

## **2.7 Background of Coping Strategies**

Most people in all stages of their lives face pressures and severe influences from various sources such as home, workplace and the society. So they can not succumb to any pressure threatening their lives; because human being is naturally preserving and balancing, which make stand out of the crowd. Accordingly, a group in any organization faces these pressures, and always tries to deal with them and to resolve them. To do this, they use methods, both cognitive and emotional strategies to tackle pressure. Some studies have attempted to identify methods or techniques to cope with pressures resulting from difficulties of work and family responsibilities. Coping theorists have generally categorized coping strategies under three groups: first group is strategies focused on resolving the problem; the second group is strategies used to alleviate the emotions triggered by the situation; and the last group is strategies involving social support (Dalton & Pakenham, 2002).

## **2.8 Definition and Historical View of Coping Strategy**

To begin with, before 1960 the term “coping” was used in the medical and social sense of the word and referred to the positive responses of pressure. Since 1960 researches in the field of coping has begun. Furthermore, the term coping did not appear in psychology until 1967. The term coping has been used in psychoanalysis under what is called “defense mechanism in the subconscious”, though dictionaries such as Oxford continues to look at coping as a response issued by positive attitudes towards threatening attitudes only. However, the period between the sixties and the seventies of last century, researchers started to relate coping strategies to stress, focusing mainly on the extreme

situation, such as threats of life and traumatic events, which requires the coping behavior. Then, in the eighties of the last century the interest of researchers focused on coping, by studying a number of responses, and measuring methods of coping.

As for the definition of the coping, there are many definitions, which vary according to scientists and researchers. For example Levine & Ursine (1980) define coping as the behavioral responses that are related to avoidance or escape in response to the environment. Coping is also defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Kihlstrom (1987) and Haan (1982) defined coping as a response issued by the individual about the stressful events which are external rather than internal.

Coping has been defined by Mathny et al., (1986) as the behavioral efforts and cognitive carried out by the individual to reduce or carry out the demands of pressure, and Mathny sees that the effectiveness of the response efforts undertaken by the individual depends on the coping behavior and coping sources. The coping behavior is an act or attempt to conduct and knowledge by the individual to deal with the pressure, i.e. the responses of the individual to agree with the pressure while the sources of coping is the individual characteristics, social and environmental per capita availability. Whereas Burr et al (1993) define coping as the actions and behaviors used by the individual to cope with pressure, where coping is something done by a person when confronted with a bad situation.

Furthermore, the term “coping” has been defined as a central part in the process of pressure, it shows how individuals become aware of and respond to the pressures, which includes all responses of an individual towards danger, or any threat, which leads to reduce the pressure completely, and includes any attempt to reduce or avoid dealing with the impacts of pressure (Fleming *et al.*, 1984); but Marais (1997) says coping is an individual efforts to manage or modify the pressure, such as changing of organizational culture of work by improving the quality of work and improving productivity. Also Callan (1993) defines the term “coping” in the work environment as efforts by the individual to obtain more information to assist his ability to predict the attitude and help him to understand the settings in dealing with problems that occur in the future.

Cox (1985) says coping refers to the behavior of problem-solving, as it refers to pressure as the result of failure to solve the problem. Coping also includes a group of cognitive and behavioral strategies used by the individual in experiencing and dealing with day to day stressful conditions and with the resulting emotional experiences. Everly (1989) also mentioned that coping strategies can be divided into two different ways. The first is cognitive which means to think in the cognitive methods to reduce the response rate of pressure, and the second physiological, which means to try to re-balance the organism. Coping is also defined as a group of cognitive and emotional acts by the individual in response to stressful situations, to restore the equilibrium of the individual or ease his tension and confusion (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993).

According to Lutfi (1994) coping is a group of activities or behavioral and cognitive strategies used by individual for problem-solving and ease the tension and emotional

impact of it. Coping strategies are the ways an individual, group or organization use to minimize the effects of stress (Belal et al., 2009). Coping strategy is also defined as ‘any activity, in thought or deed, which has its goal as the removal or modification of a threat to identity’ (Breakwell, 1986, p. 78).

Based on the above of mentioned definitions, coping is an umbrella under which a large number of strategies and behaviors have been of forward by the individual in trying to deal with stressful situations and emotions resulting from it. Coping skills play an important role in determining the manner adapted by the individual towards stressful conditions. As a results, coping is the methods and techniques of cognitive and behavioral used by the individual in dealing with the pressures and difficulties he/ or she is faced with in his/or her life which can pose a threat to an individual's body, in an attempt to avoid being likely exposed to disturbances in social, emotional and physical functions after exposure to pressure. Based on this, coping simply means a group of techniques used by an individual in dealing with stressful situations and events, so as to reduce stressful situation and reduce negative emotions caused by it.

