

## Determinants of Work-Life Balance: A Cross-Cultural Review of Selected Asian Countries

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### Abstract

Work-life balance has been recently viewed as one of the critical issues about organisational policies across different cultures and regions. The earlier studies of work-life balance have focused predominantly in the Western and developed nations with slight attention to the experience of work-life balance among Asian countries. Researchers have also paid little attention to examine work-life balance from a cross-cultural perspective, especially in Asian countries. The principal purpose of the present study is to analyse the available literature on the work-life balance among selected Asian countries. The focus of the present study is to identify the determinants of work-life balance and scrutinise the highly significant determinants of work-life balance across different cultures and regions. Based on identified determinants, it will suggest suitable measures to improve the most prevailing determinant of work-life balance among Asian countries. Further, the current study will also identify the current state of work-life balance focusing on theory, logic and methodology.

The methods of the study involve secondary data to find out determinants of work-life balance conducted in India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore and China; and it will compare the effectiveness of determinants of work-life balance to these regions. The data will help to describe how employees perceive work-life balance and why they engage in paid work, and what approaches are being adopted by these countries to balance work life in the context of varying economic, political, cultural, social and family conditions. The findings of present research and analyses will provide scholars with a complete understanding of the state of cross-cultural work-life balance and offer recommendations for future research that will undoubtedly facilitate theoretical advancement.

**Keywords:** Work-Life Balance, Cross-Culture, Review, Policy, Asia

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## Introduction

The world is in the middle of the most startling transformation in the study of work and family since the Industrial Revolution. Work and family are the most consequential domains of lives. It involves both influencing and being influenced by participation in the life domain (Edwards, & Rothbard, 2000; Frone, 2003). The relationship between participation in these two spheres of life has become ever more vital with the massive ingress of women into the labour force engendering a consequent increase in the number of dual earners couple and constant juggle between work and family. It has drawn a distinct demographical and sociological impression entirely for families and organisations worldwide. These demographical and sociological transformations influence the role that the individuals postulate within the family and also at work.

However, the term work-life balance has received remarkable interest from researchers worldwide because women's participation in the labour force has been increased globally, combined with the predominance of dual-career couples and single-parent families (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005). It has been viewed that work and family issues are unpredictably cognate to values, cultural beliefs and norms (Lobel, 1991; Schein, 1984). Hence, researchers have repetitively emphasised on cross-cultural studies to understand the diversified experience of people around the world.

Most of the cross-cultural studies emphasised on cultural differences and focused on how employees and employers of different countries deal with issues of work-life balance. The issues of work-life balance were discussed among developed countries, but only a little attention was paid to analyse the situation of work-life balance in non-western developing nations, especially among selected Asian countries.

The facts and findings of recently conducted studies among Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore and China have revealed changes in gender roles, family

patterns, and demographic structure (Pradhan, 2016). Further, it was observed that everyday survival has become difficult for the people of developing nations, especially where longer working hours is essential. In such circumstances, any type of work-life conflict is inevitable. It is the well-experienced fact that every culture carries particular societal elements that can affect how employees can experience work-family balance which is evident from the western countries where the structure of the family used to be a nuclear and distant one. Whereas among Asian nations, the structure of the family is extended in which people lived nearby (Spector, Cooper, Poelmans, Allen, & O'Driscoll, 2004). Hence, family demand and support system differ among different family structures (Joplin, Francesco, Shaffer, & Lau, 2003). Consequently, the changes in this state of affairs have brought new social problems among these Asian countries and led to demands for social policy reform (Chan, 2006; Croissant, 2004; Ku & Jones Finer, 2007). This is due to these new social issues, a reunion of work and family domain has become the most burning issues among Asian countries.

Therefore, keeping in mind the changing pattern of work-life balance and its effect on increasing work-family conflict among employees of different sectors as well as different regions, and their cultural influence on work-life balance, the present research is aimed to analyse the most prevailing determinants of work-life balance across selected Asian countries.

The present research endeavour will outline the objectives of the study, followed by a conceptual framework of work-life balance. Further, it will review the scenario of work-life balance among Asian Countries. It will also focus on the approaches to study work-life balance in these regions. Moreover, the study will analyse several determinants of work-life balance in selected Asian regions based on the previous studies and their findings in this regard. Finally, this research will conclude with the most prevailing determinants of work-life balance in each selected Asian countries, with their implications

in current organisational growth, change and development.

