Siti, an academic in Unico.

Similarly, as a primary source of support, family members also have a unique opportunity to provide both emotional support and instrumental support to the worker, outside the work environment. Despite juggling long and inconsistent working hours

and experiencing work intensification, support from parents for example, was found to help workers cope with the pressures of integrating work/non-work responsibilities. This was the case for Putih, an academic in Unico, Mohad in Custco and Dr. Hannah in Hospico, where the latter received social support i.e. from her parents, a 24 hour private crèche, a paid helper and relatives, in order to integrate her work/non-work responsibilities.

Support from a spouse was also found to be particularly important in helping workers to partially manage their work/non-work life spheres harmoniously. While several workers found working flexi-time useful and helpful for integrating their work and non-work lives, others found working on shifts to be accommodative, as with Joyce a Staff Nurse in Hospico who worked shift hours. This was even more so if they received support and assistance from their spouse. Spouses were found to be able to help workers cope with the pressures of integrating their work/non-work lives, thereby enabling them to work without distractions. Thus, an understanding family was essential as time spent with family members could be disrupted by work matters at any time. In this study 38 workers were found to have achieved partial integration leading to satisfaction, where 11 were from Unico and 12 and 15 from Hospico and Custco respectively.

Conflictual Work/Non-Work Life

In this study, apart from full to partial integration, some workers were also found to experience work/non-work conflict due to insufficient support. Work/non-work conflict tends to be associated more with workers with young children (Erickson *et al*., 2010; Ngah *et al.*, 2009; Bond, 2004) where workers with young children who struggled to integrate their work/non-work spheres and did not receive support were seen to be experiencing conflict. This is a result of the absence of organisational supports, such as an on-site crèche and superiors' support, as well as social support. Both an on-site crèche and support from the supervisor were found to be important in assisting workers to meet their caring roles and responsibilities at work. Immediate superiors/supervisors

played an important role in setting the overall tone and expectations of the workers who reported to them, in terms of the extent to which non-work demands would be permitted to influence the work sphere. This study found that supervisors and supportive work/non-work arrangements were especially important as conduits for satisfaction in workers' work/non-work integration.

In the case of Hospico and Custco, for example, conflict occurred when workers experienced a clash between their work demands and non-work responsibilities and found it difficult to handle both at the same time. When the nature of their work requires workers to work long hours while the necessary work/non-work provisions are not in place to support them, this can lead to conflict between the spheres of work and non-work activities. Due to the culture of long and inconsistent working hours in Hospico, for example, workers in certain departments had to take their children to the workplace especially when their spouse was also working at the same time, as seen in the case of John and Nora. The fact that workers had to take their children to their workplace shows that there was limited or no childcare facilities available to them and that the time they spent with their partners and children was fragmented. Md-Sidin *et al*. (2010) found that Malaysians do everything possible to ensure that work/non-work conflict did not impact on their non-work domain since the quality of their non-work life, particularly family relationships, was very important to them. However, it is evident that there were some workers who continually experienced conflict in endeavoring to integrate their work/non-work spheres. Thus, it is important for employing organisations to provide 24 hour childcare facilities to cater for those who need to work inconsistent hours or on night shifts.

It is also evident that work/non-work conflict was not just due to the absence of an on-site crèche but also a result of the absence of other social supports from for example, a full-time paid helper or nanny, spouse or, other family members. This was seen to occur in Custco particularly among workers with young children as although many workers are concerned with the need to integrate work/non-work life spheres they tend to have to spend more time at work than with their family or in pursuing personal

interests as for example in the case of Madam Mary. Madam Mary experienced difficulty in integrating her work/non-work life spheres despite having a maid, due to having to work long, inconsistent hours and her spouse having to work at the same time. A supportive superior is also considered an essential resource to reduce the negative effects of work/non-work conflict.

In contrast to the cases in Hospico and Custco where work/non-work conflicts were generally associated with workers with young children, this study found that in Unico, it was workers with parent/sibling care commitments who had difficulty in juggling work and home responsibilities. Without access to social and organisational supports such workers will continue to struggle to integrate their work/non-work lives and experience conflict between work and family responsibilities even if they are young and single as seen in the case of Ayu and Lilly. In a society where the family institution is deemed important, caring for parents and siblings is viewed desirable to maintain good relationships within the family unit. Thus, Unico needs not only to have suitable work/non-work policies in place, but also an underlying culture that assists workers to better integrate their paid work and private life responsibilities, without neglecting the needs of single workers with parent/sibling commitments.

It is evident that when high working time demand is accompanied by low work/non-work provisions within the organisation it leads to work/non-work conflict and dissatisfaction, particularly if workers do not have support in fulfilling their caring responsibilities, either from their spouse, extended family members, or from financial resources for a private crèche. A high degree of work/non-work conflict suggests that workers' work/non-work lives are not integrated. Accordingly, efforts must be made at the macro-, meso- and micro levels to improve workers' overall quality of life. If such integration is lacking, workers' work/non-work spheres will remain in conflict and this will not only be detrimental to workers' well-being but also impinge on productivity, at both the national and organisational levels.

Evidence in this study demonstrated that there are common characteristics in explaining work/non-work conflict such as an unsupportive working culture i.e. absence of on-site crèche, supportive superiors and colleagues; as well as the absence of familial and communal supports. It is also evident that work/non-work conflict can be experienced by all range of workers – women and men with young children as well as single workers with parental/sibling commitments. Thus, in order to reduce work/non-work conflict, the most common source of support needed at work is from supervisors, co-workers and organisational policies, as well as familial (spousal, family and extended family) and communal (private helper and neighbours) support.

Alternation of Work/Non-Work Life

Apart from full to partial integration of the work/non-work spheres and work/non-work conflict, workers at the individual level also experienced alternation of work/non-work life as 'compensation for their lost time' during the earlier stage of their life-cycle. It is evident from this study that there are variations in alternation to work/non-work life as workers tend to segment their work and non-work responsibilities according to life-cycle changes. In this study, it was found that when workers reached a certain stage of their life-cycle, such as when they no longer had any care commitments or when their children were grown up, despite there being less work/non-work conflict they did not show a tendency to seek a more integrated approach to work and non-work lives and instead showed preference for the alternation in work/non-work life. These were workers in the 'post-conflict' stage who had strong work ethics and thus prioritised their work responsibilities over their non-work responsibilities and appeared to gain more fulfilment from their work. This is seen in the case of 'post-conflict' workers such as Abu, Anita and Salim in Unico, as well as Sister Milla in Hospico, who were all found to prioritise work responsibilities over non-work responsibilities as 'compensation of their lost time' when their children were young. In addition, being established in their careers and having long years of service also contributed to workers prioritising and being passionate about their work. This is the case with Chief Aled, Chief Vince, Amzy and Jaideh in Custco. At the same time, workers without care

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commitments who had just started their careers also demonstrated prioritisation of work responsibilities and willingness to work long hours to reduce the work/non-work conflict of workers with family responsibilities. This is the case of Megan in Hospico.

On the other hand, however, some workers who experienced work creep due to work intensification and the nature of their job vocation, who had had to put family life aside, particularly when their children were young, were now found to focus more on their non-work responsibilities, due to re-arrangements at work. In Custco, for example, re-arrangement of work leading to workers being shifted from a hectic department i.e. Prevention Unit to a less hectic department i.e. Import and Export Unit, meant a change in their work demand from inconsistent working hours with heavy workload to flexible working hours and bearable work demand. These workers enjoyed the change in their prioritisation and took the opportunity to spend more time with their family members. This can be seen in the experiences of Tuan Ashley and Madam Melly.

