

The Hybrid Divide: Gendered Perceptions of Work-Life Conflict and Relational Strain

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v15-i4/26814>

Published Online: 03 December 2025

Abstract

This study investigates the gender-based perceived impact of hybrid work modes on work-life balance (WLB) and personal relationships among white-collar workers in Malaysia. The transition from traditional to hybrid work models, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has introduced new dynamics affecting WLB and personal relationships. Although extensive research has examined WLB, the interaction between gender and hybrid work dynamics remains underexplored, particularly in the Malaysian context. This study aims to address this gap by examining how male and female white-collar workers in Malaysia perceive and manage hybrid work arrangements and their effects on personal relationships. Utilizing a quantitative correlational research design, data were collected from 403 white-collar workers through a structured questionnaire. The analysis indicated a very strong positive correlation between hybrid work and perceived WLB, as well as a strong relationship with perceived impacts on personal relationships. Notably, gender significantly moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived WLB, with women reporting a more favourable WLB compared to men. The findings suggest that hybrid work arrangements enhance employees' perception of WLB and foster healthier personal relationships. The flexibility inherent in hybrid work is particularly advantageous for women, who often navigate multiple roles. Recommendations for organizations include promoting flexible work arrangements, addressing gender-specific needs, and continuously evaluating hybrid work policies to improve employee satisfaction and well-being. This study contributes to a broader understanding of hybrid work practices and their implications, especially within the Malaysian context.

Keywords: Hybrid Work, Work-Life Balance, Personal Relationships, Gender Differences, White-Collar Workers, Malaysia, Role Theory, Boundary Theory, Quantitative Research

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically transformed traditional working methods, leading to a widespread acceptance of remote work (Krajčák, Schmidt, & Baráth, 2023). Many employees have embraced full-time remote work, while others have adopted hybrid work

arrangements. The hybrid work model integrates conventional in-office work with remote tasks, allowing employees the flexibility to choose their work environment, whether it be a physical office or any remote location of their choice (Cook, Mor, & Santos, 2020).

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the dynamic interaction between personal and professional spheres, significantly influencing each other's equilibrium (Lorentzon, Fotoh, & Mugwira, 2024). The concept of work-life balance emerged in the early 1970s, driven by changing family dynamics and the increasing participation of women in the workforce. However, it was not until the mid-1980s that companies in Canada and the United States began to acknowledge and respond to employees' needs for harmonizing work and family commitments (Calzón-Menéndez, Sacristán-Navarro, & Cabeza-García, 2023). The term "work-life balance" was formally introduced into the European Union's public policy discourse during the Special European Council in Luxembourg in November 1997, highlighting the importance of policies that support the balance between work, personal, and family life (Hendricks, 2025).

Traditionally, working from a fixed location, such as an office, has been the norm, fostering a sense of physical presence, discipline, and unity among the workforce (Sneppen, 2025). In contrast, remote work—also known as telecommuting or flexplace—offers employees the flexibility to select their work location. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, remote work primarily took place at home due to mandated stay-at-home orders (Lizano, Bergen, Smith, Pasquarella, & Lee, 2025). Hybrid office models vary widely across organizations, encompassing flexible work hours, remote workdays, and a combination of fully remote, onsite, and partially remote arrangements (Ngonini, 2025).

This study aims to explore the nuanced perceptions and effects of hybrid working models on employees' work-life balance and personal relationships, with a specific emphasis on gender. By delving into this subject matter, the research seeks to illuminate the diverse experiences and challenges individuals face in balancing professional responsibilities with personal life commitments, such as familial relationships. Through a comprehensive examination of how hybrid work arrangements intersect with gender dynamics, this study intends to uncover potential differences in the ways men and women perceive and navigate these arrangements. Additionally, it will analyze how these dynamics may impact personal relationships, providing valuable insights into the broader societal implications of hybrid work practices. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of work-life dynamics in the context of contemporary work arrangements.

