



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE EFFECT OF SPOUSAL SUPPORT ON WOMEN'S CAREER
ADVANCEMENT**

Jasmine Dickens Charles

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THE EFFECT OF SPOUSAL SUPPORT ON WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT

JASMINE DICKENS CHARLES

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Received for examination by:

agatha

(Dr. Agatha Lamentan Anak Muda)

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Abstract

It is important to understand how to help these women to move forward and advance in their careers especially those who are juggling with multiple roles and balancing between personal and work lives. This study takes a closer at how support form spouses, both emotional and instrumental, influence career advancement among working women, specifically those who have been married. Conducted with 103 female staffs from the local authority in Bintulu, the research used online questionnaire to gather holistic view from these women. Grounded in the Work-Family Enrichment Theory, the findings reveal a compelling truth: emotional support from a spouse, such as encouragement, empathy and understanding, has a greater impact on a woman's career growth than instrumental support. This highlights the powerful role that emotional connection and mutual respect play in empowering women professionally. The study offers valuable contributions to workplace policies, cultural understanding, and academic discussions around women's career development, especially within the Malaysian context. It also opens doors for future research and initiatives aimed at helping women balance their careers and family life more effectively.

Abstrak

Memahami cara untuk membantu wanita dalam memajukan kerjaya mereka adalah suatu keperluan yang semakin penting, khususnya bagi golongan wanita yang memainkan pelbagai peranan dan berusaha mengimbangi antara komitmen peribadi dan profesional. Kajian ini meneliti dengan lebih mendalam bagaimana sokongan daripada pasangan, sama ada secara emosi mahupun instrumental, mempengaruhi kemajuan kerjaya dalam kalangan wanita yang bekerja, khususnya mereka yang telah berkahwin. Kajian ini dijalankan melibatkan 103 orang kakitangan wanita dari pihak berkuasa tempatan di Bintulu, menggunakan soal selidik atas talian untuk mendapatkan pandangan holistik daripada para wanita ini. Berdasarkan Teori Pengayaan Kerja-Keluarga, dapatan kajian mendedahkan satu kebenaran yang menarik: sokongan emosi daripada pasangan, seperti galakan, empati dan kefahaman, mempunyai impak yang lebih besar terhadap perkembangan kerjaya wanita berbanding sokongan instrumental. Ini menyerlahkan peranan penting hubungan emosi dan rasa hormat bersama dalam memperkasakan wanita secara profesional. Kajian ini memberikan sumbangan yang bernilai kepada dasar tempat kerja, pemahaman budaya dan perbincangan akademik berkaitan pembangunan kerjaya wanita, khususnya dalam konteks Malaysia. Ia juga membuka ruang kepada kajian dan inisiatif masa depan yang bertujuan membantu wanita mengimbangi kerjaya dan kehidupan berkeluarga dengan lebih berkesan.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction of The Study

This chapter discusses the background of study, the issue that motivated the investigation's goals, the study's objectives, research questions, the conceptual framework that explores how one independent variable affects a dependent variable, significance of study, and definitions of terms used in the study.

1.1 Introduction and Background of Study

The involvement of women in workforce has significantly increased over the past few decades, particularly in the public sector. This progress has contributed to the enhancement of organizational diversity and economic growth. However, the advancement of women in the public sector remains a significant area of concern, as systematic barriers continue to hinder their advancement despite the increasing participation of women in workforce. It was reported that women hold about 37% of senior management roles in the public sector, the number is much lower at 25% in the private sector. Unfortunately, just 15% of seats in the Malaysian Parliament are held by women, while women make up 17.7% of board posts in the top 100 publicly traded corporations on Bursa Malaysia by (Keynote Address at the Malaysia Insurance, 2024). Women's job advancement is significantly impacted by the degree of support they receive from their spouses. Strong spousal support, whether in the form of emotional and instrumental support, is extremely beneficial to women in balancing the demands of both personal and professional life. Addressing obstacles to women's leadership in the public sector and promoting inclusive workplace practices need an understanding of how spousal support affects women's professional advancement.

