

## A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AMONG MALAYSIANS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the role of demographic characteristics on work-family conflict and family-work conflict among public administrators in the public sector. The issues such as demographic changes, transformation on traditional roles, economic development, global influence and equal employment opportunities, have led to an increased attention on the impact of demographic differences towards work-life issues of the employees' well-being. The purpose of this study was to investigate the significant differences between demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education and marital status on work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This study utilised a survey design using questionnaires to gather data. A total of 66 public administrators in Putrajaya, Malaysia responded to and participated in the questionnaire. All the data collected were analysed using the SPSS version 25. Hence, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse differences in the level of work-family conflict. Results show that there are no significant differences in gender, age, education level and marital status with work-family conflict and family-work conflict. It can be concluded that demographic characteristics have no influence on work-family conflict and family-work conflict among public administrators. This study provides a discussion on the implication of this research to the development of the public sector organisation, and for future research.*

Keyword: Work-family conflict, Family-work conflict, demographic characteristics, Role theory.

### Introduction

Work-family conflict study is the most popular work and family construct being studied within the occupational stress paradigm (Lu, Kao, Chang, Wu, & Cooper, 2008). It has received much attention due to the great demographic changes in the workforce and competitive working environments face by the organisations (Byron, 2005). Hence, modernising trends in terms of economic development, globalisation and equal employment opportunities have attracted human resource professionals and practitioners to concentrate on the causes and consequences of work-family conflict (Anafarta & Kuruiüzüm, 2012).

Balancing work and family responsibilities is critical since the changes in the composition of workforce, such as women participation and dual-earner families and increased job demands, are due to the rapid changes of a competitive environment in the organisations (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Sharma, Dhar, & Tyagi, 2016). These challenges expand the boundaries in various arena and have serious effects on the employee's health and well-being (Vignoli, Guglielmi, Bonfiglioli, & Saverio, 2016). Hence, all these changes have led to the increase in work-family conflict which results in various negative consequences (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to give additional attention to the emerging labour challenges which are becoming more complicated.

In Malaysia, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of working individuals in a formal sector such as professional, technical, clerical and sales workers (Achour, Shahidra, Bahiyah, Mohd Roslan, & Mohd Yakub, 2017). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the percentage of labour force participation has increased from 67.6 per cent in 2016 to 68.1 per cent in 2017. From the figure, participation in the labour workforce has increased by 0.8 per cent from 54.0 per cent in 2016 to 54.8 per cent in 2017 (Department of Statistic, 2016).

On a Family Life Survey (MLFS-4) conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFBD), a small percentage of 18.7 per cent of women employees have difficulties in balancing their role at work as an employee and at home with their family. On top of that, the statistics show that 51.9 per cent of the respondents have limited time to spend with their family, 13.0 per cent have a problem with childcare, 11.9 per cent have limited time for themselves, 11.2 per cent find it difficult to manage their workload and 3.1 per cent tend to have a problem in focusing on their work. A study conducted by Noraini and Nor Diana in 2015 from 954 respondents in various employment, 63 per cent of the employees have limited time to spend with their family due to working after office hour on overtime. As a result, 75 per cent have mentioned that their holiday is disrupted due to working overtime (Noor & Mahudin, 2015).

Based on the above statistics, it is important to identify the level of work-family conflict and family-work conflict with demographic characteristics in a Malaysian context. Malaysia is considered as a country with a collectivistic culture that integrates the two realms- of work and family, into a more flexible environment, and attains meaningful life and happiness through the importance of family welfare (Zaiton, Dollard, & Winefield, 2010). Furthermore, public sector employees are expected to have different level of work-family conflict experience with respect to their demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, age, education level and marital status), considering the different perception of work-family conflict that result from the different roles in the workplace and at home (Nurnazirah, Samsiah, Zurwina, & Fauziah, 2015). Therefore, this current study is a step in the direction to fill the gap in literatures regarding work-family conflict and family-work conflict, namely, in relation to demographic characteristics.

