

Revisiting Work-Life Harmony: Integrating Maqasid Shariah for Social Prosperity among Academic Professionals at Malaysia Public University

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i11/23234> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i11/23234

Published Date: 28 November 2024

Abstract

The abstract provided outlines the important need to achieve work-life harmony among academic professionals and highlights the importance of integrating the principles of Maqasid Syariah to enhance social prosperity in Malaysian public universities. It acknowledges the challenges inherent in balancing professional duties and personal life, emphasizing the adverse effects that result from this balance being well managed. With the aim of addressing this existing scholarship gap, this study proposes a conceptual framework for a work-life harmony model based on the principles of Maqasid Syariah, aimed at fostering holistic well-being among academic professionals. In line with the wider societal objectives set out in the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, this study will also support the implementation of a comprehensive work-life policy by university management. This abstract lays the groundwork for a study that is poised to offer valuable insights into human resource strategies and practices that prioritize the well-being of academic professionals in Malaysian Public Universities, thereby enhancing both social prosperity and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Work-Life Harmony, Maqasid Shariah, Social Prosperity

Introduction

In today's dynamic educational landscape, academic professionals are increasingly expected to navigate complex and diverse roles that extend far beyond conventional teaching duties. For faculty in Malaysian public universities, these responsibilities are particularly demanding, requiring a balance between rigorous professional commitments and personal life priorities. This balancing act is critical, as a lack of effective work-life harmony can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, and diminished well-being. These consequences not only affect

individual academic staff but also have broader implications for the university community and the quality of education delivered. Therefore, exploring ways to achieve sustainable work-life harmony is vital for promoting resilience, job satisfaction, and overall productivity among academic staff.

This study is timely and necessary, as it responds to a growing need for culturally relevant work-life harmony frameworks within Malaysian public universities. Traditional work-life balance models often overlook the unique cultural and spiritual dimensions that are integral to the lives of many academic professionals in Malaysia. By integrating the principles of *Maqasid Shariah* a foundational Islamic framework focused on achieving balance, justice, and well-being this research offers an approach that resonates deeply with Malaysia's societal values and Islamic heritage. The *Maqasid Shariah*-based framework has the potential to support academic staff in maintaining a balance that honors both their professional and personal aspirations.

Moreover, this study aligns with Malaysia's broader social and economic goals, particularly the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, which emphasizes inclusive and balanced growth for societal well-being. By investigating how *Maqasid Shariah* principles can enhance work-life harmony, this research contributes valuable insights into policy development for Malaysian universities. It aims to empower academic professionals to fulfill their career and personal responsibilities harmoniously, thus supporting both personal fulfillment and professional commitment in a way that respects their cultural and spiritual values.

The findings of this study are anticipated to benefit multiple stakeholders. For university management, a *Maqasid Shariah*-inspired work-life harmony model can inform policies that prioritize the holistic well-being of academic staff, potentially reducing turnover rates and enhancing organizational commitment. For academic professionals, this model provides practical guidance on how to navigate career demands while fulfilling personal and family obligations in a manner aligned with Islamic principles. Ultimately, this research aims to foster an academic environment where personal well-being and professional success coexist, contributing to social harmony and prosperity within the university and the larger community.

Previous Studies

Previous research has underscored the pivotal role of achieving Work-Life Harmony (WLH) in enhancing organizational commitment and productivity among academic professionals, thereby contributing to societal harmony and overall well-being (Nazli Hulawany, 2021). WLH refers to the state of balance and integration between one's professional responsibilities and personal life commitments. As their responsibilities expand, academic professionals have evolved beyond traditional roles as educators to encompass positions as researchers, innovators, and leaders in their respective fields (Rahman & Zulkifli, 2020). For academic professionals, attaining WLH is essential for nurturing organizational commitment and productivity, leading to reduced stress levels and heightened job satisfaction.

Additionally, WLH encompasses multifaceted dimensions such as job design, stress levels, organizational support, work environment, and personal-life integration, all of which profoundly affect the performance and satisfaction of academic professionals (Nazli Hulawany, 2021). Furthermore, the Malaysian Family Concept (2021) underscores the

importance of mutual respect and affection within families, aligning with broader societal goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recent studies have identified various stressors and challenges faced by academic professionals, ranging from workload pressures to health issues and financial concerns (Nordeyana & Siti, 2019; Khairunesa, 2021). The outbreak of COVID-19 has further exacerbated these challenges, amplifying the multifaceted nature of academic roles, which extend beyond teaching to encompass research, administrative duties, community engagement, and fundraising efforts (Johari, 2021). This evolving landscape underscores the need for comprehensive solutions rooted in Islamic educational philosophy and Maqasid Shariah principles, which emphasize holistic well-being and societal harmony (Awang Nib Zuhairi, 2021).