According to Ismail et al. (2014), a working woman is still in charge of running her household even if she has domestic help. It is expected of her to take time out of work to attend to her husband's or child's needs if they are unwell. Society tends to view her as a horrible mother or wife if she doesn't accomplish this. On the other hand, a married working woman's ability to advance in her profession may be impacted by several circumstances, including her spouse's support. Other findings by Grossbard-Schechtman et al. (1994), married women who work full time jobs, especially managers, face extra challenges because they must manage both work and household duties. Society often expects them to handle domestic tasks like childcare

and housework, even if they have demanding careers. In this context, spousal support becomes a critical factor in diminishing the dual role burden faced by married working women.

The absence of such support, however, can have adverse consequences. Tolentino et al. (2016) stated that, working women who didn't receive any spousal support from their partners can lead to reducing in their work performance and eventually causing them into reduce promotion opportunities and salary. It appears from the findings by Grossbard-Schechtman et al. (1994), two-third of married Israeli managers aware that their spouses helped promote their career. Therefore, acknowledged the role of spousal support is essential in creating a balanced work-family dynamic that supports women's career advancement in the workplace.

Family responsibilities can be seen as a potential barrier to women's career advancement, as they face challenges in maintaining balance between work and family responsibilities (Malik et al., 2020). Traditional gender roles, workplace prejudice and the emotional strain of taking care of the home can hinder women's job advancement, resulting in fewer promotion, pay gaps and less possibilities for networking and professional growth. From 61 articles review by Singh et al. (2023) on spousal support towards women's career advancement, the researcher found that married working women may experience a "double bind", where they are expected to excel in their careers while also fulfilling traditional roles. This pressure can create stress and hinder their ability to focus on career advancement. Based on these past studies, we can observe the degree of emotional and instrumental support a woman receives from her partner is frequently correlated with her capacity to advance in her job.

People who receive spousal support from their spouses may feel appreciated, welcomes and cared for (Rizal et al., 2023). Ismail et al. (2014) stated that, spouse support is very important in facilitating women's career advancement. Based on Ocampo et al. (2018), spousal support can be in the form of emotional and instrumental support. Supportive spouses can alleviate work stress by providing emotional support and encourage in childrearing and domestic household duties. Moreover, spousal support is even more important in settings where conventional gender roles are still in place because it can enable women to overcome obstacles like discrimination at work and restricted opportunities for leadership positions. In the end, having a supportive spouse not only boosts women's self-esteem and job happiness but also significantly contributes to their success and professional advancement. To better understand how different types of spousal support affect women's capacity to advance in their careers, this

study will look at the link between spousal support and women's career advancement within the public sector. Hence, the result of this study will provide on how women's career advancement within the public sector might be aided or hindered by their spouses' dynamic in terms of emotional and instrumental support.

1.2 Problem Statement

The progress of women in their careers can be affected by work related aspects. The support from their partners plays a role in this regard. According to (Wani, 2020; Rosenbaum & Cohen, 1999), spousal support consists of emotional support and instrumental support. Emotional support refers as a behaviour that provide encouragement and understanding such as giving advice, showing concern and willing to listen. As for the instrumental support, this support is considering tangible help receive from the spouse such as household duties, childcare and providing financial support, stated by Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2008). Malik et al. (2020) stated that career advancement can be defined as the growth in positions and earning of a specific person over a given period. The focus is that getting up the hierarchy is not just about pay and benefits but also level of accomplishment one has attained in his or her career. This definition aligns with the literature in Organizational Behaviour, where career advancements is viewed as a conceptualized of success in the career progress process.