The findings show that workers tend to prioritise their work responsibilities over their non-work responsibilities as 'compensation for their lost time of career' when their children were young and because of their long service. Additionally, it is also evident that workers prioritised their family life over their work commitments to 'compensate their lost time with the children', when their children were young. Further, it is also evident that these prioritisations were in part influenced by the re-arrangement of work responsibilities at the meso level, for example, as seen in the cases in Custco. Thus, it is evident that workers segmented and prioritised their work/non-work lives differently at different stages of their life-cycle whereby 14 workers were found to have alternated work/non-work priorities: four workers each in Unico, Hospico and Custco alternated to work lives while two workers in Custco alternated to their non-work lives. The evidence indicates that there are variations in alternation between work and non-work life across the life-cycle of the worker, a factor which has hitherto been ignored.

In this study it was found that when work demand was high or when workers had to work away from home, they found various ways of handling non-work responsibilities

leading to variations in work/non-work integration. The findings discussed above demonstrate how work/non-work integration can be best thought of as a 'continuum', rather than as an 'on' (present) versus 'off' (absent) phenomenon. It is evident that the variations in work/non-work integration identified among the workers in this study show that some achieved greater integration than others.

8.5 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the relationship between work/non-work lives is better understood from a multi-level perspective. It is important that various management and union approaches to work/non-work integration be highlighted as the full commitment and support of these parties can bring about changes in the way workers manage their work/non-work lives. It is evident that the workers' work/non-work integration approach vary at the meso level because of the different organisational contexts. It is also evident that the nature of this research in terms of its focus on the public sector context provides some important contextual dimensions such as the restrictions on staffing levels leading to work intensification. Other important contextual dimensions include the nature of work demands such as reactive and unpredictable time demands, especially in relation to the urgent nature of the work in Hospico and Custco; as well as the different management approaches to working time in Unico. It is also evident that religious and cultural values are important dimensions across the three organisations. Regardless of religious affiliation, most workers' viewed their dual commitments to work and non-work responsibilities seriously, which reflects the special character of Malaysian society.

Work/non-work management at the micro level was also found to be varied. The variations in work/non-work integration identified among the workers in this study demonstrate that some achieve more integration than others, depending on the strategies they adopt. The findings indicate that some workers achieved full integration leading to satisfaction, whilst some experienced partial integration with satisfaction. It is also evident that work/non-work conflict can be experienced by all range of workers

– women and men with young children as well as single workers with parents/siblings commitments. Thus, in order to reduce work/non-work conflict, the most common sources of support at work is from supervisors, co-workers and organisational policies, as well as familial (spousal, family and extended family) and communal (private helper and neighbours) support. The findings also show that there are variations in alternation between work and non-work life and that workers prioritised their work/non-work lives differently at different life-cycle stages. The different degrees of integration to segmentation was found to be influenced by work demand, availability of support at work and home, family responsibilities as well as the workers' life-cycle stage.

The final chapter will discuss the conclusion of the study with emphasis on empirical contributions, methodological insights, future directions for research and policy/practical implications as well as limitations of the study.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents an overview of the thesis through discussions of the findings obtained from the multi-level examination of work/non-work life in the Malaysian context. The empirical contributions of the study, methodological reflections and limitations of the study are acknowledged. In addition, practical/policy implications and recommendations for work/non-work knowledge are suggested.

9.2 EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The qualitative results of the study were reviewed with regard to the research questions and main themes from a multi-level perspective which encompasses the role of the State (macro level), trade unions and organisations in the emergence and development of work/non-work policies as well as the influence of the organisation on working time through its working practices (meso level); the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards work/non-work prioritisation; and the approach used by workers in managing their work/non-work lives (micro level). Importantly, these themes reveal how workers managed their work/non-work responsibilities in the Malaysian public sector context.

9.2.1 Approach to Work/Non-Work Life in Malaysian Public Sector Organisations

To answer **Research Question 1** (To what extent have the State, management and union influenced the emergence and the development of work/non-work policies in the selected Malaysian public sector organisations?), this study found that in Malaysia, the

State, as a policy maker, is the main provider of work/non-work arrangements for public sector workers. In Western countries such as U.K. and U.S.A., the implementation of work/non-work policies are associated with increased female participation in the labour market (Dex & Scheibl 2001; Galinsky & Bond, 1998). In Malaysia, the female labour participation rate needs to be increased and thus the Government needs to introduce initiatives to attract and retain productive female labour in the labour market.

At the macro level, the State's role in influencing the emergence and development of work/non-work policies to retain female participation in the labour market has grown. Although female labour participation has increased in Malaysia, it remains relatively low compared to that in other Asia-Pacific countries (UNESCAP, 2007). Consequently, the Government, as a State employer, is endeavouring to attract more female workers into the labour market and increase their contribution to the country's economy and productivity by establishing several work/non-work policies and proclaiming their introduction through the WFCD Ministry. The State's standard work/non-work provisions which are to be implemented by all public sector organisations are as shown in Table 4.4 (Chapter Four). These policies include childcare assistance for workers who earn salaries of less than RM2000.00 a month and encouragement for the setting up of an on-site crèche in all public sector workplaces. Additionally, flexible working arrangements are also highlighted whereby the Malaysian Government, in its endeavour to encourage more women to participate in paid work, has initiated the implementation of staggered start and finish times for public sector employees.

The Malaysian Government's awareness of the non-work sphere being of equal importance to the work sphere can be seen from the varied improvements instituted in work/non-work arrangements provided. These include: enhancement of maternity leave entitlement from 42 days, before the year 1998, to 90 days, to allow working mothers more time to recover after giving birth and to breastfeed their infants before returning to work; extension of paternity leave from three to seven days which indicates the Government's awareness of working fathers' need to integrate their work and non-work

responsibilities; increase in parental leave by up to five years reflecting awareness of the importance placed on parenting responsibilities amongst working citizens and the government's support of this; and the introduction of annual free air tickets for workers and their immediate families to visit their hometown targeted at those posted to regions far from their hometown (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah or Sarawak). National initiatives and policies, such as the 'Family First' campaign, are designed to help employees to accommodate and integrate both work and non-work responsibilities. In view of all these provisions and the related findings from this research it is believed that the influence of the state is important in ensuring the effectiveness of workers' integration of their work/non-work lives, apart from the terms and conditions of employment (Warhurst *et al.*, 2008).

It is evident that the role of the State is not just important in terms of providing work/non-work leave provisions such as maternity, paternity and parental leaves, but also in implementing and supporting beneficial work practices and arrangements e.g. flexitime and on-site crèches. Although these arrangements were found to be beneficial, particularly for workers with young children in integrating their work/non-work lives, this study found that work/non-work conflict also occurred among workers with parental/sibling commitments, whose needs were not met by these arrangements. Hence, the State and related organisations should also consider developing and putting in place elderly/family care related provisions. Although Korabik *et al.* (2003) argued that workers in individualist countries expect support from management while collectivistic societies expect support from the family, this study found that both institutional and familial supports were expected to help workers in work/non-work integration. In addition, for workers with financial wealth and ability, communal supports (i.e. paid helper and private crèche) were also needed and expected when institutional and familial supports were absent. As Malaysian society is known for being highly collectivist and placing strong emphasis on the extended family (Hassan *et al.*, 2010), institutional supports (organisational and Government) are expected at work. Additionally, familial (spouse and family) and communal supports (neighbours and paid help) are also expected to be available outside the work environment. Within the

context of this research, it is seen that the gender ideology as suggested by Korabik *et al.* (2003) is somewhat different in a multi-ethnic and multi-religion society like Malaysia, as workers expect support not just from their organisations but also from their family and the community. Thus, the State as a policy maker and public sector organisations as implementors and deliverers of public services, need to be proactive if they want to enhance work/non-work arrangements.