In addressing these challenges, it is essential to consider the interplay of various factors contributing to academic stress, including institutional demands, social dynamics, and individual circumstances (Khairunesa, 2021). Factors such as lack of recognition, inadequate remuneration, and overwhelming workloads can significantly impact academic professionals' psychological and physical well-being, leading to dissatisfaction, stress-related illnesses, and diminished job satisfaction (Rahim & Yatim, 2017). However, despite these challenges, studies have also highlighted the resilience and commitment exhibited by academic professionals, particularly in polytechnic settings, where organizational commitment remains relatively high (Muhamad Reduan, 2020).

In light of these findings, there is a pressing need for proactive measures to support academic professionals in achieving work-life balance and enhancing their overall well-being. By aligning with Maqasid Shariah principles and integrating Islamic educational philosophy into WLH frameworks, universities can create a supportive environment that promotes productivity, satisfaction, and societal harmony among academic professionals (Awang Nib Zuhairi, 2021). Such initiatives not only benefit individual academic professionals but also contribute to the broader goals of national development and prosperity (Vision Prosperity Together 2030).

Principles of Work-Life Harmony

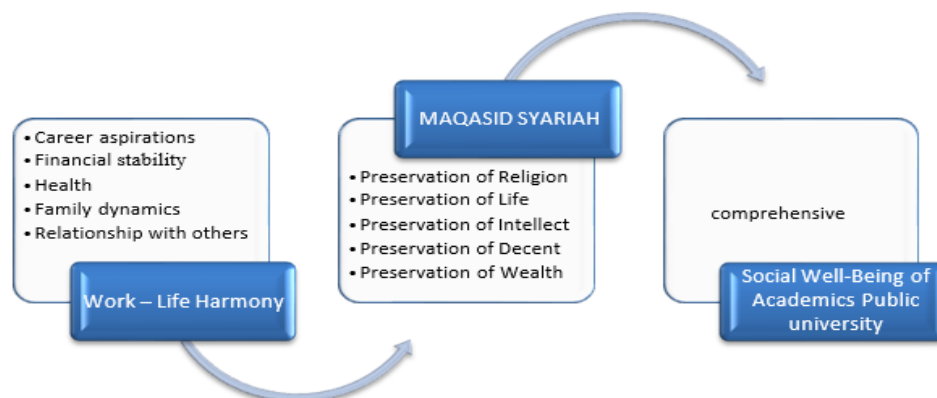


Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework for Work-Life Harmony Balance Based on the Principles of Maqasid Shariah Towards Social Prosperity in Public Universities in Malaysia.

Figure 1 below presents a conceptual framework for achieving work-life harmony, grounded in the principles of *Maqasid Shariah*. The model highlights the integration of Islamic jurisprudence into personal and professional domains, specifically addressing the unique challenges faced by academics in public universities in Malaysia. Ali and Hassan (2021) offer a profound exploration of Maqasid Shariah principles as a foundation for achieving work-life harmony. These principles, rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, emphasize the preservation of human dignity, well-being, and justice. When applied to work-life harmony, they provide a comprehensive framework to address key components such as family dynamics, financial stability, health, and career aspirations. The integration of Maqasid Shariah into the work-life harmony model ensures a holistic approach to balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Specifically, the principles of preservation of religion and preservation of life emphasize spiritual and physical well-being, while preservation of intellect underscores the importance of mental clarity in decision-making processes. Furthermore, preservation of lineage and preservation of wealth, highlight the role of stable family dynamics and financial security in fostering harmony. Ali and Hassan (2021), argue that adopting this framework not only enables individuals to lead purposeful and balanced lives but also enhances their contributions to societal well-being. In the academic context, this approach promotes resilience and productivity among university staff, contributing to broader social prosperity. A recent study by Eddyka & Sharulanuar (2023), shows that elements of family, financial well-being, relationships with others, health, and career are closely related to Maqasid Shariah in the context of work-life balance. This principle emphasizes moderation, ethical behavior, and maintaining a harmonious balance between work-related responsibilities and other aspects of life. By considering these principles, individuals can live their professional and personal lives in a manner consistent with the teachings of Islam and contribute to the overall well-being and improvement of their communities.

