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BURNOUT IN THE HYBRID WORKPLACE: EXAMINING THE STRUGGLE OF LANGUAGE LECTURERS IN MALAYSIA

[*1]Mazlin Azizan, [2]Hidayu Shafie, [3]Nurjanah Mohd Jaafar, [4]Nabila Eizati Komarudin & [5]Nurul Nadia Samud

[1,2,4,5] Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam Campus, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.
[3] Centre for Research on Language and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding author: mazlinazizan@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Many workers struggle with stressful conditions, resulting in work burnout. While studies have examined issues revolving around working from home, research on hybrid work environment is lacking, particularly in Malaysian contexts. This study aims to examine work burnout issues faced by language lecturers in a hybrid work landscape.

Methodology: A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed in this study. An adapted Copenhagen Burnout Inventory was administered online to 130 language lecturers from two public universities in Selangor through a random sampling procedure. To determine levels of personal, work-related, and colleague-related burnout, data were analysed using descriptive statistics analyses which were conducted on SPSS Version 29.

Findings: The findings revealed that personal and work-related burnout are perceived as sometimes contributing to burnout. Conversely, colleague-related burnout is perceived less frequently, suggesting minimal impact on burnout in interactions with colleagues. The overall low burnout levels suggest that hybrid working could be an effective arrangement for educators in the long run.

Contributions: The insights gained on work burnout among language lecturers will be particularly useful in manoeuvring work effectively in academia, hoping to address issues within the UN SDG Goal 3, where good health and well-being would be the focus.

Keywords: Work-life balance, hybrid workplace, burnout, academia, language lecturers.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this 21st century, with technology advancing rapidly and easy access to information, distance education has become widely adopted worldwide. The hybrid work landscape in education refers to a work environment where educators and educational institutions incorporate a combination of in-person and remote teaching and administrative practices. Generally, hybrid learning takes the form of four operational methods: the integration of online and offline resources; the combination of learning objectives; the mixture of "learning" and "practising" activities; and the integration of work and learning (Wang, 2014). It involves a flexible approach that blends traditional face-to-face instruction with online or virtual components.

Many employees were forced to start working from home (WFH) when COVID-19 was looming over us, and all classes were done online. Hybrid education, which combines traditional and distance learning, has also gained prominence in the post-pandemic era. This allows educators to conduct classes at home and have flexible teaching. Even though working from home might seem convenient, employees could still experience work burnout. Burnout, also regarded as professional exhaustion, involves an intense level of stress, which can escalate if not controlled and have an impact on one's mental health (García-Rivera et al., 2022; Mheidly et al., 2020). Burnout has also been regarded as an occupational hazard for professionals in the fields of services, healthcare, and education. Maslach and Leiter (2016) define burnout as a psychological syndrome that surfaces as an elongated response to chronic conditions leading to stress at work. Some signs of burnout include fatigue, detachment from work, and a sense of failure.

Work burnout could be caused by multiple factors, such as fatigue and exhaustion, leading to chronic stress and poor job performance (Salvagioni et al., 2017), which can be exacerbated due to unexpected and unmanageable demands. As opposed to working in the

office, there might be more workload, requirements, and expectations to be met by the employees. Those who have family members to take care of while working at the same time face more stress and experience more negative emotional well-being (Tengku Mahamad et al., 2021) compared to those who have only themselves and their work to focus on. Failure to juggle both family and work effectively will affect the employees negatively, hence it would lead to work burnout among them.

Undeniably, working from home has given many benefits and flexibility to workers. However, several studies suggest that working conditions have deteriorated and that employees are more likely to experience mental health problems, such as stress, depression, and anxiety (Tušl et al., 2021). Many employees working from home will likely struggle to preserve health boundaries between their professional and personal lives. Moreover, extended hours of screen exposure due to full-time computer work can lead to fatigue, tiredness, headaches, and eye-related symptoms (Majumdar et al., 2020). For individuals who live alone, full-time WFH without face-to-face interactions and social support every day could contribute to mental issues such as social isolation and depression (Tavares, 2017). These blurred work-life boundaries can make it difficult to detach mentally from work which can increase stress and anxiety (Xiao et al., 2021).

