



## THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE SOCIAL SUPPORT ON WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT (CASE STUDY: RURAL WATER AND WASTEWATER COMPANY EMPLOYEES KERMANSHAH, IRAN)

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### Abstract:

The main objective of the current study is to investigate the relationship between workplace social support and work-family conflict among employees who were married, living with a partner, or had at least one child or dependent living at home and worked a minimum of 20 h/week in Rural Water and Wastewater Company employees Kermanshah, Iran. The relation between workplace social support and work-family conflict (WFC) was examined using a two-dimensional measure of WFC and both global and summed facet measures of workplace social support (perceived coworker support and perceived supervisor support (pss)). Data were gathered from 158 employees. The results indicated that workplace social support related significantly to both types of WFC, but the relation was significantly stronger to perceived coworker support than to perceived supervisor support (pss). When considering all three forms of conflict simultaneously (time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based), regression results revealed that behavior-based was the only form of conflict significantly related to workplace social support. The results underscore the importance of considering both the form and direction of WFC. The study population included 158 employees. It used the improved Leiden Quality of Work Life Questionnaire by Van der Doef and colleagues and the work-family conflict questionnaire by Kelloway and colleagues to measure participants' responses. One-way ANOVA and Pearson linear correlation coefficient were used for data analyses. Results: There was a negative relation between Workplace Social Support and work-family conflict. Respondents experienced higher levels of work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict. There were significant negative relations between Perceived Coworker Support with work-family conflict and

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Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) with work-family conflict. work-family conflict of employed women could be reduced by rearranging Workplace Social Support and conditions.

**JEL:** A39, J81, E23, J21

**Keywords:** work; family; conflict; workplace; social support; perceived supervisor support; perceived co-worker support

## 1. Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, the dual-earner family replaced the traditional breadwinner–homemaker family as the predominant family model, and it is expected to remain the dominant family form within the United States (Hayghe, 1990) for the foreseeable future. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1950, 30.0% of women were in the labor force. By 1996, that percentage almost doubled, escalating to 58.8% (Hayghe, 1997), creating this shift in family models. These profound changes have heightened interest in understanding the work-and-family interface. Of particular interest to researchers has been the topic of work–family conflict (WFC). This area of work-and-family research is important in that WFC has been shown to have an unfavorable relation with a variety of variables associated with employee work life, home life, and general health and well-being (see Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000, for a review). The most widely studied correlate of WFC has been job satisfaction. Although the majority of studies have found that as WFC increases, job satisfaction decreases, results across individual studies have been inconsistent.

An increasingly important area of human resource management (HRM) research involves not only examining formal HR policies but also informal employee perceptions of support at work. For example, although early work–family (W–F) research emphasized how employees’ access and use of formal workplace supports (i.e., work–family policies, such as on-site child care) can reduce work–family conflict (e.g., Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990; Kossek & Nichol, 1992), in recent years, the field has shifted to emphasize informal workplace support, such as a supervisor sympathetic to work–family issues (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner & Hanson, 2009; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) or a Negative work–family organizational climate (Allen, 2001).

Many new HRM trends heightening workplace stress have made it critical for personnel psychologists and managers to better understand informal workplace social support linkages to work–family conflict. These include shifting labor market

demographics to include more workers that value work–life flexibility such as, parents, millennials, and older workers; rising work hours and workloads distributed on 24–7 operating systems, sharpening the pace and intensity of work; and escalating financial, market and job insecurity from the global economy (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). Despite the growing importance of understanding workplace social support linkages to work–family conflict due to these rising pressures, research has yet to fully clarify (a) what type of social support (general or work–family specific), either from supervisory or organizational sources, is most strongly related to work–family conflict; and (b) the processes by which these types of support relate to work–family conflict. (Kossek, EE, Pichler, S., Bodner, T., & Hammer, L. B, 2011).