As a result, it is clear that the term coping is used to express the capabilities, personal and environmental sources that predispose an individual to be able to cope with pressures, as sources of personal coping with the individual sources of coping environmental play an important role in the willingness of the individual to deal with events and attitudes pressing those facing him in his life. Some researchers, for example Thoits (1995) has labeled coping strategies and coping skills, which include an

individual's ability to understand the situation and cognitive assessment and evaluation of individual sources and the possibilities available to him or compatible so that he can deal with the situation. As for the functions of the coping pointed Lazarus and Folkman, coping involves the two main functions, namely to deal directly with the problem caused by the sense of management of the problem that causes distress or hardship of the individual. Meanwhile the second function of the confrontation is limited to the regulation and mitigation of the negative emotions associated with the problem or situation compressor, reducing the sense of negative emotions caused by stressful events.

## **2.9 Types of Coping Strategies**

Everyone has motivations, needs and wants. Sometimes these motivations and wants may conflict with the environment, which puts an individual in state of stress and anxiety, but each one has his own style in solving problems and overcoming painful attitudes. There are people, who give up and withdraw from the situation, and this is called escapism, and there are those who resort to confrontation and fight. Researchers have found through their studies many strategies used by individuals in dealing with pressure, which vary in the degree of effectiveness. There are two common types of coping strategies which can be distinguished: Problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies (Folkman, Schaefer and Lazarus, 1979; Leventhal and Nerenz, 1982). Problem-focused coping strategies are used to address the problem directly and emotion-focused coping strategies are used to hold feelings of distress, rather than the real problem.

There are also religious coping strategies that consist of elements of the emotion-coping and problem-coping strategies. In addition, there is social support as a strategy to cope with pressures which include advice, assistance, subsidies, and emotional support. This justifies the perceptions of the individual regarding his or her actions. It is the same thing with religious coping strategies, which include more performance of prayers and religious practices as a type of coping strategies that focus on emotion. Furthermore, religious coping strategies are more important and useful with stressful events that an individual cannot control.

Anshel (1997) argues that there is a difference between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. The first includes attempts by the individual to achieve the goal of the task by doing things like an individual emphasizing or asking for social support, and the second (emotion-focused coping) refers to the organization of emotions to reduce the hardship and emotional distress of the individual, through several techniques such as self-talk training in relaxation. In general, most studies have shown that problem-focused coping strategy is the most effective method for dealing with stress, not to mention that problem-focused strategies are often associated with a more positive outcome than emotion-focused strategies, although both approaches could contribute to make a positive outcome, depending on the stressor or problem that has to be coped with (Loots, 2008).

As one of the coping strategies, problem-focused coping was found to reduce strain (Beehr, Jonhson and Nieva, 1995), increase job satisfaction (Bhagat, Allie & Ford, 1995), increase health (Parkes, 1990), reduce psychological distress (Violanti, 1992),

and lower family-work conflict levels (Rotondo, Carlso and Kincaid, 2003) and decrease depression, anxiety, as well as somatization (Greenglass and Burke, 1991). Some researchers have divided pressure-dealing strategies to deal with the pressure into:

- Rational thinking whereby logic is used to find sources of anxiety and its causes.
- Imagining the means a person is likely to think of in the future and imagine what will happen.
- Denial defense mechanism in which the existence of unpleasant internal or external realities is kept out of conscious awareness.
- Problem-solving is a knowledge strategy that uses new ideas and innovation to address the problem and its resolution or it can simply be said that problem solving is a tool, a skill and a process. It is a tool as it can help solve an immediate problem.
- Humor and positive emotions can be used to deal with the pressure during the coping.
- Turning to religion is a revering turning a person to religions practices as a source of moral and spiritual and emotional support in the face the stress.

### **2.10 Categories of Coping Strategies**

There are four main categories of coping strategies identified: Personal, Professional, Social, and Institutional.

### 2.10.1 Personal Coping Strategies

Five specific strategies were identified under the category of personal coping strategies.

Personal coping was represented in:

- **Cognitive strategies**, such as positive thinking, setting realistic expectations, pragmatism, and blocking the negative and included comments like: “I concentrated on the positive aspects more than the negative” and “telling myself that I am not an experienced lecturer and cannot expect to perform like one”.
- **Physical strategies**, some of which are active (recreation, sport and general exercise) while others were passive (listening to music, watching TV, reading or simply relaxing or taking “long hot baths” at the end of a day).
- **Behavioral strategies**, these include the reported practice of engaging in routines, like housework, that does not require thought. Eating and drug-taking (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine) are also behaviors that some students consciously or habitually use: “I coped with stress by having a can of coke and a biscuit at recess times.”
- **Emotional strategies**, include use of self-deprecation, a capacity of staff to laugh at themselves: “If you make a mistake, like writing a word incorrectly in front of the class, it shows you are human” and trying not to be hard on themselves “I just did the best that I could.”



