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**The Role of Organizational Humanistic Social Support in Decreasing
the Interference of Work Problems on Employees' Family Conflict**

**Azman Ismail¹, Fara Farihana Suhaimi², Rizal Abu Bakar³,
Mohamad Azhari Abu Bakar⁴**

Abstract: Despite an increased interest in humanistic touch in global organizational support, the nature of helping processes rendered by supervisor and coworkers is still vague. The study was performed to examine the relationship between organizational humanistic social support and work interference with family conflict using 100 usable questionnaires gathered from academic staff in a Malaysian public institution of higher learning in Borneo. The findings of SmartPLS path model indicated that humanistic touch in term of supervisory support significantly correlated with work interference with family conflict. Similarly, humanistic touch of coworker support significantly correlated with work interference with family conflict. This result shows that the readiness of supervisors and coworkers to amply offer material and moral support in performing task have reduced the intrusion of work problems in employees' family affairs and enriched their skills to decrease family conflicts. In addition, discussion, implications and conclusion are elaborated.

Keywords: Humanistic Social Support; Supervisor support; Coworker support; Work Interference with Family Conflict.

JEL Classification: M5

¹ Associate Professor, PhD, National University of Malaysia (UKM), School of Management, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia, Tel: +603-9051 3400, Fax: +603- 9051 3028, Corresponding author: azisma08@gmail.com.

² Lecturer, PhD National Defence University of Malaysia, Defence Human Resource Management, Sungai Besi Camp, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Tel : 603-9051 3400 Fax : 603-9051 3028 Corresponding author: farihanasuhaimi@yahoo.com.

³ PhD in Progress, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Counselling Department, Jalan Dato' Mohd Musa 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia, Tel : +6082-584154 Fax : +6082-581567, Corresponding author: abrizal@gmail.com.

⁴ PhD in Progress, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Counselling Department, Jalan Dato' Mohd Musa 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia, Tel : +6082-581517 Fax : +6082-581567, Corresponding author: abmazhari@fcs.unimas.my.

1 Introduction

Generally, the success of an organization lies in its ability to render humanistic touch in term of social supports to its employees. In recent years the call to treat an organization as humanlike characteristics has become a controversial issues in human resource management (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003), organizational politics and justice (Aryee, Budhwar & Zhen, 2002), and industrial psychology (Arshadi, 2011; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). It is broadly defined as organizations readiness to regulate better rewards to employees who are efficient and effective, meeting their socio-emotional needs, valuing their contributions and caring for their wellbeing, as well as providing needed assistance to employees in carrying out job effectively and decreasing their distress level in the workplace. These humanistic approaches may encourage favorable results for the whole organization (e.g., increase commitment and performance as well as decrease turnover) and employees (e.g. job satisfaction and positive behavior) (Arshadi, 2011; Ferris, Brown & Heller, 2009; Riggle, Edmondson & Hansen, 2009)

A review of general organizational support literature published by Levinson (1965), Eisenberger et al. (2001), Riggle et al., (2009), Ferris et al. (2009), Arshadi (2011) and Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012), emphasizes that organizational support encompasses several crucial aspects such as fairness, social support, rewards and job conditions. It is broadly practiced by organizations as a promising dealing that may encourage their employees to backing their stratagems and targets. All organizational support aspects are significant, but the role of humanistic approach in term of social support in bettering work to family conflict relationship is not sufficiently elucidated in organizational support research literature (Arshadi, 2011; Fu and Shaffer, 2001; Hammed, 2008). Hence, several scholars such as Fu and Shaffer (2001), Major, Klein and Ehrhart (2002), Hammed, (2008), Ismail, Ridzuan, Yahya, Kadir, Wamin, Kuzi & Suhaimi (2010) and Ismail, Saludin, Wamin & AbdRauf (2011) propose that the role of humanistic approach in term of social support will be plainly implied if it is divided in two unambiguous aspects, namely supervisor support and coworker support. According to House (2003), supervisor support is often viewed as supervisors' preparedness to render at least four key supports to their employees: emotional support (esteem, trust, affect, concern, listening), appraisal support (affirmation, feedback, social comparison), informational support (advice, suggestions, directives, information), and physical support (aid in-kind, money, labor, time and environmental modification). If these supports and helping processes are properly instituted this may promote employees' expectedness, objective and anticipation when handling upsetting and threatening situations in the workplace (Ismail et al., 2010; Mansor, Fontaine & Chong, 2003; Simpson, 2000). Similarly, coworker support is often related to as coworkers inclination to assist each other through practicing positive behavior such