### Objectives

The purposes of selecting these countries are of two folds based on similarity and differences; first, these countries of the Asian region differ geographically, linguistically, politically, environmentally and culturally. Second, the employees working in these countries have many similar characteristics, such as common goals, hierarchical structure, common values, common grounds, a common approach to problem-solving and business relationships. Hence, keeping in mind the similarities and differences, these countries have been taken into consideration for research.

The major objective of the present study is to identify the determinants of work-life balance among employees of selected Asian countries like India, Pakistan, China, Malaysia and Singapore. Moreover, the study will also focus on:

- To identify the most prevalent determinants of work-life balance among employees of selected countries.
- To compare the determinants of work-life balance among selected countries.
- To determine the cultural influences on the work-life balance among employees of selected countries.
- To draw a theoretical base and transform into practical implications so that the management and policymakers would utilise them into their policy formation and get benefits out of this research.

### Conceptual Framework of Work-Life Balance

Research on work and family was started in the United States in the 1970s. It was Kanter (1977) who identified the need for organisational and social policies to address the intersections of work and family life. Ransome (2007) dichotomised the concept and viewed "Work" as a paid employment and "Life" as everything outside of the formal paid employment. On the other hand, the expression "Work-Life Balance" was re-instituted as a work-life means of promoting inclusivity for employees with and

without family responsibilities (Barnett, 1999; Pitt Catsouphe & Googins, 2005).

Early research on Work-life balance concentrated on employees and their commitments towards family members bringing out the execution like 'family friendly' organisational policies (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007). Skinner & Pocock (2007) took more comprehensive views of Work-life balance to incorporate all employees in paid work and to include all activities beyond paid work. Moreover, Pocock, Williams, & Skinner (2007) contend that work and family are not separate domain which can be balanced by the employee though it is comprised of permeable boundaries rather than the expression 'balance' or 'interaction' is acclimated to show these permeable boundaries and the multitude of component which can influence Work-life balance.

Several types of research have focused more on the conflict from work than non-work activities, or they have 'negative spillover' (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) with work-family conflict which is characterised as emotional and behavioural demands of work and non-work roles and responsibilities (Allan, Loudoun, & Peetz, 2007). These researches have indicated an elevated level of 'spillover' from work to non-work actions resulting in less time spent with family and friends (Pocock et al., 2007).

Numerous studies have shown the interaction effect between work and family balance and its effect on physical, psychological health and wellbeing. For instance, Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton (2000) revealed that work-family conflict leads to increased work-related stress, less appetite, anxiety, tension, fatigue, depression, increased family distress and job burnout. On the other hand, other research recommends that a healthy Work-life balance atmosphere results in increased productivity, high employee morale, commitment to the organisation and less absenteeism (Allen, 2001; McDonald, Brown, & Bradley, 2005).

There are several theories which provide guiding principles to work-life balance research. This includes Role Theory proposed by Kahn, Wolfe,

Quinn, Diedrick Snoek, & Rosenthal (1964), which introduces that an employee has various roles to play related to their life. In this regard, it is relevant that inter-role conflict happens when there is a difficulty in fulfilling competing and conflicting demands of different roles (Allen, 2001; Kahn et al., 1964).

Conservation of Resources theory by Hobfoll (1989) recommends that employees request to get and maintain various resources of Work-life balance. According to Work-life balance point of view, when the employees in the work domain experience more conflict, it leaves less resource in the family domain that will lead to stress (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Hence, the conceptual framework of work-life balance has explored various dimensions of the concept and their effects on maintaining a good work-life balance. Further, this study will selectively focus on the research conducted in selected Asian Countries to highlight the dimensions which are constituent of work-life balance in the organisations of these regions. In the following sections, we review the work-life balance among selected Asian countries.

### **Review of Work-Life Balance among Selected Asian Countries**

Work-life balance has always been a consequential contributor to the research of Behavioral Sciences. Indeed, it is a concept which includes proper prioritising between “work” (ambition and career) and “life” (pleasure, leisure, health and family). Work-life balance is nothing but balancing of the distant roles played by the employees. The balancing can be accomplished through prioritising activities. Research conducted on the work-life balance among organisations situated in the Asian region revealed a different picture based on determinants associated with maintaining a work-life balance.