Another drawback of WFH is work-related burnout. The expectation of working from home is that one will always be available and can take more work. Some feel overwhelmed by the extra workload, additional hours of working, as well as lack of downtime. Quite suddenly and unexpectedly, countless individuals faced the challenges of juggling work with childcare, personal relationships, household chores, and family demands in general (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). These WFH workers need to do their work on top of other commitments stated. In a study conducted by Ipsen et al. (2021), one of the main disadvantages of WFH is work uncertainties, with young people having more problems than the older generations.

While WFH can be beneficial for avoiding distractions from co-workers, especially in open-plan offices, another often-mentioned negative aspect of WFH is being disconnected from co-workers (Aczel et al., 2021). This disconnectivity can result in isolation, misunderstandings, decreased interpersonal contact, and role ambiguity (Ipsen et al., 2021), and despite the flexibility and comfort that working from home can give, the workers are susceptible to feeling excluded and disconnected.

Work burnout among working people involves a syndrome that induces stress and anxiety (Saleem et al., 2021; International Labour Organisation, 2020), threatening their physical, psychological, and occupational well-being (Salvagioni et al., 2017), especially in

WFH contexts. Studies have looked at the effects of the pandemic towards lecturers' quality of work-life (Susilaningsih et al., 2021) and the challenges they are facing while trying to work effectively from home (Aczel et al., 2021), but not many have discussed work burnout among language lecturers and pertinent issues that arise in hybrid work landscape during the post-pandemic era and specifically in relation to personal, work-related, and colleague-related burnout especially in Malaysian contexts which are addressed by this study.

There has been a surge in research on work burnout, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic but the core issues of societal acceptance, mindsets, and cultural acceptance around the stigma of mental illness (Leo et al., 2021), which realisation has triggered this study in the first place. Therefore, this study aspires to create more awareness within society, particularly those in the academic sphere, and direct people's attention to safeguarding one's mental health. This study is hoped to help address UN SDG Goal 3, which is that good health and well-being are the focus of ensuring a good work-life balance.

This study aims to explore the issue of work burnout experienced by lecturers, specifically those teaching languages when it comes to hybrid working conditions. Mohammed et al. (2020) argue that teachers exhibit the highest levels of exhaustion, while the medical profession has experienced a slight decline in efficacy. Additionally, extant literature comprises numerous empirical investigations on burnout among educators (Papastylianou et al., 2009; Huat et al., 2018; Carlotto & Câmara, 2019 in Mohammed et al., 2020). Particularly within public schools, the repercussions of teacher burnout manifest as a diminished inclination to teach, premature departure from school premises, non-participation in school activities, disinterest in meetings, lack of enthusiasm for engaging with students or colleagues, and increased absenteeism (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012; Serin & Balkan, 2014). Burnout within the educational sphere has garnered escalating scrutiny in the mental health domain over the preceding five decades (Aluja et al., 2005). This phenomenon is intricately delineated as a multifaceted encounter encompassing physical, emotional, and positional exhaustion (Pines & Kafry, 1981), mirroring intricate emotional and cognitive reactions to stressors. Hence, there appears to be a gap in the literature, which suggests that not only are language lecturers' views or experiences on work burnout under-researched, but most work burnout studies were also found to focus on academics or educators in general. Therefore, the decision to make language lecturers the focal point was due to practicality since it is of great interest as language lecturers ourselves to find out how a hybrid workplace environment can lead to burnout in language lecturers, which will help us to understand and explore the phenomenon further and address the matter accordingly.

Based on the purpose, the following are the research questions that this study aimed to answer:

1) What is the language lecturers' level of personal-related burnout (PRB) when working from home in a hybrid working environment?
2) What is the language lecturers' level of work-related burnout (WRB) when working from home in a hybrid working environment?
3) What is the language lecturers' level of colleague-related burnout (CRB) when working from home in a hybrid working environment?

This study examines the aspects found to be lacking in the literature on work burnout to understand this issue further and provide insights on work burnout among lecturers, especially those teaching languages in Malaysia.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Effects of WFH

The radical increase in the number of people working from home during 2020 has been one of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic (Fisher & Fisher, 2001). Due to unforeseen circumstances, many employers and workers had to switch quite abruptly to working remotely for the first time without proper preparation. Many organisations have shifted substantial parts of their work for certain sets of jobs to WFH format and have adopted a WFH approach to deal with this issue. According to Putnam and Mumby (2014), the WFH arrangement provides freedom and flexibility to the employees to plan when, where, and how they work (leading to reduced commuting time and increased family time). The flexibility that WFH provides toward how and when to schedule the work around their home demands may lower employees' WFH conflicts (Golden, 2012), reduce commute time, lower the frequency of work breaks, result in fewer reported sick days, and offer the convenience of a quieter work environment (Bloom et al., 2015). The current WFH mode redefined the conventional concept of WFH that was typically only for certain types of work, on an occasional basis, or given unique employee circumstances. Most significantly, WFH saves daily commuting time and offers more flexibility for workers to take care of their families (Tavares, 2017). Working away from the office can make someone feel in control of their life and give them more time to plan work and home tasks. This gives a sense of achievement and makes employees more productive.

