

# Social Support as a Moderator to Work-Family Conflict and Work-Family Enrichment: A Review

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**Abstract** – *This study was performed to review the experience of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment with social support as the moderator. Work-family conflict or enrichment occurs when behaviours, moods, stresses, and emotions from work bring bad or good effects into family. Social support has been seen as an important factor to assist employees with their role at work and at home. This will reduce work-family conflict among the employees and achieve positive level of inter-role between work and family, which is work-family enrichment. The review provides evidence that social support may be helpful in improving the quality of work-family life of employees. Copyright © 2014 Penerbit Akademia Baru - All rights reserved.*

**Keywords:** Work-family Conflict, Work-family Enrichment, Social Support, Dual Working Parents

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Work and family can be considered as two major and important domains in a person's life, and many studies have been done by researchers all over the world regarding the relationship between work and family. Social scientists in the field of human resource (HR) and organizational behaviour (OB) have showed interest in understanding how a person's role in workplace can affect his/her family life and vice versa. It can be seen that there is a need to fulfil the balance and integration between family needs and career requirement [1]. Changes in societal trends, combined with economy that requires dual income to support life, can be seen as a major factor that contributes to the increase in research in the area of work-family balance, which includes work-family conflict and work-family enrichment.

Imbalance or work-family conflict exists when there is inadequate time or energy desired to function at both workplace and home to the extent of that an individual prefers and to the extent that family members and employers prefer. Family role strain happens when attention and time are needed, for example to take care of the young, while work role strain may occur because of work overload and not having enough resources to carry out the required task. Currently, literatures related to work-family researches focus more on work-family conflict, and recently the concept of work-family enrichment has become an interest by most researchers [2].

Work-family conflict is defined as the difficulties faced when balancing between work and family [3,4,5]. Based on "scarcity hypothesis" [6], an individual has a fixed sum of energy to expand in various roles. Therefore, the time and energy devoted in one role will reduce the amount of time and energy that can be used in the other role. Work-family conflict has negative consequences for both employees and organizations. Among the negative effects at home are

domestic violence [7], poor physical activity [8,9], decreased emotional well-being, and low level of life satisfaction [10]. As far as an organization is concerned, work-family conflict may lead to poor performance that may give a negative impact to the organization.

Work-family conflict is common among workers, especially in industrialized country, including the US. According to Schiemen *et al.* [11], 70 percent of American male and female employees reported some interference between work and non-work responsibilities. The US is believed to suffer the highest rate of work-family conflict compared to other advanced countries because Americans work longer hours than other countries, including Japan [12]. The conflict includes time strains, missed work or family activities, and spill over of stress from work to home.

Similar to Western countries, work-family conflict issues have been recognized as critical workplace issues for Asian countries. A profitable organization in South Korea reported that work-family conflict causes job stress to employees and also gives impact to workplace productivity and performance in general [13]. In addition, according to Sakamoto and Spink [14], similar cases have been found in other Asian countries. For example, a study done by Ahmad and Skitmore [15] aimed to investigate the existence of work-family conflict, and the type of conflict among workers in Singapore revealed that the highest type of conflict is the behaviour-based conflict, followed by time-based conflict and strained-based conflict.

According to the study done by Seto *et al.* [16], Japanese working women living with young children are more prone to experience work-family conflict and at the same time have more depressive syndrome. However, in the study of Western countries, it is shown that work is good for psychological well-being of women. Working women tend to have lower level of anxiety and depression than non-working women. Work can protect women from becoming depressed by enhancing their self-esteem and increasing the social network. In Japan, the context where women living with young children may be a burden and this may cause work overload, role conflict and other concerns that may lead to increased chances of getting depressive syndrome.