### **Determinants of Work Life balance in India**

In the Indian context, researchers have revealed several determinants of work-life balance. Aryee et al., (2005) examined the antecedents and outcomes of the facilitation and conflict components of fourfold taxonomy of work-

family balance among employed parents in India to assess the influence of work-family vs family-work on work-life balance and type of effect conflict vs facilitation. Findings of the study revealed that diverse processes are responsible for the conflict and facilitation components like work overload were emphatically related to work-life conflict whereas Job involvement was positively related to work-family facilitation and negatively related to the family-work conflict. Additionally, there is a positive relationship between family support and family-work facilitation, whereas family involvement, and family-work facilitation was negatively related. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that work-family facilitation was significantly related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Chawla & Sondhi (2011) directed an exploratory survey on 75 school teachers and 75 BPO (Business Processing Outsourcing) women professionals to find out the significant contributor to work-life balance. Both sectors were analysed on six sub-scales that is, organisational commitment, work exhaustion, job autonomy, perceived work overload, the fairness of rewards, and work-family conflict. The findings of the analysis revealed that job autonomy, perceived workload and organisational commitment are the most prominent factors which are responsible for the work-life balance of an employee. Further, the study emphasised that supportive workplace help employees manage their multiple roles as well as enhance their work life.

Rajadhyaksha (2012) investigated variables on work and family issues in India, and her findings indicated that gender equality, flexibility, stress reduction and child care are major determinants where initiatives have been likely to be offered. She raised her concern that organisational work-life interventions in India are diverse and divergent, and has focused primarily on the formal sector. Even there is no underlying government policy which addresses work and family issues across various sectors, especially the unorganised one. The outcome of the study revealed that MNCs working in India offered

work-life benefits programs and supported the career development of their employees by providing flexibility for the reduction of stress and work interruptions and enhancement of production. Moreover, the study exclusively revealed the associations between work-family issues and socioeconomic context of employees.

Another study conducted by Saminathan & Kumar (2017) revealed that strategies adopted by employees in managing work-life balance entirely depend upon the situation and psychological makeup of an individual especially women which is based on the attitude of women employees in the Indian context. In order to ease work-life balance for both new working mothers and women who are already mothers of two children, on 11 August 2016, the Government of India amended the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and increased the maternity leave for new working mothers from earlier 12 weeks to 26 weeks, but a woman with two children would be able to avail 12 weeks of maternity leave (Singh, 2016). This bill became an Act since 01 April 2017. In addition, this bill also has facilities of 'work from home option' for the new mothers and incorporation of 'childcare facilities' by employers with 50 or more employees (Singh, 2016) so the Indian women can better balance their work-life and "have it all"—career, children, marriage, and financial stability" (Bhattacharyya, 2016, p. 29) without having to leave their job to look after family (Bhattacharyya, 2009; 2013). Now we move on to discuss the work-life balance determinants of Pakistan.

### **Determinants of Work-Life Balance in Pakistan**

In the context of Pakistan, Malik & Khalid (2008) has conducted a study on employees of 17 different banks of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to present the analysis of work to life, life to work and work hour adjustment. The study indicated that long working hours and lack of social support are significantly responsible for the work-life imbalance. In the same vein, the study of Syed, Memon, Goraya, Schalk, & Freese (2016) indicate that Pakistani bank employees work for longer hours, as their working hours are not mentioned in the formal contract and are

extended beyond the working hours considered as official banking hours. The reason given for the long working hours is "work overload". The findings of the research concluded that high expectation of work in the form of workload and longer working hours are not directly related to the work-family conflict. Conflict arises when expectation increases simultaneously from both domains. Hence, the opinion of management dealing with work-family balance practices differs from the employee's perspective as the management needs to build an employment relationship jointly (psychological contract) to accomplish the requirement of both the organisations and the employees. This study recommends that managers must acknowledge the significance of work-life benefits and psychological contracts by accepting their obligations towards their employees. This has especially become more important in an existing situation of work expectation and changing family demographics.

On the other hand, a study on married administrative staff members of the University of the Punjab Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore by Ullah (2010) was conducted to analyse the relationship between supportive workplace and work-family conflict and use the supportive workplace as a coping resource for overcoming work-family conflict. The study contended that supportive workplace plays an essential role in managing work-conflict.

Rehman & Azam Roomi (2012) found that achieving work-life balance is one of the most critical drivers to start own businesses among other motivational drivers as own businesses provide freedom, flexibility and control to deal with the work, family and social obligations. This study also identifies distinct factors which influence women entrepreneur's work and family roles in the specific Pakistani cultural environment. Further, it also identifies that gender biases, insufficient time family obligations, social and cultural norms as the most vital challenges in a patriarchal Islamic society encountered by women to achieve balance.