In a recent investigation by Farid et al. (2024), it was underscored that the engagement of women in pivotal positions, particularly within academia, holds indispensable significance for the advancement of human capital. The multifaceted roles assumed by female academics, balancing their responsibilities as both caregivers and professionals, necessitate a profound level of dedication to harmonize their work and personal spheres. The magnitude of their professional obligations profoundly impacts their familial commitments, with workload emerging as a prominent determinant of this equilibrium.

In their recent exploration, Hussain and colleagues (2023), delved into the role of Islam in promoting family well-being, emphasizing the core principles central to Shariah objectives, such as preserving religion, life, lineage, intellect, and property. Conducting a qualitative analysis within the multicultural context of Sarawak, Hussain et al. (2023), examined family well-being through the lens of Maqasid Shariah, employing content analysis alongside inductive, deductive, and comparative methods to glean insights from Islamic scholars. Their research concluded that family well-being policies, rooted in the five principles of Maqasid Shariah, encompass nineteen key elements. These principles address various facets essential for family well-being, including fostering religious harmony, preventing oppression, nurturing mental well-being, fulfilling marital obligations, and managing financial resources.

Work-life harmony for academic professionals within the framework of Maqasid al -Shariah emphasizes the pursuit of holistic well-being that aligns with Islamic values and principles. It

involves integrating religious duties, such as worship and family responsibilities, with professional obligations, thereby fostering a balanced and fulfilling life grounded in spirituality, social justice, and ethical conduct (Abdallah, K. 2021).

Khan (2021), emphasizes the interconnectedness of women, family, and career in shaping contemporary society, especially with the rising involvement of women in the workforce. Khan's literature review highlights the limited discourse on Islam's approach to managing family and career, particularly through concepts such as al-Tadayyun, al-Maqasid, and al-Wasatiyyah. Employing textual and literary analysis methods, Khan's study explores how these Islamic concepts can provide a novel approach to Family and Work Management (FWM). By identifying pertinent issues to FWM and elucidating the three Islamic concepts, Khan aims to bridge gaps in the literature discussion on FWM from an Islamic perspective. The analysis conducted by Khan (2021), reveals the potential of these Islamic approaches to offer a robust framework, principles, core values, and an approach for Islamic Family and Work Management (FWM-I). Specifically, the study outlines three key approaches: first, through the 10 ways of al-Tadayyun (religious devotion); second, FWM-I through a maslahah-based (Well-Being) approach and an awlawiyyat-based (priority) approach; and third, FWM-I through an al-Wasatiyyah (balanced, just, and best choice) approach.

Research Methodology

The research methodology outlined in the statement aims to comprehensively address the multifaceted challenges faced by academic staff in balancing their professional responsibilities and personal lives within the Malaysian higher education sector. This research is crucial considering the multifaceted challenges faced by academic staff in balancing their professional responsibilities and personal lives. By employing a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, we are ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved. The quantitative aspect, utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a sizable sample of academic staff, provides statistical rigor, while qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, offer nuanced insights into individual experiences and perceptions. It's also vital to consider pilot testing the questionnaires to refine them and ensure clarity and relevance to the study context.

Moreover, ethical considerations play a pivotal role in research integrity, ensuring participant consent, confidentiality, and data protection throughout the study process. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative findings, the study aims to develop a holistic framework for work-life balance among academic professionals in Malaysia based on Maqasid al-Shariah principles. This framework addresses the diverse needs and challenges faced by academic staff, ultimately

fostering their holistic well-being in the higher education sector. Overall, the research methodology outlined ensures a rigorous and comprehensive approach to studying work-life balance among academic professionals in Malaysia, with a focus on integrating Islamic principles to address their holistic well-being.

Conclusion

Integrating Maqasid Shariah principles into a work-life harmony framework provides Malaysian public universities with a uniquely ethical and holistic approach to human resource development. This model goes beyond traditional work-life balance strategies by addressing spiritual and ethical dimensions, which are often overlooked in conventional models. By focusing on the comprehensive well-being of academic professionals, the proposed framework supports individual fulfillment and social prosperity, ultimately aligning with the broader aspirations of the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

This study, therefore, not only contributes to the academic field but also serves as a practical resource for university policymakers, providing a robust framework for implementing balanced and culturally attuned work-life policies. Through these insights, universities can nurture a productive and committed academic workforce, enhancing their reputation as inclusive and supportive institutions that prioritize the holistic welfare of their staff.

Appreciation

This study is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) through the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), No: FRGS/1/2022/SS10/UTEM/02/1. The author also wants to express gratitude to the Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) for all the support.

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