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WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND JOB PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF PROJECT LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT IN NGOS IN PAKISTAN

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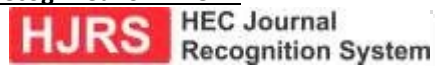
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Abstract

Code for the Paper: Pakistan's development sector is actively working to enhance the well-being of its citizens. NGOs in Pakistan work in various sectors, including health, poverty alleviation, education, violence against women, and child labour. This study investigates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), with a particular focus on the moderating effects of project leadership behaviour (PLB) and spousal support (SS). The research aims to assess how these moderating variables influence the extent to which WFC impacts employees' performance outcomes within project-based environments. The study sample consisted of 212 employees working in the development sector on various projects. The data was collected by e-mail and self-administered surveys from project personnel. This study used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the SMART PLS 3 program to conduct various tests, i.e., demographic profiling, reliability and validity testing, and moderation analysis to analyze the data. The study found that work-family conflict had a statistically significant positive influence on job performance, suggesting that employees may compensate for family-related stress by increasing work effort. Spousal support showed insignificant results and was therefore ruled out as a moderator of the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance. However, in the context of Pakistani culture, spousal support is often limited, which intensifies the burden on working partners—highlighting the need for organizational interventions to fill this gap. The study highlights the importance of supportive leadership in minimizing work-family conflict and improving staff performance in NGOs. **Keywords:** Work-Family Conflict (WFC); Project Leadership behaviour (PLB); Spousal support (SS); Job Performance (JP)

Introduction

According to [Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Antino \(2025\)](#), findings indicate that work-family conflict (WFC) impacts employees' performance and well-being. [Greenhaus and Beutell \(1985\)](#) defined work-family conflict as "a type of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects". A gap between work and home life is created due to work-family conflict, which impacts organisational commitment and job performance ([Akintayo, 2010](#)). Stress is the primary root cause of poor performance in the workplace, as individuals pay greater attention to those things in which they have a greater interest. There is a need for organisational effort to improve employee happiness to work effectively without taking any stress. Work-family policies should include ways to balance work, family, and personal life ([Felstead et al., 2002](#)).

A team leader has different common behaviours precisely; an effective team leader sets himself as a role model for his subordinates, provides passionate feedback, encourages creative conduct, and sets mutual goals for the team to achieve. Due to a lack of leadership traits and incisiveness in their personalities, some supervisors or managers sabotage the organisation's goals, reduce employee motivation, employee effectiveness, and their subordinates' job satisfaction ([Einarsen et al., 2007](#)). Work-family conflict can also erode employee engagement, resulting in decreased job satisfaction and a high prevalence of deviant workplace behaviours, such as low job satisfaction and high working stress levels ([2017, Jin](#)). [Kahn et al. \(1964\)](#) were the first to recognise a contradiction between people's work and nonwork duties.

Numerous experts have claimed that charismatic leadership positively affects employees and stimulates them to develop new required personality traits ([Bruch et al., 2007](#)). The researcher argues that leaders' positive mood, inspiring and supporting attitudes motivate the employees to perform positive

tasks, take challenges, and seek responsibilities ([Shamir et al., 1993; Avolio & Bass, 1988; Conger & Kanungo, 1987](#)). The leaders with positive behaviour feel assertive and confident and handle critical tasks exemplarily, and their subordinates follow the same ([George & Bettenhausen, 1990](#)). Leaders with positive and compelling personalities are role models for their followers, as they enhance their capability to work progressively ([Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Schyns & Mohr, 2004](#)).

Goals

- To examine the effect of work-family conflict on job performance in NGO projects.
- To test the moderating role of project leadership behaviour and spousal support.
- To provide recommendations for improving employee performance in development projects.

Research questions

1. How does work-family conflict affect job performance in NGO project employees?
2. Does supportive project leadership reduce the negative effects of work-family conflict?
3. Does spousal support play a significant role in balancing work and family conflict?

Innovation

- One of the first studies in Pakistan's NGO sector testing two moderators (PLB and SS) together in the WFC–JP link.
- Uses advanced analysis (PLS-SEM) with a good sample size (212 employees).
- Provides context-specific insights for South Asian organizational culture.

