Over the past thirty-two years, previous scholars have shown the interdependence and complexity of work and family in several ways. An increasing participation of dual-earner parents, blurring of gender roles, and shift in employee values are some examples that illustrate this complexity (Greenhaus, Ziegert, & Allen, 2012). Regarding the complex, interdependent relationship between work and family in this new era, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) argued that without taking an active step to solve the complexity of the WFI, stress and conflict experiences resulting from unbalanced work-family would decrease the quality of life in either family or work domains. To solve this issue, a recent study mentioned that measuring both work–family conflict and enrichment would have provided a more complete picture (Tang et al., 2012), and especially, research on the positive side namely WFE is more critical (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). However, existing literature have been dominated by conflict perspective, whereby researchers mainly considered the negative side of work-family interaction. As a result, the monotone work-family studies did not successfully solve the complexity of the WFI (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Thus, investigation of WFE, which was previously referred to as “the neglected side of the work-family interface” (Stevens et al., 2007, p. 243), is crucial. Though, it has received increasing attentions recently, but “there is still much to learn about the value of WFE” (Carlson, Ferguson, Kacmar, Grzywacz, & Whitten, 2011, p. 771).

The WFE literature have noted some critical gaps exist in the body of knowledge. First, there is lack of studies on WFE (Michel & Michel, 2012; Powell & Eddleston, 2012). Second, most of the existing research in the work-family area has been done in the US or other western countries.
Hence, there is generally a paucity of work-family sampling in Eastern countries such as Malaysia (Baral & Bhargava, 2011b; Lim et al., 2012; Qiu, 2011). For example, Shaffer et al.’s (2011) meta-analysis study concluded that there is lack of work-family studies in non-American counties, especially in the East. Moreover, it is important to have more work-family research in the Asia context in order to reach a better understanding of work-family positive effects due to recent changes in work domain such as emergence of the multinational firms and businesses (Sim & Bujang, 2012). Third, most of the existing studies were based on men's experiences alone in work and family, and it means the lack of study on gender influence in work-family studies (Baral & Bhargava, 2011a). Similarly, some other researchers reported the existence of inconsistent patterns of findings in the work-family literature about gender, and consequently they called for further investigations on gender influence in work-family interaction (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Stevens et al., 2007; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007; Wayne et al., 2006). Fourth, most of work-family researchers have concentrated on the consequences of WFE, and the predictors of WFE are not fully discovered (Qiu, 2011; Sim & Bujang, 2012; Stevens et al., 2007). Fifth, most of the available studies did not separate various household structures, and not consider employees’ specific family background (Lieke & Lippe, 2010). For example, employees without children may face different demands in their personal lives compared to dual-earner couples with children.

Given the above empirical gaps, this study examined WFE and its predictors among male and female Malaysian academics from a specific household structure, to answer the following research questions: What is the level of WFE among academics at Malaysian Research Universities (AMRU)? What are the levels of the selected predictors among AMRU? What are the factors influencing WFE among AMRU? What are the most significant factors explaining WFE among AMRU? Does gender influence the relationships between the predictors and WFE among AMRU.