The concept of workplace social support is derived from the broader social-support literature. It is typically viewed as a global construct (House, 1981) with a range of definitional dimensions that fluctuate in meaning. One of the most widely used and earliest definitions comes from Cobb (1976), who defined social support as an individuals' belief that she is loved, valued, and her well-being is cared about as part of a social network of mutual obligation. Others have viewed social support as involving perceptions that one has access to helping relationships of varying quality or strength, which provide resources such as communication of information, emotional empathy, or tangible assistance (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). Our review suggested that both of these core ideas of (a) feeling cared for and appreciated; and (b) having access to direct or indirect help have been used in the social-support literature, often combined in global measures. Regardless of the items used, we assume that social support is a critical job resource that makes the role demands for which support is given such as the integration of the work–family interface experienced more negatively.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Works–Family Conflict

Work–Family Conflict WFC is the term often used to characterize the conflict between the work and family domains. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) described WFC as a type of interrole conflict in which demands from the work role conflict with demands from the family role. Renshaw (1976) claimed that WFC is a result of the interaction between stress in the family and work domains. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined WFC as *“a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect”* (p. 77). The authors identified three dimensions of WFC. Time-based conflict is defined as occurring when time spent on activities in one role impedes the fulfillment of responsibilities in another

role. Behavior-based conflict occurs when behavior in one role cannot be adjusted to be compatible with behavior patterns in another role. The third form of WFC identified by Greenhaus and Beutell is strain-based conflict. This form of conflict occurs when pressures from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role. (Kossek, EE, Pichler, S., Bodner, T., & Hammer, L. B, 2011)

Work–family conflict is a form of interrole conflict that occurs when engaging in one role makes it more difficult to engage in another role (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). It is a growing type of stress for most employees in the United States (Aumann & Galinsky, 2009) and internationally (Poelmans, 2005). Work–family conflict is an important antecedent of job and life effectiveness, as many reviews show it is associated with a wide range of Negative and negative work-, family-, and stress-related outcomes (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Based on theoretical grounding showing that a lack of workplace social support is most likely to impact work-to-family conflict in the direction of the work role interfering with the family role (cf. Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992), we focused this meta-analysis on studies measuring relationships between workplace social support and work-to-family conflict.

As underscored by the descriptions of the three forms of WFC, the nature of WFC is also thought to be bidirectional. Several studies have found empirical support for a Negative reciprocal relationship between WIF and FIW (Aryee, Fields, & Luk, 1999; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). In their meta-analytic study, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found that bidirectional WFC scales correlated somewhat more strongly ( $r = -.31$ , corrected) with job satisfaction than did unidirectional scales (WIF:  $r = -.27$ ; FIW:  $r = -.18$ , corrected). To completely capture WFC, both directions must be investigated. In sum, WFC is operationally defined as consisting of time-based, behavior-based, and strain-based conflicts as well as being bidirectional (WIF and FIW).

## 2.2 Workplace Social Support

According to Cobb (1976), social support is conceived to be information leading an individual to believe that he/she is cared for, loved, esteemed and valued, and that he/she belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. Conceptually, social support is defined as the “*actions of others that are either helpful or intended to be helpful*” (Deelstra et al., 2003, p. 324). Specifically, Karasek and Theorell (1990) defined workplace social support as the “*overall levels of helpful social interaction available on the job from coworkers and supervisors*” (p. 69). According to these views and definitions, this study conceptualizes workplace social support as support that an individual receives from the supervisor and coworkers.

Workplace social support is defined as the degree to which individuals perceive that their well-being is valued by workplace sources, such as supervisors and the broader organization in which they are embedded (Eisenberger, Singlhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Ford et al., 2007), and the perception that these sources provide help to support this well-being. We conceptualize workplace social support as (a) emanating from multiple sources, such as supervisors, coworkers, and employing organizations; and (b) distinguished by different types or foci of support that are either “*content general*” or “*content specific*.” General work support is the degree to which employees perceive that supervisors or employers care about their global well-being on the job through providing Negative social interaction or resources. Content-specific support involves perceptions of care and the provision of resources to reinforce a particular type of role demand.

### **2.3 Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)**

At workplace, supervisors play an important role in structuring the work environment, providing information and feedback to employees (Griffin, Patterson, & West, 2001), and controlling the powerful rewards that recognize the employee’s personal worth (Doby & Caplan, 1995). In accordance with this view, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) suggested that the social interaction between an employee and his/her immediate supervisor is the primary determinant of an employee’s attitude and behavior at workplace. Supervisor support depends on the interpersonal skills of supervisors and is displayed in terms of trust, respect, friendship and a deep concern for their subordinates’ needs (Iverson, 1996). Just as employees form global perceptions of their value to the organization, they also develop general views regarding the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988).