Literature Review

Work-Family Conflict and Job Performance

There are numerous causes of stress, and experts claim that workplace stress is elevated when job and family life conflict, and it is among the top ten stressors ([Gao, Shi, & Wang, 2013](#)). [Senjo \(2011\)](#) claims that when someone is on their way to work in the morning and witnesses a violent crime, an accident, or hears terrible news on the radio, this can result in negative feelings at work and a decrease in energy levels. [Şahin and Yozgat \(2024\)](#) found that work–family conflict negatively affects job performance

among healthcare professionals. Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, and Hannum (2012) proposed a person-centred approach to understanding boundary management profiles.

Haar, Russo, Suñe, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) found that work-life balance is positively associated with job satisfaction in an individualistic culture. There is a limited amount of empirical evidence examining how disputes between work and family responsibilities affect both employee effectiveness and client satisfaction (Netemeyer et al., 2005). De Clercq, Haq, and Butt (2025) highlight a significant risk faced by employees who experience a spillover of work-related stress into their family lives. This disruption can impair their ability to meet organizational performance standards, thereby amplifying stress levels and perpetuating a cycle of strain across both domains. Work-family conflict has distinct antecedents that may require tailored interventions (Byron, 2005). The concept of family encompasses a range of obligations involving children, spouses, unmarried partners, and the overall home environment (Frone, 2000). Aldhafeeri, Abou Hashish, and Abo Shereda (2025) explained that work-family conflict negatively affects nurses' job performance. Work-family conflict refers to stressors arising when job demands interfere with fulfilling family duties, whereas family-work conflict occurs when familial responsibilities disrupt professional obligations (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrin, 1996).

Allen, Cho, and Meier (2014) examined how individuals manage the interface between their professional responsibilities and personal lives, emphasizing the strategies used to maintain balance across these domains. Employers who implement work-family rules are more likely to detect and notice positive psychological and behavioural changes in their employees, resulting in greater employee comfort and performance (Medina et al., 2017). The literature proves the multiple obstacles and struggles employees face when juggling work and personal responsibilities (Wattis et al., 2013; Keene & Quadagno, 2004).

Social support has a significant inverse relationship with work-family conflict (French,

Dumani, Allen, & Shockley, 2018). There are specific, explicit, and informal policies in place to encourage work-life efforts. Workplace social support significantly influences work-family conflict outcomes (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). In addition to these frameworks, it is vital for the success of any work-life effort. Additionally, spouse support can positively affect workplace performance, increase job satisfaction, and decrease job burnout. Kelly et al. (2011) introduced a conceptual framework for mitigating work-family conflict, emphasizing the role of sociocultural dynamics within the workplace. Ahmed (2022) explored the work-life balance struggles of NGO employees in Pakistan, highlighting systemic and personal stressors. By fostering a supportive organizational environment, the model proposes that work-family conflict can be alleviated, work-family integration can be enhanced, and overall organizational effectiveness can be improved.

H1: Work-family conflict (WFC) is negatively associated with job performance (JP), such that higher levels of WFC correspond to lower levels of JP.

Project Leadership Behaviour as a moderator

Elbaz and Haddoud (2017) concluded that leadership behaviour's favourable effect is conditional on the development of leadership knowledge. Their findings support the hypothesis that intelligent leadership positively affects employee satisfaction. Sarros et al. (2008) describe leadership conduct as that which inspires subordinates to identify and pursue organizational goals and interests and holds the capacity to motivate followers to perform at their best. Kim and Brymer (2011) found that managers' ethical management styles highly influence managers' job satisfaction. Leadership behaviour has a strong and positive correlation with the pleasure and performance of followers. Lian et al. (2011) revealed similar findings and concluded that leadership behaviour is associated with employee job satisfaction. Fatima (2023) examined how leadership behaviours influence

employee well-being across South Asian organizational contexts.

Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) established a strong association between exceptional and inspirational leadership behaviour and follower satisfaction. According to researchers such as Vlachos et al. (2013), supporting project leadership practices improves job satisfaction. Sun et al. (2016) found that inspiring leadership actions significantly impacted employee job satisfaction. Additionally, Zehir et al. (2011) discovered an excellent correlation between inspirational leadership and job satisfaction via employees' respect for their bosses. Research by Lian et al. (2011) has shown that effective leadership behaviour is positively associated with higher levels of employee job satisfaction.

Being a project leader is a very challenging task involving emotions and self-respect. The supervisor or manager is supposed to be an example for his subordinates to follow his working style to improve their work performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Bonnet (2011), if a supervisor or manager comes late on a routine basis and then sits in an office in late hours and expects employees they also sit for late hours, then due to this negative behaviour, there will be high job burnout, high turnover intentions, and poor employees' job performance. Leadership behaviour is often considered a role model for their subordinates. If his personality is inspiring, employees will follow him, and their work performance will improve. According to Olsen et al. (2010), leaders' moral support also helps employee to perform their daily tasks better, which also helps achieve targets and meet organizational goals. It also reduces job stress levels.

H2. Project leadership behaviour (PLB) significantly moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), such that effective PLB mitigates the negative impact of WFC on JP.

Spousal Support as Moderator

A predominant objective among employees is the pursuit of stability and harmony across both professional and familial domains (Carlson &

Grzywacz, 2008). In contemporary organizational settings, the increasing demands of work—coupled with evolving family responsibilities—have intensified the challenge of achieving this balance. Spousal support plays a critical role in maintaining work–family balance during the launch of a family business (Gudmunson, Danes, Werbel, & Loy, 2009). As employees strive to fulfill expectations in both spheres, the potential for role conflict escalates, often resulting in psychological strain and diminished job performance. Job and family involvement, along with social support, are closely linked to work–family conflict and overall satisfaction (Adams, King, & King, 1996). Earlier research on the subject describes work-family balance as "the pursuit of role-related prospects shared and exchanged between a worker's role-related partners in the workplace and family domains" (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003). Though studies on the subject indicate that individuals who have achieved work-family balance are more likely to help their organization's status, obtaining and maintaining such balance appears challenging for many employees (Halpern, 2005). According to Hobfoll (2001), there are services available to help shape and maintain work-family balance. This work-family balance can be maintained with the assistance of family members and coworkers (Greenhaus, Ziegert, & Allen, 2012).

Ferguson et al. (2012) emphasize that dual-career couples face unique challenges in maintaining a work-family balance, as each partner often finds it difficult to dedicate sufficient time to their familial obligations. Achieving equilibrium requires deliberate role-sharing and mutual support across professional and domestic spheres. However, existing literature offers limited insight into the nuanced mechanisms that facilitate this balance. To begin, significant empirical attention must be paid to work-related spouse support (Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999). These gaps occur because scholars and researchers have been unable to develop research that quantifies spousal assistance for work-related issues and

stresses, which is considered contributing support. Cultural roles and family expectations significantly influence workplace dynamics in Pakistan (Khan, 2021).

Building upon Janning's (2006) foundational work, the researchers introduced a framework to assess spousal support specifically targeted at work-related challenges, along with work-related social support mechanisms aimed at helping families achieve work-family integration. While prior studies have indicated that coworker support in the workplace promotes work-family balance and that spousal emotional support may paradoxically undermine it (Ferguson et al., 2012), the present research seeks to broaden the conceptualization of spousal support. It aims to explore how work-oriented spousal contributions—beyond traditional family-based support—might influence the balance between professional and personal roles.

Moen and Sweet (2002) noted that despite the potential for strong work-related outcomes, couples working together may also experience increased stress. Prior studies on work-related couples indicate that such partnerships can yield notable benefits, including enhanced work-family synergy (Moen & Sweet, 2002), heightened emotional intimacy between partners (Janning, 2006). Williams et al. (1991) found that the constant juggling of professional and familial responsibilities can blur the boundaries between work and home life, leading to negative repercussions for family satisfaction (Chesley, 2005; Desrochers, Sargent, & Hostetler, 2012). Halbesleben, Wheeler, and Rossi (2012) found that dual-earner couples tend to spend less time together and report lower levels of general work-to-family conflict compared to those in non-aligned professions. However, they are more susceptible to stress-induced work-to-family interference. Janning (2006) further noted that sharing work-related information with a spouse may become taxing, prompting individuals to limit such exchanges. Drawing on Conservation of Resource Theory (Hobfoll, 2001), the present study posits that spousal support oriented toward work-related challenges can enhance the