- **Rational/Time Organization strategies** are identified by staffs in the way they clearly defined their priorities for work and free time “Having a balance between work and social life” and “On weekends I spent some time not thinking about anything involved with teaching.”

### **2.10.2 Professional Coping Strategies**

Being well prepared for lessons as well as for the general responsibilities associated with life as a university lecturer are seen as important strategies in avoiding stress. Three specific professional coping strategies are identified such as knowledge of the curriculum, use of self-management skills, and professional qualities.

### **2.10.3 Social Coping Strategies**

Turning to family and friends in times of crisis or simply for conversation and reflection was widely reported as a significant coping strategy. Social coping strategies included discussion with people and involvement in social events.

### **2.10.4 Institutional Coping Strategies**

Two specific levels of institutional coping strategies are identified at both government level and university level; to support by advice, assistance, subsidies, programmes, flexibility, financial support, attitudes, facilities, motivations and rules.

## **2.11 Coping Strategies from Islamic Perspective**

Research on work-family conflict and the role of coping strategies has increased over the past decade, while research on employees' well-being has increased during the last years. Most studies on work-family conflict and coping strategies have been conducted from several perspectives. But there are not enough studies, which address all problems and issues related to work-family conflict from Islamic perspective, except some studies such as: Hussin and Noor (2007) in their study, which aim was to investigate the relationship of work-family conflict to well-being, the second objective was to examine the role of coping in the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being. The study was applied on married Malay nurses in several government hospitals and public health care centers located in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The researcher randomly distributed 254 copies of questionnaires, and a total of 243 completed questionnaires were obtained from organizations. The researcher assessed coping strategies using two different scales, problem-focused coping and religious coping. The results of this study indicated that both religious and problem-focused coping strategies are related to job satisfaction. Also high levels of religious coping are associated with high levels of job satisfaction because this type of coping strategy has played the main role in all aspects of the respondents' lives.

Most people sometimes face difficulties and problems in their life, and these can worry them. They can describe these difficulties as stressful events. Even good things can be considered a stressful event. Both positive and negative things can put people under a lot of pressures and difficulties, so that it can be a stressful event. Work-family conflict is

one of the stressful events, in this part; the researcher will attempt to explain how to deal with life problems through the holy Quran

According to Abi-Hashem (2007) the soundest way of coping with life's problems is that of religious coping strategies because this way it helps with mental well being. This way is the way of believers; Allah's (SWT) evidence was the best to be explained at this point:

"إن الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل عليهم الملائكة ألا تخافوا ولا تحزنوا وأبشروا بالجنة التي كنتم توعدون"

Those who say, "Our Lord is Allah" and then stay steadfast, on them descend angels [saying], "Do not fear and do not worry, we are giving you the glad tidings of the paradise you were promised." (Surat Fussilat 41:30).

But not all people understand the importance of religious coping strategies in managing life's problems. In many verses in the Qur'an (Al-An'am 6:102):

"ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ" سور الأنعام

"That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things".

Also Allah (SWT) said:

"وَاللَّهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ" سورة هود.

*“And to Allah belong the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth and to Him will be returned the matter, all of it, so worship Him and rely upon Him. And your Lord is not unaware of that which you do” (Hud 11:123)*

Given the aforementioned Quranic verses, Allah (SWT) reminds us to rely on Him in all affairs, to put our trust in Him and make Him the source and origin of our decision making in life. This reflects all the research findings that tell us repetitively of the advantages and positive outcomes of religious coping strategies. Maybe this is because we know that there is something we can rely on in hard times, which makes it easier for us to deal with life’s problems. Some practical strategies to cope religiously with are that one should perform greater numbers of recommended prayers, to frequently be a state of Allah. And to contemplate the way the universe is designed.

Sometimes we believe that the power coming from our own selves, feeling too confident that it is we who make the changes, and solve the problems. But most of people know the power of togetherness. Support from other people can significantly increase the effectiveness of our coping style. We can decrease our strain by sharing what is bothering us and maybe getting wiser guidance from another person who may help in handling the problems we are facing. It is important to reflect on ourselves in times of strain. Do we just listen to ourselves? Do we turn to substances when we are distressed by something? Are we brave enough to accept the problem which is afflicting us? Most importantly, do we trust Allah (SWT) enough to help us with our problems? These questions can only be answered by individuals themselves (Abi-Hashem, 2007). People

habitually depend on medical means to deal with life's problems; however, there are many other natural strategies of coping with it as well. Some Islamic or Quran based guidelines to cope with problem can be useful.