## Work-Family Conflict

The conflict between work and family role have been conceptualised based on role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). The concept of role theory is used to understand the inter-role conflict that occurs because of the inability of an individual to fulfill work and family role expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). The work-family conflict has been defined as "a form of inter-role conflict where pressures from the work and family domains are incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Work-family conflict has been identified into three types of conflicts, namely time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behaviour-based conflict (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Time-based conflict refers to the conflict that arises when the time devoted to one role, limit the time available to participate in another role. Strain-based conflict denotes the mental and emotional strain demands of work and family role which are not compatible. While behaviour-based conflict occurs when specific behaviour required in one role is incompatible in another role.

Additionally, the work-family conflict has been conceptualised into bi-directional influence between work and family roles (Amstad et al., 2011; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). This conceptualisation is based on work-family domain and should be assessed separately because each one of its directions may have a unique set of consequences (Whiston & Cinamon, 2015). Previously, the work-family conflict has been identified as two bidirectional domains with a few terms such as Work-family conflict (WFC) and Family-work conflict (FWC) or Work Interference Family (WIF) and Family Interference Work (FIW) (Frone, 2003). In particular, Work-family conflict denotes work role where there is interference by family responsibilities while Family-work conflict is where family role is interfered by work responsibilities.

### Work-Family Conflict in Malaysia

The study on work-family conflict has explored areas in various dimensions such as organisation-related aspects in terms of working hours, role ambiguity and role overload (NurIzzaty, Azman, Nurul, Sholihien, & Zulkefli, 2016; Surena & Sabitha, 2011) along with familial aspects such as spouse support (Ahmad, Che, & Jamal, 2010), parental demand (Azzat & O'Driscoll, 2012) and marital satisfaction (Mahayudin & Azahari, 2015), as well as the individual aspects such as demographic characteristics (gender, age and marital status) (Azzat, Noor, & Siti, 2013; Siti, Siti, Azizah, Hamidah, & Ishak, 2011).

Hence, the study on the effects of work-family conflict such as effects on turnover intention, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being are also explored (Aazami, Shamsuddin, & Akmal, 2015; Choi, Anisa, Tan, & Goh, 2016; Sim & Sopian, 2012; Siti et al., 2011). However, there are very few studies have been established on the differences between demographic characteristics with respect to work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the differences between each of the demographic factors and the variables of work and family conflict, with specific regard to the employees in the Malaysian public sector.

As mentioned above, extensive research has been conducted to measure the antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict (Sav, Harris, & Sebar, 2013). Thus, it is worth noting that all the studies have been conducted within the different settings, few of the studies conducted so far have focused on the relative influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, education level and marital status on work-family conflict with reference to the public sector, in particular in government organizations. Therefore, within these contexts, this study seeks to fill these identified gaps in the literature.

### Demographic Characteristics

#### *Gender*

Demographic variables in this research include gender, age, education level and marital status. In regards to gender, in a conservative paradigm of gender-based labor, a female employee is responsible for the family and the men employees are assumed to hold the role of the breadwinner (Boyar, Huang, & Xu, 2014; Duxbury & Higgins, 1993). While some studies noted that females experience work-family conflict more often and at a higher level, some others indicate it has no impact at all (Frone, 2003).

According to Eby et al., (2005), there is still no consensus on the possibilities of gender differences in the amount of work-family conflict experience. A recent study conducted by Coyle, Leer, Schroeder and Fulcher(2015) found that there is no significant influence of gender on work-family conflict. The finding suggests that both genders must cope with two roles in the family domain and labour force which does not correspond with each other.

In regards to family-work conflict, women are found to have greater family-work conflict than men. This is proven by Grandey, Cordeiro and Crouter's (2005) study among dual-earner couples. However, the previous study has also found that there are no differences in gender and family-work conflict. For instance, a study conducted by Lu et al.(2008) and Lu et al.(2009) find male and female have no significant differences when it comes to family-work conflict in Taiwan. Conclusively, from this review it has been shown that gender has no significant difference on work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

#### *Age*

One of the individual difference variables that have received attention is employees' age (Matthews, Bulger, & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). This study suggests that age difference may be a factor in the perceptions of work-family conflict. Based on the previous literature, age has been found to have no significant effect on work-family conflict.

An example of this is the study that has been conducted by Qu and Zhao(2012), where the result indicates that there is no difference between the respondent's age and work-family conflict. Similarly, in a more recent study by Handini, Haryoko and Yulianto (2016), the authors have found that age categories have no influence on work-family conflict.