employee's ability to maintain work-family balance. This type of support not only improves the well-being of the focal employee but also benefits the spouse, as it mitigates stress transmission across domains. Employed spouses, in particular, are better equipped to offer impactful and instrumental assistance, leading to a more harmonious work-family equilibrium—marked by greater family satisfaction, elevated job performance, and reduced relational strain.

Prior research has examined the role of family-provided social support in enhancing employee well-being, highlighting its positive influence through mechanisms such as psychological capital and perceived organizational support (Le et al., 2023). More recently, Schnettler et al. (2024) demonstrated that perceived family support significantly decreases family-to-work conflict and enhances family satisfaction among dual-earner parents, especially during periods of heightened stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Huynh, Winefield, and Xanthopoulou (drawing upon Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002) reported that social support from family members diminishes fatigue, pessimism, and emotional distress.

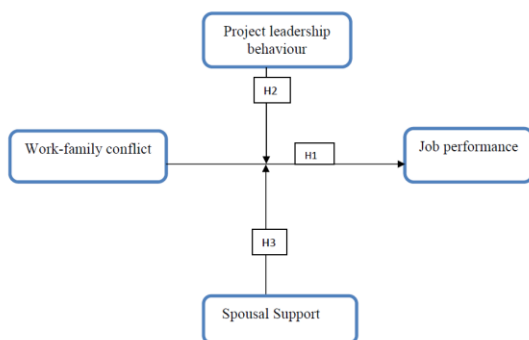
While Janning (2006) identified four key dimensions of partner support—emotional sensitivity, shared professional networks, time investment, and topic familiarity—the nuances of how partners offer work-related assistance continue to evolve. Recent research by Walter and Haun (2020) reveals that in dual-earner couples, especially those sharing occupational linkages, work-related spousal support significantly enhances recovery experiences such as relaxation and mastery. Similarly, Li et al. (2024) found that daily sharing of work-related experiences fosters mutual personal growth and strengthens relational well-being over time. Possessing the ability to visit one's partner during workdays constitutes quality time spent together (e.g., having lunch together or commuting together). The possibility of a partner becoming acquainted with their

spouse's colleagues is referred to as a shared network (e.g., a spouse becomes acquainted with their partner's colleagues and better understands their personalities when their colleagues refer to that specific person). The capacity to appreciate the unique nature of the spouse's work environment is related to the companion's sensitivity (e.g., the companion is well versed in their partner's job responsibilities at work and the fact that it involves completing duties in a stressful atmosphere). Finally, the capacity to comprehend or possess knowledge about a spouse's job description is beneficial to both couples and is referred to as subject matter comprehension. For instance, if one spouse is a marketing manager and the other is a technical expert, they can share knowledge to benefit one another and then propose ideas, concepts, or points of view beneficial to both partners.

H3. Spousal support (SS) significantly moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), such that higher levels of SS attenuate the negative impact of WFC on JP.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

Figure 1: Research Framework



Research Methodology

To gather empirical evidence for this study, a structured survey methodology was employed, targeting project-based professionals affiliated with several prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Islamabad. Data collection was facilitated through multiple channels, including Google Drive, email correspondence, and direct distribution of self-administered questionnaires. The survey

instrument comprised a total of 56 items, systematically aligned with the study's four core constructs: work-family conflict, job performance, project leadership behaviour, and spousal support. All questionnaire items were presented in English, a language commonly used in professional and academic settings within the target population. Given the participants' proficiency and familiarity with English, the need for translation or linguistic adaptation was deemed unnecessary. The clarity and accessibility of the instrument ensured reliable comprehension and response accuracy across the sample.