as providing care, becoming friendly, showing empathy and warm relation, appreciation, respect, support and eliminating negative behaviours such as bad biting and gossiping, (Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Ismail et al., 2011). If these humanistic supports are aptly performed this may enhance the employees' skills to delivering daily job and handling distressing and threatening circumstances as a mean to create healthy workplace environments (Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Ismail et al., 2011).

An additional review of the workplace assistance program discloses that the preparedness of supervisors and coworkers to sufficiently rendering support in performing a task may lessening the interference of work problems in employees' family affairs and improve their skills to manage family conflict (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hamed, 2008). As work interference with family conflict is concerned, researchers like Boles, Howard & Donofrio (2001), Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, Le Breton & Baltes (2009) and Ismail et al. (2010, 2011) generally define this term as work interrupts family sphere that causes work to take control family affairs. It usually takes place in three major types: time-based, strain-based and behavior-based. First, time-based conflict happens when the time demands of one role are mismatched with those of another (e.g. working overtime forces an individual to cancel a family outing). Second, strain-based conflict happens when strain experienced in one role meddles with involvement in another role (e.g. meeting a deadline for tender prevents an individual to concentrates to family matters). Third, behavior-based conflict happens when behavior patterns suitable to one role are inappropriate in another (e.g., emotional restrictions at work are contrary with the openness expected by family members). If the differing between work and family roles is not appropriately managed this may intensify role performance in one domain (e.g. increase job performance) and dwindle role performance in other domains (e.g. increase family conflict) (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Byron, 2005; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011; Michel et al., 2009).

There is a common presumption among scholars within an organizational support model that supervisor support, coworker support and work interference with family conflict are different constructs, but highly interconnected. For example, the preparedness of supervisors to sufficiently render humane support (e.g. emotional, appraisal and/or physical support) and coworkers to necessarily offer support (e.g. caring, empathy, respect and/or cooperation) may lessen the intrusion of work issues in employees' family lives and improve their skills to reduce family conflict (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hamed, 2008; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011). Even though the nature of this relationship is interesting, the role of humanistic approach in term of supervisor and coworker support in handling work to family conflict is given less consideration in the workplace support research literature (Hamed, 2008; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011). Many scholars state that the predicting variable of supervisor and coworker support is given less emphasized in previous studies because they

have much described the global organizational support concept, explained the general social support characteristics (Arshadi, 2011; Ferris et al., 2009; Riggle et al., 2009), and employed a document analysis method to explore the correlation between role of social support and work to family conflict. Previous study also failed to disclose the effect size of supervisor and coworker support on employees' family conflict and well-being (Michel et al., 2009). As a result, outcomes from these studies have not provided enough information to be used as useful guidelines by practitioners in planning, implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of social support programs in dynamic organizations (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hammed, 2008; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011). Hence, this situation motivates the researchers to further investigate this relationship.

2 Objective of the Study

This study outlines two objectives: firstly, is to investigate the relationship between supervisor support and work interference with family conflict. Secondly, is to assess the relationship between coworker support and work interference with family conflict.