Hence, combining work and family roles does not necessarily bring conflict, but enrichment as well. This is supported by Eby *et al.* [17], where there is an extended research towards work family paradigm that includes the positive side of work-family interface rather than the negative side. Based on the role enhancement theory, Marks [18] suggested that individual will get benefits from the commitment in multiple roles and resources from one domain, which then can be used to fulfil the demand in another role. Work-family enrichment, also known as work-family facilitation, can be understood as a relationship between work and family, where experience and participation in one role may help to increase the performance in another role [19]. Work-family enrichment, as well as work-family conflict, may occur from work to family and vice versa [2,3,4].

Support from all levels of management and family is important to assist an employee in reducing work-family conflict and contribute to work-family enrichment. Social support may come in terms on emotional and instrumental support. In work environment, social support may come from supervisor, co-workers and also from the management. According to Voydanoff [20], support from the organization, either from supervisor or co-workers, is an important element to achieve work-family balance. In addition, in achieving work-family balance, support from supervisor, co-workers and the management is important for work-family enrichment because social support can reduce work-related tension and strain [21,22,23,24,25,26].

For example, co-workers can assist in emotional support by mitigating the stress associated with work-family conflict. Instrumental support includes offering assistance by emailing or delivering work materials when an employee has to work from home to attend to a sick child. Support from supervisor may also be in the form of emotional and instrumental support, where they may be emotionally empathetic and sensitive towards work-family conflict issue and concern for the well-being of employees and their families. Instrumental support may include offering advice in meeting family responsibilities, providing direct assistant to accomplish work task, making scheduling changes, and also giving encouragement to employee to use family-friendly policy that has been established by the organization. According to Edwards and Rothbard [27], support from supervisor helps to reduce work-related concerns, which may help employees to participate in family activities effectively. Management support is related to the policy and benefits that stress out the importance of work-family balance and give opportunities for employees to use the policy that will help to balance between work and family lives. Besides, management can also give support by encouraging family-supportive work culture. Colton [28] suggested that management support leads to positive spill-over between work and family.

On the other hand, support from family comes from outside of the work environment, including spouse and other family members. Two forms of supports from spouse are emotional and instrumental supports. Some examples of emotional support include emphatic understanding and listening, affirmation of affection, advice, and concern for the welfare of each other. Instrumental support is related to assistance from partners in household chores and childcare [29]. Conservation of resources (COR) theory by Hobfoll [30] stated that employees actively preserve, protect and build resources. Resources may include social support, autonomy and others that can be used to solve problems [19]. In this case of using the COR theory, it is assumed that an employee who received support from co-workers and partners can acquire resources that may help them to balance work and family demands, which would lead to employee satisfaction in both family and work domains.

## **2.0 DEFINITION**

### **2.1 Work-family Conflict**

Work-family conflict can be seen as an important issue in today's business world [31,32]. Some researchers used terms such as work-home interference [33] and work-non-work interference [34] interchangeably, which refers to work-family conflict. In recent years, there has been an increase in interest in studies about conflict in work and family life domains, where conflicts experienced by individuals between their roles in family and at work have been highlighted. Work and family can be seen as two interdependent domains which cannot be separated and affect each other in two-ways relationship [7,35]. However, both two-ways interaction, either work interfering with family or family interfering with work, act differently and can be clearly separated and are independent [36,37].

Early researches define work-family conflict as pressure in both roles of work and family domains, which are mutually incompatible. Work-family conflict is the extent of the demands and responsibilities in one of the two roles that interfere with the demands and responsibilities in another role. Greenhaus and Beutell [4] suggested that work-family conflict is a consequence of inconsistent demands between roles in work and in family. In other words, work-family

conflict is likely to occur when expectation in one role does not meet the requirement in another role, therefore preventing efficient performance in the other role.

Work-family conflict is defined by role theory as an inter-conflict which happens when the role demand from one domain (family/work) interferes with the role from another domain (family/work) [4]. Early researches define conflict between work and family as a one-dimensional direction, but later the research by Frone *et al.* [38] discovered that there are two directions of interference. In the early research by Greenhaus and Beutell [4], work-family conflict is a conflict that occurs when an individual's role in work interferes with the role in the family, while family-work conflict is a conflict that occurs when an individual's role in the family interferes with the role in workplace. Work-family conflict can be seen as bi-directional and multi-role phenomena. The multi-role phenomena include time, strain, and behaviour-based conflicts for multiple roles that one has to be responsible for.