Purposive sampling was used, and 212 married male and female project personnel from various non-governmental organisations in Islamabad were contacted via e-mail, Google forms, and paper copies. The response rate via e-mail was meagre; 35 surveys were returned by e-mail; the remaining questions were completed in person at these organisations. The current study is quantitative, with data being gathered via standardised questionnaires.

Measures

The questionnaire has two parts devoted to hypothesised relationships. The first segment contained demographic questions, while the remaining sections contained questions about all the factors. All instruments were closed-ended, and a five-point scale (Likert, 1967) was utilised.

The work-family conflict scale is highly reliable ($= 0.91$) and has strong construct and content validity. This is an eight-item scale that assesses family-work conflict. (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly; WFCS) (1983).

The scale of leadership conduct was adapted from (Dirk van Dierendonck & Inge Nuijten, 2010). This is a scale of thirty items with three reverse questions. The dependability of the scale is more than 0.89 in this investigation. It has denoted participative, supportive, and directive leadership behaviours. This leadership measure has been widely utilised in marketing and strategy literature and is commonly acknowledged as an accurate indicator of

subordinates' impressions of leadership style and

Table 1. Gender-Based Classification of Survey Participants

Gender		Frequency
Male		133
Female		79
Total		212

Table 2. Age Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30 years	78	36.8	36.8	36.8
Valid 31-40 years	94	44.3	44.3	81.1
41 and above	40	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	

behaviour.

The 12-item spousal support measure was taken from (Janning 2006) and had a reliability of 0.90. Among the items were a sensitive companion, a shared network, comprehension of the subject, and logistical/time spent together.

A six-item scale created by (Kock N. 2013) was used to assess work performance. The elements on this scale indicate the frequency with which specific behaviours are evaluated in a formal employee assessment system and are detailed in an employee's job description.

Measures were adopted and tested for reliability and validity on the first 50 filled questionnaires, and no items needed rephrasing. Reliability was checked to see whether the instrument measures the same thing as it should measure. Also, validity was checked as the instrument developed for this study can be used or not. Cronbach's Alpha and factor reduction were tested to check the reliability and validity of the items.

Data Analysis & Finding

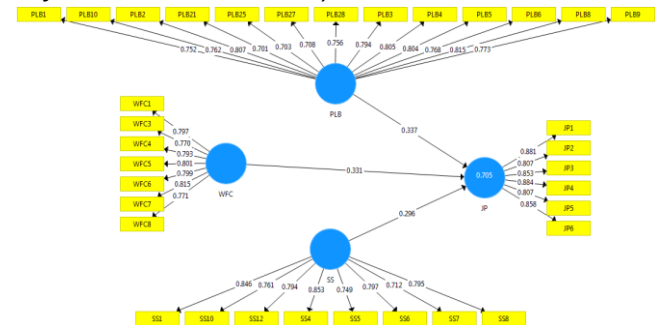
Descriptive statistics and analysis

Numerous tests, including the measurement model, reliability tests, construct validity, and correlation and regression analysis findings, were employed to analyse the structural model. SPSS software was used to enter all data, and demographic information was reported. SEM SMART PLS 3 was utilised to analyse the data in this study.

Valuation of the Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model was conducted using SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle et al., 2015), employing the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. This evaluation encompassed key psychometric properties, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Figure 2. Baseline Measurement Model before Moderation Analysis



Firstly, all the instruments were added in Figure 2 above, and factor loading was done in the SMART PLS 3 software. There were eight items from the variable Work-family conflict (WFC), Spousal Support (SS) had 12 items, Project Leadership Behaviour (PLB) had 30 items, and Job Performance (JP) had a six-item scale. According to Hair et al. (2010), all the factor loading values should be higher than 0.5 to obtain the convergent validity. The entire factor loading having a value less than 0.5 was eliminated and then resulting in the above Fig.2 were obtained. We can see that after deleting values less than 0.5 rest of the factor loading values improved. Initially, there were 56 items for factor loading, but after elimination, 34 items were left, which had more than 0.5. All the beta values showed positive and significant results.