Additionally, despite public sector organisations being authorised to implement all the best policies in terms of work/non-work arrangements, working hours in most of these organisations are invariably high and there is general acceptance of this culture, resulting in there being very little difference in terms of work/non-work integration. Unlike the situation in European countries where the European Working Time Directive has been introduced to guide workers on maximum work hours allowable, e.g. doctors should not work more than 48 hours per week in hospitals (Morris-Stiff *et. al.,* 2005), in Malaysia, there is no such working time directive issued, except for the General Order Chapter G (1974) which only mentions working time and overtime in general without specifying the maximum hours one can work, regardless of working pattern. The absence of a working time directive which sets the maximum working hours allowable in the national agenda has resulted in workers working long hours at the organisational level.

At the meso level, organisational support is important not only to enhance the work/non-work policies introduced by the Government but also an essential resource or coping mechanism as it can help reduce the negative effects of stressors and the level of work/non-work conflict (Bond, 2004; Hopkins, 2005; Valcour & Hunter, 2005).The extent of management and union influence on the emergence and development of work/non-work policies in the Malaysian public sector (Research Question 1) was however found to vary across the organisations in this study. Table 8.1 (Chapter Eight) shows the work/non-work provisions made available in Unico, Hospico and Custco to accommodate workers' work/non-work integration, in addition to the standard work/non-work arrangements provided by the State. Each of these organisations had its

own way of managing its human resources and in all the three cases the approach towards work/non-work integration differed. Whilst Unico emphasised on the provision of a conducive workplace in order to produce happy and productive workers, Hospico practiced a segmentation approach whereby work and non-work life were not seen to be integrated due to the reactive nature of most clinical jobs in Hospico. Meanwhile, Custco's management viewed work/non-work issues as being important and placed emphasis on spiritual matters and family welfare. Despite the differences in approach, all the three organisations had similarities in terms of the provision of sports and fitness arrangements at work. In addition to fulfilling workers' work/non-work needs, the provision of sports and fitness arrangements at work also suggests that fostering a team spirit within the organisations to be an important agenda for these organisations, as the nature of most work is individualistic.

The Unico Management claimed that there were limitations in their ability to enforce work/non-work provisions as the standards for work/non-work enhancement came from the Government. Apart from the standard provisions by the State, the work/non-work arrangements provided in Unico were found to be more recreational in nature in line with Unico's motto 'healthy workers, happy workers'. This agenda was also pursued by UNTES, Unico's union-related body. Additionally, the punch card system continued to be practised in Unico, in the midst of so-called flexitime system promoted by the management, as the union had not negotiated with the management to have it abolished. This shows that the relationship between UNTES and the Unico management was reflective of a unitarist logic, as the union sought to support management practices due to the belief of its President that the Union and the employer had the same interests in promoting employee wellbeing and productivity.

Meanwhile, the management in Hospico believed in work/non-work segmentation due to its 'work first' culture. As such while the nature of most tasks in Hospico which often involved life and death situations required workers to be always ready to work at any time, it was not always accompanied by supportive work/non-work arrangements, hampering integration of the work/non-work life. The absence of supportive work/non-

work arrangements, such as an on-site crèche, restrained workers' work/non-work integration. At the same time, HOCWU, the Hospico employees' union, was more focused on pursuing 'basic' demands at work and as such, did not consider work/non-work arrangements as priority. This showed that both management awareness of work/non-work integration issues and HOCWU's role in developing work/non-work policies, were relatively weak. In contrast, Custco's management viewed work/non-work issues as an important issue, placing emphasis on spiritual matters and family welfare. Hence, various arrangements and activities related to work and non-work life were provided, not just for workers but also for their spouse and children. Given that certain jobs in Custco had high work demands, the management made an effort to take care of workers' work and non-work spheres by providing and implementing appropriate work/non-work arrangements. Hence, CUSTWU, the Custco union, did not need to expend extra effort to fight for the workers' rights.

A supportive organisation can help people cope with job demands such as long hours, shift work, frequent travel or job pressure (Demerouti *et al*., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The evidence presented here shows how management can influence workers' efforts in integrating their work and non-work lives. The research indicates that organisational work/non-work life provisions can either create work/non-work conflict and negative work experiences or enable workers to integrate their work/non-work spheres. Additionally, the failure of trade unions, as the workers' representatives, in playing their role efficiently and effectively can contribute to impeding workers from integrating their work/non-work lives. The evidence from this research not only supported Warhurst *et al*.'s (2008) suggestion that organisations and unions as structural factors can influence the integration of workers' work/non-work lives, but also indicated that the role of the State can also influence workers' work/non-work integration. As such, the development and implementation of work/non-work policies cannot rely solely on the Government, as the policy maker, as integration at both the state level and the meso level is required for management and union support.

The study also found that the most widely available work/non-work policies in the three organisations in this study were those related to maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, and flexitime – particularly appropriate for 'married workers with children' rather than other groups of workers. Apart from the 'annual balik kampung package', there was no work/non-work arrangement provided to cater for workers who had parental and sibling care commitments, although in Malaysian society the family institution and family responsibility are strongly upheld. Moreover, and importantly, provision of arrangements such as the inclusion of elder care referral services or leave to provide elder care are still absent from the national agenda. Such services and leave are needed to uphold the workers' 'extended family' values which significantly prioritise parents. Such values which are upheld by the citizens are currently not being supported by government policy or the employing organisations. Additionally, the absence of an on-site crèche in the three organisations and lack of support from superiors, as experienced by some workers in Custco and Hospico for example, hindered workers' work/non-work integration. At the organisational level, management should be aware of and alert to workers' work/non-work needs particularly that of those with young children to assist them to meet both their caring role and responsibilities at work. Despite the additional work/non-work arrangements provided at the organisational level, the absence of basic requirements for work/non-work integration such as an on-site crèche, implies that the Government is failing in its role as a public sector employer, since policies created at the national and organisational level did not always take into consideration the day-to-day needs of workers who had to juggle their caring and domestic responsibilities with that of their paid work. These findings support that of Grzywacz *et al.* (2007) and Warhurst *et al.* (2008) as it demonstrates how important organisational policies and supports are for workers' work/non-work integration to be achieved and how appropriate work practices provided at the organisational level or through State policy can (e.g. staggered flexible working time) assist such integration and allow for some adaptation of work/non-work life.

9.2.2 Work/Non-Work Practices and the Organisation of Working Time

In relation to **Research Question 2** (How do organisational factors such as the nature of work demand and the organisation of working time affect workers' work/non-work patterns?) the working time arrangements in the three organisational settings, as discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, were found to contribute to workers having to work long hours. Three organisational factors were found to contribute to this, namely: the nature of work demand, under-staffing and managerial control over working time.