Multiple roles individuals have to perform and compete for a person's time. Generally, time spent on one activity cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time-based conflict refers to the time that has been reduced to perform another role due to the one role that has been accomplished or time pressure to meet the demand of one role while struggling to meet the demand of the other role [4,38]. Time-based conflict is consistent with excessive work time and schedule conflict dimension suggested by Pleck *et al.* [39] and role overload by Kahn *et al.* [40]. Role overload can be defined as the demands of multiple roles that one has to accomplish that exceed available time and energy resources [41]. A study by Kim *et al.* [42] also suggested that long working hours and heavy duty work load are believed to have a direct influence on work-family conflict. Long working hours and heavy duty load can also increase stress, tiredness and inefficient work by employees, which can contribute to work-family conflict.

Strain-based conflict occurs when one's role can hinder one's performance in another role [4]. According to Pleck *et al.*, [39], strain-based conflict is consistent with fatigue when strain or irritability dimension exists when the strain in one role gives impact to the performance in another role. The roles are incompatible in the sense that the strain created by the ones that make it difficult to comply with the demands of another role. The forms of strain include anxiety, tension, fatigue, irritability, depression, low energy or apathy [4,38,43].

Another form of work-family conflict is behaviour-based conflict. Behaviour-based conflict occurs when one domain impacts inappropriately towards another domain [4]. Specific pattern in role behaviour may be incompatible with the expectation regarding behaviour in another role. For example, high pressure environment in workplace will lead to inappropriate behaviours at home. Halbesleben *et al.* [44] suggested that most of the working employees with family responsibilities experienced the strain-based work-family conflict. All three types of conflicts have a direct influence towards the employees.

Besides, employees' motivation depends on problem related to work-family conflict that they experienced. Negative consequences such as low affective organizational commitment, employee burnout, frequent family interruptions, lateness and absenteeism, high turnover, decrease in job satisfaction, high level of job stress, and preference to work for a few hours would probably occur due to work-family conflict. However, an individual may be able to reduce work-family conflict if they receive support either from work-related domain or family-related domain. The interaction between work and family does not only bring conflict but may

also bring enrichment from one role to the other role, which refers to the positive side of balance, namely work-family enrichment.

## **2.2 Work-family Enrichment**

Many researchers used a variety of terms to describe the positive interaction between work and family roles, for example, work-family enrichment, facilitation, enhancement, engagement and positive spill over [19,45]. These terms have always been used interchangeably. However, scholars have found some differences between these labels [45]. According to Sieber [46], work-family enhancement refers to the acquisition of resources that are useful in several life challenges, while positive spill over refers to the transmission within-person across domains of positive motions, moods, or thoughts [47]. The term work-family facilitation refers to improvements in the life system through resources gained in a specific sphere of life [48] and finally, work-family enrichment refers to “the extent to which experiences in one role help to improve the quality of life in the other role”.

Enrichment can occur in two directions; work-to-family or family-to-work enrichment, and it is believed that the latter is stronger than the former [19]. Work-to-family enrichment can be seen as experience, skills and opportunities gained or developed at workplace that enhance family life, while family-to-work enrichment occurs when positive mood, behaviour, sense of accomplishment, and support or resources received or generated from family give a positive effect in work role [19]. Work-to-family enrichment will promote better well-being to the family domain. Work-family enrichment predictors can be found in work domain factors, for example, work characteristics [21,49].

Furthermore, according to previous studies, researchers found two paths where the resource from one role can be used to promote high performance and positive effect in another role. The two paths are classified as instrumental path and affective path [19,46]. Instrumental enrichment occurs when resources such as ability, skills and values are transferred directly to another role and this will result in enhanced performance in the latter role. Affective enrichment occurs when resources generated in a role can produce positive effects, for example, mood and emotion within the role will produce high performance and positive outcome in another role.