In the case of family-work conflict, the previous study has also found that age does not have any significant effects on family-work conflict. This is evident in the case of Qu and Zhao (2012) among sales managers in the hotel industry. In a more recent study, Dartey-Baah (2015) also supports that age categories have no differences with family-work conflict.

#### *Education*

Previous studies on the demographic characteristics such as education level have shown no consensus on the results. For instance, a study conducted by Beigi, Ershadi, and Shirmohammadi (2012) has identified that among operational personnel, education has no effect on work-family conflict. Likewise, in a more recent study by Kan and Yu (2016) it is discovered that there is no difference between education level and work-family conflict among front-line employees.

Moreover, with regard to family-work conflict, the previous study has only focused on education differences pertaining to work-family conflict (Hao, Wang, Liu, Wu, & Wu, 2016; Sahibzada, 2006); this study will attempt to investigate the significant difference of education level on family-work conflict.

#### *Marital Status*

Marital status is considered one of the most important demographic variables in the literature on work-family conflict (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011). The relationship between marital status and work-family conflict is unclear (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009). Married individuals are found to experience more work-family conflict than an unmarried individual. This is due to single individuals having more flexibility in the use of time and energy with fewer family obligations (Beigi et al., 2012).

The previous study has stated that marital status does not make any differences in work-family conflict. For example, in a meta-analysis study by Byron (2005) on the antecedents of work-family conflict, marital status shows no difference in work-family conflict. In a more recent study, Jamadin et al.(2015) also supports that marital status has no effect on work-family conflict among administrator in a semi-government organization.

In terms of family-work conflict, the previous study has also found that there are no differences between single and married employees of family-work conflict (Zhao, Mattila, & Ngan, 2014).The study revealed that single and married employees suffered from different type of stress due to spill overs between work roles and social life.

#### **Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional research design. The main advantage of using this approach is it can help researchers to collect accurate data, and to avoid the occurrence of bias as well as to improve the quality of the data collected (Creswell, 2013). The study was carried out among 66 working professionals in Putrajaya. The respondents are public administrators working in federal government. The reason for choosing public administrator in Putrajaya is that Putrajaya serves as the federal administrative centre of Malaysia. For the study purpose, public administrators are chosen based on their similar work scope, that is in executing the country's development strategies, including strengthening the administrative functions, social infrastructures and economic performance (Mohamad, Nur Izzati, Siti, & Rusnah, 2013).

The data were collected through survey questionnaires that were distributed personally to their respective workplace organisation. This was done to ensure that the return rate of the questionnaires would be higher. Hence, around 100 questionnaires were distributed to one of the ministries in the Malaysian federal government. Out of 100 questionnaires, a total of 66 usable valid questionnaires had been obtained. As a result, the response rate reached 66%.

The survey questionnaires consist of two parts: first, work-family conflict was measured by using the instrument developed by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams(2000) with 18-items. The response was measured using a six-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Examples of items were, "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like" and "It is difficult for me to relax when I am away from my work". The Cronbach's Alpha value for the entire instrument score was above 0.874 which was considered as good (Nunnally, 1978).

Second, the next section of the questionnaires consists of demographic information such as gender, age, marital status and education level of the employees. For example, gender is categorized into male and female, age groups comprise of 20 - 29 years old, 30 - 39 years old, 40 - 49 years old and 50 years old and above. Education is measured with a four-category level, ranging from secondary level to doctorate level (PhD). Lastly, marital status is categorized into single, married, separated, divorced and widowed.

#### **Results**

##### *Demographic characteristics*

The sample consisted of 66 working public administrators with a 100% returned rate for the questionnaire. As per Table 1, the respondents consisted of 44 females (66.7%) and 22 males (33.3%). Majority of the respondents were Malays who made up a total of 61 persons (92.4%), this was followed with 3 persons (4.5%) of others races and 2 Chinese (3.0%). Hence, there are 41 (62.1%) respondents around the age of 30 to 39 years old made up the majority, this was followed by 13 (19.7%) respondents age 20 to 29 years old, and the lowest percentage was made up of 40 to 49 years old with 11 persons (16.7%), and 1 (1.5%) respondent representing 50 years old and above.