According to Warhurst *et al.* (2008), work practices influence workers' work/non-work life patterns. The culture of long working hours which characterises many organisations and occupations is one of the causes of work/non-work conflict (Lewis, 1997; Frone *et al.,* 1997; Piotrkowski *et al*., 1987). In this research context, provision for staggered flexible start and finish times was found to have been implemented nationwide in the Malaysian public sector workplaces. Additionally, in Unico, flexible working time for academics had been implemented alongside a punch card system for monitoring which resulted in restricting flexibility. It was found that a commonality in the three organisational cases was the requirement of long working hours. Despite the provision for flexible working times, the average number of working hours for academics in Unico was 47 hours per week, and 60 hours per week for some occupations in both Custco and Hospico. In this study, it was seen that the reactive nature of certain jobs required workers to work altruistically for the public good and also required workers to work long hours. Although the working time demand varied from one occupation to another, the long working hours culture in these cases demonstrated that the nature of certain job types requires high work commitment such as the life and death situations as in the clinical work at Hospico, the prevention of crime by preventive and investigation officers in Custco, and the education of people by academics in Unico.

Work/non-work arrangements are associated with reduced work/non-work conflict and enhanced organisational commitment (Lambert, 2000). However, these positive effects

are achieved only when the organisational workplace is supportive of work/non-work programmes. In this study, the high work demands in certain jobs in Custco, Hospico and Unico were not accommodated by adequate resources e.g. work/non-work arrangements. As such, the relationship between work demands and management's desire to control working time, and the absence of necessary work/non-work provisions (i.e. on-site crèches) was seen to create conflict. Alternatively, if work demands and management control were low and work/non-work provisions were high, conflict could be reduced and work/non-work spheres could be better managed. Additionally, the absence of a work time directive setting a maximum number of working hours in the national agenda has contributed to workers having to work long hours at the organisational level. Additionally, the need to work long hours is seen to be further exacerbated by the failure of these public sector organisations to recruit adequate number of skilled and qualified staff. The case studies of Hospico and Custco demonstrated that the under-staffing problem resulted in work intensification as well as long working hours for the existing employees. The evidence provided in this research not only supported Ford and Collinson's (2011) and Warhurst *et al.*'s (2008) suggestions that work practices can influence workers' work/non-work lives, but also indicated that workers' work/non-work integration can also be affected by organisational characteristics.

9.2.3 The Role of Religious and Cultural Values in the Management of Workers' Work/Non-Work Lives

To answer **Research Question 3** (To what extent do cultural and religious values as well as diversity across gender and life-cycle influence workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work responsibilities?), this study found that religious and cultural values had critical implications on workers' attitudes towards their dual commitments to work and non-work responsibilities. Performance of work was viewed as a vocation which created a specific form of public sector ethos within the Malaysian context, infused by religious and cultural contexts. Additionally, these influences had significant

implications on workers' attitudes towards commitment to their non-work responsibilities.

While work/non-work conflict in association with cultural values from the Asian perspective has attracted the interest of many researchers (Hassan *et al.*, 2010; Lu *et al.,* 2006; Yang *et al.*, 2000), research on the influence of religion on work/non-work integration in the Malaysian context is absent, although Malaysians are reported to generally be religious in nature (Abdullah, 1996). Although the study by Reed and Blunsdon (2006) indicated that one's religion can affect one's attitude towards one's work/non-work roles, in general however, studies on work/non-work lives and their relationship with religious values are under-researched. Thus, a study utilising a multi-level approach to examine the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards prioritisation of their work/non-work lives fills a gap in literature. Religion is usually perceived to offer 'hope, solace and power when other resources are exhausted and when people look beyond themselves for help' (Noor, 1999: 140). Religion can act as a buffer when experiencing a negative situation and is perceived as an effective coping mechanism (Noor, 1999). Thus, it is not surprising that aspects of religion are found to be facilitators in workers' work/non-work integration in the Malaysian context. Regardless of religious affiliation, this study found that religious and cultural values had critical implications for workers' views of their dual commitments to work and non-work lives. This study found that the workers regarded their paid work as a vocation and their strong work ethic was significantly associated with the religious dimension. Consistent with the findings of Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) and Tayeb (1997), this study found that religious affiliation encouraged workers to perceive good work performance as akin to an act of worship to God, not just among the Muslim workers but also the Christian workers. This was because of the concept of 'amanah' whereby workers view themselves as being accountable to God in the performance of their work. Moreover, good productive works are perceived to be a means to obtaining life in the hereafter, and thus managing work life in a positive way and showing commitment to the employing organisation are encouraged.

Religious values were also found to influence workers' attitudes in prioritising their non-work life spheres. Although work commitment was viewed as important, the study findings also indicated that workers believed that the non-work domain should not be neglected. Religion was found to govern every aspect of workers' lives: their public life in the workplace and their private life at home. The research context also indicated that most of the employees needed to work to earn money to support themselves and family members which explained why they were willing to work long hours. The breadwinner ideology was thus an important cultural feature and underpinned the economic motivation aspect. It was the impetus for workers to be able to provide financial security to immediate and extended family members, applicable not only to workers with large families (immediate or extended) but also to single or newly-married workers. This shows that emotional support and maintaining kinship ties were of significant importance to the workers. In the research context, the breadwinner ideology was found to not be limited to just the nuclear family and male workers, but was also found to be an important feature of women's attitudes on commitment to work, to be able to support their extended families. Additionally, this indicated that responsibility towards both parents and siblings were motivating factors not just for workers' attitudes on commitment to their caring role but also their views on commitment to work. The custom of '*balik kampung*' was also found to be widely practised by the workers in the three organisations in this research. Through such practices, and with the support of appropriate Government policies, the workers were able to maintain kinship ties and fulfil their filial duties to older family members and siblings. According to Carlson *et al*., (2006), if an individual's self-concept or value is more strongly associated with family than with work, positive spillover from family to work is more likely to occur and vice versa. Although Western research cite similar results, the definition of family in a collectivist society goes beyond the nuclear family (husband, wife and children). Family, the most important in-group in Malaysian society, includes the extended family (parents, grandparents, siblings) and relatives. This may explain why satisfactory work/non-work integration in the Malaysian context encompasses not only work and the immediate family but also the community (relatives, friends and neighbours). As the family is the most important domain in an

employee's life, greater satisfaction with the family may result in greater life satisfaction.

Although from a Western perspective, religion and culture could be considered as constraining factors in relation to workers' dual commitments to both work and non-work priorities, as it supports high level commitment to work and their employers (Parboteeah *et al*., 2009; Chusmir & Koberg, 1988), in the Malaysian context, the reverse is true as religious and cultural values influence workers' attitudes in terms of not neglecting both their family obligations as well as responsibility to work. As such, religion and cultural values influence how Malaysians think and feel about their dual obligations. This suggests that in order to enable workers to fulfill their dual obligations of work and non-work, a more supportive work/non-work culture at work should be practiced and implemented across the three organisations. The aforementioned findings showed that religious and cultural beliefs and values influenced workers' attitudes towards their work/non-work roles and responsibilities and were amalgamated within their lifestyles. Warhurst *et al.* (2008) argued that the work/non-work lives of individuals depend on the economic, social and cultural resources of the individual. This would suggest that religious and cultural values do not operate at just the meso level but also exert influence at the micro level. Hence, the State, at the macro level, and the organisations at the meso level, play a significant role in assisting or constraining workers' integration of their work/non-work lives at the micro level.