Stoddard and Madsen [50] developed the following dimension of work-family enrichment, which includes development, affection, and capital. For example, in work-to-family direction, development occurs when participation in work results to the acquisition or refinement of skills, knowledge and behaviour or ways of viewing things that promote individuals to serve better in family domains. Affection refers to positive emotional state or attitude when involved in work helps an individual to be a better family member. Another dimension is capital, where participation in work promotes the level of psycho-social resources, such as sense of security, confidence, accomplishment or self-fulfilment that lead the individual to be a better family member.

Additionally, resources to meet several demands in multiple role include skills, psychological resources (i.e. self-confidence), energy, time, social supports (i.e. supervisor’s support), instrumental/structural resources (i.e. formal policies), and financial resources. The same resources may have different effects on the work-family outcomes, depending on how an individual evaluates themselves [51]. Thus, besides resources and demands, the work-family

experience is likely to be influenced by an individual's evaluations of self in terms of efficacy, locus of control, self-esteem, and neuroticism.

For an individual to be able to balance between work and family and reach work-family enrichment, social support can be seen as crucial resources that may assist individuals with multiple roles that they need to cope with. The source of social support may come from work environment, as well as family environment. Work-family balance, work-family conflict and work-family enrichment may result in three types of outcomes, which are individual-related outcome, work-related outcome, and health-related outcome. In this study, the researcher focused on work-related outcome, which is affective organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment is one of the elements in organizational commitment that is considered as important for employees in order to meet the goals of an organization and reach good performances.

### **3.0 SOCIAL SUPPORT**

According to van Daalen *et al.* [52], social support is the exchange of resources between at least two persons, with the goal of helping the person who receives the support. In general, social support helps individuals to retain existing resources and gain new resources [53]. For example, according to Grzywacs and Marks [50], social support from either work or family generates a positive effect in the source domain and increases the quality of life in the other domain. The primary functions of social support are emotional and instrumental supports [54]. Emotional support includes behaviour that provides encouragement, understanding and attention, while instrumental support includes behaviour such as assisting in problem solving and any kind of assistance with the aim to facilitate an individual's participation in the other domain [55]. Both types of social support can give a positive effect that helps an individual with work domain [56].

In the literature, the role of social support has been emerging systematically as an important factor that positively influences work-family balance. Enhanced resource and confidence that are linked to work and personal-based social support will lead an individual to be able to perform and feel more satisfied in all aspects of their lives. Social support may come from work-related and family-related domains.

#### **3.1 Work Support**

Support from workplace is an important resource for individuals in order to be able to meet the demands from work and family. Work support refers to the support that an individual may receive from his/her workplace regarding work and family-related matters. In this research, work support includes supports from supervisor, co-workers and the management [57].

##### **3.1.1 Supervisor Support**

Support from work may come from many sources, and those that are mostly explored are supervisors and co-workers [20], and it is believed to be another critical element to achieve positive work-family interaction. According to Hopkins [58], frontline supervisor has a direct influence on subordinate workload and work-related stressors, which gives impact on the subordinate's work role and interferes with his/her family role. Family friendly policies, such as flexibility with work hours, schedules, and timing, are contingent on the discretion of supervisor.

Subordinate can fully participated in family activities if the supervisor can help to reduce their work-related concern [27]. Many past researchers found that supervisor support was very important for subordinate work-related issues, but not all supervisors were supportive towards their subordinate all the time. As a representative from the management, supervisor acts as an agent to communicate the organization's goals and values to the subordinates and evaluate their performance. Subordinates' organization rewards, for example, merit pay and skill training, and also working condition, for example, greater autonomy and recognition from upper-level management, are based on supervisor appraisals.