The majority- 43 (65.2%) respondents are married as compared to 22 (1.5%) single employees. However, there are only one respondent (1.5%) with a divorced status. 39 (59.1%) respondents have a Bachelor degree, follow by 27 (40.9%) with a Master degree. Lastly, 22 (33.8%) respondents have been working in the organisation for more than 10 years, followed by 21 persons (31.8%) who have 6 to 9 years of tenure. Hence, 17 persons (25.8%) only have 1 to 2 years of tenure. Lastly, there are only 6 persons (9.1%) with 3 to 5 years tenure in the organisation.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics**

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	22	33.3
	Female	44	66.7
Age	20 to 29 years old	13	19.7
	30 to 39 years old	41	62.1
	40 to 49 years old	11	16.7
	50 years old and above	1	1.5
Race	Malay	61	92.4
	Chinese	2	3.0
	Indian	0	0
	Others	3	4.5
Marital Status	Single	22	33.3
	Married	43	65.2
	Separated	0	0
	Divorced	1	1.5
	Widowed	0	0
Education Level	Secondary (SPM)	0	0
	Diploma/Certificate/STPM	0	0
	Bachelor Degree	39	59.1
	Master Degree	27	40.9
	PhD	0	0
Organisation Tenure	1 to 2 years	17	25.8
	3 to 5 years	6	9.1
	6 to 9 years	21	31.8
	10 years and above	22	33.3

### Gender

#### *Gender and work-family conflict*

**Table 2: Independent T-test according to gender and work-family conflict**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Work-family Conflict	Male	22	2.868	-1.496	64	0.853
	Female	44	3.257	-	-	-

Note: The mean difference is significant at values 0.05

Table 2 presents the t-test result according to gender. The result indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of work-family conflict based on gender ( $t(-1.496) = 0.853, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that gender did not affect the level of work-family conflict among public administrators in the public sector. The findings is similar to the research done by Nasurdin et al., (2013), Panatik et al., (2011) as well as by Erkmen and Esen, (2014).

*Gender and family-work conflict***Table 3: Independent T-test according to gender and family-work conflict**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Family-work Conflict	Male	22	2.343	-0.204	64	0.662
	Female	44	2.386	-	-	-

The mean difference is significant at values 0.05

Moreover, results also identify that gender has no significant difference with family-work conflict ( $t(-0.204) = 0.662, p > 0.05$ ). This result supports the findings by previous studies such as Lu et al., (2008) and Lu et al., (2009). Taken together, these results suggest that there is no significant difference between gender on both work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

Overall, the findings show that there are no differences between male and female employees on the level of work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Some studies (Anafarta & Kuruüzüm, 2012) has found evidence proposing differences between genders on work-family conflict, however, some studies conclude that males and females employees experience work-family conflict at similar levels (Beigi et al., 2012).

The fact that no difference is found between work-family conflict as experience by males and females could be explained by the result from the transformation of the gender role through socio-economic development in Malaysia. Specifically, male and female employees participate more in work and family commitments respectively (Aizzat et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that both gender have similar level of work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

**Age***Age and work-family conflict***Table 4: ANOVA between Age categories and work family conflict**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work-Family Conflict	Between Groups	2.210	3	0.737	0.720	0.544
	Within Groups	63.426	62	1.023	-	-
	Total	65.636	65			

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

One-way ANOVA was utilised to investigate the difference in the respondents' age in work-family conflict. Table 4 shows the results for work-family conflict ( $F(0.720) = 0.544, p > 0.05$ ). The results show that there is no significant difference between the respondents' age and work-family conflict. This findings is supported by previous research conducted by Allen and Finkelstein(2014), Handini et al., (2016) and Ahmad, Nek Kamal, and Aizzat (2011).

*Age and family-work conflict***Table 5: ANOVA between Age categories and family-work conflict**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Family-work Conflict	Between Groups	3.484	3	1.161	1.882	0.142
	Within Groups	38.257	62	0.617	-	-
	Total	41.741	65	-	-	-

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

Similarly, no significant differences were found between age and family-work conflict. Based on the result, it is found that  $t(1.882)$  with  $p$ -value  $> 0.05$  (0.142), it can be concluded that age has no influence on family-work conflict.