3 Literature Review

Several recent studies using an indirect effects model approach to investigate the role of social support in the workplace stress based on different samples, such as 800 employees from 29 academic departments and 34 administrative officers in Hong Kong University (Fu & Shaffer, 2001), and 200 working women from teaching and healthcare professions in Nigeria (Hammed, 2008). Findings from these studies reported that the preparedness of supervisors and coworkers to sufficiently render humanistic support had successfully reduced the interference of work problems in employees' family affairs and reduced their family conflicts (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hammed, 2008)

These studies are consistent with the notion of organizational support theory. For example, Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) organizational support theory postulates that the inclination of organization to acknowledge employee contributions and care about their well-being may invoke feelings of obligation from the employees to perform organization goals. While, social exchange theory (e.g., Blau, 1964; Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Gouldner, 1960; Organ & Konovsky, 1989) elucidates that the readiness of organization to offer favorable treatments may inspire employees to achieve the organizational interests. Moreover, role theory (e.g., Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978) posits that work and family domain involve multiple roles, and different expectations and beliefs of others where many demands are engaged on individuals may result in

conflict (e.g., inter role conflict). In addition, conflict theory (e.g. Eby, Maher & Butts, 2010; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990) explains that discordancy of work and family aspect is a result of different norms and requirements may improve role performance in one aspect (e.g., job) and reduce role performance in other aspect (e.g., family). Thus, Edward and Rothbard's (2000) spillover theory states that one's first experience (e.g., bad or good human relation) may subsequently influence his/her experience (e.g., function conflict or dysfunctional conflict). These theories emphasize that recognition of employee contributions, care about employee well-being, favorable treatments, inter role conflict and employee experience are closely related to the concept of humanistic approach of social support (e.g., supervisor support and coworker support). For example, application of these theories in the workplace explains that the preparedness of supervisors and coworkers to sufficiently render material and moral support in executing job have successfully decreased the interference of work problems in employee lives and increase their abilities to decrease family conflict (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hamed, 2008; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011).

Based on the literature, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between supervisor support and work interference with family conflict.

H2: There is a positive relationship between coworker support and work interference with family conflict.

4 Methodology

4.1. Research Design

A cross-sectional research designed was used because it had allowed the researchers to amalgamate the organizational social support research literature, the semi-structured interview, the pilot study and the actual survey as a main procedure to collect data for this study. The use of such methods may reduce the inadequacy of single method and improve the ability to gather accurate, less bias and high quality data (Cresswell, 2012; Ismail et al., 2010, 2011; Sekaran, 2003). The data for this study was collected in a Malaysian public institution of higher learning in Borneo. To uphold confidentiality, the name of this organization is kept anonymous. In the first step of data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted involving six experienced academic staff from different faculties such as the science and technology based faculty, the social science, humanities and liberal arts based faculty. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique because they had working experiences more than seven years and well versed on the nature of academic work practiced in their organizations. This interview method was used to further comprehend the supervisor and worker support characteristics, and the

nature of work interference with family conflict, as well as the relationship between such variables in the higher institution. The information gathered from such interviews was recorded, categorized according to the research variables, and constantly compared to the related literature review in order to clearly understand the particular phenomena under study and put the research results in a proper context. Further, the results of the triangulation process were used as a guideline to develop the content of survey questionnaires for a pilot study. Next, a pilot study was carried out. The pilot questionnaires were first discussed with the interviewed participants. Information gathered from such participants was used to verify the content and format of survey questionnaires for the actual study. A back translation technique was performed to translate the content of questionnaires in Malay and English in order to increase the validity and reliability of the instrument (Hulland, 1999; Wright, 1996).

4.2. Measures

The survey questionnaires for this study have three sections: first, supervisor support had 5 items that were developed based on supervisor support literature (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000; Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Boles et al., 2001; Turner, Frankel & Levin, 2004). Second, coworker support had 4 items that were developed based on coworker support literature (Allen et al., 2000; Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Boles et al., 2001; Turner et al., 2004). Third, work interference with family conflict had 4 items that were developed based on work to family conflict literature (Allen et al., 2000; Boles et al., 2001; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005; Halbesleben, Harvey & Bolino, 2009). These items were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “very strongly disagree/dissatisfied” (1) to “very strongly agree/satisfied” (7). Demographic variables were used as controlling variables because this study focused on employee attitudes.

