

## Gender as moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment

Sidra Maqsood\*

### Abstract

*Mechanisms of social support in individual's life has important role in achieving work family life enrichment. Support provided by family, friends and colleagues may reduce the pressures of work-family life and leads to enrichment. These support mechanisms may vary with reference to gender as both men and women receive varying levels of support in society. The present study aimed at examining the moderating role of gender in the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment. A sample of 312 married males and 166 married females was selected from public sector universities through simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was developed by incorporating socio-demographic characteristics, scales of social support and work family life enrichment. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done to check the reliability. Cronbach Alpha test was used to check the reliability. Moderation analysis was used through PROCESS to examine role of gender as moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment. Data was analyzed by using computer software SPSS. The findings of the study revealed that gender is a significant moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment social support is creating more positive influence on work family life enrichment for women as compared to men.*

**Keywords:** Gender, Social support, Work Family Life Enrichmen

### Introduction:

The area of work and family life interface has been in the focus of researchers, sociologists and anthropologists since several decades. They tried to examine and document how work outside home is influencing the family life. This particular research interest of researchers has produced a series of studies that documented negative effects of work pressures on the individual and family life that needed to be addressed (Allen, 2001; Emslie, Hunt, & Macintyre, 2004; Frone, 2000). Further, when increasing number of women also started joining the labor market, the cohesion of the family unit and family life became more debated phenomenon. Although, literature depicts that due to women's participation in labor market men have started involvement in household chores, however, the prime responsibilities of household chores still lies with women despite working full time in job market (Fuwa, 2004). Recently, there has been a move in this area of research from negative to positive aspects of professional and family life interactions.

---

\*Government College University, Lahore

This shift highlights the positive side of interplay of both the roles. There is a growing array of studies that is focusing on the potential positive special effects of individuals' professional life on their family life and vice versa. The literature has termed this positive impact as work family life enrichment. This new literature called as work family life enrichment tries to document or produce evidence that working men and women in labor market, in fact can enrich their life at both places that are workplace and family due to the benefits derived from work places and homes. The term has been defined as bi-directional and postulations of the work and family life enrichment theory state that resources created in one role, whether this role is related to family or work, can be helpful in performing second role (Akram et al., 2014; Greenhouse & Powell, 2006). Furthermore, Carlson et al., (2006) has explained "work family life enrichment (WFLE) as occurring when resources and experiences gained from one role improve role performance and quality of life in the other role". Research conducted in the domain of work and family life has identified various personal dynamics for instance education, income, gender, and race as contributing factors of work family life enrichment (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Grzywacz et al., 2002; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004). It is being observed and witnessed that when a person works in a positive and productive environment, several benefits such as networking, social capital, and enhanced income levels would be achieved that can positively influence the family role. Thus the traditional literature which focused primarily upon the conflict and negative influence of professional on family life is now under scrutiny. Furthermore the studies highlighted the role of social support as important predictor of work and family life enrichment as living in family and working at work place, one needs support to perform his or her role. Researchers argued that if individuals have support from organization and family then they can perform the desired roles by family and workplace in better and efficient manner. It has been found that with the help of social support individuals were in better position to cope with stress related to work and family life. This also leads to positive impact on physical strength and psychological wellbeing of individuals (Carlson & Perrew, 1999; Deelstra et al., 2003; Greenglass, 1993; Marcinkus et al., 2007). Although social support is necessary for both male and female but literature has specifically emphasized upon the importance of mechanisms of support extended by family and place of work to the working women. In various research studies social support for working women has been associated with the flexible working hours, flexible work, supportive supervision and child care facilities at workplace (Carlson et al., 2006; Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000; Marcinkus et al., 2007). Further study highlighted that support from supervisors played more important role in work to family life enrichment of females (Kumar, Channa & Bhutto, 2017). Similarly, it is also important for working females to get support from family with reference to sharing household responsibilities, sharing childcare, understanding by family regarding job's constraints and providing emotional support to females in creating a harmony between their professional and familial life where needed. For instance husbands having non-traditional attitude towards gender roles may support their wives in household chores to balance between multiple aspects of work and family life (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1983). Available literature provides information regarding gender differences with reference to social support and work family life domains. However the role of gender as a moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment is relatively less researched area with reference to Pakistan. The present research is an attempt to examine the role of gender as moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment.