Supervisor may provide support in the presence of supportive behaviour, for example, provide information, instrumental aid, and mentoring. Work-family conflict can be reduced by having support from supervisor, and this is supported by Hammer et al., [59], where family-supportive supervisor could reduce work-family conflict in a variety of behaviours, such as emotional support, instrumental support, role modelling, and creative-work family action. Besides leading to lower work-family conflict [60,61], supervisor support can also decrease stress level at work [62], increase affective organizational commitment [63], and increase job satisfaction [64].

### **3.1.2 Co-workers Support**

From the literature, many researches have been conducted on management support and supervisor support compared to co-workers support. Support from co-workers has been found to be associated with organizational outcomes, such as turnover intentions [65], increased affective organizational commitment [63], and job satisfaction [66,67]. Outcomes for an individual include increased psychological well-being [68], minimized role conflict [69], and also increased positive spill over from work to family [28]. Supportive co-workers, for example, will put an extra effort to help to accommodate other colleagues who have to miss work because of family problems, such as taking care of sick children and are willing to help to meet his or her deadline. This will help employees to accomplish certain tasks or work, and at the same time, they can attend to family demands. As a result with the help of co-workers, job incumbents will feel good and satisfied of their ability to reduce conflict between work and family, thus enhances enrichment.

### **3.1.3 Management Support**

Management support can be defined as employee's perception towards the value that the organization contributes and to what extent the organization is concerned with their own employees' well-being [70,71]. An employee's perception will depend on the benefits or programmes offered by the organization and by a culture of supportive behaviour in the organization. It includes the organizational approach by the implementation of work family policies. Policies such as flexible work can allow individuals to integrate between work and family demands that lead to work-family balance. Apart from that, family friendly policies, such as job sharing, unpaid family leave, on-site childcare, support group for working parents, and others, can promote work-family balance.

## **3.2 Family Support**

Family support or non-work social support is considered by Marcinkus *et al.* [72] as a personal support. It may come from the employee's spouse, parents, children, siblings, extended family,

and friends. In this research, family support includes spouse and other family members. A number of studies stated that family social support has a positive impact towards work-family balance.

### **3.2.1 Spouse Support**

Spouse support is defined as help, advice, and understanding that spouses provide to one another [29]. Spouse's emotional support includes emphatic understanding and listening, affirmation of affection, advice, and concern for welfare of the other partner. Instrumental support associates with tangible help from partner, such as household chores and childcare. Past researchers stated that spousal support particularly influenced in reducing work-family conflict [73,74].

### **3.2.2 Family Members**

Family members, for example, employees' parents, can also provide instrumental support as spouse by assisting day-to-day household activities, such as relieving employees' household task, helping to take care of their children, and also accommodating employees' work requirement. Besides, employee can focus his/her time and preserve energy for work. Family instrumental support can be seen as an important resource that influences both life and job satisfactions [55].

Emotional support from family members includes listening and empathizing with work-family struggles and giving advice or suggestion to manage work-family conflict. Emotional support received by an individual from family members can also reduce negative experiences and positively affect their lives and job satisfaction.

Family instrumental support is accepting family responsibilities to reduce workload of family members. Family instrumental support can be seen as an important resource that influences both life and job satisfactions [55].

## **4.0 SOCIAL SUPPORT AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT**

Social support from work and family domain is an important element that can assist an individual to reduce work-family conflict between work and family life. Social support can reduce conflict in workplace or family life and can simultaneously lead to enrichment in both work and family domains. Early research showed that co-workers support can enhance psychological well-being [68], reduce role conflict, and enhance positive spill over from work to family [28]. As for supervisor support, it has been suggested by the researcher that employee who received support from the supervisor may experience lower work-family conflict [60] and lower level of stress at work [62], which can contribute to successful balance between work and family. Instrumental and emotional supports provide energy or positive affect for individuals to transfer to work. It can be expected that employees who received greater instrumental support experience greater work-family enrichment.