Research Outline

Aim and Scope of the Study

Investigating the impact of working conditions on employees' personal relationships and overall well-being is crucial for a diverse array of stakeholders, including employers, policymakers, and the workforce. This study aims to contribute to the discourse surrounding hybrid work models, specifically examining how these arrangements influence personal relationships and work-life balance across different gender identities.

The primary objective of this research is to enhance our understanding of the multifaceted effects that hybrid work arrangements have on individuals' lives and relationships. As workplace dynamics evolve—particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic—it is

essential to analyze how these changes affect not only professional productivity but also the personal lives of employees. This understanding is vital for fostering a work environment that is not only more supportive but also more equitable and inclusive.

The findings of this study aim to provide actionable insights for organizations looking to refine their Human Resource policies, work arrangements, and support systems to better meet the diverse needs of their workforce. The ability of organizations to adapt based on these insights is crucial, as it lays the groundwork for work environments that enhance employee well-being and productivity, ultimately benefiting both employees and the organization.

Additionally, this research seeks to equip individuals with tools to evaluate the suitability of hybrid work arrangements in relation to their family and social circumstances. This personalized approach empowers employees to make informed decisions that align with their well-being and specific needs, while also promoting a proactive strategy for managing work-life integration.

Furthermore, by illuminating the lasting effects of hybrid work arrangements on personal relationships and work-life balance, this study aspires to contribute to the development of emerging work trends. Understanding these dynamics is essential for prioritizing employee satisfaction and well-being within organizational strategies, especially in an increasingly dynamic work environment. Recognizing the interplay between work and personal life can lead to more holistic approaches to employee engagement, retention, and overall organizational culture.

In summary, this study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature regarding the intersection of hybrid work, gender dynamics, and personal relationships, thereby providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of modern work-life dynamics. Through this exploration, the research will not only highlight the challenges posed by hybrid work arrangements but also identify opportunities for creating a more balanced, fulfilling, and productive work experience for all employees.

This study specifically examines how male and female white-collar workers perceive work-life balance within the context of the hybrid work model, as well as how this arrangement impacts their interpersonal relationships. In this framework, the hybrid work model acts as the independent variable, while the effects on personal relationships and perceptions of work-life balance are considered dependent variables. Gender serves as a moderating variable in this analysis, focusing on white-collar workers in Malaysia.

White-collar workers are defined as office personnel and professionals engaged in tasks that require a significant degree of expertise. This group includes individuals in fields such as engineering, sales, marketing, management, administration, and finance. Traditionally, "white-collar" refers to staff who adhere to a formal dress code, often characterized by light-colored or white dress shirts.

These workers typically occupy managerial, administrative, and professional roles within organizations, including businesses, government agencies, and non-profit entities. Their

responsibilities often involve communication, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, and sound judgment, as well as strategic or creative endeavors related to their areas of expertise. Understanding the complexities of work-life balance as it relates to white-collar workers in Malaysia is crucial. Research by Kim, Rhee, Sung, and Kang (2025) highlights the varying significance of work-life balance across different generations and genders, emphasizing the importance of considering these variables when analyzing professionals' perceptions. Therefore, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how individuals in these roles navigate the demands of their work and personal lives.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as stated below:

1. To examine the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia.
2. To examine the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia.
3. To determine whether gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia.
4. To determine whether gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the research question formulated for this study are as follows:

1. Is there a positive relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia?
2. Is there a positive relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia?
3. Does gender moderate the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia?
4. Does gender moderate the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia?

Literature Review

In recent decades, work-life balance has emerged as a critical concern, drawing significant attention from trade unions, employers, and scholars alike. The increasing participation of women in the workforce has intensified the challenge of balancing professional and personal responsibilities, as they often juggle multiple roles within their households and careers (Alhaider & Alqahtani, 2025). Various factors contribute to the delicate dynamics of work-life balance, particularly affecting women's experiences in both personal and professional realms.