### **Work-Life Balance in China**

In China, a study conducted by Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi (2009) on 189 dual-career couples to examine antecedents and outcomes in connection to a fourfold categorisation of work-family balance that constitutes direction of influence and types of effect. The outcome of the study explains that working hours, childcare responsibilities, organisational family-friendly policy and salary were significantly related to the conflict component of work-life balance while spouse support, new parental experience and family-friendly supervisors and co-workers had significant positive effects on the facilitation component of work-life balance. Further, the findings of the study generally supported the relative salience of family and work antecedents and resources about work-life balance. In contrast to the adverse impact of work-family conflict, work to family facilitation had constant significant effects on work and family attitudes.

In a comparative study on Chinese and American employees revealed that that American employees experienced higher family demand, which will have a more significant impact on work-family conflict, whereas the Chinese employees experienced higher work demand, which will have the more significant impact on work-family conflict (Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zou, 2000). These distinctions are primarily due to the relative values placed on work and family time in the two nations. Employees in China are sacrificing their family time for work because they perceive work as self-sacrifice for the benefit of the family or as a short-term cost incurred to gain long-term profit, whereas in America sacrificing family time for work is generally viewed as an inability to care for significant others in ones.

However, Lu, Wang, Siu, Lu, & Du (2015) observed that mediating effects of work-home interference on the relationships between work demand and work outcome are found to be effective commitment, job satisfaction and job performance. The result implies that work-home interference mediated the relationships between job satisfaction, work demand and affective commitment. However, the result did

not indicate intervening effect between job performance and work demand.

### **Work-Life Balance in Malaysia**

In a study conducted on Malaysian working women by Noor (2004) examined the role of salience in the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being. The findings of the study illustrate a direct impact of role salience in the prediction of job satisfaction. Work salience was significantly related to job satisfaction. However, contrary to predictions, work salience exacerbated the negative impact of work interface with family conflict, rather than family interface with work conflict on well-being.

In another study, Fung, Ahmad, & Omar (2012) developed a mediation model in which they include optimism and self-efficacy (dispositional factors) as antecedents, job satisfaction as the outcome and work-family enrichment as the mediator. The model is based on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the model of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and the social exchange theory. This model introduces the mechanism of how dispositional factors could influence job satisfaction among employees through work-family enrichment. Projection of the model indicated that optimism and self-efficacy has a direct effect on job satisfaction. Further, this model also proposed that work-family enrichment mediates the relationship between both the dispositional factors and the outcome (optimism, job satisfaction and self-efficacy).

Similarly, the purpose of the study conducted by Razak, Omar, & Yunus (2010) is to investigate the relationship between parental demand, spouse support and family involvement with work interference and family interference. They have concluded that spouse support has a significant influence on family interference with work. The researcher explained the result that spouse of the medical officers had accepted the challenges and expectations of their spouse (medical officers) works and they are ready to play a more prominent role in the family relations. Further, the study found that parental demand is significantly and positively related to both work interference and family interference. The

findings of the research concluded that as the doctors have a heavy workload and close involvement; hence, they are not able to find leisure time to support to fulfil the needs of their children actively.

Moreover, the findings also revealed that family involvement was extensively related to work interference but not with family interference. As the doctors are supposed to be highly committed towards their work, hence they are unable to get enough time to spend with their family, especially when the family needs the time. Therefore, they do not use to stay with them as and when the family required their company.

Chang (2013) also supported and viewed work-life balance as “being able to perform or fulfil role obligation in work and family domains”. He has also revealed that work-life balance is achieved when work duties are fulfilled, and at the same time, household affairs are well taken care of. The work-life balance of the families in Singapore are devoted in the next section.

### **Work-Life Balance in Singapore**

A study conducted by Larson, Sheffield, Trail, & Hill (2008) to analyse the influence of the work-family interface on fertility in Singapore. The principal purpose of the study was to identify how families with different numbers of children differ with regards to the features of work-life and family life, and to explore which personal, family, work, and work-family variables differ with those who desire more children from those who do not desire more than one child. Findings of the study yielded an exciting result that persons with one child reported the highest work-family conflict as well as family work conflict than the individuals with two or more children. The reason can be the transitioning to parenthood, which requires significant adjustment between work and family life. This study also emphasised that Singaporeans were not inclined to achieve their ideal family size due to financial issues.

Further income and education are significantly related to individuals’ desires for children. Furthermore, persons who have more children

generally have lower education and income. However, flexibility at the workplace was the topmost concern among Singaporeans. Thus, improvements in the facilities of the workplace like increased flexibility may potentially increase the fertility rate among Singaporeans, although, it was not related to family size or childbearing intentions.