Other than that, with options to WFH, workers may have more control of environmental factors when working from home; indoor environmental quality (IEQ) factors such as lighting, temperature, humidity, air quality, noise and ergonomics are important for the physical and mental health of workers (Samani, 2015). Specifically, IEQ factors influence a worker's comfort, which impacts satisfaction (Abdulaali et al., 2020). Unlike in conventional offices, where the workspaces are usually arranged by employers when working from home, workers have full autonomy and the responsibility of setting up their workspaces at home, being able to work in a location at home that may have better IEQ conditions as opposed to being in a fixed cubicle or open-plan offices (Kim & de Dear, 2013). Research has found that home offices might provide better air quality conditions than traditional ones (DeFilippis et al., 2020).

In their research, Salvagioni et al. (2017) conclude that burnout results from chronic stress at work, with several consequences to workers' well-being and health. They reiterate that the individual and social impacts of burnout highlight the need for preventive interventions and early identification of this health condition in the work environment, and mental health can also improve with remote working, as there is less stress and working in their environment can be relaxing. Happy employees are productive and motivated, which leads to better quality work, as happiness relates to a state of mind in which an individual experiences a sense of joy, satisfaction, positive thinking, and a feeling that one's life is good, has meaning, and is worthwhile (Jalali & Heidari, 2016).

2.2 Past Studies on Work Burnout

Some studies show work burnout is caused by personal, work-related and colleague-related issues (Galanti et al., 2021; Miguel et al., 2021). Looking at lecturers teaching online amidst the pandemic, Susilaningsih et al. (2021) have reported adverse effects on the quality of work-life of the lecturers. On the other hand, Miguel et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional quantitative, qualitative, and analytical study on medicine lecturers teaching online during COVID-19. They found the participants to be experiencing personal burnout the most, followed by work-related burnout.

In addition, an observational study on burnout syndrome among lecturers was conducted by Kovalkova and Malkova (2021) on 22 lecturers at National Aviation University, Kiev, Ukraine. A questionnaire was designed according to the methods developed by Boyko (2002), which allows the identification of burnout syndrome in its three phases (tension, resistance, and exhaustion), with four symptoms in each phase. The results below suggest that the second burnout stage was significantly higher than the others. Their general findings,

however, indicate that lecturers are not stressed. Ślusarz et al. (2022) have investigated the status of job burnout, work-related depression and job satisfaction among neurological and neurosurgical nurses in Poland. His study reveals a work-related burnout incidence of 32%, colleague-related burnout incidence of 44.2% and patient-related burnout incidence of 22.8%. 71.8% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with their work. The study also reveals that work-related burnout was higher in people above 54 years old than those in the youngest age category. This suggests that burnout levels experienced by workers in these two studies depend on specific factors and circumstances.

Many past studies have also focused on the personal aspects of burnout. Mheidly et al. (2020) have reported that the rapid changes in communication and learning processes through intensive use of online communication during the pandemic era have led people to experience an increase in stress and burnout levels at work. This suggests that individuals with different personal issues might react differently towards burnout. It has been found by studies looking at personality traits and telecommunication burnout that introverts may be facing stress more easily compared to extroverts (Meymandpour & Bagheri, 2017). On the same note, in a qualitative study involving 20 Malaysian working mothers with small children, positive and negative reactions have been reported in dealing with stress while working from home (Tengku Mahamad et al., 2021). They have also found that these mothers experienced different effects of working from home, which also vary depending on their marital status and the age of their children. Moreover, the findings suggest that the support system received, both at home and at work, and the nature or state of social isolation experienced by them will have a significant role in their work-life balance. In a cross-sectional study, Mckinley et al. (2020) conducted an online survey on 1651 doctors in the United Kingdom on how they cope with work burnout, and one crucial factor found is emotional resilience, which can be attributed to how one can positively cope with personal burnout. On a similar note, Baumgarten et al. (2020) have carried out a national survey on doctors in France involving 141 residents and 432 neurosurgeons, and the findings show that the personality traits of these doctors can act as the protective layer against burnout.