Research has explored numerous aspects, including career advancement, work-related stress, family-work conflict, and childcare, revealing the myriad challenges female employees face in their pursuit of work-life balance (Hasan, Khan, Butt, Abid, & Rehman, 2020). As women navigate diverse roles in the 21st century, achieving this balance has become increasingly complex (Vasumathi, 2018). Organizations are recognizing that a focus on quality of life is essential for attracting and retaining talent, leading to an emphasis on work-life

balance as a means of enhancing employee performance and well-being (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020).

A significant gap in the literature is the understanding of how gender influences work-life balance. While research acknowledges the non-linear effects of age, the interplay between gender and age-related shifts in work-life structures remains underexplored (Thrasher, Wynne, Baltes, & Bramble, 2022). This gap hinders the development of effective strategies for promoting gender equality and enhancing work-life balance. Thus, this study aims to investigate the nuanced relationship between gender and work-life balance, focusing on how perceptions differ between men and women and how these perceptions inform family-friendly workplace policies.

As work models continue to evolve, organizations are increasingly adopting remote work arrangements to foster flexibility and productivity (Iqbal, Khalid, & Barykin, 2021; Aziz, et al., 2023). However, it is critical not to overlook employee welfare in this transition. Neglecting well-being can lead to significant consequences, including reduced productivity, lower job satisfaction, and impaired decision-making. Research indicates that when employees feel unsupported, it can result in increased stress, higher turnover, and adverse effects on mental health (Castaneda, Surachartkumtonkun, Maseeh, Thaichon, & Shao, 2025). Thus, prioritizing employee well-being is essential for organizational success (Marecki, 2023). According to Hasyim and Bakri (2025), a commitment to mental and emotional health can enhance motivation, creativity, and collaboration, driving long-term performance. As organizations embrace remote work, they must ensure that employee welfare remains central to their strategies, balancing productivity with support for a thriving workplace culture (Bello, Tula, Omotoye, Kess-Momoh, & Daraojimba, 2024; Almazrouei, Alvarez-Torres, Schiuma, & Lopez-Torres, 2025).

Additionally, this study will explore how perceptions of work-life balance influence personal relationships and family dynamics. Despite growing employer interest in this area, there remains limited understanding of how individuals conceptualize and prioritize work-life balance within their personal lives (Gragnano, Simbula, & Miglioretti, 2020). By examining these narratives, this research aims to provide insights into the interplay between work-life balance and personal relationships, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of its impact on individuals' lives.

To frame this exploration, the study was guided by Role Theory and Boundary Theory, which illuminated the complexities of work-life dynamics and the influence of gender on these experiences. Role Theory provided insights into how individuals navigate various professional and personal roles, highlighting the expectations tied to each. Meanwhile, Boundary Theory examined how employees manage the often-blurred lines between work and personal life, particularly in hybrid work settings. Together, these theories offered a robust framework for understanding how gender shapes perceptions of work-life balance and overall well-being. By integrating these perspectives, the study underscored the necessity for organizations to consider these dynamics when developing policies and practices that effectively support their diverse workforce.

Role Theory

Role Theory provides a critical framework for understanding how individuals manage multiple social roles and their associated expectations. It posits that people simultaneously occupy various roles, each with distinct responsibilities (Biddle, 1986). In hybrid work settings, this theory highlights the potential for role conflict, where the lines between professional and personal roles blur (Kalmanovich-Cohen & Stanton, 2025).

Research shows that hybrid work can enhance work-life balance by allowing greater flexibility in managing these roles, thereby reducing conflict and improving role performance (Valery, Santati, & Hadjri, 2023; Baig, 2025). This flexibility not only aids in integrating work and personal responsibilities but also positively influences personal relationships by decreasing work-family conflict (Kamboj & Eronimus, 2025).

However, the gendered nature of role expectations complicates this dynamic. Studies indicate that men often report more favorable impacts on their personal relationships in hybrid environments, while women may face greater challenges due to traditional norms that assign them heavier domestic responsibilities (Silva & Lopes, 2025; Williams & Shaw, 2025). For instance, Salgado's 2022 thesis explores how gender role salience and flexibility can buffer the negative effects of household responsibilities on work-family conflict, revealing that those who prioritize family roles or exhibit adaptability experience less strain.