Fackrell, Galovan, Hill, & Holmes (2013) have conducted a study on 102 married women entrepreneurs in Singapore and concluded that there is a need for more significant spouse support, flexible working hours and full day school to alleviate work-family conflict.

Another survey conducted by Ahmad & Skitmore (2003) examined the nature of work and family conflict and their effect on managers. The survey indicates that problems do exist in the interface between work and family life, but individuals would gain some earning for family time and job-related issues involving security, flexible working hours and high profile are given more importance than leisure activities and conflicts based on behaviour, time and strain.

### **Approaches of Work-Life Balance**

Work-life balance has been a continuing preoccupation of researchers across disciplines for four decades. Interest in work and family has risen due to changes in the way in which work has been carried out as well as industrialisation and the participation of increasing numbers of women into the world of paid work. Approaches to work and life theories have increasingly been studied based on changing demographics and their impact on work-family life balance and well being of individuals. These are three basic approaches which govern the horizon of work life, which are as follows:

**Utilitarian Approach:** According to the utilitarian approach, work-life imbalance happens only when role investments by people are not equal to net role rewards.

Utilitarian approach discloses competition among roles using the conception of reward and cost in determining levels of role investment (Homans, 1976). Individuals are investing in their roles that maintain a positive balance between

reward and cost. Farrell & Rusbult (1983), in their research, established a positive interaction between job commitment and perceived reward of work along with the significant negative relationship between perceived costs of work and job commitment.

Further, the work-family conflict would be experienced by an individual because of the circumstances (like the birth of a child) when an individual has to invest more (and thus more equally) in the family role. The struggle between work and family roles is unavoidable, where one role will get more importance at the expense of another role. Thus, it is evident that the relation between the utilitarian approach and role conflict models of work and family life are inevitable (Goode, 1960; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979).

**Institutional Approach:** Institutional approach proposed that organisations implement family-friendly programs to get validity, but the implementation of programs occurs with little deliberation towards how programs should be operated (Arthur & Cook, 2003). Thus, organisations may execute different programs (such as flextime) without considering the risks associated with operating of those programs.

There are at least three pressures which organisations may experience, which is consistent with the institutional theory. These include normative pressure, mimetic pressure, and coercive pressure (Arthur & Cook, 2003; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Normative pressures suggest that an organisation must adopt a specific family-friendly program to make the organisation legitimate. Mimetic pressures force organisations to change as a result of imitating a competitor, and the organisation seeks validity by “mimicking successful competitors” (Arthur & Cook, 2003, p.233). Coercive pressures are usually government mandated rules which compel organisations to implement family-friendly programs. Consequently, organisations are imposed by operational concerns such as difficulties in ensuring that employees are physically present in the office to respond to customer needs. Apart from that, there is a lack of management support, which encourages

employees to participate in family-friendly programmes.

**Role enhancement approach:** The role enhancement approach depicts work and family as a separate conflicting domain. It was fortified by the dominant corporate culture that unequivocally required family matters to be left at the threshold of the work-place. To be accepted sincerely on the job, women would have to comply with the conventional one-dimensional perspective of men as worker thrones. This dichotomise model is still, unfortunately, a part of the corporate world, and the traditional role assumptions associated with the gender still have a hold on organisations' pattern. Furthermore, the scarcity model of energy is consistent with the predominant management obsession on “face time” as evidence of employee commitment and productivity. Since it is assumed that family roles drain employee's energy reserves, the ideal approach to get the most out of employees is to keep them working for long hours so that they will be inaccessible for family activities.

The work-family interface has been defined as constant tension and continuous conflict, especially for married women employee with children. Every employee is seen as trapped in a zero-sum game in which resources consume in one domain reduce those available in the other domain which certain diminished role quality in the deprived domain (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991).

**Social Identity Approach:** Social identity approach illustrates the way individuals identify themselves and others. This approach believes that people tend to classify themselves and others into different social categories (Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). The theory encircles a person's complete psychological recognition with their social group's members and roles that are presumed meaningful as well as significant in shaping one's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Deaux, 1993). As per this approach, a person's identity is the outcome of several factors, such as values, beliefs and personal experiences, which determines a person's identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).



It is the Supervisors' beliefs and attitudes about help-seeking and help-giving at work, which is suppose to validate how supportive and helpful they are with their employees experiencing work-family conflict. For instance, supervisors who consider that employee should talk to them about their grievances related to work and family and believe that this is a part of their responsibility to support their employees in dealing with their problems are more likely to intervene proactively with employees. Moreover, the supervisor's intervention is also influenced by their work-life encounters. Hence,

these three approaches provide a clear picture of work-life balance in the present scenario of the organisation.