4.3. Unit of Analysis and Sampling

A quota sampling was used to determine the number of sample size for this study, which is 200 academic employees. Later, a convenient sampling was employed to distribute the survey questionnaires to academic staff in 8 faculties through their faculty offices. This sampling technique was chosen because the list of registered employees was not given to the researchers for confidential reasons and this situation did not allow the researchers to randomly select participants in the organization. Of the number, 100 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding 50 percent response rate. The survey questionnaires were answered by participants based on their consent and a voluntarily basis. The

number of this sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique, showing that it may be analyzed using inferential statistics (Sekaran, 2003).

4.4. Data Analysis

The SmartPLS version 2.0 as recommended by Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009) was employed to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument, and thus examine the relationship between many independent variables and one or more dependent variable simultaneously.

The main advantage of using this method may deliver latent variable scores, avoid small sample size problems, estimate every complex models with many latent and manifest variables, hassle stringent assumptions about the distribution of variables and error terms, and handle both reflective and formative measurement models (Henseler, Ringle&Sinkovics, 2009). The PLS path method generated by SmartPLS is used to test the hypothesized model and outcomes of this test may clearly shows the significant relationship between independent variable and dependent variable if the value of t statistic larger than 1.96. This result indicates that independent variable acts an important predictor of dependent variable in the hypothesized model (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). Thus, a global fit measure is conducted to validate the adequacy of PLS path model globally based on Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroder & Van Oppen’s (2009) global fit measure. If the results of testing hypothesized model exceed the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of R², showing that it adequately support the PLS path model globally (Wetzels et al., 2009).

5 Findings

5.1. Participant Characteristics

Findings from analysis revealed that most respondents were male (57.0 percent), aged between 40 to 45 years old (38.0 percent), married (81.0 percent) and had served from 1 to 5 years (45.0 percent) (as in Table 1).

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N=100)

Participant Characteristics	Sub-Profile	Percentage
Gender	Male	57.0
	Female	43.0
Age	< 27	24.0
	28-33	6.0
	34-39	24.0

	40-45	38.0
	> 45	8.0
Marital Status	Single	19.0
	Married	81.0
	Widow/Widower	-
Length of Service	1-5 years	45.0
	6-10 years	18.0
	11-15 years	23.0
	> 16 years	14.0

Source: Research Findings

5.2. Validity and Reliability Analyses for the Measurement Scales

Table 2 indicates the results of convergent and discriminant validity analyses. All constructs had the values of AVE larger than 0.5, indicating that they met the acceptable standard of convergent validity (Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler et al., 2009). Besides that, all constructs had the values of $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ in diagonal were greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in off diagonal, showing that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2009).

Table 2. The Results of Convergent and Discriminant Validity Analyses

	AVE	Supervisor support	Coworker support	Work Interference with Family Conflict
Supervisor support	0.762	0.873		
Coworker support	0.721	0.377	0.849	
Work Interference with Family Conflict	0.836	0.441	0.337	0.914

Source: Research Findings

Table 3 shows the factor loadings and cross loadings for different constructs. The correlation between items and factors had higher loadings than other items in the different constructs. The loadings of variables greater than 0.7 are considered adequate (Chin, 1998; Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler et al., 2009). In sum, the validity of measurement model met the criteria.

Table 3. The Results of Factor Loadings and Cross loadings for Different Constructs

	Supervisor support	Coworker support	Work Family Conflict
Supervisor support			
My supervisor shows a great understanding when I have family matters to attend to.	0.349627	0.845283	0.353381
My supervisor always looks out for me whenever I have work-related problems.	0.404215	0.865271	0.245871
My supervisor accommodates me when I have family/personal business.	0.319701	0.803072	0.178318
My supervisor understands when I talk about personal/family issues.	0.506590	0.822566	0.166106
My supervisor always gives constructive criticism.	0.542217	0.905945	0.458123
Coworker support			
<i>I have co-workers who are cooperative and friendly.</i>	0.883603	0.292533	0.218480
<i>I have co-workers who are responsible in accomplishing every task given.</i>	0.893754	0.381508	0.368856
<i>I have co-workers who</i>	0.869833	0.449447	0.470986