"قال اهبطا منها جميعا بعضكم لبعض عدو فإما يأتينكم مني هدى فمن اتبع هداي فلا يضل ولا يشقى"

*Allah (SWT) said: "Get you down (from Paradise to the earth), both of you together, some of you are an enemy to some others. Then if there comes to you guidance from me, then whoever neither follows my guidance he shall neither go astray nor shall be distressed."* (Surat Taha 20:123).

All Muslims they believe that Salat and ziker are the best way to prevent such feelings like worry. Therefore, Allah (SWT) said:

"الذين آمنوا وتطمئن قلوبهم بذكر الله الا بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب"

*"Those who believe (in Allah) and their hearts acquire tranquility with the remembrance of Allah. Hear well! It is only through the remembrance of Allah that hearts acquire tranquility."* (Surat Al-Ra'ad 13:28).

According to Karim (1984), among the best ways Islam chooses to cure the Ummah from many diseases, at a time chemical discoveries are full swing, is Zikr, Tasbih "glorifying" and Salat "prayer". Which if properly performed can bring mental tranquility and cure people who are mentally ill. This, as he says, was acknowledged by the Prophet (SAW) and solidified specially, when Allah puts in man a tremendous spiritual energy able to change his attitude towards life and towards the world. By looking inwardly he begins to look outwardly and thus he enters the society (Karim,

1984). It is this faith, which the Quran eludes to the prophet (SAW) knowing that emotions have a profound effect upon health, which is evident from the Hadith: when a man came to the prophet seeking advice, he was told to stay away from being angry. This is confirmed in the Quran where “those who restrain their anger”, are promised the rewards of paradise.

### **1- Patience a condition of success and prosperity:**

"يا أيها الذين آمنوا اصبروا وصابروا ورابطوا واتقوا الله لعلكم تفلحون"

Allah (SWT) said: “*O you, who believe, persevere and endures and remains stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful (Al 'Imran 3:200).*”

### **2- Patience is the way to earn the companionship of Allah:**

"و اصبروا إن الله مع الصابرين"

Allah (SWT) said: “*...and be patient. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.*” (Al-Anfal 8:46).

### **3- Allah will reward those who have patience with a threefold reward blessing, mercy and guidance:**

"وبشر الصابرين الذين إذا أصابتهم مصيبة قالوا إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون، أولئك عليهم صلوات من

ربهم ورحمة وأولئك هم المهتدون" سورة البقرة، الآيات من 155-157

Also Allah (SWT) said: “*...but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere – who say, when afflicted with calamity: ‘To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return’ – they*

*are those on whom [descend] blessings from their Lord, and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance” (al-Baqarah 2:155-157).*

**4- Allah has mentioned patience alongside the pillars of Islam and Iman, as he has mentioned it alongside Salah:**

"واستعينوا بالصبر والصلاة وإنها لكبيرة إلا على الخاشعين"

Allah (SWT) said: *“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah] ...” (Al-Baqarah 2:45).*

"الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ"

Also Allah (SWT) said: *“Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good” (Surat 'Ali `Imran 3:134).*

The Prophet (SAW) prescribed some unique remedies for the treatment of sorrow, apprehension and fear, the major components in forming stress. He encouraged the reading of the holy Quran specially the Mu'wadhatayn (surat al-Nas and al-Falaq), which teach man how to seek refuge in Allah and ask his protection. These are anchors in the present-day treatment of the neurosis that base is in security and helplessness (Karim, 1984). Of the most important among Islamic rituals is the Salat. Salat engenders a state of homeostasis in the body, since the period of work stress is interrupted to allow the body to come to rest again. It has been found that during stress, hormones are released which are of the corticosteroid group responsible for hypertension with its sequel of heart attacks and cardiac failure, gastric ulcers, and nervous disorders. In

mental sphere, Salat, which requires a reliance on one's creator, prevents and cure most of neuroses, depression, and major psychosis (Karim, 1984).

## **2.12 Coping Strategies and Work-Family Conflict**

Some researchers reported that educational institutions have important effect on academicians working. According to Barry *et al.*, (2001) higher learning institutions had a major shift which had a significant impact on the role and working practices of the academics. In the context of the “increasingly economist and managerial ethos, which surrounds university life,” (Currie *et al.*, 2000, p. 269), jobs of academic has become more difficult in terms of effort, as well as time. With growing institutional demands and accountability and work intensification a 50 or 60 hours per week workload has become the norm in many higher learning institutions (Jacobs and Winslow, 2004).

In a study conducted in Australia, Currie et al. (2000, p. 270) reports that academics felt the pressure “to give more time to the university, work overtime and weekends while not being paid any more money for doing so”. Similar examples of academic overwork could easily be found across Europe. An individual orientation, and an unlimited time devoted to academic work with total commitment to the “cause” (Cummins, 2005) are not new requirements in academe but perhaps universities have pushed it too far in recent years and became “greedy institutions” (Currie *et al.*, 2000). According to Rotondo et al., (2002) one way to reduce work-family conflict is for individuals to have the ability to effectively cope with the stressful demands.