### **Determinants of Work-Life Balance among Selected Asian Countries**

The present study has identified different determinants of work-life balance based on researches conducted in the area. Following tables highlight the determinants found by researchers in their studies conducted in different Asian countries.

**Table 1: Determinants of Work-Life Balance in India**

Authors	Year	WLB Determinants
Samuel Aryee, Hwee Hoon Tan, E. S. Srinivas	2005	Personality, Role involvement, Social support, Work overload, Job satisfaction, Organisational commitment.
Deepak Chawla & Neena Sondhi	2011	Perceived Work Overload, Fairness of Rewards, Job Autonomy, Work Exhaustion, Work-Family Conflict and Turnover Intention.
Ujvala Rajadhyaksha	2011	Gender equality, Flexibility, Stress reduction, Health awareness, Child care
Prasanna Kumar, K. Venkateswara Raju	2014	Organisational climate, Family support, Flexibility, Job satisfaction and Relationship
Dr Sunita Yadav & Dr Reeta Kumar	2017	Occupational-Household Stress, Mental Health, Social Support, Life Stages.

Table 1 highlights the determinants of work-life balance among Indian organisations. It is evident from Table 1 that researchers have identified many determinants that emerged as a component of work-life balance. However, there are few determinants which are found to be common in almost all the research conducted among employees in organisations. These determinants are stress, job satisfaction, workload, flexibility and family support in which job satisfaction and flexibility are found to be the most common determinants of work-life balance among Indian organisations.

Table 2 depicts the common determinants of work-life balance prevalent in Pakistan. It is clear from Table 2 that there are few determinants which are common in almost all the research conducted by different researchers such as working hours (flexibility), family demand and needs. It means that employees in the Pakistani

organisations consider the fulfilment of family needs/ demands as the most critical determinants work-life balance.

Table 3 highlights the crucial determinants of work-life balance among Chinese employees. It is apparent from Table 3 that many determinants emerged as a component of work-life balance among employees in China. The important determinants are work demand, job satisfaction, working hours and social support. Hence, balancing work and life activities are more difficult for Chinese employees as they require managing many aspects of work and family to balance work life.

<b>Table 2: Determinants of Work-life Balance in Pakistan</b>		
Authors	Year	WLB Dimensions
Arooj Malik and Gulfam Khan Khalid	2008	Organisational Culture, Work Hours, Goal Clarity, Family Characteristics, Elder & Child Care and Role Conflict.
Sami Ullah	2010	Supportive workplace and work-family conflict
Sumaira Rehman and Muhammad Azam Roomi	2012	Spouse and family support, Family needs and flexibility, Family background and attitudinal drivers,
Noreen Saher, Tasmia Matloob, Fariya Tahreen, Shazia Safdar Ali and Galya H. Al Sulim	2013	Job type, Work time commitment, job flexibility, job involvement, (work-related factors), number of children, child care arrangements, life-cycle stage (family-related factors) and locus of control, role values, gender role orientation.
Sumaiya Syed, Salman Bashir Memon, Nasreen Anis Goray, M.J.D Schalk, C.Freese	2016	Workload, working hours, psychological contract and family demands.

<b>Table 3: Determinants of Work-Life Balance in China</b>		
Authors	Year	WLB Dimensions
Nini Yang, Chao C. Chen Jaepil Choi And Yimin Zou	2000	Family demand, work demand, no. of dependents, unpaid working hrs, age, gender.
Jia-Fang Lu and Oi-Ling Siu, Paul E. Spector, Kan Shi	2009	First child age, employed a domestic helper, elderly domestic helper, spouse support, working hrs, monthly salary, family friendly policy, family friendly supervisor and coworkers.
Jia Fei Jin, Michael T. Ford, Chih Chieh Chen	2012	Work and Family Role Overload, Social Support, Job Satisfaction, Family Satisfaction and work-family enrichment
Chang-qin Lu and Bei Wang, Oi-ling Siu, Luo Lu and Dan-yang Du	2014	Work demand, Job satisfaction, Job performance and Chinese work value