Many studies focus on work-related burnout (e.g. Salvagioni et al., 2017). A study by Ipsen et al. (2021) examining people's experiences and main factors of advantages and disadvantages of working from home has found that most people had experienced more positive than negative effects of working from home, which are mostly work-related. Three main advantages of WFH, work-life balance, significant work efficiency, and increased work control, were presented. The main disadvantages of WFH: home office constraints, work

insecurities and insufficient resources, can subsequently lead to work burnout especially if the work conditions are not favourable. In another study involving a survey on mental health service providers during COVID-19 in the United States, higher work changes have been reported to contribute to higher work-related burnout, and it was suggested that employers should try to limit task, setting and team-related work changes as a possible solution to alleviate the burnout problems among workers (Sklar et al., 2021). The findings of Lam et al. (2022) in a cross-sectional survey of participants from six large-size corporations suggest that the work conditions and environment are enormously important to work-related burnout.

In many studies, colleague-related burnout is usually labelled as work-related burnout. Aczel et al. (2021) and Ipsen et al. (2021), for instance, have discussed this type of burnout in relation to employees experiencing social isolation and the feeling of being disconnected from other people, including their colleagues at work, which have eventually led them to experience stress and anxiety. In a cross-sectional study by Galanti et al. (2021) focusing on work productivity, engagement and stress, the issue of social isolation has been highlighted as affecting workers' level of engagement with their work, which can lead to burnout. Increasing the opportunities to be able to communicate with colleagues and superiors has also been reiterated as an effective strategy that can be adopted by organisations or employers in dealing with this issue, which suggests the importance of this kind of supportive system at work. Supporting communication among employees and with the management and adopting a blame-free environment for them to share concerns, issues, or suggestions can help minimise colleague-related burnout and address the stereotype of perceiving this type of sharing as a sign of weakness (Leo et al., 2021).

On the other hand, Russell et al. (2020) discuss burnout as a prevalent and global concern among educators and highlight burnout as a modern epidemic signalling a highly stressful profession for educators. Burnout is defined in this study as a workplace phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress and is characterised by exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. In a study conducted by Cacha et al. (2019), stress has been identified as the experience of feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope with internal and external stressors, leading to physiological and psychological changes, where ultimately, can significantly impact an individual's overall well-being.

Friedman (2000) asserts that the core of burnout stems from teachers feeling professionally inadequate due to ongoing gaps between their aspirations and the harsh realities they face. This incongruity arises from the juxtaposition between their idealized conception of effective pedagogy and the pragmatic challenges they encounter within their educational

environments. Despite their continuous striving to achieve professional goals and maintain their initial teaching ideals, the tough realities persistently test and slowly erode their determination.

2.3 Past Studies on Work Burnout among Language Lecturers

There are a few studies that have been carried out with the focus on burnout among university lecturers (Jarmas & Raed, 2018; Rocha et al., 2020; Mohammed et al., 2020; Jacobson, 2016), but only a few burnout studies have been found to focus on language lecturers especially in WFH contexts as well as during the COVID-19 era (e.g. Shlenskaya et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020). Many of the recent studies on foreign language teachers' burnout have focused on English teachers (e.g. Li, 2022; Xing, 2022; Zhou, 2022) and only a handful have explored burnout among non-English language teachers (Fan et al., 2021; Izquierdo et al., 2021; Jafri et al., 2020; Topuzov et al., 2020). Teaching is commonly considered a stressful profession (McCormick & Bennet, 2011; Pyhältö et al., 2020). Teachers suffering from this syndrome start getting cynical views toward their jobs, students, and even themselves. According to Raitskaya and Tikhonova (2020), analyses of recent years demonstrated that the profession of a high school teacher is no longer a comparatively low-stress job; teachers are involved in a high-volume workload and feel the increasing pressure both to publish scientific results and acquire external research funding, especially the language teachers. Typical days for language teachers worldwide have been regarded as stressful enough, given their typically heavy workloads, time pressures, and difficulties in juggling roles. The sources of teacher stress have multiplied with the advent of COVID-19, and workloads that were once perceived as substantial have been made complicated by rapid conversion to online delivery for which many language teachers had not been prepared but whose effects seem likely to last for years to come (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

Shlenskaya et al. (2020) have investigated the difficulties experienced by university staff in teaching full-time university students via distance learning, which have led to professional burnout. A survey of the lecturers who provided online classes using Maslach and Leiter's (2016) questionnaire adapted from Vodopianova et al. (2013) found that teachers' gender did not affect their burnout. The most negative factors reported were the increased time spent working at the computer and the absence of a clear separation between working and private time. teachers who had never adopted distance education methods before the pandemic suffered more, and their level of burnout increased.