Table 3. Construct Evaluation: Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
JP	0.922	0.939	0.721
PLB	0.941	0.949	0.587
SS	0.913	0.930	0.623
WFC	0.901	0.922	0.628

Table 3 presents a summary of the reliability

and validity metrics for all constructs, including Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha is frequently used in surveys to determine the internal consistency of Likert scale items (reliability). According to [George & Mallery \(2003\)](#), the alpha values are as follows: "> 0.9-Excellent, 0.8-Good, 0.7-Acceptable." However, some experts argue that 0.60 is appropriate as well. Cronbach's Alpha >0.70 is considered acceptable in SMART PLS 3. Table 3 demonstrates that all constructs in this investigation have an Alpha value of more than 0.60, indicating that the variables in this study are incredibly trustworthy and consistent. The second column of the table outlines the composite reliability values, which meet the recommended threshold of 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE), which exceeds the minimum criterion of 0.50 ([Fornell & Larcker, 1981](#); [Hair et al., 2014](#)). As demonstrated, all constructs exhibit composite reliability above 0.70 and AVE values greater than 0.50, thereby confirming the robustness and validity of the measurement model.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	AVE	JP	PLB	SS	WFC
JP	0.721	0.849			
PLB	0.587	0.758	0.766		
SS	0.623	0.710	0.678	0.790	
WFC	0.628	0.721	0.665	0.560	0.793

To assess the distinctiveness of the constructs within the model, discriminant validity was examined. This was evaluated by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with its correlations to other constructs, as recommended by [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#). Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE exceeds the inter-construct correlations. In our model, all diagonal values are greater than the corresponding off-diagonal correlations, indicating no multicollinearity concerns and confirming that each construct is empirically distinct.

Table 5. Structural Association Between Latent Variables

	JP	PLB	SS	WFC
JP	1.000			
PLB	0.758	1.000		
SS	0.710	0.678	1.000	
WFC	0.721	0.665	0.560	1.000

The correlation table for latent variables describes the link between the variables. Pearson correlation coefficients should be between -1 and +1, an acceptable range. It is used to verify the model's external consistency. Positive numbers indicate a strong relationship between variables; as one variable grows, the other increases. While negative numbers indicate that there is a strong negative correlation between variables, positive values indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between variables.

Table 6. Bootstrapped Total Effects After Moderation Using PLB

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)
PLB -> JP	0.267	0.268	0.100
PLB-Moderating Effect -> JP	-0.099	-0.101	0.030
SS -> JP	0.252	0.252	0.112
WFC -> JP	0.298	0.296	0.057

The preceding table presents the descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean values, standard deviations, t-statistics, and p-values. Given that the analysis was conducted using SMART PLS 3, which employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the assumption of normal data distribution is not required. As noted by [Efron and Tibshirani \(1986\)](#) and [Davison and Hinkley \(1997\)](#), PLS-SEM evaluates the significance of path coefficients through a nonparametric bootstrapping procedure. The results indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically supported following moderation analysis and bootstrapping. Although the PLB construct exhibits a negative mean, it remains statistically significant, suggesting the presence of a moderating effect within the model. Overall, the findings confirm the validity of the

proposed hypotheses and reinforce the robustness of the structural model.

Table 7. Bootstrapped Total Effects After Inclusion of Second Moderator (SS)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Findings
PLB -> JP	0.332	0.343	0.098	3.376	0.001	supported
SS -> JP	0.270	0.261	0.113	2.384	0.018	supported
SS-Mod -> JP	-0.023	-0.025	0.030	0.752	0.452	Not supported
WFC -> JP	0.328	0.323	0.060	5.438	0.000	supported

The above table shows the result after moderator spousal support (SS) and bootstrap. Moderation value negatively affects -0.023, and also its p values are more significant than 0.05, so this moderator did not support our model and was not accepted. In this case, our hypothesis is rejected as there is no spousal support between WFC and JP. In Pakistani culture, men are often seen as breadwinners while women are expected to manage all household tasks, even if they are full-time employed. Male partners have decision-making power, which limits women's autonomy and access to support. Also, in many households, sharing domestic responsibility is not common.