<b>Table 4: Determinants of Work-Life Balance in Malaysia</b>		
Authors	Year	WLB Dimensions
Aminah Ahmad	1997	Social support and Work-family conflict
Noraini M. Noor	2004	Well-being, Work and family role salience, Work-family conflict, (measured by job satisfaction and symptoms of psychological distress).
Dr.Ahmad Razak, Dr Omar, Dr Jamal Nordin bin Yunus	2010	Parental demand, Spouse support, family involvement, work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW).
Ng Swee Fung, Aminah Ahmad and Zoharah Omar	2012	Optimism, Work-family enrichment, job satisfaction and self-efficacy,
Azelin Aziz And Artemis Chang	2013	Role obligation, role satisfaction, role interference,

**Table 5: Determinants of Work-Life Balance in Singapore**

Authors	Year	WLB Dimensions
Jean Lee Siew Kim, Choo Seow Ling	2001	Time pressure, schedule inflexibility, work stressors, no. & age of children,
Ahmad, Sariati and Skitmore, Martin	2003	Flexible working, 'family-friendly' policies, Work-family conflict and child-care.
Lindsay Larson, Rachel Sheffield, Elisabeth Trail, E. Jeffrey Hill	2008	Fertility decline, number of children, job satisfaction and work hrs flexibility.
Tamara Fackrell, Adam M Galovan, E Jeffrey Hill and Erin Kramer Holmes	2013	Work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, work-family interface and schedule flexibility,

Table 4 provides the determinants of work-life balance in Malaysia. It is evident from Table 4 that several determinants emerged as a component of work-life balance. There are few determinants which are found to be prevalent in almost all the research conducted among Malaysian employees. The crucial determinants found through the above table are social support, work and family role salience and different other roles played by employees in Malaysian organisation.

Table 5 depicts the determinants of work-life balance prevalent in Singapore. It is clear from Table 5 that there are few determinants which are common in almost all the research conducted by different researchers. Job satisfaction, working hours, work-family interface are found to be the most prevalent component of work life in Singaporean organisations.

The determinants of work-life balance found through different researches conducted in context with the above mention countries are having various reasons including the cultural aspect of working organisation. Hence, the cultural perspective of work-life balance is discussed below separately to fulfil the other objectives of the present study.

### **Culture and Work-Life Balance: An Organisational Perspective**

Organisational culture is a term that has been identified as the "glue that binds organisations together" (McDonald, 2014, p. 380). The notion that culture has been derived from anthropology and the continuous effort by researchers to define the concept is not identical. Different researchers have defined culture in their respective manner. Since the very beginning, culture has been gaining importance in the field of organisational behaviour which is evident from the performance shown by the employees while working as a team member (Nielsen & Randall, 2012). Culture can fortify linkages between technology adoption and organisational development. It can be a significant achievement factor in organisational development and play a vital role in determining the success or failure of the organisation. Specific components of organisational behaviour have been significantly affected by its sociological and psychological nature and applied to understand organisational culture.

It was explained by several researchers during the 50s when psychologists demonstrated it as a micro aspect of organisational behaviour. During the 80s, the concept deviated to different theories and inferences which were drawn from these behavioural and situational perspectives. In the early 90s, the researchers understood that exorbitant amount of attention was paid to

behavioural perspective than organisational. Hence, the paradigm shifted to organisational perspective, which necessitated a coordinated effort of sociological, psychological and organisational scholars to develop the concept as a multidisciplinary field (Porter, 1996).

At an early stage, Meyerson (1991, p. 256) noted that "culture was the code word for the subjective side of organisational life". Organisational culture shows individuals' interpretations of actions and situations in organisations. Organisational culture can also be defined as a structure of shared meaning of values held by organisational members that distinguish one organisation from other organisations.

Arnold (2005) has defined organisational culture in context with the employees who are working in the organisation to understand the behaviour in a given set of circumstances. Schein (2004) has given a more complex definition of organisational culture as an arrangement of shared fundamental assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Konteh, Mannion & Davies (2008) stressed that culture constitutes a lens through which an organisation can be understood and interpreted. Tan & Sun (2012) make a distinction between formal and informal organisation; both are linked to organisational culture. Chapman (2002: insert page number) revealed that organisational culture is dynamic and "appears due to the complex interactions of human behaviour" and is also structural, because "such interactions fabricate particular patterns (or structures) which, in turn, influence the interactions themselves." According to Gupta and Govindarajan (2000), organisational culture consists of six major categories such as leadership, process, people, reward systems, information systems and organisation structure. Each of these categories includes factors that descend from it.

According to Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness (1999), there are three probable dimensions of work-life culture. The first dimension is related to organisational time demands or expectations that employees give priority to work over family. These dimensions are related to the time spent at work and the optimum utilisation of time by the employees. The time-based conflict has been identified as the most important source of work-life conflict. This usually happens when time pressures in specific roles are high.