The theory that links the relationship between social support and conflict is the conservation of resources (COR) theory [75]. According to COR theory, people strive to build and protect resources of values, and that stress occurs when these resources are threatened or diminished.

Resources can be divided into four main categories: objects, conditions (tenure, good marriage, and social support), personal characteristics (self-esteem), and energies (money, insurance) [76]. Resource loss is said to be more important than resource gain. Because of that, in order to prevent loss, individuals must invest in other resources. This theory extends to suggest that individuals with more resources are buffered against loss and are more capable of gaining additional resources compared to those with fewer resources, which are more vulnerable to loss.

To deal with increasing demands and stress, resources are very important. Demands are associated with multiple roles that an individual needs to perform. Stress occurs if these resources are threatened or lost, or if resource investment does not result in the desired resource gain. More specifically, the occurrence of stress and its outcomes depends on how the resources fit the demands [77]. Social support represents one of the important key resources, and it has two functions. It functions as an instrument in protecting existing resources and getting new resources [78]. Adequate resources are important to avoid time, strain and behavioural-based conflict, which can lead to work-family conflict. It is parallel with Erdwins *et al.* [74], whom suggested that social support can be seen as a social resource that has been found to be associated with reduced work-family conflict.

A study by Karatepe and Kilic [79] found that supervisor support reduced work-family conflict among frontline employees in Northern Cyprus Hotel and this was confirmed by empirical data. This finding was supported by Frye and Breugh [80], which indicated that the supervisor support gave important consequences to work-family conflict and reduced work-family conflict. The research in this area was extended by Muse and Pichler [81] whom suggested that supervisor support and also family support were key predictors to work-family conflict. This study was conducted among lower skill workers in manufacturing company in the Southern Region of the US. In this research, supervisor support was found to be negatively related to work-family conflict but family support had no significant relationship with work-family conflict. Another study by Wadworth and Owens [82] in public organization sectors, two western cities in the US suggested that social support, especially from work sources, reduced the possibility of work interference with family, which was one of the directions of work-family conflict.

Anderson *et al.* [60] used structural equation modelling to analyse data from 1997's National Study of Changing Workforce, which showed that managerial support did help to mitigate work-family conflict. Hill [83] studied the relationship between SV support and WFC using the National Study of Changing Workforce data from Families and Work Institutes, US. In this study, supervisor support (job) had a positive relationship with work-family conflict.

A recent study conducted by Lisa [84] on the employees who worked in several fields ranging from customer service, accounting and finance, administration, information technology, marketing, underwriting, and also sales and claims suggested that management and supervisor support (supportive work-family culture) effectively reduced perceptions of work-family conflict, which help to reduce some of the negative effects of work-family conflict on employees' well-being. Managers and supervisor acted as a gatekeeper to formal organization policies and informal practices. They should be provided with guidance on how to be supportive and tolerant towards their employees' family commitment.

According to Lai [85], family support can reduce work-family conflict among Chinese family, which is known by its Confucian ideology and familistic collectivism society. The study was

carried out among hotel employees in Beijing and Hong Kong. The familistic collectivism society study revealed that support from family was more effective in reducing work-family conflict faced by employees than support from work. Another study by Aizzat *et al.* [86] on married Malaysian entrepreneurs suggested that spouse was an important factor to reduce work-family conflict. A similar study done by Ahmad *et al.*, [87] among medical officers in the Malaysian Public Hospital also found that spouse support was negatively related to work-family conflict, but the relationship was not significant.

A research by Hajar *et al.* [88] revealed that low support from partner (husband) and family members increased perceived work-family conflict experience by married female nurses in Iran. Supervisor support also has a big role in reducing work-family conflict. However, in this study, there was no significant relationship between co-workers and work-family conflict. Another study done by O' Driscoll *et al.* [89] on the role of social supports included co-worker support and family support as moderators in the relationship between work-family conflict, employee well-being, and satisfaction. This research was conducted in 23 large organizations in New Zealand which consisted of financial, retail, manufacturing, tourism, and service industries. One of the findings suggested that co-worker support takes a role to alleviate the impact of work-family conflict and family support was seen to have a direct effect on work-family conflict.