MacIntyre et al. (2020) investigated the stress and coping responses of an international sample of over 634 language teachers and measured stressors and 14 coping strategies grouped into two types: approach and avoidant, with substantial stress levels reported by teachers. Correlations show positive psychological outcomes (well-being, health, happiness, resilience, and growth during trauma) correlated positively with approach coping and negatively with avoidant coping. Avoidant coping, however, consistently correlated only with negative outcomes (stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, and loneliness). Although approach coping was consistently used across stress groups, avoidant coping has been shown to increase as stress increased.

According to Isa and Palpanadan (2020), language lecturers, as academicians, have a wide-ranging job scope encompassing teaching and learning, research, publication, consultancy, and community services. While these responsibilities may vary in terms of workload, excessive demands can lead to stress and burnout among lecturers. The sources of stress in academic organisations can be attributed to factors such as overwhelming workloads, unclear employee roles, ineffective organisational management, autocratic leadership styles, inadequate communication systems, work-related challenges, and the impact of personal life on employees (Yozgat et al., 2013). Moreover, career development for language lecturers often entails additional duties, such as attending relevant courses to expand their knowledge and ensuring compliance with university and government regulations. While the level of importance may differ for each responsibility, all of them require considerable commitment from academicians, particularly in terms of effective time management and maintaining the quality of their work. The cumulative effect of these responsibilities can result in elevated burnout levels among lecturers, impacting their psychological, physiological, and behavioural well-being (Bhargava et al., 2018).

2.4 Theoretical Models of Work Burnout Studies

Galanti et al. (2021), in studying the effects of work and family challenges on WFH workers during the pandemic, have adopted a theoretical model often used in occupational health psychology called the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The model refers to work demands in terms of physical, psychological, and socio-organisational well-being leading to fatigue, stress and burnout, while work resources refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organisational issues with contribution towards reducing work demands, increasing work motivation, personal and growth. Their approach, which comes with an addition of personal resources in the JD-R model, also influences the current study's approach.

Another widely adopted model of burnout is based on Cox's (1978) Transactional Model of Job Stress which was developed in Europe, and the construct of "work-related stress" elaborated from EU-OSHA (mainly addressing health sectors) is meant to look at a broader category of risk factors job burnout (Chirico, 2016). According to Jachens and Houdmont (2019), two other popular models of work burnout are The Job Demand-Control-Support (JDC-S) and Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) models which hold a prominent position in psychosocial work environment research and practice. The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model is also known as the Job Strain (JS) model, and usually will come with its extension, the Job Demand-Control-Support (JDC-S) model and the Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) model. The former can be explained as a set of working conditions governed by different levels of job demands, control, and social support. The latter, the ERI model, can be described as concerning the notion of failed contractual reciprocity between effort output at work and the rewards gained like the benefits and remuneration, promotion chances and job certainty.

Kristensen et al. (2005) state that the personal burnout category in the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) focuses on measuring the level of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion experienced by individuals. The CBI, which is a newly developed assessment tool, aims to evaluate the essential aspects of burnout, namely fatigue and exhaustion, in three domains: personal life (referred to as personal burnout), work (referred to as work-related burnout), and client interactions (referred to as client-related burnout) (Andrew Chin et al., 2018). The items related to personal burnout consist of general questions that all participants can answer. On the other hand, the work-related burnout category in the CBI examines an individual's perceived degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion, specifically in relation to their work. The items pertaining to work-related burnout are more focused and centred around symptoms of burnout related to work. Similarly, the client-related burnout category in the CBI explores an individual's perceived level of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion in their work with clients. The term "client" is used broadly to encompass individuals such as patients, students, teachers, children, and others who receive services (referred to as service recipients) from individuals providing the service (referred to as service providers). The items concerning client-related burnout specifically assess the connection between fatigue and work that is centred around people.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study chose the quantitative approach to conduct the research as this approach would allow this study to be conducted on a larger scale than the qualitative approach, and it could

also quantify the sample's perspectives, opinions, attitudes, or trends numerically and then generalising the results to the whole population chosen (Creswell, 2009). More specifically, cross-sectional research design was employed.