The links between four methods of work-family coping strategies such as help-seeking, direct action, avoidance/resignation, and positive thinking, and work-family conflict levels are measured. There are two different types of work-family conflict-strain-based and time-based examined as well as the role of direction (WIF, FIW) to examine the efficiency of different coping styles. Direct action and help-seeking coping used at home were related with lower FIW conflict levels. Avoidance/resignation coping was related with higher conflict levels of all types. The results report that individuals may have better opportunity and control for positive change within the family domain compared with the work climate.

Work-family conflict is considered to be one of the major problems which faced by working women in 21st century in workplace. Furthermore, work-family conflict has been identified as a major problem for working mothers (e.g. Aryee *et al.*, 1999; Ng *et al.*, 2002). This study targeted female married professionals who had children and examined their work-family conflict experiences as well as coping strategies. Western literature abounds on this topic (e.g. Ferber and O'Farrell, 1991; Hochschild, 1997; Pleck, 1977). Excessive work time has long been seen as the major culprit affecting work-family balance (Pleck *et al.*, 1980). Furthermore, Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that control perceptions were associated with levels of work-family conflict. Carlson and Perrewe (1999) suggested social support is an antecedent to perceived work-family stressors; i.e. the lack of social support can lead to work-family conflict experiences.

Lo, Stone and Ng (2003) conducted a study to examine the kind of work-life conflict. Hong Kong women of high status faced and the strategies they used to cope with work life conflict. The sample included married professional women with children who were interviewed face to face or over the telephone. The results showed the inefficiency of the coping strategies practiced by the participants. Accordingly as stated by the researchers, organizations and institutions in Hong Kong realized the importance of support for the working mothers in order to maintain a work-life balance.

Based on literature review, many researchers and authors tried to find the best strategy to cope with work-family conflict. Hall (1972) has created a three-part typology of coping behavior: structural role redefinition, personal role redefinition, and reactive role behavior. This model allows for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Other aspects of coping behavior have also been reported. For example, Leiter (1991) suggests that “escapist” coping behavior is directly associated with an increased tendency to suffer burnout. Beutell and Greenhaus (1983) find that traditional-oriented women tend to adopt non-functional coping strategies when dealing with intense work-family conflict. Women tend to develop different coping strategies from men (Bray et al., 2001; Fielden and Davidson, 1999; Haar and Morash, 1999). Although work-family conflict has been studied extensively for a number of years, the issue of how women cope with their life situation, particularly women in Asia, remains relatively unexplored. Matsui et al., (1995) supported that the husband moderated the effect of parental demands on the perceived work-family conflict among Japanese working women.

### **2.13 Summary about Coping Strategies**

Generally the concept of “Coping Strategies” is used to describe people's responses to difficulties and stressful situations. Researchers are still searching to find the efficient strategies to cope with life problems. The efficiency of coping strategies lies in its ability to reduce immediate stress as well as to prevent its long-term consequences, such as, influences on well-being, or the development of illness. The effectiveness of a given coping strategies may show difference in the individual employing it than to those observing and evaluating it. The majority of these strategies and techniques such as imagination, mediation, communication, social support and religiosity have been applied in western societies. The findings of many studies have confirmed the efficiency of these techniques and strategies in coping with life problems and easing its impacts. Furthermore, these techniques are now entering the medical mainstream and are included in many treatment programs.

Most of these techniques are rooted in Islamic spirituality and in different Islamic forms of worship, ‘Ibadat, which can be- if applied in the correct way - considered as remedial tools for coping with life’s problems. For example, life problems can be reduced using the following Islamic techniques: Dua, Sabar, Uboodiah, Remembrance of Death, Zikr, Tawakkul, and Tilawat-ul-Quran. The findings of many studies have shown the effectiveness of listening to the Quranic recitation on physiological aspects, for curing maladies such as heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension and reported improvement in all, irrespective of whether the listener is a Muslim or non-Muslim, Arab or non-Arab.

As mentioned above, the main difference of coping strategies between western and Islamic perspective is the emphasis among individual's relationship with his/her creator and their reliance on Allah (God); some empirical studies have demonstrated the significance of reliance on God as a coping strategy in the reduction of anxiety, depression, and restitution of hope. This difference displays clearly only in religious coping strategies, because these strategies relate to religion, beliefs and ethics values.