### **2.4 Perceived Coworker Support**

In addition to supervisor support, coworker support also involves the interpersonal transfer of instrumental or emotional resources (cf. Yoon & Thye, 2000; House, 1981). As Hobfoll (1988) argued, coworkers can be a key source of resources for employees. On condition that coworkers are willing to listen to job-related problems, are helpful in assisting with the job, can be relied upon when things become difficult on the job and share worries and concerns with each other, work group cohesion is enhanced (Iverson, 1996) and all these appear to be effective in buffering responses toward job-related stress (Ashford, 1988).

## **2.5 General supervisor support and supervisor work–family support**

General supervisor support involves general expressions of concern by the supervisor (i.e., emotional support) or tangible assistance (i.e., instrumental support) that is intended to enhance the well-being of the subordinate (c.f., House, 1981). Whereas general supervisor support focuses on support for personal effectiveness at work, supervisor work–family support facilitates the employee’s ability to jointly manage work and family relationships. Supervisor work–family support is defined as perceptions that one’s supervisor cares about an individual’s work–family well-being, demonstrated by supervisory helping behaviors to resolve work–family conflicts (Hammer et al., 2009) or attitudes such as empathy with one’s desire for work–family balance (Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

## **2.6 Perceived organizational support and organizational work–family support**

Organizational support theory holds that individuals personify organizations by attributing human-like characteristics to them and that they develop Negative social exchanges with organizations that are supportive (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986) refers to employees’ overall beliefs regarding the degree to which an employer values employees, cares about their well-being, and supports their socioemotional needs by providing resources to assist with managing a demand or role. POS can also be content specific to a domain such as employees’ family-supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP), the degree to which an organization is seen as family supportive (Allen, 2001). We build on this work and define organizational work–family support as perceptions that one’s employer (a) cares about an employee’s ability to jointly effectively perform work and family roles and (a) facilitates a helpful social environment by providing direct and indirect work–family resources. Examples are a work–family climate (indirect support) where workers feel they do not have to sacrifice effectiveness in the family role to perform their jobs and can share work–family concerns (cf., Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001), and perceived access to useful work–family policies (direct support). Three hypotheses guide this meta-analysis, which are explained with rationale below.

## **2.7 Supervisor Support and Work–Family Conflict**

At workplace, supervisors have been recognized as being instrumental in developing the roles and expectations of employees. By structuring the work environment and by providing information and feedback to employees. Consequently, the perception that one’s supervisor is supportive is indicative of a pleasant work environment, which is likely to have a Negative effect on Work–Family Conflict and job satisfaction. In other

words, when intrinsically favorable and satisfying job conditions are interpreted by individuals as a sign of care and respect from the supervisor, Work–Family Conflict will be decreased. Empirically, the finding that a supportive leadership environment had a high Negative association with Work–Family Conflict provides evidence for existing research hypothesize that a supportive supervisor has a significant effect on employee Work–Family Conflict.

Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is stated as:

**H1: There is a direct Negative relationship between Supervisor Support and Work–Family Conflict.**

## **2.8 Coworker Support and Work–Family Conflict**

Like supervisor support, coworker support also involves the interpersonal transfer of instrumental or emotional resources (cf. Yoon & Thye, 2000; House, 1981). Similarly, coworker support allows individuals to feel valued, cared for and supported by colleagues, which makes a work environment more pleasant and rewarding (van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). Empirical findings indicate that variations in satisfaction between coworkers influence significantly the internal work motivation of employees (Howard & Frink, 1996). In other words, supportive interactions between coworkers may be key motivators for individuals and are likely to have a Negative effect on Work–Family Conflict. In particular, past theoretical and empirical studies have shown that people experience lower levels of Work–Family Conflict when they feel close to and connected to their coworkers. In summary, supportive relationships among colleagues generally enhance well-being, as coworker support at workplace is likely to fulfill the need for affiliation between coworkers (Chay, 1993).

Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is proposed as:

**H2: There is a direct Negative relationship between Coworker Support and Work–Family Conflict.**

## **2.9 Supervisor and organizational support linkages to work–family conflict**

When examined separately, we expect that both general and work–family conflict workplace support will have a direct and negative relationship with work-to-family conflict. The rationale for this hypothesis draws on and integrates assumptions from social support (Caplan et al., 1975; House, 1981), and conservation of resources (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and job demands–resources (JD–R) theories (Karasek, 1979). The primary tenets of COR theory are that individuals strive to gain and maintain resources that are valuable to them and that resource loss has a greater psychological impact than does resource gain as related to stress. A key proposition of the JD–R model is that

interactions between job demands and resources are important, such that certain resources (e.g., social support) can mitigate the negative psychological effects (e.g., burnout) of stress.

Because work-to-family conflict is a situation where the demands of the work role deplete resources (e.g., time, energy, emotions) required to participate in the family role (Lappiere & Allen, 2006), individuals with greater access to workplace social support garner additional job psychological resources (cf., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) that provide a stress buffer to manage strain. When individuals feel socially supported at work, they feel cared for by social others and feel that they have access to help (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Hobfoll, 1989). As individuals perceive more social support, their emotional and psychological supplies for coping with daily stressors increase and perceptual appraisals of stressors decrease (Jex, 1998). When individuals have more social support in general and content specifically for managing work–family issues, these Negative dynamics may spillover into the family role thereby reducing work to family conflict (e.g., Frone et al., 1992).

### **2.10 General versus work–family conflict support linkages to work–family conflict**

We expect that work–family conflict support will have a stronger relationship with work-to-family conflict than will general workplace support. The rationale for this proposition is based on the assumption that work–family conflict support is likely to be a more psychologically and functionally useful resource to manage work–family stressors, such as time, strain, or behavior-based conflicts, the main theoretical components of work–family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), than general workplace social support.

Work–family research has shown that trying to manage demands from multiple roles (i.e., work and family) leads to reduced resources and increased strain in the form of work-to-family conflict (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Work–family conflict social support goes a step further than general support, in that it not only buffers stress from job demands but helps to conserve resources in *both* the work and family domains (Allen, 2001) by providing support specifically directed at balancing demands from both spheres (Hammer et al., 2009; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). For example, supervisors providing work–family conflict support will be viewed as caring more about work–family well-being and providing more help to ensure work–family effectiveness than supervisors who are only generally supportive for the work role. As a result, employees with greater access to work–family conflict support will feel they have more work–family conflict psychological resources than those with general support. Employees will be more likely to feel comfortable discussing work–family problems with supervisors

perceived as providing a lot of work–family conflict support or asking for greater flexibility or autonomy to better manage the work–family interface. This will enable employees who perceive they have high work–family conflict support to feel in greater control of work–family demands and perceive they have more content-relevant resources to manage work–family conflicts than those who only perceive they have general supervisor support. (Kossek, EE, Pichler, S., Bodner, T., & Hammer, L. B, 2011)

Granted, certainly perceiving one has a generally supportive supervisor who cares about one’s overall well-being is a resource. However, theory suggests general support will be less strongly related to work–family conflicts. For example, general support may not necessarily give workers more autonomy over where and when the work role is done to handle work–family demands nor increase employee access to or communication of information on work–family policies or provide a sounding board for openly discussing work–family conflicts (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Similarly, organizations perceived as providing greater work–family conflict support will be more likely to be seen as valuing employee well-being not only at work but also at home and as having more helpful work–family conflict resources such as work–family policies that can be used without backlash than those providing just general organizational support.

Besides theoretical reasons, construct measurement rationale also supports stronger relationships between work–family conflict and work–family conflict support compared to general workplace support. We draw on a bandwidth fidelity argument from measurement experts arguing that the breadth of the predictor and criterion should be congruent in order to have a stronger correlation or association with each other (Hogan & Holland, 2003). Indeed, a recent validation study found work–family conflict support to be significantly related to lower work–family conflict over and above a general measure of supervisor support (Hammer et al., 2009).

### **2.11 Model of relationships between different support types and work-to-family conflict**

No existing research has integrated an examination of the relationships between different types of social support across supervisor and organizational sources as related to work-to-family conflict in a single model. This is a significant omission because, in a simultaneous model, one type (general or work–family specific) or source (organizational or supervisor) of support may become a more or less important predictor of work–family conflict when controlling for other types and sources of support. Although direct relationships in relation to WFC are posited when different types and sources of support are examined separately, when all forms of support are

examined simultaneously, we expect that POS (general and work–family-specific) will mediate relationships between general and work–family conflict supervisor support and work-to-family conflict.