Another study by Lapiere and Allen [24] investigated the role of workplace (supervisor support), family (family support) and individual (problem-focused coping) in helping to avert work-family conflict. Overall, this study revealed that factors within workplace, family and individual play unique roles in coping with work-family conflict.

## **5.0 SOCIAL SUPPORT AND WORK-FAMILY ENRICHMENT**

As it has been stated by conservation of resources, social supports are important for employees to remain and increase resources in response to multiple demands that are needed to be fulfilled by an individual. The availability of social support may help an individual with its instrumental and emotional needs regarding work and family demands and may help the individual to balance both demands. Hence, social support may lead to work-family enrichment.

However, some studies did not find a positive relationship between social support and work-family enrichment, even though others have found that there was a positive relationship between these two variables [90]. A study done by Karatepe and Bekteshi [91] on full-time frontline employees in 4-and 5-star hotels in Albania in 2007 found a positive relationship between family support and work-family enrichment.

This result was in parallel with the findings obtained by Baral and Bhargava [92], where there was a strong and positive relationship between family support and family-work enrichment. Besides, in this study, a strong positive relationship between family support and work-family enrichment has also been found. It means that the feeling of supportiveness by an individual helps to carry a positive experience from work-to-family domain. There was also a positive relationship between supervisor support and work-family enrichment. The positive relationship between these two domains suggested that supervisor support promotes individual psychological-resources based in terms of confidence, so that an individual can effectively deal with work and family obligations. This study was done among managers in six different organizations situated in western India. Another study was also conducted by Bhargava and

Baral [93] among full-time managerial employees working in four manufacturing and IT sectors located in the western part of India, which found that social support was a predictor to work-family enrichment.

This positive relationship was also supported in the study conducted by Hill [83] using data from the National Study of Changing Workforce, which suggested that manager support had a stronger relationship with work family enrichment. Another study was done by Beutell and Wittig [23] on three groups, which were matures, baby boomers, and generation X-ers regarding work-family conflict and work-family synergy. The study used samples from 1997 and 2002 in the National Study of Changing Workforce and found that supervisory support was significantly related to reduce work-family conflict with the exception of the mature group in 1997. Meanwhile, supervisor family support was the best predictor of work family synergy with the exception of the mature group in 2002.

Wadsworth and Owens [25] stressed that support from supervisor, co-workers and organizational were important elements of work-family enrichment on the study of employee in public organization. This is because social support at workplace could alleviate most of the work related to tension and strain [26]. Such supports are believed to have the potential in providing energy and psychological-resources based to participate in family-related activities that can enhance their satisfaction and performance in family domain and will result in work-family enrichment.

In contrast, the studies conducted by Aryee *et al.* [21] did not find any significant relationship between supervisor support and work-family enrichment. This maybe because Aryee *et al.* [21] used global measure to measure social support instead of measuring supervisor support and co-worker support differently. In this study, it was also revealed that co-worker support was not found to be significant in work-family enrichment. The positive effect received from supervisor was most probably much stronger and effective compared to friendly and helpful co-workers that can help employees to carry positive experience from work-to-family domain.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

Work and family interaction is an important area of research that has been conducted by many researchers. Negative interaction between work and family will give negative consequences, such as absenteeism, turnover intention, burnout, stress, and others. Therefore, it is important for employees to balance between work and family that can lead to positive work and family-related outcomes, such as employee well-being, satisfaction in both work and family, and also organizational commitment. Social support has been seen as an important factor to assist employees with their role at work and at home. This will reduce work-family conflict among the employees and achieve positive level of inter-role between work and family, which is work-family enrichment. Successful employees in managing multiple roles between these two important domains contribute to affective organizational commitment and lower the risk of turnover intention among the employees in a particular organization.

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