Table 8. R² Statistics for Model Fit Assessment

	Before Moderation		After Moderation (PLB) and bootstrapping		After Moderation (SS) and bootstrapping	
	R ²	R ² Adjusted	R ²	R ² Adjusted	R ²	R ² Adjusted
JP	0.705	0.701	0.721	0.716	0.706	0.700

The coefficient of determination (R²) reflects the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. According to [Cohen et al. \(2000\)](#), R² values ranging from 0.02 to 0.12 are considered weak, values between 0.13 and 0.25 are moderate, and values exceeding 0.26 are deemed substantial. As shown in the preceding table, the R² value before moderation is 0.705, indicating that 70.5% of the variance is explained by the independent variables. Following the application of bootstrapping with PLB moderation, the R² value increases to 0.721 (72.1%), suggesting an enhanced explanatory power. In the final column, moderation is applied to SS, resulting in a slight increase in R² to 0.706 (70.6%). All R² values fall within the range of substantial effect sizes, confirming the statistical significance and

strength of the model.

Table 9. Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1	Work-family conflict (WFC) is negatively associated with job performance (JP), such that higher levels of WFC correspond to lower levels of JP.	Accepted
H2	Project leadership behavior (PLB) significantly moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), such that effective PLB mitigates the negative impact of WFC on JP.	Accepted
H3	Spousal support (SS) significantly moderates the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), such that higher levels of SS attenuate the negative impact of WFC on JP.	Rejected

Conclusion

The findings of the current study affirm that work-family conflict (WFC) has a statistically significant and negative impact on job performance. In this context, project leadership behaviour and spousal support were investigated as moderating variables to assess their potential buffering effects. The inclusion of these moderators provides deeper insight into the dynamics influencing employee performance within project-based environments.. Conducted within Islamabad's NGO sector, which engages in diverse development initiatives, the research identified a gap in the existing literature: prior studies have not simultaneously considered project leadership and spousal support as moderators in the WFC-job performance relationship. Through statistical analysis using the outlined methodology, the findings validate the H1 hypothesis, demonstrating that competition between work and family roles markedly diminishes job performance outcomes.

The study collected data exclusively from married project staff, comprising 62.5% male and 37.3% married female participants. These figures suggest an underrepresentation of married women in the workforce, likely attributable to heightened exposure to work-family conflict. Observations from the NGO sector indicate that unmarried women are more prominently employed, facing fewer domestic responsibilities and less work-family interference, which may positively affect their job performance. Furthermore, demographic analysis reveals that 44.3% of respondents fall within the 31–40 age bracket, indicating peak workforce participation. In contrast, only 18.9% are above 40 years of age, suggesting potential

attrition due to limited career advancement or occupational shifts.

In testing the second hypothesis (H2), the study explored the moderating role of project leadership style in the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance. Findings affirm that leadership behaviour significantly influences job outcomes. Specifically, supportive leadership is positively correlated with enhanced employee performance, reinforcing the importance of empathetic and effective managerial conduct in mitigating the adverse effects of work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict tends to escalate in the absence of managerial or supervisory support; however, findings from the current study indicate that when leadership is supportive, job performance improves markedly. The third hypothesis (H3), which proposed that spousal support significantly moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance, was not supported by the data. Although spousal support may influence other variables such as general social support, its impact on job performance in this study was found to be negligible or even detrimental. The lack of understanding or emotional backing from a partner may exacerbate work-family tensions. Conversely, when a spouse comprehends the nature and demands of their partner's role, the potential for conflict diminishes—possibly even enhancing performance.

Gender plays a pivotal role in demographic research, as societal expectations and responsibilities assigned to men and women vary across cultures and civilizations. In the context of Pakistan, distinct cultural identities—including Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and Pakhtoon traditions—shape familial roles, where domestic responsibilities are typically assigned to the female partner and income-generating duties to the male. Although women participate more equally in professional environments across other cultural settings, they often encounter significant challenges, such as workplace harassment and insufficient childcare support. Some international NGOs mitigate these obstacles by offering on-site

daycare facilities, enabling female employees to engage with their children during work hours. Such supportive environments have been associated with reduced employee turnover and enhanced job performance, largely due to lower stress levels among working mothers.