Toward this end, we develop a mediation model to examine interrelationships between work-to-family conflict and different types of work-place social support (general, and work–family specific) simultaneously. We argue that workplace social support and work–family conflict constructs comprise an important interrelated employee–employer social system. Organizational support theory contends that employee perceptions of supervisor support contribute to perceptions of organizational support ([Eisenberger et al., 1986](#); 2002). Because a supervisor acts as a representative of the organization, assuming a supervisor has respect, (Eisenberger et al., 2002), his/her supportiveness will lead an employee to be more likely to perceive the organization as supportive. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) documented that perceptions of organizational support mediate relationships between supervisor support and outcomes relevant to this study such as strain. Further work by Eisenberger et al., (2002) found that supervisor support contributed to temporal change in organizational support (but not vice versa); and POS fully mediated the relationship between supervisor support and turnover. These results suggest that supervisor support is related to POS and that the latter is often a mediator for supervisor support and employee work–family-related outcomes (strain).

Extending this view, Allen (2001) proposed that perceptions of organizational work–family support will mediate relationships between supervisor work–family support and similar work-related outcomes. Indeed, Allen (2001) found that organization work–family support completely mediated the relationship between supervisor support and work–family conflict. Overall, existing theory and research (e.g., Behson, 2002) would suggest that both types of organizational support will mediate the relationships between both types of supervisor support and work–family conflict.

### 3. Participant characteristics

The descriptive statistics for the valid respondents are shown in Table 1.

<b>Gender</b>	Male	79%
	Female	11%
<b>Age (years)</b>	Under 30	5%
	31-40	25%
	41-50	47%
	Over 50	23%

<b>Seniority (years)</b>	Over 15 years	60%
	11-15 years	23%
	years 5-10	8%
	Under 5 years	9%
<b>Education</b>	Masters	2%
	Degree	17%
	Diploma	31%
	High school	50%
<b>Annual income (NT R)</b>	Over 35,000,000	24%
	25,000,001 – 35,000,000	31%
	20,000,001 – 25000,000	31%
	Less 20,000,000	14%

#### 4. Results

The results of the Pearson linear correlation test showed a significant negative relationship between Workplace Social Support and WFC ( $P = 0.001$ ,  $r = -0.41$ ). Therefore, there was a reduction in WFC with increased grade of Workplace Social Support. A significant negative relationship between Workplace Social Support and work to family conflict ( $P < 0.001$ ,  $r = -0.43$ ) and family to work conflict ( $P = 0.01$ ,  $r = -0.28$ ) was observed.

The correlation coefficients showed that respondents experienced higher levels of work to family conflict than family to work conflict.

The results showed significant negative relationships between Workplace Social Support to WFC ( $P = 0.000$ ,  $r = -0.33$ ), family to work conflict ( $P = 0.000$ ,  $r = -0.24$ ), and work to family conflict ( $P = 0.000$ ,  $r = -0.33$ ). The relationship between dimensions of work-family conflict and different dimensions of Workplace Social Support are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Correlation between Dimensions of Workplace Social Support and Work-Family Conflict Dimensions

Dimensions	P Value		
	Work-Family Conflict r	Work to Family Conflict r	Family to Work Conflict r
Perceived supervisor support (PSS)	-0.23 (0.001)	-0.16 (0.029)	-0.23 (0.001)
Perceived coworker support	-0.28 (0.000)	-0.37 (0.000)	-0.12 (0.110) a
Workplace Social Support	-0.33 (0.000)	-0.33 (0.000)	-0.24 (0.000)

a Not significant ( $P > 0.05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

Overall, my results provide a clear pattern: that the form or *type* of workplace social support (whether it is general or content, i.e., work–family specific) that an employee receives from the workplace matters for work–family conflict, as does the *source* of support (i.e., supervisor or organization). Work–family conflict support seems to operate differently in terms of its relationship with work-to-family conflict than general support, according to whether the source is the organization or supervisor. As a result, this study shows how important it is in future research for scholars to take care in construct definition and measurement related to workplace social support and work–family conflict linkages. Currently, work–family studies sometimes are unclear in or confound the referent used (e.g., organization or supervisor, general or content-specific support) in the same construct, which should be avoided (c.f., Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