9.2.4 Workers' Management of Their Work/Non-Work Spheres

To answer **Research Question 4** (how do workers manage their work/non-work spheres? What factors influence the different degrees of prioritisation and integration?), this research found that workers' work/non-work management approaches varied. Work/non-work life approaches vary at the meso level because of the different organisational contexts. Consequently, the nature of the relationship between work and non-work also varies according to the strategies that the workers adopt. It has been argued that achieving integration between non-work and work life is increasingly a

priority for many people (Sturges & Guest, 2004) and integrated individuals are reported to experience a low level of stress when enacting their roles, probably because they are participating in role activities that are salient to them (Greenhaus *et al*., 2003). Blunsdon *et al*. (2006:2) define work/non-work integration as "individuals 'successfully' segmenting or integrating 'life' and work so as to achieve a satisfying quality of life, overall satisfaction and less strain or stress from not having to juggle conflicting role demands". Workers' commitment to their work/non-work responsibilities depend on the degree of support, both institutional and private, that they are able to draw upon and their life-cycle stage. As such, the variations and diversity in work/non-work integration across and within the three cases can best be viewed as a continuum. In considering the management of work and non-work life as a continuum in this study, some workers were found to achieve partial to full integration, segmented to conflictual and were satisfied or dissatisfied with the relationship between work and non-work life. Their capacity to integrate both spheres was also dependent on their work position, life-cycle position and availability of organisational support (both formal and informal), family help and paid support.

Full to Partial Work/Non-Work Integration

According to Warhurst *et al*. (2008), the structural context of paid work, through the terms and conditions of employment, such as flexitime or shift working hours, can facilitate workers' work/non-work integration as well as create negative work/non-work experiences. This acknowledges the importance of the availability or absence of work/non-work arrangements provided at work. In Unico, for example, despite management exerting control over working time and this being a constraint on smooth integration of work and non-work spheres, some workers were still able to achieve informal flexibility depending on the nature of their specific roles - leading to full satisfaction and integration. Some workers in the present study were able to achieve flexibility and gain full satisfaction depending on the nature of their job, for example as an Anthropologist or Pharmacist. The nature of workers' specific roles at work and availability of support to help cope with and develop strategies to deal with work

intrusions on their life resulted in seven workers across the organisations achieving greater integration than the others, where two were from Unico, and four and one from Hospico and Custco respectively.

In another case, some workers achieved partial integration as they needed support from the organisation and superiors in order to cope with their work demands and achieve work/non-work integration. For workers with young children, for example, support received from the employing organisation, spouse, extended family or help from a private crèche or paid helper enabled them to better handle their work/non-work life responsibilities. Mindful of their specific work responsibilities in their employing organisations, these workers were very much concerned about integrating their work/non-work responsibilities in order to achieve harmonious lives between their work/non-work spheres.

As noted by Md-Sidin *et al*. (2010), the role of spousal support was important in order to have a good quality of life. In this study, social supports i.e. family, spouse, employer / immediate superior, and other private help was found to help and accommodate workers in coping with the pressures of integrating their work and non-work lives, thereby enabling them to successfully integrate their work and non-work lives. This study also found that other factors such as managerial role in enhancing the implementation of work/non-work provisions was also important in supporting workers' work/non-work sphere integration. These findings extend the findings in Md-Sidin *et al.*'s study. Although support from extended family members, neighbours and paid helpers are a less frequently researched topic (Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011), this study found that these supports played an important role in assisting workers' work/non-work integration. It is evident that institutional, familial and communal supports are factors that contribute to workers' work/non-work integration in the multi-ethnic and multi-religion society of Malaysia.

Conflictual Work/Non-Work Life

One of the consequences of the inability to integrate work and non-work demands is the increasing level of work/non-work conflict experienced by parents in employment (Erickson *et al.*, 2010; Ngah *et al.*, 2009; Bond, 2004). This was also evident in this research context, particularly in Hospico and Unico, where workers with young children who struggled to integrate their work/non-work spheres and did not receive support were seen to be experiencing conflict. This was because organisational support, in the form of an on-site crèche and superiors' support for example, as well as social support, were absent. Immediate superiors/supervisors played an important role in setting the overall tone and expectations for the workers who reported to them in terms of the extent to which non-work demands would be permitted to intrude into the work sphere. For example, this study found that supervisors and supportive work/non-work arrangements were especially important means of assistance. The study found that when there was high working time demand but low work/non-work provisions in the organisation, it creates conflict, particularly if workers did not receive institutional, familial and/or communal support in fulfilling their caring responsibilities. If workers experience work/non-work conflict, this suggests that the workers' work/non-work lives are not integrated.

Additionally, although studies by Erickson *et al.* (2010) and Higgins *et al*. (1994) excluded single workers as they were assumed to experience less work/non-work conflict, this study found that single workers with parental/sibling commitments also experienced conflict. Evidence in this study demonstrated that work/non-work conflict can be experienced by all range of workers – women and men with young children as well as single workers with parental/sibling commitments. In line with Md-Sidin *et al.* (2010), the findings show that regardless of gender, everyone can experience work/non-work conflict. Evidence in this study also demonstrated some common characteristics of work/non-work conflict such as an unsupportive working culture, e.g. absence of on-site crèche, unsupportive attitude of superiors and colleagues; as well as absence of familial and communal supports. Accordingly, efforts are required at the macro-, meso-

and micro levels to improve workers' overall quality of life. If such integration is lacking, workers' work/non-work spheres will remain in conflict and this will not only be detrimental to workers' well-being but also impinge on productivity, at both the national and organisational levels. To reduce work/non-work conflict, the most common sources of support required are those at work, from supervisors, co-workers and organisational policies, as well as familial (spousal, family and extended family) and communal (private helper and neighbours) support.

Segmented Work/Non-Work Life

Although work/non-work integration depends on individual workers' needs, care should be exercised to ensure that the needs of certain groups of workers, i.e. (single) workers without children, are not neglected (Higgins *et al.,* 1994; Erickson *et al.,* 2010). It was therefore one of the aims of this study to find out how workers managed their work/non-work lives at different life-cycle stages and with different family structures. This study found that workers integrated the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. In the West, it has been reported that so-called 'post-conflict' workers do not want to work long hours or expose themselves to inflexible demands in their work role responsibilities (Bond *et al*., 2005; Moen *et al*., 2000) and thus seek flexible work hours (Erickson *et al*., 2010). In this study, it was seen that when workers reached certain life-cycle stages, such as when they no longer had care commitment or when their children were all grown up, despite having less work/non-work conflict, they did not show a tendency to seek a more integrated approach to work and non-work lives, and instead alternation in work/non-work life was preferred - leading to segmentation of work and non-work life.

Alternation of work/non-work life was found among some workers who prioritised work over non-work when they reached a certain life-cycle stage, i.e. post-conflict stage, as compensation for 'lost career time' from when their children were younger. Other alternator workers, on the other hand, at the post-conflict stage, leaned towards family life to compensate for when they had prioritised work during the time when their

children were young in the interest of career development. Workers prioritise their work or non-work lives depending on the context-specific logics they use at different life-cycle stages (Warhurst *et al.*, 2008). This study found that workers prioritised and alternated the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. Although Coffey (1994) indicated that the pressure to demonstrate commitment by working long hours was strongest at the early stages of a career, this study found that there were workers in the 'post-conflict' stage who had strong work ethics and prioritised their work responsibilities over their non-work responsibilities and appeared to gain more fulfillment from their work. In addition, 'post-conflict' stage workers also demonstrated the need for less flexibility at work than workers with young children. It is also evident that workers prioritised their family life over their working commitment to compensate for 'their lost time with the children', when their children were young. Moreover, it is also evident that in part this prioritisation was influenced by the re-arrangement of work at the meso level, for example, in the cases seen in Custco.