Spousal support can be defined as the availability, encouragement and non-interference provided by spouses to achieve goals (Jakubiak et al., 2016). Spousal support or husband's support is extremely important in facilitating the wife's well-being at workplace (Wani, 2022). Greer et al. (2022) stated that, these two types of spousal support eventually can help to improve effectiveness and reduce work-related stress among married working women. A and R (2024) points out that by providing spousal support in terms of emotional support can boost women's confidence and psychological wellness and motivation to seek advancement opportunities in their careers. Instrumental support such as where the husbands' greater contributions to household labour enable working women to dedicate more time and energy to their professional pursuits. As for career support, the involvement of spouses in career planning leads to better-informed decisions regarding job changes and promotions which are essential for career progressions.

A lot of women are now actively involved in the workforce by taking up leadership or senior management roles. The percentage of women in senior management increased to 31% worldwide in 2021. As of 2021, women hold at least one senior management position in 90%

of businesses globally. (Catalyst, Women in Leadership, 2022). However, it can be tough for them to manage their work and personal lives effectively. Not having support from their spouses might impede their career growth result in lower job satisfaction, delayed progress or even quitting the career altogether. David and Cooper (1984) found that women managers reported higher pressure ratings when it came to conflicts between their careers and spouses, homes or marriage or having children. For example, female managers experience greater career-related pressure and conflicts with their husbands or partners compared to male managers and they lack adequate emotional support from their spouses. Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2008) acknowledged that the working women, encountered the common pressure of executive job and the fast-paced way of life that goes along with it. Furthermore, work pressure and family conflict is nothing new to the working women. Rosenbaum & Cohen (1999) discovered that women are expected to fulfil the conventional duties of a wife and mother but are also expected to pursue outside occupations. Based on studies by O'Neill and Jepsen (2019), have discovered that women had to withdraw from their fulltime job to fulfil their responsibilities as caregivers to their spouses, parents, children or grandkids. This shows that women confront greater obstacles on their professional ladder than males do due to family obligations, which impedes their ability to advance in their careers. As a result, women either abandon their jobs or make sacrifices in their careers. Another study by Dickson (2020) to support this claim, the researcher describes that both parents believe mothers have a natural bond with their children, making them more important for their kids' well-being than fathers. This belief can lead to mothers being seen as the main caregivers, even when both parents work. A study by Buckley et.al (2000), the study discovered that while women often have responsibilities, they are generally less inclined to value holding leadership roles compared to men.

This research aims to explore how the support from spouses impacts the career growth of women in the workforce by analysing the forms of support such as understanding and practical assistance they receive from their partners and how it influences their career development path The results intend to offer perspectives on how companies and communities can create an encouraging atmosphere for women seeking success, in their careers alongside managing personal responsibilities.

1.3 General Objectives

To examine the effect on spousal support on women's career advancement.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the effect of emotional support on women's career advancement.
2. To examine the effect of instrumental support on women's career advancement.
3. To examine which spousal support is the most dominant in effecting on women's career advancement.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H_{a1}: There is a significant effect between the emotional support and women's career advancement.

H_{a2}: There is a significant effect between the instrumental support and women's career advancement.

1.5 Research Framework

The research framework is the report's formulation of the constructs or principles of focus, as well as their intended connections. The effect of spousal support is the independent variable while women's career advancement is the dependent variable for this study. Figure 1.1 illustrates the research framework of this research.

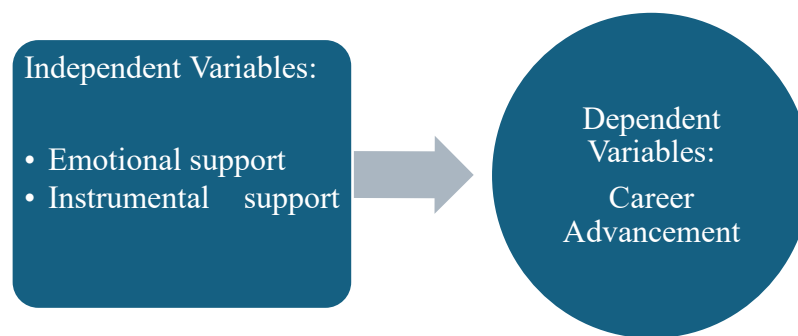


Figure 1.1: Framework of study adapted from Ocampo et al. (2018), Greenhaus & Powell (2006), Greer et al. (2022)

