

Exploring the Impact of the Spousal Support on Work-Life Balance: A Study of Married Female Workers at the Selected Organization in Ceramic Industry in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: The work-life balance of married female employees in the selected organization in ceramic industry in Sri Lanka is significantly influenced by spousal support, making a major factor contributing to employee work-life balance. The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between spousal support and work-life balance among married female employees in the selected organization in ceramic industry in Colombo District, Sri Lanka. The study investigates how spousal support (household work & child care, emotional support, financial support, career of spouse, and attitudes of spouses) influence on work-life balance under the dimensions of role balance, workload management, time management, and strain balance. The primary data were obtained from the study sample, which comprised 103 married female employees which was selected using a simple random sampling method, using a self-administered questionnaire containing 24 statements on a five-point Likert Scale. Multivariate analysis was employed as the main statistical technique in this study. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between spousal support and work-life balance, emphasizing the critical role of spousal support in enabling employees to navigate professional and personal roles of married female employees effectively.

Keywords: Spousal Support, Work Life Balance, Ceramic Industry.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Work & Family consider as some important domains of adult life of most people & these realms are considered as backbone of human existence (Md-Sidin et al., 2008). There are more dual-career families than single-parent households in the current world (Morf, 1989). According to Gutek et al (2019), work-family responsibilities have been shaped by the conventional gender norms which results the perception for men as “bread winners” while as “home makers” for women. Increasing female labor force participation was a major change in the labor market in the last century. Complexity of current economy & education level of females are significant factors which leads married women to engaging a job (Fortin,

2015). Many new responsibilities come after transition into parenthood such as childcare & they increase household tasks as well as stress levels of mothers (Smallen et al., 2022). Many working mothers struggle with balancing work & family life as they perceive that woman is more responsible for household works than men (Greaves et al., 2017).

Spousal support provided by husbands as the closest party after marriage, plays a significant role in balancing emotions and enhancing life satisfaction for working mothers. Many foreign research findings have revealed that spouse support can control the work life conflict of female employees & help to maintain their work-life balance. The social support of a spouse or husband is one of the variables that influence on

work life balance of female employees (Nita et al., 2024). Supportive activities of husbands such as dividing domestic roles, listening to their complaints & giving advices or suggestion are able to balance the emotions & increase life satisfaction of working mothers (Nita et al., 2024).

As Jennifer and Gardner (2007) state that failure in balancing the work and family in the employee's life, results in employee job dissatisfaction and increase turnover. Therefore, work-life balance of employees is essential for achieve both organizational goals & personal goals. The social support of husband is one of the significant variables that influence on work-life balance of female employees (Nita et al., 2024)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Spousal Support*

According to Dorino (2009), spousal support is one of the type of supports coming from outside of the working environment. Spousal support is the physical & mental support given by the partner regarding any work or non-work related problem (MD-Sidin & Sambasivan, 2008). According to Alarifi & Basahal (2023), there are six types of supports that a spouse can give for his or her partner which are household support, childcare & parental support, intellectual support, financial support, emotional support & the most important one is professional support. Professional support is a direct or indirect support of the spouse for a working women for her current work status and future career aspirations. Partners who gives higher professional support have low expectations from their wives on household activities & encourage her to develop her career path & studies furthermore. The emotional support is the behavior of giving attention, love, and affection to his/her partner (Rizl et. al., 2023). Noor (2010) found that husbands with higher education levels have given support to their partners.

Number of researchers like (Williams et. al., 2016) & (Rizl et. al., 2023) have been revealed that the spousal support can reduce work-family conflict. The comfort, appreciation, attention & assistance of the spouse will make a person able to handle the working females' conflicts successfully (Rizl et. al., 2023).

➤ *Work-Life Balance*

Work-family balance reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles (Greenhaus et. al., 2003). Kirchmeyer (2000) defined work-life balance as achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to

be well distributed across domains. According to Fleetwood (2007), ability of people to control their work about when, where & how they work in multiple roles is known as work-life balance. Some researchers have been defined the Work-Life Balance as a fulfilment of role salience between multiple roles. According to Grzywacz and Bass (2003) and Kalliath and Brough (2008), if an individual could reduce his work hours to spend time with their new child for an example, this could be perceived as effective work life balance which explains that the Work-Life Balance means the perceived control between multiple roles by a person.