Although work/non-work life management can be manifested in various patterns (Warhurst *et al.,* 2008), this study found that work/non-work integration is best viewed as a continuum due to the variations in satisfaction levels. It is evident that work/non-work integration can be achieved when all the necessary supports are available for the workers thus reducing work/non-work conflict. Alternatively, workers alternated the needs of their work/non-work spheres differently at different life-cycle stages. Thus, the various patterns of work/non-work life management found in this study demonstrate the importance of understanding how structural factors at the macro and meso levels can support or impede Malaysian workers' integration of their work/non-work lives and how workers manage their work/non-work spheres differently at the micro level.

Offering work/non-work provisions at the State level does not automatically result in positive work/non-work integration experiences for employees. Hence, a range of other supports i.e. from superiors, colleagues, family (and extended family), neighbours and paid help are also needed to assist in smooth work/non-work integration. This emphasises the need to understand work/non-work issues from a multi-level

perspective. A multi-level approach not only provides in-depth analysis of the degree to which workers integrated, conflicted or alternated between their work/non-work lives but also assists in analysis of the influence of factors at the macro- (role of the State), meso- (role of trade unions and organisations) and micro- (individual perspective) levels, thereby providing in-depth understanding of the work/non-work spheres from multiple levels, which is not possible with a single-layered approach.

9.3 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With regard to the methods used in data collection, the findings were derived from in-depth semi-structured interviews. It might be useful to use other qualitative method such as a focus group interview with workers across different sectors and industries as a comparative study. Gathering several groups of workers from various sectors and industries would be interesting and also challenging. Valuable results could also be obtained by becoming a participant in a multinational company for a period of time and observing how the company implements work/non-work arrangements for workers who uphold local religious, social and cultural traditions and those with differing societal and cultural values. The case study approach provides insights that would be difficult to obtain from quantitative methods and provides rich data from which items can be developed for questionnaire surveys. Rigorous surveys, in turn, can provide a basis for systematic assessment of the generalisability of the results. Hence, conducting a quantitative study based on a multi-level approach in future research would give stronger support for the complementariness of workers' work/non-work management and the relationship with their level of satisfaction. Future efforts should also use a greater variety of methodologies to tease out exact mechanisms linking work/non-work integration at multiple levels, including additional sources of data such as co-workers, supervisors, and family members. Conducting more longitudinal enquiries to capture the direction of influence is also a pressing need.

While this study looked at work/non-work lives in public sector organisations in Malaysia, utilising a multi-level approach, it concentrated on Sabah only, one of the 14 states in Malaysia. Wider research should be conducted to cover the whole country. Further, this research focused on workers from the public sector, other studies could usefully concentrate on the private and corporate sectors so as to obtain more comprehensive understanding of workers' work/non-work lives in the Malaysian context.

9.4 PRACTICAL/ POLICY IMPLICATIONS

At the macro-level, this study included the development of a protocol for profiling standard work/non-work related policies and service provision (see Chapter Four). The availability and/or absence of work/non-work arrangements such as parental leave and benefit policies, the provision of child and elder care services, and policies that constrain or expand workers' involvement in paid employment and in unpaid family work, can be theorised as providing the critical social contexts that frame both employment conditions and the experience of the work/non-work interface. The multi-level approach of this study not only allows an examination of work/non-work life at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels, but also to look at cross-level influences (i.e. whether aspects of religion and culture, for example, influence the relationship between micro-, meso- and macro-levels). This is something that few other studies have been able to do.

Because of this, it is expected that this study has practical and policy implications for the alleviation of the harmful effects of work/non-work conflict, for example. In addition to the opportunity to learn about the effects of alternative approaches, the study highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context that affects management's decisions and employees' expectations and experiences. Moreover, a cross-cultural examination of organisations and Government policies can provide critical learning points for policy makers who must increasingly be aware of the need to

find culturally-appropriate ways to alleviate the harmful effects of work/non-work conflict.

At the State level, policies related to elderly and sibling care, e.g. dependent care leave, need to be imposed as it is important for workers with parent/sibling care to integrate their work and non-work responsibilities. The research showed how the absence of such leave entitlement contributed to the existence of workers experiencing work/non-work conflict despite the desire to integrate work/non-work life. Such services and leave are needed to uphold 'extended family' values which significantly prioritise parents/siblings. Such values upheld by citizens are not yet supported by government policy nor employing organisations. When making any policy related to work/non-work, the Government as employer should take this group into account, especially in the context of Malaysia where the family institution is highly esteemed and the prevailing religious and cultural values are still widely accepted by the society. Hence, workers with parent and sibling care commitments need to be included when any policy or arrangement related to the work/non-work sphere is to be implemented as they need their own special programmes and assistance to enable them to have a better quality of life – in both the paid work and non-work spheres.

The absence of a working time directive from the national agenda has contributed to workers working longer hours at the organisational level as no maximum working hours have been fixed. The Malaysian Government as policy maker should consider providing guidelines for the maximum hours workers should work, for example, in a week, to enable individual workers to strategise their work and non-work spheres according to their needs in each sphere, rather than let the responsibilities in one sphere override those in the other. It would be useful for workers to know their rights as employers would not be able to take advantage of their skills and not pay them appropriate remuneration. In addition, the employer will be able to ensure there is an appropriate relationship between 'demands' (i.e. work demand and management desire to control workers' working time) and 'resources' (i.e. work/non-work provisions

provided to cater for the 'demands') so that the unique Malaysian public sector ethos can be retained to the uppermost.

The State as policy maker is the main provider of work/non-work arrangements for public sector workers. Public sector organisations which act as Government machinery to deliver services to the people, need to be proactive if they want to enhance work/non-work arrangements. Through national policies e.g. the 'Family First' campaign, both work and non-work responsibilities are assumed to be integrated. As such, the Government as a State-employer needs to solve the under-staffing problem faced by public sector organisations, particularly in Hospico and Custco. This critical problem contributed to workers working long hours and spending little time with their families or pursuing personal interests. Thus, the State needs to recruit more workers to avoid prolonged labour shortages in the near future. This is important to ensure workers' high quality of life and for the benefit of organisational productivity.

At the organisational level, policies and arrangements which promote the re-entry of women who have taken time off for childcare and more flexibility in the workplace need to be enforced by public sector organisations in a more serious and systematic manner. The research findings show that despite the Government's encouragement to establish on-site crèches, an on-site crèche was absent in all the organisational case studies, indicating that they were not seriously engaged with government initiatives on work/non-work integration. Hence, supports and awareness from Government, organisations and unions, particularly in terms of on-site crèches and care of the elderly should be encouraged.

The management in public sector organisations needs to develop new strategies to resolve work/non-work conflict and dilemmas taking into account cultural characteristics, distinct economic situations, social institutions, and family structures. Management should also consider strategies to help workers with work/non-work conflict, particularly if they do not have the financial ability to get private supports. Additionally, as religion and cultural values were found to influence how Malaysians

think and feel about their dual obligations, a more supportive work/non-work culture at work is highly sought to be practiced and implemented in the organisation in order to enable workers to fulfill their dual obligations of work and non-work.

There is also a need for caution when considering the work/non-work life area as appropriate for the development of integrative union strategies. In the research context, the organisational weakness of the unions certainly limited the exercise of any powerful union voice; a union approach towards a more integrative and partnership oriented policy might improve this lack of voice. Additionally, although this study was conducted in the Malaysian public sector, the findings can serve as guidelines for organisations elsewhere, specifically multinational companies (MNC) operating in Eastern cultures with predominantly strong cultural beliefs and values. Organisations should also encourage employees to take up the work/non-work arrangements in order to reduce work/non-work conflict. Better dissemination of policy information through proactive union, internal newsletters, monthly meetings, induction and superior briefings etc. will also help to ensure that information reaches employees.