### **2.14 Conceptual Framework for the Current Study**

The conceptual framework for the present study is displayed in Figure 2.1, which represents the impact of work-family conflict on Muslim working women's well-being. The current framework is developed based on literature review. Figure 2.1, based on the work of Yu (2007) and (Yildirim & Aycan, 2007) focuses on the relationship of work-family demands to well-being, the link of work-family demands to work-family conflict, the relationship of work-family conflict to well-being, and the role of religious coping strategies as a moderator of work-family conflict and well-being. The main reason for why this study focuses on religious coping strategies is because there is an increasing recognition of the role of religious coping in reducing work-family conflict (Boyce, 2005) and work-family conflict as work and family issues are related to cultural values, norms, and beliefs (Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999; Poelmans, 2005).

The current research aims to examine the antecedents of work-family conflict and to investigate its impact on Muslim working women's well-being. Many theories, which can explain the effects of work-family conflict; Frone (2003) reported that there are seven theories that can be used to explain the effects of work-family conflict; the

segmentation theory, congruence theory, integrative theory, spillover theory, compensation theory, resource drain theory and the role theory. The segmentation theory purports that life and family represent two separate un-related domains that have no influence on each other, while the congruence theory suggests that since work and family share a common cause, they can have either a positive or negative correlation and that any relationship found between the two is spurious. The integrative theory suggests that work and family are so closely entwined that any attempt to differentiate between the two would be futile.

The spillover theory postulates that one domain affects another by way of a positive relationship - in essence, as the name suggests, spilling over from one domain to the next. The compensatory theory suggests that there is a negative relationship between work and family, and that, for example reduced satisfaction in one domain would lead a person to try to make up (compensate) for this by increasing energy exerted towards some aspect in the other domain. Next, the resource drain model posits that the negative relationship that exists between work and family occurs as a result of one domain using up time and energy that are needed for the other domain. By far the most common explanation for the nature of the work-family interrelationship is derived from the perspective of role theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964).

Role theory is generally discussed from two perspectives: the scarcity and the enrichment perspectives. The scarcity perspective assumes that individuals have a fixed amount of psychological and physiological resources to expend on their role performance. Thus, involvement in multiple roles can impair one's functioning due to

conflicting demands on these resources, or incompatible behaviors among roles (Gutek, Searles & Klepa, 1991). Studies from the scarcity perspective are often known as “work-family conflict” (WFC) research. WFC was defined by Greenhaus and Buetell (1985, p.77) as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect”. Researchers have distinguished two types of WFC: work- interfering-with-family (WIF) or “work-to-family” conflict and family-interfering-with-work (FIW) or “family-to-work” conflict”) conflict (Poelmans et al., 2005).

Many empirical studies to reveal the relationships among variables of research framework as is shown in figure 3.1. Each variable has been recognized as a significant antecedent or outcomes of work-family conflict. Furthermore, each variable is expected to relate directly to work-family conflict.

#### **2.14.1 Work-Family Demands and Work-Family Conflict**

Some studies have shown that work overload, work hours and work schedule are the significant predictors of work-family conflict are related with lower job satisfaction, life satisfaction and family satisfaction. For example high work-family conflict is positively related to high working hours (Bruck et al, 2002; Burke et al., 1980; Eagle et al, 1997; Major et al., 2002; Wallance, 1999; Yang et al., 2000), high work-family conflict is positively related to long working hours (Burke, Weir, & Duwors, 1980; Frone et al., 1997; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Gutek et al., 1991; Pleck, Staines & Lang, 1980; Wallace, 1997), also high work-family conflict is positively linked to work schedule inflexibility (Ayee, 1992), and work overload and irregular work schedules have a

strong positive relationship with work-family conflict (Burke and Greenglass, 2001; Simon et al., 2004).

Moreover, some studies have shown that increased parental demand results in higher work-family conflict. Noor (2003) reported that the number of children at home was a crucial factor with regards to these variables. In families with no children at home, the total workload of full-time employed men and women was about 60 hours per week. For women, the number of hours per week increased rapidly with children at home, but this increase was much smaller for men. In families with three or more children, women's total work load was almost 90 hours and men's about 70 hours a week—a mean gender difference of about 2.5 hours a day. Several studies have shown the number of children living at home is positively associated with WFC and FWC (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Also time spent on family activities has been found to be positively associated to family-work conflict (Frone et al., 1997., Gutek., 1991), and working women with children younger than 12 years old experience more conflict between work and family and these are also more conflict for working women with older children (Higgins et al., 2004).

#### **2.14.2 Management /Supervisory Support and Work-Family Conflict**

Managers and supervisors are very important source for employees who support them to balance their work demands and family roles. A few studies found that supervisory support is an important source of social support in coping with problems associated with work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Burke and Greenglas, 1999; Duxbury and Higgins, 1994; Thomas and Ganster, 1995). Supervisor support means that managers provide emotional and instrumental support to workers on balancing job and family

responsibilities, some researchers believe that well-being of a family lies largely in the hands of high-level supervisors (Rodgers and Rodgers, 1989). Also, one of the major management practices and support system that have the propensity to reduce work-life conflict is flexible or alternative work schedules (J.D. Nixon, undated, EEO Trust 2006; Conger, 1998).