➤ *Spousal Support and Work-Life Balance*

According to Rajapakshe and Dyarathna (2022), child care, working hours & supporting system have positive impact on work-life balance of married working women. Flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, and supportive organizational cultures will mitigate work-family conflict and enhance work-life balance (Lambert & Kossek 2005). Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) stated that supportive spouses can alleviate work-family conflict by sharing household and caregiving responsibilities. Number of foreign researches like Anderson (2009) has been revealed that supportive spouses contribute positively to women's ability to manage work & family roles effectively while highlighting to have a clear communication & mutual understanding between husband & wife. According to the above literature available in Sri Lanka & foreign countries, majority of researches have been revealed that there's a positive impact on the spousal support on married female workers.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study involved a population of 140 married female employees employed in selected organization in ceramic industry, Colombo district, Sri Lanka to examine the spousal support that come from their husbands in order to maintain work-life balance. The research employed a simple probability random sampling technique, with a selected sample of 103 – married female employees utilized for the study, as suggested by (Morgan , 1970).

To collect the necessary data, a questionnaire which consisted of 24 closed-end questions was used as the primary data collection method by limiting the respondents' ability to express their thoughts and required them to select one option from a list of possible alternatives. The questionnaire measures spousal support and work-life balance using a five-point Likert scale. The collected data from the questionnaire was analyzed using quantitative analysis techniques.

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

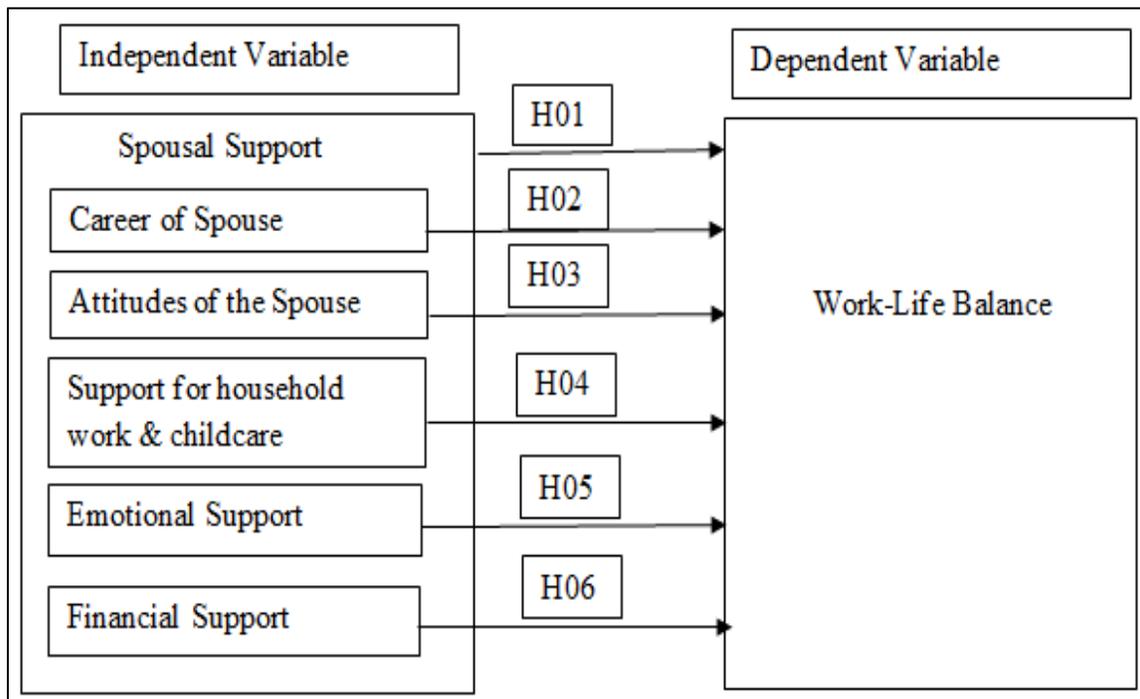


Fig 1- Conceptual Framework

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

➤ *Reliability Analysis*

The internal consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach’s Alpha test in order to measure the reliability of the primary variables, indicating how well items work together as a cohesive unit and can independently measure the same construct. The results of Cronbach’s Alpha test are given in Table 1, indicating that internal consistency of each tool is deemed acceptable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

	Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha
01	Spousal Support	0.788
02	Work-life Balance	0.893

Source: Survey Data

The Table 2 revealed that the main two variables in this research study, spousal support and work-life balance exhibit high level of reliability as indicated by Cronbach’s Alpha values of 0.788 and 0.893 respectively.