As a conclusion, age does not have any difference on work-family conflict and family-work conflict. The reason is because work-family conflict and family-work conflict can happen on younger and older employees. This study confirmed the findings by Abdul Wahab (2005) who investigated the role of demographic data such as age and work-family conflict in government organizations. The author also found that age did not have any significant difference on work-family conflict.

**Education***Education and work-family conflict*

**Table 6: ANOVA between Education level**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work-Family Conflict	Between Groups	1.359	1	1.359	1.353	0.249
	Within Groups	64.277	64	1.004		
	Total	65.636	65			

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Education level and work-family conflict. The result indicates that there is no significant difference on education level on the respondent's work-family conflict. Specifically, the results reported that  $F(1.353) = 0.249$ ,  $p > 0.05$  indicated that work-family conflict was not influenced by education levels. The findings are similar with the previous study conducted by Beigi et al., (2012) and Kan and Yu (2016).

#### *Education and family-work conflict*

**Table 7: ANOVA between Education level**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Family-work Conflict	Between Groups	.292	1	0.292	0.450	0.505
	Within Groups	41.449	64	0.648		
	Total	41.741	65			

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

Hence, based on the analysis result, education level has been identified to have no significant difference with family-work conflict. According to the analysis, it is indicated that  $F(0.450) = 0.505$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . These results suggest that there is no significant difference between education and work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Correspondingly, similar findings are also reported by Hao et al., (2016) and Sahibzada, (2006).

Based on the findings above, education has no significant difference for both work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This is due to the fact that education level does not affect employees work and family responsibilities; their work responsibilities and the position within the organization. The employees have more resources and support, they are also in a position to learn new skills and to become skilled in managing their work and family responsibilities (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009).

#### **Marital Status**

##### *Marital Status and work-family conflict*

**Table 8: ANOVA between Marital status and work-family conflict**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work-Family Conflict	Between Groups	3.662	2	1.831	1.861	0.164
	Within Groups	61.973	63	0.984		
	Total	65.636	65			

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

Table 8 shows the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Marital status and work-family conflict. The results indicate that the marital status of the respondents is not significantly related to the level of work-family conflict. In particular, the results indicate that no difference has occurred in work-family conflict ( $F(1.861) = 0.164$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) across the marital status between the singles and those who are married respectively. The result is similar to the study conducted by Erdamar and Demirel, (2014).

##### *Marital Status and family-work conflict*

**Table 9: ANOVA between Marital status and work-family conflict**

Variables		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Family-work Conflict	Between Groups	1.149	2	0.575	0.892	0.415
	Within Groups	40.591	63	0.644		
	Total	41.741	65			

Note: The mean difference is significant at values  $p < 0.05$

Hence, the ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences between marital status and family-work conflict. From the analysis findings, family-work conflict appear to be unaffected by marital status ( $F(0.892) = 0.415$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This result is aligned with a previous study conducted by Zhao et al. (2014).

From the result presented above, marital status does not have significant differences on both work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This can be inferred that unmarried employees tend to have more flexibility in using their time and energy and have less family obligations (Beigi et al., 2012). As for married employees, the employment status of the spouse is potentially an important influence in family-work conflict (Fu & Shaffer, 2001). Non-working spouses will allow the employed partner to concentrate more fully on his/her work. This will help employees to manage their work-family conflict and family-work conflict. As a conclusion, there is no difference between marital statuses towards both conflicts.

### Discussions

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of demographic characteristics towards work-family conflict and family-work conflict in the public sector in Malaysia. The results found that there were no significant differences between gender, age, education and marital status on work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Although previous literature has reported that demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, education and marital status) do make a significant difference on work-family conflict and family-work conflict (Benjamin, 2015; Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Siti et al., 2011), contrary to this expectation, this study found no differences among the public administrators in Putrajaya. This finding is similar to the previous study that has been conducted by Burke, Koyuncu and Fiksenb(2013) where the researchers have concluded that personal demographics are unrelated to both work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