Ultimately, while hybrid work offers opportunities for enhanced role quality in personal domains, women often do not reap the same benefits as men due to the persistent burden of managing both work and family roles (Rebecca, Jayawardana, & Madurapperuma, 2025). This underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in discussions of work-life balance and hybrid work arrangements.

Boundary Theory

Boundary Theory posits that individuals construct and manage mental and physical boundaries to separate work and personal roles (Cho, Meier, Dormann, & Allen, 2025). Silva and Lopes (2025) emphasized that, in hybrid work contexts, this theory is essential for understanding the impact of flexibility in integrating work and personal life on employees' work-life balance and personal relationships.

Hybrid work facilitates flexibility in task management, potentially enhancing work-life balance by allowing employees to navigate boundaries more effectively (Mutter & Thorn, 2025). Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) highlight the importance of managing these boundaries to minimize role conflict and facilitate smoother transitions between roles.

This theory also addresses gender differences in boundary management, suggesting that societal norms influence how men and women navigate work-life boundaries (Shen & Zamani, 2025). While hybrid work offers flexibility, it requires active management to ensure work does not intrude on personal time (Xu, Tang, Yang, & Lai, 2025). Successful boundary negotiation is essential for maintaining work-life balance and supporting personal relationships (Kamboj & Eronimus, 2025).

Research indicates that the ability to adapt boundaries flexibly predicts higher satisfaction with work-life balance among hybrid workers (Zhamshit, 2025). Kamboj and Eronimus (2025) assert that the observed variations in employee preferences underscore the critical need for organizational support in formulating effective boundary management strategies. This dynamic is further complicated by prevailing gender norms; men typically experience fewer domestic responsibilities, facilitating the establishment of clearer boundaries, whereas women often encounter significant challenges in this regard (Grilo, Moreira, Santos, Araújo, & Ferreira, 2025; Gregersen, 2025). Consequently, Boundary Theory offers valuable insights into the intricate complexities of work-life integration within hybrid work environments, highlighting the necessity for organizations to adopt a nuanced approach that considers these gendered dimensions.

Hybrid Work Models

Identifying an effective hybrid work model for large-scale remote work hinges on two principles (Huda & Hambali, 2025):

- **Task Context Assessment:** Understanding the nature of core activities helps determine the balance between remote and office work (Wawera, Niebuhr, Glaser, & Rinne, 2025).
- **International Market Evaluation:** Assessing the need for a global workforce influences the pursuit of specialized skills and may lead to acquisitions or establishing hubs in talent-rich areas (Sparkman, 2025; De Kluyver & Pearce II, 2021).

Based on these principles, hybrid work models can be categorized into four types:

- **Large Hubs:** Office-centric, focusing on close collaboration for specialized tasks (Lamovšek, Radević, Mohammed, & Černe, 2025).
- **Hubs and Satellites:** Combines global hubs with satellite operations to leverage regional expertise (Khan & Raheel, 2025).
- **Distributed:** Centers on high-volume, routine tasks that can be digitized, allowing flexibility based on talent and cost (Reji, 2025).
- **Global Virtual:** Enables worldwide talent access, suitable for companies needing a global presence without focusing on specific talent searches (Shinde, 2025).

These hybrid models provide a strategic framework for organizations navigating remote work effectively. The evolution of the hybrid work system has been influenced by several factors, including digitalization, entrepreneurship, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Suganya & Kumar, 2025; Ankitha, Gopalakrishna, & Venugopal, 2025). Digital marketing and social media have accelerated globalization, leading to more remote work and freelance opportunities (Yadav, 2025). Although hybrid work existed before the pandemic, it has become increasingly integrated into organizational structures (Ngonini, 2025). Technological advancements, particularly in machine learning and artificial intelligence, are reshaping job roles, with some expected to become obsolete (Shimray & Subaveerapandian, 2025).