Women's career advancement is significantly impacted by spousal support, which includes both instrumental and emotional support. Expressions of concern, encouragement, and empathy from a husband are referred to as emotional support, and they can provide women the psychological fortitude and self-assurance they need to face obstacles at work. Greer et al. (2022) stated that, these two types of spousal support eventually can help to improve effectiveness and reduce work-related stress among married working women.

The study's theoretical foundation is the theory of work-family enrichment by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), which holds that resources acquired from one domain (family) can have a beneficial impact on another domain (work). In this situation, spousal support serves as an essential tool that enables women to successfully manage their tasks in the home and at work, so advancing their careers. Positive work-family dynamics are facilitated by emotional and practical support, which empowers women to take on leadership roles, pursue advancement in their careers, and accomplish long-term career objectives.

Conversely, instrumental support entails concrete help like childcare or sharing domestic duties. Women who receive this kind of help can focus more on their professional responsibilities since it relieves the time and energy restrictions they experience. Based on study by Rizal et al. (2023), the study found out that the spousal support especially in terms of instrumental support had significant impact in reducing work-family conflict. When spouses actively contribute to managing domestic tasks, it reduces the burden of the working women, which often a barrier to women's career advancement. This supported by Priyadarshini et al. (2022), stated that the cruciality of the gender roles shift for women to advance in their career, especially the involvement of their husband in domestic labour which eventually can help to strengthen women's value, productivity and impact at their workplace.

Support that is both instrumental and emotional fosters an atmosphere in which women may succeed in their careers. Women who have supportive partners, for instance, are more likely to take advantage of leadership chances, take part in training courses and dedicate themselves to long-term professional objectives. Women's attempts to balance work and family have a detrimental impact on professional advancement, while few males help around the house (Agrawal and Singh, 2021).

By providing both emotional encouragement and practical assistance, spousal support directly impacts women's ability to advance in their careers. This connection emphasizes the importance of examining familial and social factors alongside organizational practices when addressing barriers to women's career advancement.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The term that used in this research are defined operationally and conceptually as follows.

1.6.1 Spousal Support

1.6.1.1 Conceptual definition

Spousal support defined as support given by a spouse in providing comfort, appreciation, attention and assistance that can help improve individual abilities in dealing conflicts (Rizal et al., 2023). Spousal support also can be referred as in terms of help, advice and understanding and the like is needed to reduce the imbalance of work and family roles (Amin et al., 2017).

1.6.1.2 Operational definition

In this study, spousal support refers to emotional support and instrumental support that assessing how often a spouse supports the working women, listen to their worries, help around the house and balance work obligations. These measurements are adapted from the Family Support Inventory for Workers (FSIW) by King et al. (1995).

1.6.2 Career Advancement

1.6.2.1 Conceptual definition

According to Powell and Butterfield (2013), career advancement refers to the improvement of a person's skills, recognition in the workplace, promotions and increasing responsibility.

1.6.2.2 Operational definition

In this study, career advancement is assessed through the assessment of participant's career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion and remuneration growth. These items are adapted from Spagnoli and Weng (2017).

1.6.3 Emotional Support

1.6.3.1 Conceptual definition

Tement et al. (2023) defined emotional support as striving for reassurance and understanding. (e.g., showing concern on spouse's work, willingness to listen and giving advice or guidance)

1.6.3.2 Operational definition

In this study, emotional support is assessed through items in the questionnaire that capture how often a spouse provide reassurance, listens to concerns and express confidence in the participant's abilities. The sample item such as "My spouse reassures me about my job when I need it". These items are adapted from the Family Support Inventory for Workers (FSIW) by King et al. (1995).