## **Objective of the Study**

To examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment

## **Material and Methods:**

Quantitative research technique was used to examine the moderating effect of gender on the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment. Survey research method was used to collect the data from respondents of the present study. A well-structured questionnaire was developed by incorporating questions regarding socio-demographic information of the respondents and standardized scales of social support and work family life enrichment.

Standardized scale of social support, "Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support" developed by Zimet et al., (1988) was considered. The "Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support" consisted of 12 items, in which 4 items were for the measurement of family support, 4 items were for the measurement of workplace support and 4 items for the measurement of support from significant others. As in the present research social support was operationalized as support given by family, friends and workplace, therefore the researcher modified the scale by replacing statements of significant other's support with the statements measuring workplace support.

Standardized scale of work family life enrichment was developed by Carlson et al., (2006) was used. In this scale 9 items were related with "work-to-family enrichment" and 9 items were related with "family-to-work enrichment".

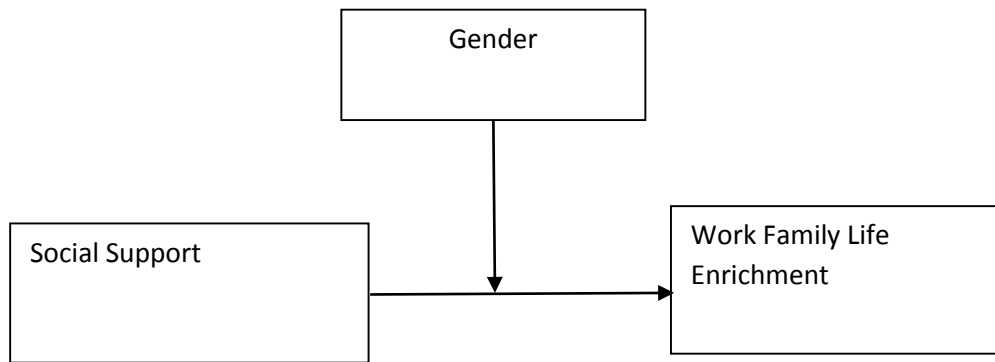
Questionnaire was finalized after pre-testing and after checking the reliability of the scales by applying Cronbach Alpha test. Unit of analysis of the study was the married males and females working on 17 and above scale in the public sector universities of Lahore. A sample of 312 married males and 166 married females was selected through simple random sampling technique. Moderation analysis was used through PROCESS by (Hayes, 2015) to examine role of gender as moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Moderation analysis:**

Moderation analysis was done to check the moderating effect of gender on the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment.

Moderation model when social support is independent variable, work family life enrichment is dependent variable and gender is a moderator.



**Figure: 1.0 Gender as moderator.between social support and work family life enrichmen**

A PROCESS modal 4 is performed to test the significance of gender as a moderator between social support and work family life enrichment.

Table 1.0: *Model Summary*

| R     | R <sup>2</sup> | MSE     | F        | df2    | df1      | P     |
|-------|----------------|---------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| .7121 | .5071          | 85.5696 | 162.5237 | 3.0000 | 474.0000 | .0000 |

Overall Model:  $F(3, 474) = 162.5237$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ,  $R^2 = .5071$ . It means 50.71% of the variance in independent variable i-e work family life enrichment is caused by predictor i-e social support. And as  $P < 0.01$  it means model is significant.