As businesses adopt hybrid models, they move away from traditional 9-to-5 schedules, emphasizing flexibility, inclusivity, and work-life balance (Shinde, 2025; Mohamad, et al., 2024). This model offers benefits like increased productivity and cost savings but also presents challenges such as the need for improved internet security and potential issues with employee interaction and inclusion (Williams & Shaw, 2025). The future of work will increasingly center on the hybrid model, highlighting the need for readiness, strategic

planning, and adaptability in response to technological and managerial changes (Iqbal, Khalid, & Barykin, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework combines Role Theory and Boundary Theory to examine the dynamics of hybrid work modes and their impact on work-life balance and personal relationships, with a particular focus on gender factors.

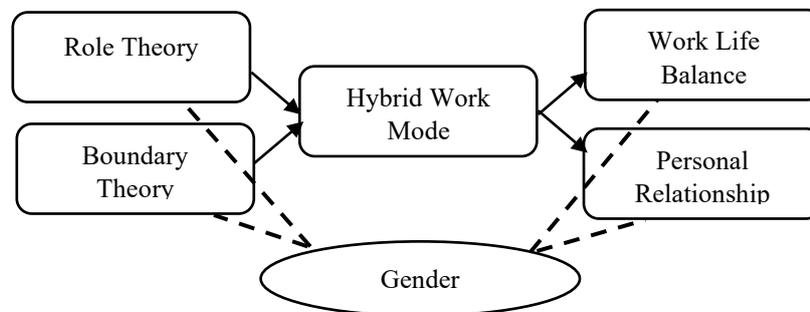


Figure 3.1 Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework aims to address the impact of hybrid work modes on perceived work-life balance and perceived impact on personal relationships, with gender serving as a moderating variable.

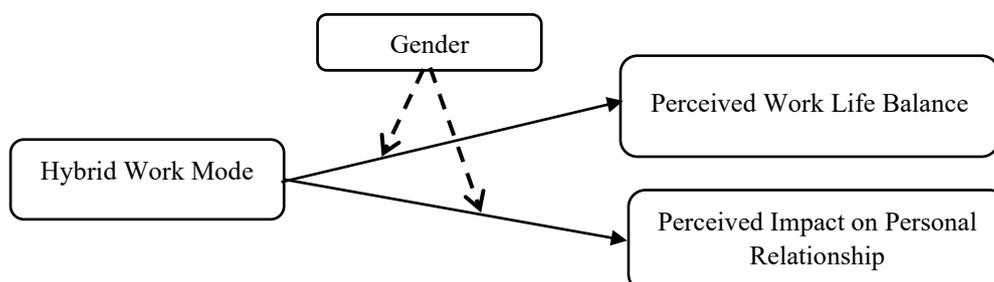


Figure 3.2 Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Development

his study aims to explore the implications of hybrid work models on perceived work-life balance and personal relationships, with a particular focus on gender differences. By developing targeted hypotheses, we will investigate how these dynamics influence employee well-being and organizational effectiveness in the evolving work landscape. The research hypotheses developed for this study are as follows:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work-life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia.
- H3: Gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance among white collar workers in Malaysia.
- H4: Gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships among white collar workers in Malaysia.

Research Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

This study employs a quantitative correlational research design to explore the relationships between hybrid work models and their impacts on white-collar workers in Malaysia. The target population consists of approximately 4,300,521 white-collar workers, representing 27.6% of the total workforce of 15,581,600, as reported by the Ministry of Economy, Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025). In line with this population, an estimated sample size of 400 participants will be utilized to ensure robust statistical analysis.