1.6.4 Instrumental Support

1.6.4.1 Conceptual definition

Instrumental support refers to a form of spousal support that involves practical assistance and tangible help provided by a spouse such as help with the household chores and responsibilities (Rizal et al, 2023).

1.6.4.2 Operational definition

In this study, instrumental support is measured through specific survey questions regarding the extent to which a spouse shares household task. These items are adapted from Family Support Inventory for Workers (FSIW) by King et al. (1995). The sample item such as "My spouse helps me out by running errands when necessary".

1.7 Significant of Study

The importance of this study is in its ability to support women's career advancement in public sectors through both practical applications and scholarly research.

1.7.1 Practical Implication for Public Sector Organizations

The study's conclusions have applications for public sector organizations and policymakers. While diversity in leadership and gender equality is frequently emphasized by public organizations, the indirect but important function of spousal support networks may be overlooked. The findings of this study can direct the creation of work-life balance-promoting policies, such flexible work schedules or spousal involvement initiatives, which have been demonstrated to improve worker productivity and well-being (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

1.7.2 Cultural Relevance in Malaysia

Furthermore, this study is especially pertinent to Malaysia, where women are frequently assigned substantial household duties due to cultural norms and conventional gender roles. Targeted efforts to empower women in their professions and lessen gender gaps in leadership roles can be informed by knowledge of how spousal support alleviates these difficulties. Mee et al. (2013) discovered one of the main barriers towards women's career advancement in Malaysia is that Malaysian women often struggle to manage the competing demands of work and family responsibilities. Saadin et al. (2015) suggested that that gender bias in appraisal may be the cause of the dearth of women in high organizational positions. Strong restrictions that affect how female employees are viewed in organizations are gender stereotypes.

1.7.3 Future Research Foundation

This research can serve as a foundation for enhancing women's professional advancement. The supporting ideas, theories and models that were developed by earlier researchers or utilized in this study can be more useful and tangible in the current investigation. The integration offers a strong foundation for creating practical initiatives in addition to expanding our understanding of the elements affecting women's professional advancement. In the end, the study advances a more thorough and empirically supported strategy for removing obstacles and facilitating women increased professional success.

1.8 Limitations of Study

1.8.1 Sample Size and Representative

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small that only focusing and conducted to working married female employees and limited to a specific demographic, which may not be representative of the entire married female employee's population. This is one of the major reason this research is not applicable towards unmarried female employees and their aspects might be not valid. The terms of spousal support only can be applicable and can be use towards those working married employees or at least with a child.

1.8.2 Contextual and Sector-Specific Limitations

Besides that, this study only focusing specifically on public sector instead of private sector. This is due to that this research only focusing on government employees instead of private sector employees. Based on this research, the result might be showing from the married female employees in public sector. Due to this, this will make the study incomplete and less enrich because of lacking covering of all sectors. Additionally, the accuracy of the results may be impacted by the study's assessments of spousal support and career advancement, which may not have been thorough or verified.

1.8.3 Methodological Limitations

Moreover, answering the questionnaire might be time consuming for them and this led to them to simply answers without reading and fully understanding of the questions. Most of them choose not to answers the questionnaire due to many questions and sections that need to be answered.

1.9 Summary

The study explores the effect of spousal support on women's career advancement in the public sector, focusing on the work-family enrichment theory developed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006). It emphasizes the importance of instrumental and emotional support in reducing work-family tensions and promoting professional advancement. The research aims to identify the most influential elements on career advancement, providing insights to advance gender inclusion and assist women in leadership roles in the workplace.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section discusses the literature view, and it is divided into four sections. The first section discusses issues related to the topic. Section two discusses related theories. The third section is about the same past findings and the fourth section is a summary of this chapter.