**Table 1.2: Coefficients of Effect of Gender, Social Support and Gender \* Social Support on Work Family Life Enrichment**

|                | Co-eff       | SE     | t           | p     | LLCI         | ULCI    |
|----------------|--------------|--------|-------------|-------|--------------|---------|
| Constant       | 31.4938      | 6.3716 | 4.9429      | .0000 | 18.9738      | 44.0138 |
| Gender         | -<br>10.7851 | 4.1542 | -<br>2.5962 | .0097 | -<br>18.9480 | -2.6222 |
| Social Support | 0.6081       | 0.1259 | 4.8310      | .0000 | .3608        | .8555   |

|                         |       |       |        |       |        |       |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| Gender x Social Support | .1960 | .0834 | 2.3514 | .0191 | -.0322 | .3599 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|

Results shown in table 1.0 of Hayes moderation analysis approach depicts that both independent and moderator variables are significant for work family life enrichment in the presence of interaction term. However, in this analysis interaction term is significant which was also significant ( $\beta_3 = 0.1960$  with  $p\text{-value} = 0.0191$ ) because  $p\text{-value}$  is less than prescribed value 0.05. It confirms that gender is playing moderation role for this relationship.

**Table 1.3: Conditional Effects of the Social Support at Values of the Moderator(s)(Gender):**

| Gender | Co-eff | SE     | t       | p      | LLCI   | ULCI   |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Male   | 0.8042 | 0.0545 | 14.768  | 0.0000 | 0.6972 | 0.9112 |
| Female | 1.0002 | 0.0631 | 15.8421 | 0.0000 | 0.8762 | 1.1243 |

Moreover, regression coefficients shown in table 1.3 for both categories of moderator variable have shown that social support is creating more positive influence on work family enrichment in females as compared to male as their regression coefficient is  $1.00 > 0.80$ . However, both regression coefficients are significant.

**Table 1.4: Test of Highest Order Unconditional Interaction(s); Social Support \* Gender**

|                         | R <sup>2</sup> | F      | df2 | df1 | P     |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------|-----|-----|-------|
| Social Support x Gender | .0057          | 5.5290 | 1   | 474 | .0191 |

The table 6.26 explains the interaction part of Model, where  $F(1, 474) = 5.5290$ ,  $P = .0191$ ,  $R^2 = .0057$ . It means .05% of the variance is caused by social support and gender. And as  $P$  is  $.0191 < 0.05$  it means it is significant.

The findings of the present study suggest that social support is a significant predictor of work family life enrichment. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that social support helps individuals in achieving quality of life and enhancing work family life enrichment (Hamid & Amin, 2014; Grzywacz & Marks 2000; Nicklin & McNall, 2013). Further findings suggest that gender is a significant moderator between the relationship of social support and work family life enrichment. It was assumed that with reference to social support there will be

difference in men and women and this difference will impact the effect of social support on work family life enrichment. Literature suggested that working women required more support in order to perform dual responsibilities of family and workplace (Baral & Bhargava, 2011; Chen et al., 2018; McNall et al., 2010). Further, findings of the current research revealed that social support is creating more positive influence on work family life enrichment for women as compared to men. This finding is also consistent with previous research done by Kumar, Channa, & Bhutto, (2017). They also reported that gender was a significant moderator between support provided by supervisors at workplace and work family life enrichment. Their findings also revealed that females need and required more support from supervisors in order to complete their household responsibilities (Kumar et al., 2017).

### **Conclusion:**

Overall, the present study reported that social support is a significant predictor of work family life enrichment. Further it concludes that gender is a significant moderator between the relationship of work and family life enrichment and social support is creating more positive influence on work family enrichment in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

### **Limitation of the study:**

The present study is based on data obtained from some selected academic institutions from Lahore. So geographically the study is limited in its coverage to one city and from the data perspective it only dealt with academic institutions. These selected academic institutions constitute smaller portion of working professionals. There are other public, private and commercial institutions where a large number of men and women work that could become part of a larger study yielding possibly different results. Therefore, conclusions that have been drawn should be seen and viewed with these constraints, because the complexities as well as opportunities of work family life enrichment may vary from various commercial, industrial and other business organizations.