To gather data, the study employed non-probability sampling techniques, which prioritized availability over strict mathematical protocols. This approach allowed for a more accessible participant selection process, enabling the research team to engage a diverse range of individuals who could provide valuable insights. The unit of analysis focused on individuals holding positions as executives, administrators, and telemarketers within various sectors, including finance, banking, technology, education, human resources, healthcare administration, and consulting. By targeting these specific roles, the study aimed to capture a wide array of perspectives and experiences, thereby enriching the overall understanding of hybrid work dynamics. This strategic selection of participants not only facilitated a more comprehensive data collection process but also ensured that the findings would reflect the nuanced realities faced by professionals across multiple industries.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation for this study was meticulously adopted and adapted from a diverse array of scholarly sources, including the influential works of Paruzel et al. (2022), Castaneda, Japos, and Templonuevo (2022). By leveraging these established frameworks, the research sought to construct a robust and comprehensive methodology that captured the intricate dynamics of hybrid work within the white-collar workforce. This multifaceted approach not only enhanced the validity of the findings but also facilitated a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of work in contemporary settings. Ultimately, it positioned the research as a pivotal contribution to the ongoing discourse on workplace transformation, offering insights that were both timely and critical for organizations navigating the complexities of hybrid work environments.

Data Analysis

The analysis commenced with the quantitative data gathered from questionnaires, employing descriptive statistics to summarize central tendencies, variability, and distributions. This provided insights into participants' perceptions of hybrid work's impact on work-life balance and personal relationships. Subsequently, inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVA, were applied to examine relationships between variables and test hypotheses, particularly focusing on gender differences in perceptions. This approach highlighted significant disparities and trends within the dataset. SPSS was utilized for its efficiency in managing complex data and conducting both descriptive and inferential analyses, thereby ensuring a rigorous examination of the findings.

Research Findings

Demographic Profile

A total of 403 respondents participated in the study, revealing a balanced demographic profile that enhances the validity of the findings. In terms of gender representation, 208 respondents (51.6%) were male, while 195 (48.4%) were female. This near-equal distribution indicates no significant gender gap, ensuring a comprehensive view of perspectives within the study as shown in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0

Demographic Profile

Gender	n=403	Percentage (%)
Female	195	48.4
Male	208	51.6

Analysis of Hypotheses

Table 1.1

Correlation Analysis

		Hybrid Mode	Work-Life Balance	Personal Relationships
Hybrid Mode	Pearson Correlation	1	0.927**	0.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	n	403	403	403
Work-Life Balance	Pearson Correlation	0.927**	1	0.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	n	403	403	403
Personal Relationships	Pearson Correlation	0.821**	0.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	n	403	403	403

Relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work-life balance

The analysis conducted using SPSS, as shown in Table 1.1, revealed a remarkable Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.927 between Hybrid Work Mode and Work-Life Balance, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates a very strong positive correlation, suggesting that as employees embraced hybrid work arrangements, their perceptions of work-life balance significantly improved. These findings highlight the substantial impact of hybrid work on enhancing employee well-being, emphasizing the potential benefits of flexible work environments in fostering healthier work-life integration. The results not only contribute to the existing literature on workplace dynamics but also provide compelling evidence for organizations contemplating the implementation of hybrid work models. Ultimately, this analysis reinforces the notion that adopting such arrangements can lead to greater employee satisfaction and engagement, thereby promoting a more productive and harmonious workplace.

Relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships.

The analysis for the second hypothesis revealed a strong Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.821 between Hybrid Work Mode and Personal Relationships, with a significance level of p

< 0.001. This robust positive correlation indicates that individuals in hybrid work settings are more likely to experience enhanced personal relationships. These results underscore the important role that hybrid work arrangements play in fostering healthier interpersonal connections among employees. By providing greater flexibility and autonomy, hybrid work not only boosts professional productivity but also facilitates the development of stronger bonds and support networks among colleagues.

This finding highlights that hybrid work environments can act as a catalyst for improving social interactions, ultimately leading to a more cohesive and collaborative workplace culture. Such insights are crucial for organizations aiming to optimize employee relationships and enhance overall job satisfaction in a rapidly evolving work landscape.

Gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance.

The analysis revealed a significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work-life balance, with a p-value of 0.034, well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This finding indicates that gender plays a crucial role in this relationship. Specifically, a one-unit increase in the gender variable (from male to female) was associated with a 0.097 standard deviation increase in the work-life balance scale, suggesting a statistically significant, albeit small, impact.