### **2.14.3 Well-Being and Work-Family Conflict**

Well-being is measured by life satisfaction, family satisfaction and job satisfaction. Life satisfaction is one factor in the more general construct of subjective well being. Some studies found that negative relationship between life satisfaction and work-family conflict. Arora et al., (1990) found a negative relationship between work-family conflict and life satisfaction. Aryee (1992) found that work-family conflict is related to a low level of life satisfaction for Singapore women professionals. Also Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found that higher work-family conflict negatively relate with lower life satisfaction.

Family satisfaction is one significant factor in the more general construct of subjective well-being. Family satisfaction refers to affective reactions to one's family and reflects the extent to which individuals have positive feelings about their family situation (Galginaitis, 1994). Some studies have generally shown negative relationship between family satisfaction and work-family conflict. Kopelman et al. (1983), Rice, Frone, and McFarlin (1992), Burke and Greenglass (2001), Aryee et al. (1999), all found that family satisfaction is negatively related to work-family conflict. However, Parasuarman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found that there is no relationship between work-family conflict and family satisfaction.



Job satisfaction is very important variable, not just because it enhances work performance, but also because it improves life quality of employees. Job satisfaction is actually a big factor for a professional specially, with working women, because it brings happiness for them in life. Job satisfaction has been defined by Galginaitis, (1994) as a positive emotional situation resulting from the evaluation of one's job or work experiences and replicates the extent to which an individual has positive feelings about the job. Arora et al., (1990) found a negative relationship of work-family conflict to job satisfaction. According to Kossek and Ozeki, (1998), Allen et al. (2000) and Wiley (1987) all found that low job satisfaction is negatively related to work-family conflict. Pleck et al., (1980) reported that when work-family conflict exists, the working women experience less job satisfaction. Previous studies have proposed that there is a relationship of work- family conflict to job satisfaction (Ahuja, Chudoba, George, Kaemar, Harrison, 2002; Perry, Jenkins, Repetti & Crouter, 2000). Strok, Brett and Reilly (1996) reported that work-family conflict has been found to be negatively associated to some variables correlation to job satisfaction.

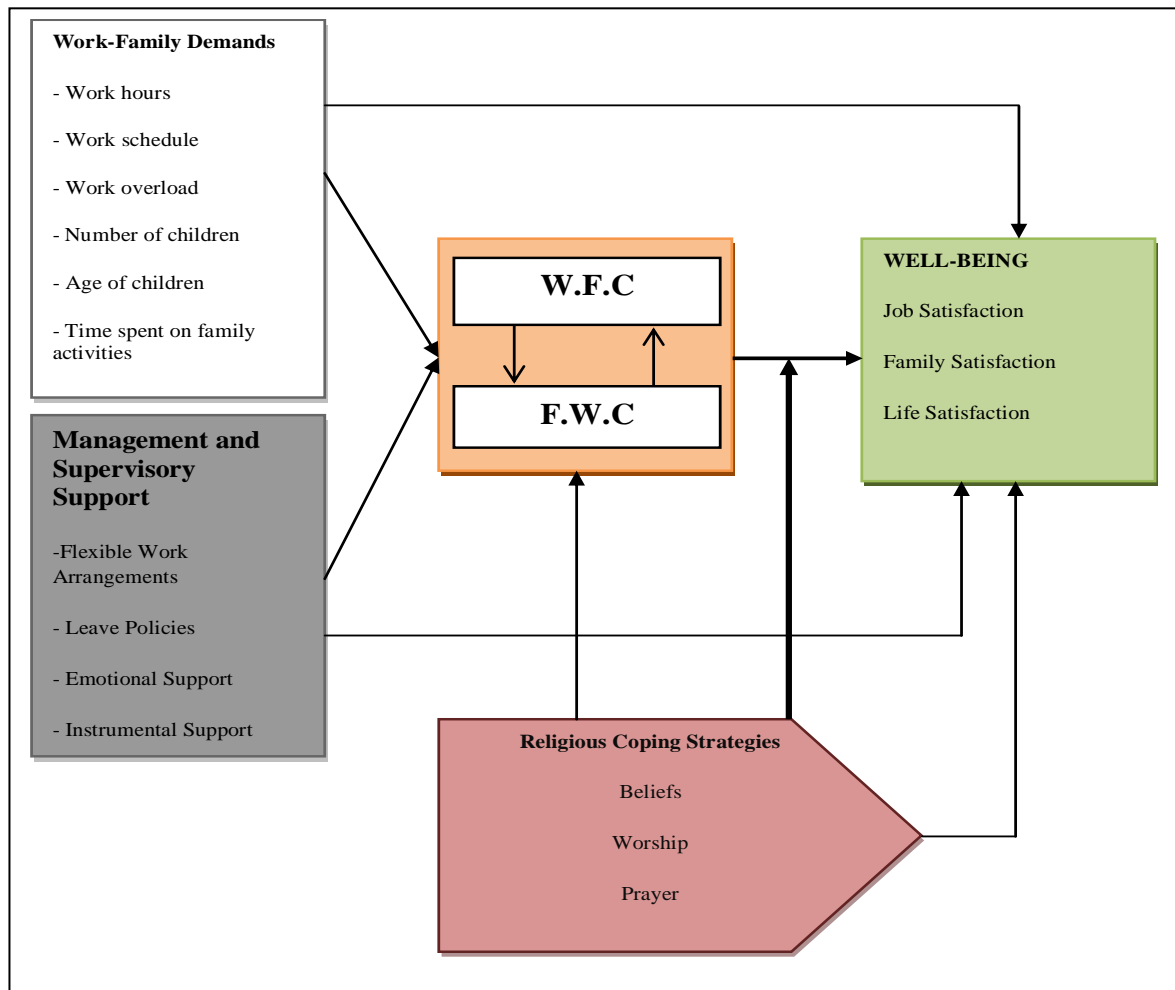
#### **2.14.4 Work-Family conflict and Religious Coping Strategies**