### **References:**

- Akram, H., Malik, N. I., Nadeem, M., & Atta, M. (2014). Work-Family Enrichment as Predictors of Work Outcomes among Teachers. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 8(3), 733-743.
- Allen, T. D. (2001). Family-supportive work environments: The role of organizational perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58(3), 414-435.
- Baral, R., & Bhargava, S. (2011). Examining the moderating influence of gender on the relationships between work-family antecedents and work-family enrichment. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 26(2), 122-147.
- Beutell, N. J., & Greenhaus, J. H. (1983). Integration of home and nonhome roles: Women's conflict and coping behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68(1), 43.
- Carlson, D. R., Kacmar, K.M., Wayne, J. H., & Grzywacz, J.G. (2006). Measuring the Positive Side of the Work Family Interface: Development and Validation of a Work-Family Enrichment Scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 131-164.

- Carlson, D. S., & Perrewé, P. L. (1999). The role of social support in the stressor-strain relationship: An examination of work-family conflict. *Journal of Management*, 25(4), 513-540.
- Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., & Williams, L. J. (2000). Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional measure of work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56(2), 249-276.
- Chen, W., Zhang, Y., Sanders, K., & Xu, S. (2018). Family-friendly work practices and their outcomes in China: the mediating role of work-to-family enrichment and the moderating role of gender. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(7), 1307-1329.
- Deelstra, J. T., Peeters, M. C., Schaufeli, W. B., Stroebe, W., Zijlstra, F. R., & van Doornen, L. P. (2003). Receiving instrumental support at work: when help is not welcome. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(2), 324-331.
- Emslie, C., Hunt, K., & Macintyre, S. (2004). Gender, work-home conflict, and morbidity amongst white-collar bank employees in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 11(3), 127-134.
- Frone, M. R. (2000) Work-family conflict and employee psychiatric disorders: The national comorbidity survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(6): 888-895.
- Fuwa, M. (2004). Macro-level gender inequality and the division of household labour in 22 countries. *American Sociological Review*, 69(6), 751-767.
- Greenglass, E. R. (1993). The contribution of social support to coping strategies. *Applied Psychology*, 42(4), 323-340.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(1), 72-92.
- Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (2000). Reconceptualizing the work-family interface: An ecological perspective on the correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 111-126.
- Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (2000). Reconceptualizing the work-family interface: An ecological perspective on the correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 111-126.
- Grzywacz, J. G., Almeida, D. M., & McDonald, D. A. (2002). Work-family spillover and daily reports of work and family stress in the adult labor force. *Family Relations*, 51(1), 28-36.
- Hamid, R. A., & Amin, S. M. (2014). Work-family conflict and work-family enrichment and their consequences in Malaysia. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 19(5), 729-733.
- Hayes, A. F. (2015). An index and test of linear moderated mediation. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 50, 1-22.
- Higgins, C., Duxbury, L., & Johnson, K. L. (2000). Part-time work for women: does it really help balance work and family? *Human Resource Management*, 39(1), 17-32.



- Kumar, A., Channa, K. A., & Bhutto, N. A. (2017). Gender as moderator of the relationship between supervisory support and work to family enrichment. *Global Management Journal for Academic & Corporate Studies*, 7(1), 103-109.
- Marcinkus, W. C., Whelan-Berry, K. S., & Gordon, J. R. (2007). The relationship of social support to the work-family balance and work outcomes of midlife women. *Women in Management Review*, 22(2), 86-111.
- Marcinkus, W. C., Whelan-Berry, K. S., & Gordon, J. R. (2007). The relationship of social support to the work-family balance and work outcomes of midlife women. *Women in Management Review*, 22(2), 86-111.
- McNall, L. A., Nicklin, J. M., & Masuda, A. D. (2010). A meta-analytic review of the consequences associated with work-family enrichment. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(3), 381-396.
- Nicklin, J. M., & McNall, L. A. (2013). Work-family enrichment, support, and satisfaction: A test of mediation. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 22(1), 67-77.
- Sumer, H. C., & Knight, P. A. 2001. How do people with different attachment styles balance work and family? A personality perspective on work-family linkage. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(4), 653- 663.
- Wayne, J. H., Musisca, N., & Fleeson, W. (2004). Considering the role of personality in the work-family experience: Relationships of the big five to work-family conflict and facilitation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64(1), 108-130.
- Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52(1), 30-41.