As mentioned in the earlier section, given the increased participation of women employees and dual-earner families, increased job demands due to rapid changes in the competitive environment in the organisations have dramatically shifted the balance of job and family obligation. According to Hoobler, Hu and Wilson (2010), individuals are encouraged to be the "ideal worker" while they are simultaneously expected to be the "ideal parent/caregiver". A study conducted by Abdul Wahab (2005) amongst 200 employees in government organization found no significant difference in demographic characteristics towards work-family conflict and family-work conflict. A possible justification is offered by Aminah (2007) in her study on family-friendly employment policy in Government organization. It is reported that the government has provided three types of family-friendly facilities, namely 1) flexible work arrangements, 2) family care benefits, and 3) childcare facilities and related benefits. However, the implementation of this family-friendly policies is still in the earlier stage (Aminah, 2007). This, therefore, makes it a bit difficult to measure the difference of demographic characteristics on work-family conflict among employees in the government organisation.

Finally, this result can also be explained culturally. Although demographic role (e.g. gender, age, education, marital status) has significant differences on perceived work-family conflict in individualistic countries (e.g. United States and Canada) (Billing et al., 2014), the results are not significant for collectivistic country such as Malaysia suggesting that cultural norms moderate the effect (Azzat & O'Driscoll, 2012). In western culture, work and family relationship are being separated (Zaiton et al., 2010). Unlike Eastern cultures such as in Malaysia, Malaysian employees integrate the two realms work and family where the family domain is more flexible than the work domain (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Family welfare is given utmost importance to attain meaningful life and happiness. Therefore, work is usually supported by the family members and is seldom perceived as a disturbance to family life (Aryee, 1999).

### Managerial Implications

Although this study was conducted in Malaysia, particularly in a public organisation, the findings can serve as a reference and as guidelines for other organisations in Eastern cultures with predominantly collectivist values. In regards to work-family conflict, organisations should encourage employees to utilised family-friendly policies as it has been shown that the policies can improve the balance of work and family commitment (Sabitha & Surena, 2017). The initiative towards implementing the family working culture can be successful with the practice and support by the management and supervisor within the organisation (Azzat & O'Driscoll, 2012; Allen, 2001).

The implementation of flexible working hours seems to reduce work-family conflict. Flexible working hours will help the individual balances work and family responsibilities, thus, enhancing capability and performance at work (Siti et al., 2011; Surena & Sabitha, 2011). Furthermore, organisations need to provide employees with the resource they need to meet the demand of the job. Hence, to minimize family-work conflict, support from government and organisations in providing child care initiative should be encouraged (Zaiton et al., 2010). Additionally, child-care centre with facilities will support the work-family culture and assist employees with children and thus reduces stress at work (Huffman, Culbertson, Henning, & Goh, 2013).

This study also provides a better understanding of the relationship among demographic characteristics of the work-family domain. Organisations must give an important intention in striking a balance between home and work roles in order to help their employees (Wan Edura, Mohamad Sahari, Azura, & Izhairi, 2012). This study is practically important in the sense of demographic revolutionary changes such as dual-earner career, technology advancement and women participation in the organisations. This will help the organisation to understand these relationships to provide initiatives to attract and retain the workforce. Moreover, it will also help employers to delineate important management implications for the development and implementation of work-family balance strategies (Sim & Sopian, 2012).

### Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, this study used a self-administered questionnaire survey from a single source and used a cross-sectional design. This is difficult to determine the causality between the variables due to data that were collected at one point. A longitudinal design would make a better demonstration of the causal relationships between the variables.

Second, this study is limited to only one organization. Thus, it will limit the generalizability of the study. The findings cannot be generalized to other work categories or sectors that do not deal with providing and delivering services to the public. Hence, if the study had been conducted in several organisations, it might have yielded different results.

Lastly, a significant albeit small sample size had been utilised. The findings of this study may only be generalised to the public administrator working in the government sector. Caution must be exercised in order to generalise the findings in this study in another context in the study area, as well as outside the public sector.

### **Conclusion**

The main purpose of the study was to explore the influence of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education level and marital status on work-family conflict and family-work conflict among public administrators in Putrajaya, Malaysia. This study found few antecedents from the previous literature in the Malaysian settings that could be examined further in future research. Correspondingly, the findings of this study suggest that demographic characteristics do not have any direct influence on work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Thus, future research may want to include other work-related and family-related variables with a bigger sample size and this should not be limited to public administrators who are working in government organizations.