Based on previous studies, work-family conflict has been identified as the big problem for working women at workplace. Work-family stress has been identified as the main problem for working mothers (e.g. Aryee et al., 1999; Ng et al., 2002). This study targets married women professionals who have children and examines their work-family conflict experiences as well as coping strategies. Western literature abounds on this topic (e.g. Ferber and O'Farrell, 1991; Hochschild, 1997; Pleck, 1977). Asian working mothers' stress-coping strategies might also differ from their western counterparts due to the

Confucian ideology which emphasizes harmony over confrontation (Susanna et al., 2003). Although work-family conflict has been studied extensively for a number of years, the issue of how working women cope with their life situation, particularly women in Asia, remains relatively unexplored. Matsui et al., (1995) reported that support by the husband moderated the effect of parental demands on the perceived work-family conflict among Japanese working women.

#### **2.14.5 Research Framework**

This conceptual framework (figure 2.1) shows the work-family demands and management/supervisory support effect on work-family conflict and the impact on Muslim working women's well-being, and the role of religious coping strategies as a moderator effect of work-family conflict to employees' well-being.



**Figure 2.1:** This Framework has been adapted from work of Yu (2007) and (Yildirim & Aycan, 2007).

**Remark:** **W.F.C:** Work-to-Family Conflict, **F.W.C:** Family-to-Work Conflict

From the above figure 2.1 the purpose of this research is to develop and present a theoretical framework for examining the relationships between antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict. This research also aims to address examining the effects of work-family demands on working women’s work-family conflict and well-being, as well as examining the effects of management/ supervisory support on working women’s work-family conflict and well-being. In other words, Muslim working women are more satisfied with their job, family, and life if they are given more support by managers and supervisors,

and their well-being if they are given a short working hours, flexible work schedule, and supporting family issues, otherwise, work overload, long working hours, and inflexible work schedule are considered the main sources of work-family conflict. Besides, work-family conflicts as an intervening variable that can help us conceptualize and understand how work-family demands and inflexible management affect employees' well-being.

Several studies have examined the relationship between work-family conflict and an individual's general well-being (Chou, 2004; Huang, 2005). Furthermore, the study examines indirect effect of religious coping strategies as a moderator on the relationship between work-family conflict and employees' well-being. In other words, the well-being of Muslim working women will not emerge from work-family conflict except those who have more religiosity. If Muslim women academics have limited religiosity, then work-family conflict will effect on their well-being.

## **2.15 Summary**

Work-family conflict is a very hot issue in 21st century in many countries. However, most of the studies on work-family conflicts have been conducted in developed countries (Aminah, 1996) such as European countries, US, and Canada, but as more women in non-western societies join the labor market, understanding the effects and sources of work-family conflicts has become increasingly important. Thus, in Malaysia context, we don't really know which sources of work-family conflict can influence employee well-being, and what kind of strategies that they are using to cope with work-family conflict. Many studies-international and local have reported: different types of pressure and work-family demands can be the main sources of conflict between work demands and family roles. However, still

much more research is needed on identifying the sources which create conflict between work demands and family roles and kinds of coping strategies that reduce work-family conflict. In conclusion, this chapter may contribute to developing a better understanding of sources of work-family conflict which influence employee's well-being and the effects of religious coping strategies on different types of employee outcomes.