9.5 CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Explaining and analysing the role of the State, trade unions, organisations and individual perspectives required a multi-level approach which this research incorporated to provide an in-depth analysis and understanding of workers' attitudes towards work/non-work integration and how they actually manage their work/non-work lives. However, the concept of work/non-work integration is in its infancy stage in Malaysia, which contributed to most participants in this study – management, union officials and workers - being unfamiliar with the terminology. Hence, this factor may have biased the study findings. Additionally, the findings reported in Chapters Five, Six and Seven revealed a unique kind of public sector ethos (attitudes towards commitment to work based on religious and cultural values) to be one of Malaysian workers' characteristics. However, whether they work harder in practice as a result is difficult to answer with any degree of accuracy (Noon & Blyton, 2007).

Funding in the three organisational cases to establish work/non-work arrangements at the organisational level was under the direct administration of three different Ministries. This study did not investigate the adequacy of budgets provided for work/non-work arrangements, thus information on such matter was not provided in this study. Further, data chapters (Chapter Five, Six and Seven) focused on how the organisation of working time contributed to workers working long hours and its effect on workers' management of their work/non-work spheres. However, labour turnover was not investigated nor the long-term effect of long working hours on workers' spouses, who were not interviewed during the study.

As also shown in Chapters Six and Seven, Hospico's under-staffing problem was caused by a lack of qualified and skilled clinical workers. Custco also had an under-staffing problem. Although Hospico's and Custco's HR managers were asked why additional staff had not been recruited, they could not answer this question as the recruitment issue was not their responsibility.

It is also appropriate to acknowledge that due to the sensitivity of Malaysian organisational culture and religious issues, workers often refused to criticise the effectiveness of the role of the State and/or the management as well as the work/non-work provisions provided. If criticism of their effectiveness had been more forthcoming, it may have produced different findings.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this study contribute to extant literature by providing empirical evidence based on the multi-level examination of work/non-work life as opposed to over-emphasis on the individual level of analysis (see Casper *et al.,* 2007). Another contribution of this study is the empirical examination of the influence of religious and cultural values on workers' attitudes towards their dual commitments to work/non-work responsibilities. This study also contributes to literature by providing empirical evidence on the variations and the reasons why workers integrate their

work/non-work lives differently and as such why it is best to view workers' work/non-work integration as a continuum.

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APPENDIX 1:
SCHEDULE FOR RESEARCH FIELDWORK/DATA COLLECTION

Date	Activities
Location: Cardiff/Malaysia Period: four months (June 2008-October 2008)	Preparation for fieldwork and data collection. 1. Approval - Get interview questions approved by the University Ethic Committee 2. Selection of organisations - Ten organisations were identified for the preliminary stage - obtain initial access to organisations - identify Human Resource Manager and union official to be interviewed 3. Preparing for Interviews - identify respondents who agreed to be interviewed - set appointment for interviews 3. Gather secondary data from each organisation and other relevant bodies and institutions
Location: Malaysia Period : Five months (November 2008 – April 2009)	Main Fieldwork: 1. Preliminary stage: Interview with Human Resource Managers and Union Officials (accessed to six organisations) 2. Stage Two: Three case studies a) Case study 1: - Interviews - Observation - Transcribe data b) Case study 2: - Interviews - Observation - Transcribe data c) Case study 3: - Interviews - Observation - Transcribe data

To Whom It May Concern

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a full-time Ph.D. student at the Department of Human Resource Management at Cardiff University. Cardiff University is one of the UK's leading universities.

The subject of my research is 'An analysis of work/non-work lives in Malaysian public sector workplaces: A Multi-Level Approach'. A substantial proportion of the thesis involves creating, conducting and analysing interviews. The aim of the preliminary interview is to investigate the existing pattern of work/non-work policies in the organisation and the workforce composition. I would like to inform you that your esteemed organisation has been selected for the purpose of the study and I would therefore like to interview your human resource manager (or any officer who is in-charge of personnel policies) and your worker representative / union official (if any).

I anticipate the interview lasting approximately forty to sixty minutes. Your views and comments on my research topic would be an invaluable part of my doctoral thesis and I believe that your input will enhance the quality of the research.

I would like to stress that any information given will be kept strictly confidential and no references will be made by name to the respondents and organisations which participate in the interview (unless otherwise agreed). I hope that your esteemed organisation will be able and willing to cooperate. I would be grateful if you could indicate whether this would be possible. I will then contact you to make the necessary arrangements. Thanking you in advance for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,   Supervisor,

Dzurizah Ibrahim   Dr. Sarah Jenkins

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH AIMS AND ETHICAL SCRUTINY

AN ANALYSIS OF WORK/NON-WORK LIVES IN MALAYSIAN
PUBLIC SECTOR WORKPLACES: A MULIT-LEVEL APPROACH

Dzurizah Ibrahim
Cardiff University

Research Aims and Objectives
The research is concerned with examining the nature of work/non-work understanding, provisions and practices in the context of selected Malaysian public sector workplaces and examine the models of work and non-work domains to find out the interaction between work and non-work spheres within the organisational cultures.

Ethical Scrutiny
This research has been granted ethical approval by Cardiff University's Ethics Committee. This means that all interview data will be treated confidentially and the identity of the organisations and of the employees will not be disclosed.

Research Report
The findings from the research will be presented as a PhD thesis, however, in line with the university's ethical commitments, the report will not contain individual quotes or information which will lead to the identification of employees.

Contact Information
If you want to discuss the project in more detail you are welcome to speak to me in person or, alternatively, please feel free to email me:-
Ibrahimd@cardiff.ac.uk

Interview Schedule

Date   : _____
Time   : _____
Place   : _____

Section 1: Organisation Background

1. Type of organisation:
2. Workforce:
   a. Total number of employees:…………………………………
   b. Number of female employees:……………………………….
   c. Number of male employees:…………………………………
   d. Composition by ethnic background:…………………………
   e. Composition by religion background:………………………..
   f. Composition by age:………………………………………….
   g. composition by level of grades:………………………………

Section 2: Work/Non-Work Arrangements

(Ask the respondent if the organisation they are working for has the following):
3. Working Arrangements
   a. Flexibility of time:
      - Flexible working hours: ………………………………………
      - compressed work weeks: ……………………………………
      - annualised hours: ………………………………………..
      - part-time work: …………………………………………..
      - term-time working: ………………………………………….
      - job-sharing: ……………………………………………….
      - adjustable shift patterns: …………………………………
      - sabbaticals and career breaks: ……………………………
      - extended lunch break hour (religious purposes, i.e. Friday prayer):……
      - time break for breastfeeding mother:………………………
      - time break for praying : …………………………………
      - other working time arrangement (if any): ………………

   b. Flexibility of location:
      - working from home: …………………………………………
      - working in different subsidiaries/locations (owned by the organisation):…..

4. Leave arrangements (days allowed to be taken):
   - maternity leave: …………………………………………………
   - paternity leave: …………………………………………………
   - paternal leave: ………………………………………………..
   - compassionate / emergency leave: ……………………………

    - leave based on religion purposes:……………………………….

    - other leave (if any):………………………………………………..

  5. Arrangements supporting for work/non-work integration

    - childcare centre: …………………………………………………

    - dependant care: ………………………………………………….

    - fitness and wellness centre: ……………………………………..

    - prayer room: …………………………………………………….

    - breastfeeding room: …………………………………………….

    - any work event involving family/non work matters : ………….