This nuanced understanding highlights that experiences in hybrid work settings can differ based on gender, emphasizing the importance of considering demographic factors in workplace studies. Consequently, we accepted Hypothesis H3, confirming that gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and work-life balance. These insights are vital for organizations striving to create inclusive work environments, as they demonstrate the need for tailored approaches that address the unique challenges and benefits experienced by different genders in hybrid work configurations (refer to Table 1.2).

Table 1.2

Moderation analysis between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance

		Coefficients			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Model						
I	(Constant)	2.303	.193		11.924	<.001
	Gender	.056	.026	.097	2.132	.034

la. Dependent Variable: Work-Life Balance

Gender moderates the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived impact to personal relationships.

The analysis indicated that the p-value for the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between hybrid work mode and perceived work-life balance was 0.157, exceeding the significance level of 0.05. This finding suggested that the moderating effect of gender was not statistically significant (refer to Table 1.3). Consequently, we did not have sufficient evidence

to support the assertion that gender influences the relationship between hybrid work mode and work-life balance. As a result, Hypothesis H4 was rejected.

This outcome highlights the complexity of the factors affecting work-life balance, indicating that gender may not play a crucial role in this specific context. It underscores the importance of considering a broader range of variables that could influence employee experiences within hybrid work environments. For instance, factors such as age, job role, and individual personality traits might also significantly affect how employees perceive their work-life balance. Understanding these dynamics is essential for organizations aiming to develop effective policies and practices that genuinely enhance work-life balance for all employees, irrespective of gender. By adopting a more inclusive approach to research, organizations can better tailor their strategies to meet the diverse needs of their workforce.

Table 1.3

Moderation analysis between hybrid work mode and perceived work life balance

		Coefficients			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.562	.219		11.678	<.001
	Gender	.043	.030	.070	1.418	.157

1b. Dependent Variable: Personal Relationships

Summary

The findings of this analysis underscore the significant impact of hybrid work arrangements on employee well-being, revealing a strong correlation with both work-life balance and personal relationships. Employees engaged in hybrid work reported feeling more balanced and experiencing improved interpersonal connections, highlighting the positive effects of flexible work environments. While the analysis indicated that gender played a moderating role in the relationship between hybrid work mode and work-life balance, the evidence suggested that this impact was relatively modest. Moreover, it was found that gender did not significantly moderate this relationship in this context, which emphasizes the complexity of the factors influencing work-life dynamics.

This nuanced understanding points to the necessity for organizations to consider a variety of variables when assessing the effects of hybrid work on employee experiences. Overall, these results highlight the transformative potential of hybrid work in promoting both personal and professional well-being. They suggest that such arrangements could serve as a valuable strategy for organizations looking to enhance employee satisfaction and engagement in an increasingly flexible work landscape.

Conclusion

This research investigates the impact of hybrid work modes on the perceptions of work-life balance and personal relationships among white-collar workers in Malaysia. It was anticipated that hybrid work arrangements would show a strong correlation with both work-life balance and interpersonal relationships. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the role

of gender as a moderating factor, suggesting that it may influence how hybrid work affects individuals' views on balance and their connections with others.

The findings of this research clearly demonstrate that hybrid work significantly enhances employees' perceptions of work-life balance, supporting the hypothesis that those in hybrid arrangements are more likely to view their circumstances positively. This result aligns with existing literature, including a study by Bloom, Han, and Liang (2024), which found that employees at Trip.com who engaged in hybrid work reported improved perceptions of work-life balance due to the flexibility of alternating between home and office environments. Similarly, Barrero, Bloom, and Davis (2021) noted that hybrid work settings not only promote better work-life balance but also foster a stronger sense of belonging among colleagues, contributing to increased job satisfaction.

From a theoretical perspective, Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) provides a valuable framework for understanding these findings. The evidence suggests a tendency toward role enhancement in hybrid work scenarios, where fulfilling professional responsibilities enriches personal life rather than creating role conflict. This alignment indicates that the flexibility and satisfaction afforded by hybrid work arrangements positively influence employees' perceptions of their non-work roles, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being. These insights underscore the critical importance of flexible work environments in modern organizational practices.