In terms of target population, language lecturers were chosen since there was a lack of study related to work burnout among them in a hybrid setting arrangement. Most of the studies involving language educators in the existing literature mainly focused on physical work settings compared to hybrid work settings, based on the review of the existing literature. Therefore, this study collected data from two chosen public universities' language lecturers as they already had the experience of working from home through online distance learning (ODL) and in hybrid work settings. These explained the inclusive criteria of the respondents in this study (any language lecturers teaching in public universities and had experience teaching online or in a hybrid setting). The selected sampling procedure was random sampling, and the sample size of this study was 130.

The instrument used in this study was adapted from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen et al., 2005). This adapted instrument had a total of 28 items and comprised four sections. Section A (a total of eight items) was related to the respondents' demographic profiles, which include gender, years of teaching experience, and language taught by the lecturers. Meanwhile, Section B contained six items related to personal burnout when working from home. In the following section, i.e., Section C, eight items on work-related burnout when working from home were included, and finally in Section D, six items on colleague-related burnout were included. For Sections B, C and D, the Likert scale was used. The respondents had to rate their response to each item from 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Very often), to 5 (Always).

The method of data collection chosen for this study was a survey, where questionnaires were distributed to the sample of the target population. In this regard, the instrument was adapted from a study by Kristensen et al. (2005) in which the items were screened before they were adapted to ensure suitability for this study. As mentioned, the respondents were asked to choose their answer for each item based on the Likert Scale from 1 to 5, which was different from the scales used in Kristensen's et al. (2005) study, where they used a scoring range between 0 (Never) to 100 (Always).

Once the questionnaire was adapted and developed according to the context of this study, it was sent to experts for face and content validity purposes. The responses and feedback received from the experts helped this study to amend the questionnaire accordingly. Cronbach's alpha analysis was also conducted to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, and it was

found that the alpha value was 0.944, which showed excellent reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). After the validity and reliability procedures were carried out, the data was collected by distributing a Google Form survey through email and WhatsApp, which was made available for two months.

In terms of data analysis, this study analysed the data gathered using the SPSS software version 29. Since this study aimed to identify the level of personal, work-related, and colleague-related burnout, descriptive statistics analyses were utilised to obtain the findings of this study. The mean and standard deviation of each item in Sections B, C, and D were reported to answer the research questions.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine language lecturers' level of personal, work-related, and colleague-related burnout when working from home in a hybrid working environment. The findings will be presented based on the research questions, which will be addressed accordingly.

4.1 Demographic Profiles

This subsection will present the demographic profiles (Section A) of the respondents which involved gender, highest academic qualification, and language taught. Table 1 displays the frequencies and percentages according to each item.

Table 1: Demographic profiles of respondents

Demographic Profiles		**Frequency (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
1) Gender	Male	27	20.8
	Female	103	79.2
2) Highest academic qualifications	Bachelor's Degree	1	8
	Master's Degree	92	70.8
	PhD	37	28.5
3) Language taught	English	81	62.3
	Malay	19	14.6
	Mandarin	8	6.2
	Arabic	11	8.5
	Japanese	5	3.8
	French	2	1.5
	German	2	1.5
	Italian	1	0.8
	Spanish	1	0.8

Based on the table, there were 27 male respondents (20.8%) and 103 female respondents (79.2%). A majority of the respondents (n = 92, 70.8%) have a Master's degree, followed by 37 (28.5%) PhD holders and 1 (8.0%) Bachelor's degree holder. Next, most of the respondents teach the English language (n = 81, 62.3%), followed by the Malay language (n = 19, 14.6%) respondents. Italian and Spanish are taught by one respondent, respectively. The complete list of languages taught by the respondents can be found in Table 1.