Beyond workplace daycare facilities, European cultures often promote flexible child care arrangements, including fostering or home-based care supported by the employer. If similar models were adopted in Pakistan, particularly within the non-governmental sector, it could significantly enhance female workforce participation. The current research indicates a concerning trend: many female employees resign from NGO roles after the birth of their first child due to inadequate workplace or domestic childcare provisions. Introducing policies that support alternative caregiving options—such as subsidized home care or employer-supported foster arrangements—could alleviate stress, reduce attrition, and strengthen gender equity in professional settings.

Work-family conflict emerges when an individual receives insufficient spousal support, coupled with a lack of understanding of the professional demands imposed by their occupation. This conflict is particularly pronounced in high-responsibility roles such as healthcare, where doctors may be on-call around the clock. In such cases, the unpredictability and emotional intensity of medical emergencies can disrupt family routines and sleep patterns, leading to cumulative stress. When these stressors are compounded by minimal familial empathy or support, the professional's psychological well-being suffers, ultimately impairing their performance and decision-making capacity during subsequent work hours.

NGOs can initiate community-based awareness programs that challenge traditional gender roles and promote shared domestic responsibilities. They can arrange workshops and seminars to promote legal literacy and to support working women.

Limitations and Implications

This research is geographically constrained to the NGO sector in Islamabad, which presents a limitation in its generalizability. In Pakistani society, spousal support remains critically underdeveloped due to prevailing religious and socio-cultural norms. Marital relationships are often shaped by high expectations, yet lack the emotional reciprocity and shared responsibilities necessary for sustained relational well-being. Future studies should consider expanding the scope to include public sector development initiatives for a broader comparative analysis. Replication of the study across diverse occupational contexts—such as law enforcement officers, medical professionals, and legal practitioners—would be valuable, as these roles are all susceptible to work-family conflict, potentially impacting job performance. Additionally, leadership behaviour remains a crucial determinant of employee outcomes. Positive leadership practices are shown to foster greater employee engagement, enhance job satisfaction, reduce occupational stress, and cultivate a supportive work environment, all of which are instrumental in achieving organizational objectives at elevated levels of performance.

Another limitation lies in the cross-sectional nature of the data, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships over time. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how work-family conflict and leadership behaviour evolve and interact across different phases of project implementation. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response bias; future research could benefit from incorporating multi-source data, including supervisor evaluations and organizational performance metrics. Finally, cultural and gender-specific dynamics were not explicitly examined, which may influence both the perception and impact of work-family conflict—especially in South Asian contexts where familial obligations and workplace expectations often intersect.

Future direction

This study investigated the impact of work-family conflict on job performance, with project leadership behaviour and spousal support positioned as moderating variables. Due to the exclusion of spousal support in the final analysis, future research is encouraged to explore alternative forms of social support, such as coworker assistance, parental involvement, and other relational dynamics. Expanding the sample size could enhance the statistical robustness of subsequent findings. Moreover, comparative studies involving both NGO and governmental sector professionals may offer valuable insight into sector-specific dynamics. Cultural variations in the expression and impact of spousal support also warrant deeper investigation.

Observational insights suggest that individuals in physically demanding professions—such as traffic police—face heightened health risks, including musculoskeletal issues and respiratory conditions stemming from environmental exposure. Therefore, future studies should consider examining work-family conflict and support mechanisms within these occupational contexts, integrating variables aligned with job-related physical stressors.

Additionally, longitudinal research designs could be employed to capture the evolving nature of work-family dynamics over time, particularly in response to organizational changes, leadership transitions, or policy reforms. Incorporating psychological capital variables—such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—may offer a more nuanced understanding of how individuals cope with competing demands.

Future studies may also benefit from integrating digital transformation factors, especially in remote or hybrid work environments, where boundaries between professional and personal life are increasingly blurred. Investigating the role of AI-driven leadership and virtual team management could reveal new moderating mechanisms that influence employee well-being and

performance.

Finally, gender-specific analyses could uncover differential experiences of work-family conflict and support systems, particularly among female professionals balancing caregiving responsibilities with high-pressure roles. Such insights would be valuable for designing inclusive workplace policies and targeted interventions that promote equity and psychological safety.

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