<i>like to help one another.</i>			
<i>My co-workers always give support to encourage me to produce a good job.</i>	0.842791	0.575318	0.387333
Work Interference with Family Conflict			
<i>I have enough time to do my personal social activities.</i>	0.514493	0.437805	0.908323
<i>Excessive workload DO NOT refrain me from concentrating towards family.</i>	0.298048	0.459300	0.929473
<i>Stresses from my work demand DID NOT affect my relationship with family.</i>	0.432630	0.260949	0.934768
<i>My concentration towards my family is NOT affected whenever I have work-related problems.</i>	0.280932	0.077908	0.882848

Source: Research Findings

Table 4 shows the results of reliability analysis for the instrument. The composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha had values of greater than 0.8, indicating that the instrument used in this study was high internal consistency (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009; Nunally & Benstein, 1994).

Table 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Construct	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Supervisor support	0.93	0.91
Coworker support	0.95	0.94
Work Interference with Family Conflict	0.93	0.90

Source: Research Findings

These statistical analyses confirm that the measurement scales have met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses.

5.3. Analysis of the Constructs

Table 5 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistic. The means for the variables are from 4.67 to 5.56 signifying that the levels of supervisor support, coworker support and work interference with family conflict ranging from high (4) to highest level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., supervisor support and coworker support) and the dependent variable (i.e., work interference with family conflict) were less than 0.90, indicating the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006).

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation Analysis (r)		
			1	2	3
1.Supervisor support	5.26	0.97	1		
2.Coworker support	5.56	0.91	0.48**	1	
3.Work Interference with Family Conflict	4.67	1.41	0.38**	0.29*	1

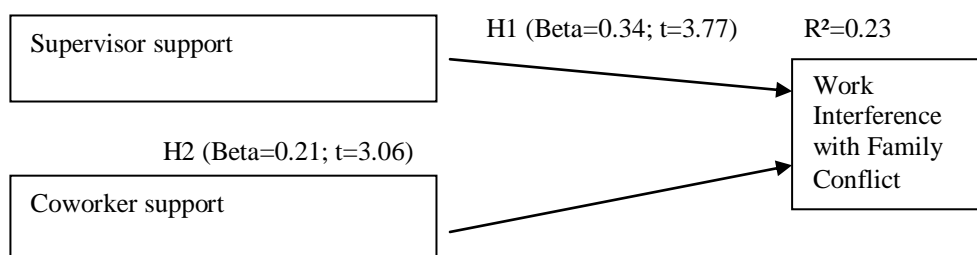
Note: Significant at **p<0.01 Reliability Estimation is Shown in a Diagonal

Source: Research Findings

5.4. Outcomes of Testing Hypotheses 1 and 2

Figure 1 shows the outcomes of testing PLS path model. First, the supervisor support significantly correlated with work interference with family conflict ($\beta = 0.34$; $t = 3.77$), therefore H1 was supported. Second, the hypothesis of coworker support significantly correlated with work interference with family conflict ($\beta = 0.21$; $t = 3.06$), therefore H2 was supported. In terms of explanatory power, quality of model predictions in the analysis can be demonstrated by the score of R². The

inclusion of these variables had explained 23 percent of the variance in dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.23$).



Note: Significant at $*t \geq 1.96$

Figure 1

In order to determine a global fit PLS path modeling, we carried out a global fit measure (GoF) based on Wetzels et al.'s (2009) guideline as follows: $GoF = \sqrt{\text{MEAN (Communality of Endogenous)} \times \text{MEAN (R}^2\text{)}} = 0.44$, indicating that it exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of R^2 . This result confirms that the PLS path model has better explaining power in comparison with the baseline values (GoF small=0.1, GoF medium=0.25, GoF large=0.36). It also provides adequate support to validate the PLS model globally (Wetzel et al., 2009).