4.2 RQ1: Level of Personal-related Burnout (PRB)

The first research question was to investigate the respondents' PRB level. This construct has a total of six items. Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation for each item. The items are arranged in descending order of mean scores. For interpretation of mean score purposes, the interpretation from Nunnally and Berstein (1994) was referred to (1.00 - 2.00 = low, 2.01 - 3.00 = medium-low, 3.01 - 4.00 = medium-high, 4.01 - 5.00 = high).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for Personal-Related Burnout (PRB)

Item no	Items	Mean	SD
PRB3	How often are you emotionally exhausted when working from home?	3.16	1.11
PRB1	How often do you feel tired when working from home?	3.13	1.04
PRB2	How often are you physically exhausted when working from home?	2.95	1.03
PRB5	How often do you feel worn out when working from home?	2.68	1.15
PRB4	How often do you think "I can't take it anymore!" when working from home?	2.48	1.16
PRB6	How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness when working from home?	2.28	1.07
	Total score for PRB	**2.78**	**0.92**

The ranking of mean scores of PRB items ranges from 2.28 to 3.16 (on a scale of 1 = never to 5 = always). The highest mean score is 3.16 (SD = 1.11), which refers to the item 'PRB3: How often are you emotionally exhausted when working from home?' while the lowest is for the item 'PRB6: How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness when working from home?' with a mean score of 2.28 (SD = 1.07). The total mean score for the PRB category is 2.78 (SD = 0.92), which indicates a burnout level that approaches *sometimes* (i.e. Likert scale = 3). It appears that the respondents are more inclined to feel that overall, the PRB construct sometimes contributes to burnout in the WFH setting.

4.3 RQ2: Level of Work-related Burnout (WRB)

The second research question was to study the level of WRB among the respondents. This construct contains eight items. Table 3 displays the mean and standard deviation for each of the items. The items are arranged in descending order of mean scores.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Work-Related Burnout (WRB)

Item no	Item	Mean	SD
WRB4	Do you have enough energy for your family when working from home?	3.44	.92
WRB5	Do you have enough energy for friends when working from home?	3.18	.98
WRB1	Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day when working from home?	2.92	1.11
WRB6	Is the nature of your work emotionally exhausting when working from home?	2.77	1.10
WRB7	Does your work frustrate you when working from home?	2.58	1.16
WRB8	Do you feel burnt out because of your work when working from home?	2.53	1.09
WRB3	Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you when working from home?	2.40	.95
WRB2	Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work when working from home?	2.38	1.09
	Total score for WRB	**2.78**	**0.63**

The ranking of mean scores of WRB items ranges from 3.44 to 2.38. The highest mean score is 3.44 (SD = 0.92) for the item 'WRB4: Do you have enough energy for your family when working from home?'. This is followed by the item 'WRBQ5: Do you have enough energy for friends when working from home?' with a mean score of 3.18 (SD = 0.98). The lowest score is 2.38 (SD = 1.09), which refers to the item 'WRBQ2: Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work when working from home?'. The total mean score for the WRB construct is 2.78 (SD = 0.63). This indicates that, similar to the PRB construct, the respondents are more inclined to feel that overall, the WRB construct sometimes contributes to burnout in the WFH setting.

4.4 RQ3: Level of Colleague-related Burnout (CRB)

The third research question was to study the level of CRB among the respondents. This construct contains six items. The mean scores are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for Colleague-Related Burnout (CRB)

Item No	Items	Mean	SD
CRB1	Do you find it hard to work with colleagues when working from home?	2.68	1.11
CRB4	Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with your colleagues when working from home?	2.54	1.04
CRB2	Does it drain your energy to work with colleagues when working from home?	2.49	1.10
CRB3	Do you find it frustrating to work with colleagues when working from home?	2.42	1.09
CRB5	Are you tired of working with your colleagues when working from home?	2.28	.997
CRB6	Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with your colleagues when working from home?	2.28	1.06
	Total score for CRB	**2.45**	**.90**

The highest mean score in Table 4 refers to the item 'CRB1: Do you find it hard to work with colleagues when working from home?' with a score of 2.68 (SD = 1.11). The second highest score is 2.54 (SD = 1.04), for the item 'CRB4: Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with your colleagues when working from home?'. Meanwhile, the lowest score is obtained by the item 'CRB5: Are you tired of working with your colleagues when working from home?' (M = 2.28, SD = 0.997) and item 'CRB6: Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with your colleagues when working from home?' (M = 2.28, SD = 1.06).

Additionally, for the CRB construct, the total mean score is 2.45 (SD = 0.90) which indicates a burnout level that approaches *rarely* (i.e. Likert scale = 2). It appears that the

respondents tend to feel that the CRB construct, in general, *rarely* contributes towards burnout in the WFH setting. This is supported by the mean scores of items in Table 4. The table shows that all CRB items are ranked below 3 (indicating *sometimes*).