A key implication of the path analytic findings is that when it comes to linkages between perceptions of general social support and work–family conflict, it is important for employees to feel that their organization cares about reducing work–family conflicts and that they are provided adequate resources to both do their job and manage their non-work demands (Eisenberger et al., 1986). However, when it comes to perceptions of support for work and family and the relation to work–family conflict, it is potentially more important for supervisors to enact specific behaviors that are supportive of employees' ability to balance work and family (Hammer et al., 2009; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) than it is for them to enact more general socially supportive behaviors (Caplan et al., 1975). The rationale for the recommendation is that this study clearly demonstrates that supervisors are the mechanism for shaping views of general and work–family conflict support and its association with work–family conflict.

Future research should focus on the supervisor's role in the enactment of HR practices to manage newer and evolving workforce issues such as work and family relationships. It is only relatively recently work–family issues have entered the workplace as a mainstreamed supervisor leadership role (Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010). Many supervisors and firms are still in transition in shifting behaviors and cultures to be more explicitly supportive of work and family. New studies are needed to explicitly capture these managerial and organizational learning processes.

None of the studies in our database considered how perceptions of workplace support cascade across levels of analysis from supervisors to organizations to employee work–family conflict experiences. Longitudinal multilevel studies should increasingly include measures of both general and work–family conflict supervisor and POS. With

few exceptions (i.e., Thompson, Jahn, Kopelman, & Prottas, 2004), work–family research neglects important cross-level or support relationships. Given the need for more multilevel work–family research, future studies should be conducted with further construct clarity in distinguishing between the measurement of supervisor and coworker support at the work-group level and organizational support at the cultural and policy levels. All of the studies we examined measured support at the individual perceptual level. Different types of support from different sources may have specific impacts on differential types of conflict and different mediators or moderators. For example, supervisor or coworker support may have a stronger relationship to work–family conflict in a high performance teamwork environment where the tasks are highly interdependent and employees learn to rely on one another, or cross-train to back each other up, than organizational support. Future research on workplace social support theory should also be further developed to theorize the conditions under which content-specific compared to content-general workplace support matters more for Negative employee outcomes. Theories need to be enhanced to understand processes making the source of the support relevant or not and why, such as whether coworker or team support can substitute for supervisor support and in what contexts. For example, cultural contexts may vary, and future studies should also include analysis of cross-cultural contextual differences, as nationalities may vary in what types and sources of support are likely to be most strongly related to work–family conflict.

## 6. Conclusion

The results showed that social support in the workplace, employees are seeing less work-family conflict. In fact, if there is social support at work, there is less work - family conflict. Research on linkages between workplace social support and work–family conflict has increased dramatically over recent decades. Despite this expansion, more consolidation and agreement is needed in the work–family field on definitions, construct measurement, and recurring processes of study. Our study clearly shows that work–family conflict support is more strongly related to work to family conflict than general support.

We also show both general and work–family specific supervisor support relate to work–family conflict via perceptions of work–family organizational support. POS and social support are well-researched theoretical domains that span a number of disciplines across the social sciences, which will provide a continued theoretical springboard for advancement of the work–family field. They also are constructs

offering vehicles to mainstream work–family measurement and research questions to integrate with core human resource and organizational behavior measures.

Increased attention to work–family conflict support will also enhance general effectiveness of human resource systems. Organizations are hiring increasing numbers of workers who are bringing their family demands with them while they are on the job. Given work–family conflict is associated with many health, well-being, and organizational outcomes (Eby et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 2010), by changing workplaces to be more socially supportive of Negative work–family relationships, employment contexts serve a proactive role that shape critical employment and societal outcomes.

## 7. Limitations and Future Research

Same as previous research, this study has certain limitations. First, although testing results indicate that common method bias is not a serious problem in this study, it introduces potential problems as the research variables were gathered from the same source. Second, caution is necessary when make causal inferences between the variables because this study is conducted with cross-sectional approach. Third, the sample is confined to a limited number of Rural Water and Wastewater Company employees Kermanshah, which might in turn limit the generalizability of its findings and conclusions either to other companies or private enterprises. Finally, one must be cautious when interpreting the findings due to the possible constraint of non-response bias, such that non-respondents might hold different views with respect to the variables in question, leading to biased survey estimates.

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