    - other arrangement (if any):……………………………………

Section 3: The Nature of Work/Non-Work

6. Why have these particular policies been implemented? Was the development of these policies influenced by any other party i.e. government regulations, business case, union involvement, demographic trend and/or organisational culture?

7. Based on the provision you have mentioned before, how does the organisation define work/non-work? Is it part of organisation policy?

8. Are there any activities which are particularly most important in dealing with work/non-work issues? (Prompt for the respondent's understanding of the concept of work/non-work integration)

Section 4: Work/Non-Work Practices

9. Can you tell me to what extent work/non-work arrangements offered by the organisation meet workers' needs? (Probe: ask him/her how/why). Could it go further?

10. How seriously does this organisation take work/non-work practices? (Probe: Does it just fulfil the statutory requirement or is it more as a leading-edge?)

11. In order to encourage workers to perform well, what does the organisation do? How?

12. What have been the opportunities and challenges of implementing WLB practices in this organisation?

Section 5: Work/Non-Work Take-Up and Turnover

13. Can you tell me about the level of work/non-work take-up in this organisation (for the past year). (Probe: If the respondent answers this question, ask him/her to say which particular (gender, age, ethnicity, religion and/or level of grade) group has shown a high level of take-up (which particular practice) and why?) OR what are the three most popular work/non-work arrangements among workers for take-up?

i.   Why do you think they are popular?

ii.   Do you see it as a 'perk', an 'entitlement' or a 'benefit'? Does it affect your/workers' attitude towards the organisation? If so, how positive/negative?

14. Can you tell me about the level of turnover in this organisation (for the past year). (Probe: If the respondent answers this question, ask him/her to say which particular (gender, age, ethnicity, religion and/or level of grade) group has shown a high level of turnover and why?)

Section 6: The Impact of Work/Non-Work Arrangements

15. Do you think work/non-work arrangements play a significant role in enhancing your organisation's productivity and helping to boost your workers' satisfaction? (probe: is there any evidence to support this view?).

16. Can you tell me what benefits work/non-work arrangements bring to employees? How about the benefits to the organisation?

17. What are the possible costs or/and disadvantages they may have? For example, are they cost-effective?

Section 7: Attitudes and Opinions

18. In your opinion as HR Manager, do you think it is necessary to have work/non-work arrangements? (Probe: regardless of the answer, ask him/her why)

19. What is your view on women's involvement and participation in the labour market?

20. Who do you think is responsible for work/non-work policies? Should it be government, organisation, individuals or all three?

21. Do work/non-work policies go far enough or too far in this organisation? How does this organisation do?

22. Has there been conflict between groups over work/non-work issues?

23. Are there likely to be future developments on work/non-work arrangements and practices?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TRADE UNION /UNION-RELATED BODY OFFICIALS

Interview Schedule

Date : _____
Time : _____
Place : _____

Section A: Union Background

(Ask the respondent the following):

Position of respondent in the union: ………………..
Name of Union:………………………………………..
Type of union: …………………………………………
Year of establishment:…………………………………
Registered under:………………………………………
No. of member:……..…………………………..

Section B: Union's Roles

1. Can you tell me the main activities of the union in this particular organisation?

2. Have you heard of the term work/non-work integration? What do you understand by such term?

3. Is the union aware of the work/non-work arrangements that the organisation provides to the workers?

3. Has the union ever brought up any issue related to work/non-work integration (i.e. flexible start and finish time, longer maternity/paternity/parental leave, and/or childcare assistance) with the management?

4. What is your view on the union's role in dealing with work and non-work arrangements for workers in general in order to help improve the quality of their work/non-work lives?

5. In your view how do you see the role of the organisation in ensuring the work/non-work arrangements meet workers' needs?

6. In most developed countries, unions have played a significant role in enhancing work/non-work arrangements at workplaces. How do you view your union in the future with regard to this issue?

7. In most developed countries, unions play a significant role in promoting a better understanding among workers of the importance of work and non-work life integration in order to convince their employer of its importance. In your view, how would your union face this challenge and thus promote harmonious employment relationships at work?

8. In your view who do you think should be most responsible for introducing and promoting work/non-work arrangements in every workplace? why? Do you think this is a role for the union?

Section C: The Role of the Union Representatives

9. Is there any discussion/agenda between union and the management over work/non-work issues?

10. How were work/non-work policies in this organisation developed?

11. Did the union take part in negotiations? (What does the union in this workplace do to promote work/non-work issues?)

11. Why did the organisation develop these policies?

12. Do workers consult the union over work/non-work matters?

13. Has there been conflict between employees and management over work/non-work issues?

14. What do you think would be the union's 'ideal work/non-work package' for this organisation?

15. If workers are facing a problem to integrate or balance their work life and personal life, how would you solve this problem? What would you suggest?

APPENDIX 6:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WORKERS

Interview Schedule

Date : _____
Time : _____
Place : _____

Section A: Respondent's Background

1. Age: ……………………………………………………………………..
2. Gender: …………………………………………………………………….
3. Marital status (with/without children/dependant): ……………………………
4. Ethnicity background: ……………………………………………………..
5. Religion background: ………………………………………………………..
6. Level of grade/occupation: ………………………………………………..
7. Status of occupation: Full-time / Part-time …………………………………

Section B: Working Practices and Work/Non-Work Policies Take-Up

8. Tell me a bit about your job and what it involves.

9. How long have you been working in this organisation?

10. How many hours do you work? How do you find it suits you?

11. Have you heard of the term work/non-work integration? What do you understand by such term?

12. Are you aware of the work/non-work arrangements that the organisation provides for you as a worker?

13. How do your current working practices (such as flexible start and finish time etc) suit you?

14. Are you satisfied with the leave arrangements you are entitled to? (Probe: why)

15. Have you ever taken-up any of the arrangements?

16. Have you ever experienced any difficulty in taking up any of the work/non-work arrangements provided? (Probe: If yes, ask him/her what has prevented him/her from taking up work/non-work arrangements).

Section C: Implications of Having Work/Non-Work Arrangements

17. What benefits do work/non-work arrangements bring to you? (Probe: how and why?)

18. What are the possible cost and/or disadvantages they may have? (Probe: ask him/her what is/are their suggestion(s) to overcome them).

19. Has take-up of work/non-work generated any tension at work between different groups?

Section D: Organisational Culture

20. If your child/parent is sick, would you take the day off?

21. If your task at work needs you to work longer hours to finish it, what would you normally do? (Probe: ask him/her if the task will be finished at home)

22. If you are asked by your superior to do a certain task that might affect your caring responsibilities at home, would you do the task?

23. Are you willing and able to perform on demand? Why?

24. Are your opinions influenced by your religion background/ethnicity? (Probe: if yes, can you explain more)

26. How do you find working in this organisation? Is it competitive/stressful/relaxed? (Probe: why?)

Section F: Attitudes and Opinions

27. Do you think work and non-work life conflict or support one another? From which do you gain most satisfaction?

28. Who handles caring responsibilities? (Probe: which is prioritised: work or non-work responsibilities and why) (Probe: if the answer is both, ask him/her how they draw the boundary line between the two in the real-life context)

29. Please describe how can you improve and enhance your work life and personal life.

30. In your view, whose role is it to enhance the work and non-work integration.

31. Has the union ever promoted any agenda about work/non-work issues?

32. How would you describe the values of the organisation?

33. Do you think it is necessary to implement work/non-work arrangements?

34. In your view, please explain if there is any other element that needs to be implemented that has not yet been provided at work. (Probe: ask why)

35. What are other needs that you think are necessary to be provided by the employer/organisation in order to balance/integrate your personal life and work life?