The analysis of the impact of hybrid work on personal relationships also reveals significant positive outcomes. It shows that hybrid arrangements contribute to healthier personal connections, supporting the hypothesis that individuals in such settings are more likely to view their relationships favourably. This is consistent with findings from Dale, Wilson, and Tucker (2024), which indicate that an improved work-life balance not only boosts job satisfaction but also reduces absenteeism, turnover intentions, and burnout, while enhancing both physical and mental health. These benefits extend beyond the workplace, leading to stronger personal relationships and overall well-being.

Furthermore, Santillan, Santillan, Doring, Pigao and Mesina (2023) emphasizes that the opportunity for increased family time serves as a crucial motivator for employees in hybrid frameworks, allowing them to achieve a more harmonious balance between work and personal life. This flexibility enables better management of family commitments and social engagements, thereby reducing stress and fostering deeper connections. Theoretical insights from boundary theory illustrate that effective management of work and non-work roles enhances perceptions of personal relationships. The flexibility inherent in hybrid work arrangements likely facilitates improved boundary management, leading to these positive perceptions. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of flexible work environments in enhancing personal relationships and well-being.

The moderator analysis indicates that women in hybrid work settings perceive a better work-life balance than men, suggesting that the flexibility offered by these arrangements is particularly beneficial for women managing multiple roles (Zhamshit, 2025; Røstum, 2025; Martínez & Chunga-Liu, 2024). This flexibility allows them to balance household and caregiving responsibilities with professional obligations, enhancing overall well-being. Research shows that hybrid work can reduce commuting time, providing women with more

opportunities to engage in personal and family activities, which further alleviates stress and promotes satisfaction in both personal and professional spheres.

Conversely, the analysis found no significant moderating effect of gender on perceptions of personal relationships, contradicting existing research that suggests women benefit more from hybrid work due to their caregiving roles (Mutter & Thorn, 2025). While some studies highlight productivity gains for women, they also report challenges such as blurred boundaries and increased workload (Kabir, Cohoon, Lund, Chen, & A.J. Metz, 2025). These challenges point to the complexities of hybrid work, as the absence of physical separation can hinder motivation and well-being, particularly for women who may struggle with role overload.

These findings may reflect the unique cultural context of Malaysia, suggesting a need for further research to explore these dynamics. The results raise important questions about how hybrid work arrangements can be optimized to support all employees, particularly women, in balancing their professional and personal lives. Overall, the study provides critical insights into how hybrid work impacts perceived work-life balance and personal relationships, underscoring the importance of a nuanced understanding in this evolving landscape. By prioritizing flexible work arrangements, organizations can better support gender equity and enhance job satisfaction among their workforces.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution of this Research

This research highlights the significant positive effects of hybrid work arrangements on work-life balance and personal relationships among white-collar workers in Malaysia. The findings show that this flexibility not only helps employees feel more balanced but also strengthens their interpersonal connections. This is especially beneficial for women, who often juggle multiple roles in both their professional and personal lives. In the Malaysian context, where traditional gender norms can place additional burdens on women, the flexibility offered by hybrid work becomes crucial for their well-being.

However, the study also reveals some complexities associated with hybrid work, such as blurred boundaries and an increased workload, which can negatively impact overall well-being. This dual nature of hybrid work arrangements is important to recognize; while they can empower employees, they also require careful management to avoid potential downsides. Therefore, this research emphasizes the need for organizations to prioritize flexible work environments—not just as a way to support all employees, but also to boost job satisfaction and promote gender equity. By actively addressing the unique needs of their workforce, organizations can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture that recognizes the diverse challenges employees face.

Furthermore, the study calls for deeper exploration of these dynamics within Malaysia's distinctive cultural context. Ongoing research in this area is essential for developing targeted strategies that enhance the benefits of hybrid work while addressing its challenges. Such efforts are vital for fostering a healthier, more balanced workforce and underscore the importance of adaptive work policies in today's complex and evolving employment landscape.

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