➤ *Demographic Analysis*

For the purpose of data analysis, 103 completed questionnaires were received. In terms of the age, majority of respondents is in the age 20 & 30 which denotes the 75% out of the total sample while minority of the sample is in the age above 50 which denotes 2.28%. There are 55 respondents who works as executive level category in the selected organization which represents 53.4% while other 48 respondents are staff level employees which represents 46.6% as percentage. Majority of the respondents in the sample of the study still haven’t children which represents the highest percentage as 54.63%. The researcher believes that majority of respondents are in the 20 – 30 age category is the reason for that situation. 19 respondents have more than one children while other 17.8% respondents from sample have only one child.

➤ *Regression Analysis*

The regression analysis for the primary data can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	R Square	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Spousal Support	.402	.619	.076	.634	8.193	.000
Career of Spouse	.274	.652	.065	.442	8.275	.000
Attitudes of the Spouse	.198	.764	.097	.454	7.869	.000
Support for household work & childcare	.235	.562	.085	.562	8.241	.000
Emotional Support	.211	.722	.087	.325	6.678	.000
Financial Support	.189	.654	.076	.523	7.578	.000

Source: Survey Data

Based on the analysis conducted above, the R square value is 0.402, indicating that 40.2 percent of the variance in work-life balance can be attributed to spousal support. In simply, a 40.2% change in work-life balance can be explained by the presence of spousal support. This impact hold significance, as evidenced by the extremely low p-value of .000, which is less than 001. In addition to that, the t value of 8.193 exceeds the critical value of 1.96, further confirming the substantial influence of spousal support on work-life balance.

According to the above analysis, R square is 0.274, which means that 27.4 percent of the variance in work-life balance is explained by career of spouse. This impact is highly significant, as the sig. value is 000 and this value is less than 001. Further, the t value is 8.275, which is greater than 1.96. This means there's a significant impact of work-life balance on career of spouse. Attitudes of the Spouse is significantly impact to the work-life balance as the sig. value is 000 and the t value is 7.869, which is greater than 1.96. Further, R square is 0.198, which means that 19.8 percent of the variance in work-life balance is explained by Attitudes of the Spouse. R square is 0.235, which means that 23.5 percent of the variance in work-life balance is explained by support for household work & childcare while 21.1 percent of the variance in work-life balance is explained by Emotional Support. Both dimensions significantly impact to the work-life balance by confirming sig. values as .000 as well as t value for both dimensions are 8.241 and 6.678 respectively which exceeds the critical value of 1.96 further confirming the substantial influence of both dimension on work-life balance.

Finally, R square is 0.189, which means that 18.9 percent of the variance in work-life balance is explained by financial support. It means that 18.9% of the change in work-life balance can be accounted by financial support. This impact is highly significant, as the sig. value is 000 and this value is less than 001. Further, the t value is 7.578, which is greater than 1.96.

According to the analysis results all hypotheses were accepted by confirming there's a highly significant impact on spousal support on work-life balance as well as the all

dimensions of the independent variable such as, career of spouse, attitudes of the spouse, support for household work & childcare, emotional support and financial support are significantly impact to the work-life balance of the married female employees in selected organization in ceramic industry in the Colombo District.

VI. FINDINGS

The research problem addressed in this study pertains to the investigation of the influence of spousal support on the work-life balance of married female employees in selected organization in ceramic industry in the Colombo District. To explore this issue, a conceptual framework was developed based on existing theoretical knowledge. The findings of the study indicate a significant impact of spousal support on the work-life balance of married female employees in selected organization in ceramic industry in the Colombo District. Five dimensions of spousal support (career, attitudes, household support, emotional support, and financial support) were identified as crucial factors that significantly influencing the work-life balance of married female employees at selected organization. Therefore, the study provides a clear answer to the research problem, affirming the highly significant influence of spousal support on the work-life balance of married female employees in selected organization in ceramic industry in the Colombo District.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study suggest that work-life balance among married female employees in the selected organization in ceramic industry in Colombo District has a highly significant impact from spousal support. In order improve employee work-life balance, several strategies can be implemented. One such strategy is to conduct training programs for married female employees to give an awareness about the work & family role balance & importance of taking spousal support for that purpose. Additionally, create a network for employees and their spouses to share experiences and advice on balancing work and family and arrange family trips, family day events in order to develop family

relationships in order to maintain work-family balance that ultimately lead to individual success, group success and organizational success.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of spousal support on married female employees' work-life balance in the selected organization in ceramic industry in Sri Lanka. Enhancing work-life balance among married female workers in the selected organization within the ceramic industry in Colombo District can be achieved through greater spousal support, improved organizational policies, and flexible work arrangements. Strengthening support systems at both the workplace and home can contribute to better job satisfaction and overall well-being. Future research should examine the long-term effects of spousal support on work-life balance and explore effective strategies for mitigating work-family conflicts.

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