Based on the findings of this study, the mean PRB level score among language lecturers was 2.78. This suggests that the frequency with which language lecturers experience personal burnout is approaching "sometimes". This indicates that while burnout is present among language lecturers, it is not excessively high. These results align with previous studies, such as those involving lecturers at the National Aviation University in Kiev, Ukraine (Kovalkova & Malkova, 2021). The findings from the study indicate that most lecturers are not stressed, overloaded or burned out when working in hybrid settings. This contrasts with Miguel et al.'s (2021) study, which has found high personal burnout levels among respondents. Unlike Miguel et al.'s (2021) study, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study was conducted when COVID-19 was less of a threat, allowing for a more stable hybrid working environment. This flexibility seems to be preferred by the lecturers, contributing to lower burnout levels.

The mean score for WRB was also 2.78, indicating that work-related burnout is similarly approaching "sometimes". This finding aligns with Isa and Palpanadan's (2020) study, which reported low work stress and burnout levels among Malaysian university lecturers. The hybrid work arrangement might help maintain a good work-life balance, as suggested by our findings and those of Ślusarz et al. (2021), where 32% of respondents experienced work-related burnout while the majority were satisfied with their work. Providing training in stress management and burnout could further support lecturers' well-being.

For CRB, the mean score was 2.45, suggesting that burnout related to colleagues is approaching "rarely". To understand this, it is important to review the questionnaire items, which revolve around the difficulty of working with colleagues, e.g., feeling frustrated, burdened, and tired when working with them. The low overall mean score suggests that the respondents have positive relationships with their colleagues and rarely feel that working with them is difficult or burdensome. Good workplace relationships can provide essential support, reducing stress and enhancing well-being (Collie et al., 2015; Kinman et al., 2011).

Another way of interpreting the CRB results is by considering the socio-cultural background of the language lecturers. Kitayama et al. (1997) believe that non-Westerns (such as Malaysians) avoid jeopardising social relationships as they were raised to be part of a meaningful social unit. Hence, living and working as a collective society, they distance themselves from self-enhancement and blame others, and they lean more towards self-criticism. The language lecturers here can be regarded as trying to avoid causing conflicts in

their social unit and, hence, will avoid attributing burnout to their colleagues. The low score in the CRB category indicates that working remotely from home could help achieve a harmonious relationship and dynamic workplace environment among colleagues. Hence, this workplace arrangement could be implemented in educational institutions in the long run.

One potential contributing factor to the overall low burnout levels could be demographic factors. While not directly examined in this study, demographic factors such as the geographic location of the participants (Jafar et al., 2024), all of whom had good internet access, might have played a role in mitigating burnout. The lecturers in this study are based in urban areas with robust internet infrastructure, which is crucial for effective hybrid teaching. This access likely reduces stress related to technical difficulties.

The background of the educational institutions involved may also play a role. The language lecturers are from large universities in Malaysia, and while the hybrid working model adopted varies, it generally includes a mix of in-person and online teaching. As large institutions, guidelines are aimed at facilitating this balance. These institutions also provide substantial technological resources, including access to online teaching platforms and training programs to enhance digital literacy. Demographic considerations, therefore, may influence burnout levels and should be considered in future research.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Studies on work burnout, which is not a recent phenomenon, have escalated ever since COVID-19 knocked on our doors, forced most people to WFH, and now resort to hybrid work settings. The unpreparedness to deal with online teaching and communication while working from home has pushed many lecturers to the edge, either physically or mentally, which can affect their work performance. However, the findings of this study suggest that offering a hybrid approach can be a positive move for many institutions. The study's results indicate that the language lecturers in this study experienced low personal, workplace, and colleague-related burnouts. This implies that the hybrid workplace setting could be a reliable and effective arrangement for educators in the long run. The low burnout scores also suggest hybrid workplace arrangements could contribute to healthier mental health among the language lecturers. Arguably, this was likely due to the ease of teaching and learning process experienced by the language lecturers due to them working from home and having fewer administrative and demanding tasks than when those duties must be performed physically. This might also be due to the nature of language teaching and its delivery, which can be effectively carried out both physically and online. The findings of this study are hoped to shed light on work-life balance issues and

suggest proactive actions that can be taken by relevant educational organisations, ministries, institutions, and their stakeholders in Malaysia to ensure effectual work output without jeopardising workers' mental health. This study is valuable for the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and other fields, especially Human Resources and Psychology, to move forward with new designs to create a balanced work and personal life.

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