6 Discussion and Implications

This study indicates that the humanistic approach in term of supervisor support and coworker support act as important predictors of work interference with family conflict. In the context of this study, management teams have planned and implemented challenging jobs for academic staff in order to sustain and achieve their organizational strategies and goals. According to the interviewed respondents, majority academic staff view that the levels of supervisor support, coworker support and work interference with family conflict are high. This situation explains that the willingness of supervisors and coworkers to adequately provide material and moral support in handling job stress have decreased the interference of work problem in employees' family affairs and increase their family wellbeing.

The study presents three major implications: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, the results of this study confirm that supervisor support and coworker support have been important predictors of work interference with family conflict in the organizational sample. This result also has supported studies by Fu and Shaffer (2001), Hammed (2008), and Ismail et al. (2010, 2011). Although this study reveals that the relationship between organizational support and work interference

with family conflict is significant, the strength of such relationships is low. The information gathered from the semi-structured interview shows that this finding may be affected by external factors. Firstly, respondents who have different backgrounds have inconsistent views and assessments about the importance of material and moral support provided by supervisors and coworkers. Further, due to their different cultural background the participants of this study may uphold a mix between collectivistic culture and individualistic values. In collectivistic cultures, the needs of the group are more crucial than individual wishes. Individuals in collectivistic cultures are expected to give in to the goals of the group, ignoring their own desires in many aspects. On the other hand, individualists converge on a more personal sense of self. These two forms of values undeniably led participants to have different views on the important of humanistic support rendered by supervisor and coworkers. Secondly, respondents have different values and judgments about the abilities of supervisors and coworkers to equally provide material and moral support to employees who have worked in different job groups. These differences may decrease the acceptance and appreciations of employees to the implementation of such support processes in the studied organization. Additionally, the employees' may perceive the assistance rendered was related to organizational politics. They may construe and characterize supervisory and coworker support as a self-serving effort to gain political favor, particularly if the support is rendered in an obvious manner. This may interfere with their acceptability and appreciation of support rendered by supervisor and coworkers.

With respect to the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaires used in this study have exceeded the acceptable standards of the validity and reliability analyses may lead to the production of accurate and reliable findings. In terms of practical contributions, the findings of this study can be used as a guideline by the management to improve organizational support programs. The possible suggestions are: firstly, training content and methods need to be properly planned and implemented to managers and operational workers in order to impart necessary knowledge, up to date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. Secondly, high commitment management practices need to be inculcated in order to encourage participative decision making styles. Thirdly, work-life balance courses need to be implemented to decrease the effect of work problems on employees' family affairs and the effect of employees' family problems on their job. Fourthly, the level of pay needs to be increased to increase employees' purchasing powers and increase their daily standards of living. Finally, counseling and guidance unit or an outsourced Employee Assistance Program (EAP) need to be established and subscribed to help employees getting proper assistances about their personal, work, social and financial problems. Additionally, management should consider running periodic survey on employees' work satisfaction and use the findings to improve system delivery and compensation. A monthly talk or

seminar on work related issues deliver by external parties may also help to boost the employees' morale. If management heavily considers these suggestions this may induce positive employee attitudes and behavior.

7 Conclusion

This study proposed a conceptual framework based on the organizational support literature. The measurement scales used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. The outcomes of testing PLS path model confirmed that organizational support significantly correlated with work interference with family conflict. This finding also has supported and broadened the organizational support research literature mostly published in Western countries. Therefore, current research and practice within organizational support needs to consider supervisor support and coworker support as crucial dimensions of the workplace employment domain. This study further suggests that the willingness of supervisors and coworkers to adequately provide material and moral support will strongly decrease the intrusion of work problems in employees' family affairs and enhance their capabilities to decrease family conflict. Thus, these positive outcomes may lead to increased employee well-being and organizational performance in an era of global competition.

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