A study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) and the International Labor Organisation (ILO) revealed that Asian nations have the longest working hours more than 48 hours a week, with the highest proportion of workers. Time expectations of an organisation influence work-life balance (Thompson et al., 1999; McDonald, Brown & Bradley, 2005). Many pieces of research recommend that long working hours affect adversely in maintaining work-life balance (Moore, 2007; Allan et al., 2007; Pocock, 2005; Dex & Bond, 2005). In the same vein Pocock et al., (2007) suggest that long working hours (45–49 hours per week) and very long working hours (60+ hours per week) were constantly related with poorer work-life balance.

The second segment of organisational culture advocated the anticipated negative career consequences coupled with the utilisation of work-life benefits as well as devoting time to family obligations. In different organisational culture studies visibility is a benchmark and "face time" is an indicator of contribution and commitment to work. Perlow (1995) proposed that in organisations where employees are expected to be visibly present at work (face time) can be an obstacle to work-life balance programmes and the employees who participated in those work-life balance initiatives is seen as less committed to their job. Moreover, Guillaume & Pochic (2007) observed that an employee who works on a part-time basis had less chance of managerial promotions than full-time employees. Employees who take part in work-life balance programs or utilises its benefits, such as flexible working hours or

locations may challenge the employee's credibility to be seen as a committed employee.

Thompson et al. (1999) consider that the third component of work-life culture is managerial support and sensitivity, which acts as employees' family obligations. Researchers identified that the condition in which supervisors and managers encourage their employees to use work-life balance initiatives are more likely to take up and accept organisation offers (McDonald et al., 2005; Smith & Gardner, 2007).

Supervisory support continuously can be the most significant cultural variable in employees' decisions to avail family-friendly benefits and programs. Thompson et al. (1999) proposed that a supportive organisational culture can also make an organisation most preferred place to work. In addition to that, employees' dedication and motive to continue with the organisation should also be optimistically influenced. They have also discovered that a supportive organisational culture was related to increased employee retention, a higher level of commitment and a reduced amount of work-life conflict.

## Conclusion

The present study aimed to identify the determinants of work-life balance among selected Asian countries. On the basis of an extensive literature survey of the researches conducted on work-life balance in different organisations of selected Asian countries, it concludes that the researches conducted in India on work-life balance revealed that stress, job satisfaction, workload, flexible working hours and family support are found to be the typical determinants of work-life balance in which job satisfaction and flexible working hours are the two most prominent determinants which have affected the work-life balance among Indian employees. It is hence arguable that the newly enforced Maternity Act (Singh, 2016) would beget some form of ease among the new working mothers through which they would be able to make a balance in 'having it all' (Bhattacharyya, 2009; 2013; 2016). On the other hand, it was found that flexibility; family demand and needs are found to be the essential

determinants of work-life balance among Pakistani employees. Based on the findings of the above mentioned two nations, it is very evident that flexibility is the most prominent determinants of work-life balance.

Among Chinese employees, it was found that work demand, job satisfaction, working hours and social support play an essential role in maintaining a work-life balance. However, among Malaysian employees, social support and work-family role salience are found to have a positive influence on the work-life balance. Study on Singaporean employees also revealed that job satisfaction, working hours and work-family interface play a prominent role in maintaining a work-life balance. Hence, it is clear from the above literature survey that social support is the most critical determinant of work-life balance among Chinese and Malaysian employees whereas job satisfaction is the most important determinant of work-life balance among Chinese and Singaporean employees.

By reported findings, it can be clearly stated that supportive work culture is a key determinant of work-life balance in China and Malaysia. However, satisfying work culture is dominant in both China and Singapore.

Therefore, from the findings mentioned above, it can be suggested that work-family structure may be affected by the context in which the work and family domains operate in a particular culture. The work timings, work demand, social support may vary among employees across the organisation. Thus, it is acknowledged from the available source that demand arises from work and family roles differ in various settings. Work and family roles are analysed differently by employees belonging to different cultural backgrounds. There were differences regarding reasons for work preferences towards their employment and the extent to which their work role is perceived. Although employees of different nations do not differ significantly in their perceptions related to work and family roles.

Hence, it can be concluded that determinants of work-life balance such as job satisfaction, flexible working hours and social support cannot

be overlooked especially concerning the organisations of the above mentioned Asian countries. The management and policymakers can best utilise the present findings into the formulation of the new policy and to manage the work-life balance in their respective organisations.

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