2.2 Discussion on Variables of Study

2.2.1 Emotional Support

Balancing between being a good mother, a good wife and at the same time focusing on career advancement can be emotionally exhausted for working women. Emotional support plays a crucial role to ensure the well-being of married working women. Research highlights the significant influence of emotional support on women's career advancement. Ocampo et al. (2018) discovered that married managers are more likely to be given consideration for promotions and training chances for professional advancement if they get emotional support and prompt advice about work-related issues from their spouses. Spector and Cinamon (2017) highlighted how career advancement might be encouraged by the emotional support of significant individuals.

Similarly, another finding by Singh et al. (2023), emotional support is linked to career advancement. Their findings suggest that emotional support empowers individuals, particularly women, to pursue their professional goals by enhancing their confidence and motivation. Feeling supported encourages women to seek promotions, take on challenging assignments, and navigate workplace complexities more effectively. Based on a study by Beach et al. (2006), the impact of emotional support of non-directive support is more favourably compared to its helpfulness. For instance, listening about how was the wife's day and their rant about their workplace. Such supportive behaviours strengthen mental resilience, enabling women to handle workplace challenges with greater determination. Even when direct solutions are absent, being heard and emotionally supported can be a powerful motivator, reinforcing a woman's belief in her capabilities and fostering career advancement.

2.2.2 Instrumental Support

Instrumental support is defined as asking for help and tangible assistance such as childcare and home duties (Tement et al., 2023). Instrumental supports allowed the wives to

pay more attention to completing work-related task and focusing to move forwards in their careers. In conclusion, instrumental support is one of the most important and overarching support out of all types of spousal support when it comes to ensuring working women able to advance in their career. Priyadarshini et al. (2020) stated that the productivity and effect of women's work may be significantly influenced by instrumental spousal support. This type of support reduced the burden of domestic responsibilities, allowing to focus more on their career in which enhances their overall productivity and job performance. Dickson (2020) notes that it is obvious that working mothers' benefit from the instrumental support of their spouses.

In 2000, comprehensive review of 200 scholarly books and articles revealed significant insights into the dynamics of household over the preceding decade. While men's contributions to domestic tasks had increased relatively, women continued to shoulder a disproportionate burden, performing at least twice as much housework as their male counterparts (Coltrane, 2000).

2.2.3 Career Advancement

According to Wani (2022), career advancement is seen as the ability of women to navigate their careers successfully despite the challenges posed by traditional gender roles and familial obligations. Rosenbaum & Cohen (1999) emphasize that wives were more certain than their husbands that their careers negatively impacted their marriage and parent-child connections. Factors influencing career advancement include individual performance, skills development, networking, mentorship and organizational support. The research indicates that women often face career disruptions due to familial responsibilities, which can hinder their professional development and advancement. Thus, career advancement is framed not only in terms of promotions or job titles but also in relation to the support systems that enable women to pursue and sustain their careers effectively.

Moreover, in the context of Malaysia, Malaysia working female has compensated their networking time with family responsibility at home (Mee et al., 2013). In this context, the working women had to sacrifice or substitute their networking time which eventually can help to ladder up their career advancement in terms of promotions and salary but instead they must fulfil household care instead. As a result, many Malaysian women struggle to participate in professional networking events which are critical for career advancement, skills development and leadership opportunities.

Generally, based on the past research by Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009), women had to break in their career and quit their job since they face more hurdles in their career ladder as compared to men due to family responsibilities hamper their career advancement. Family obligations significantly impact women's work life, leading to greater obstacles in career advancement. Cultural norms often assign women a disproportionate amount of caring and household duties, which can hinder their ability to advance in their careers. Women may also find it harder to pursue professional development or promotion opportunities, which could ultimately hinder their career success compared to men who have less family obligations. This shows that the society still strongly hold with beliefs that women should be responsible with the house chores duties regardless of whether they are working or not.

2.3 Related Theory

2.3.1 Work-Family Enrichment Theory by Greenhaus and Powell (2006)

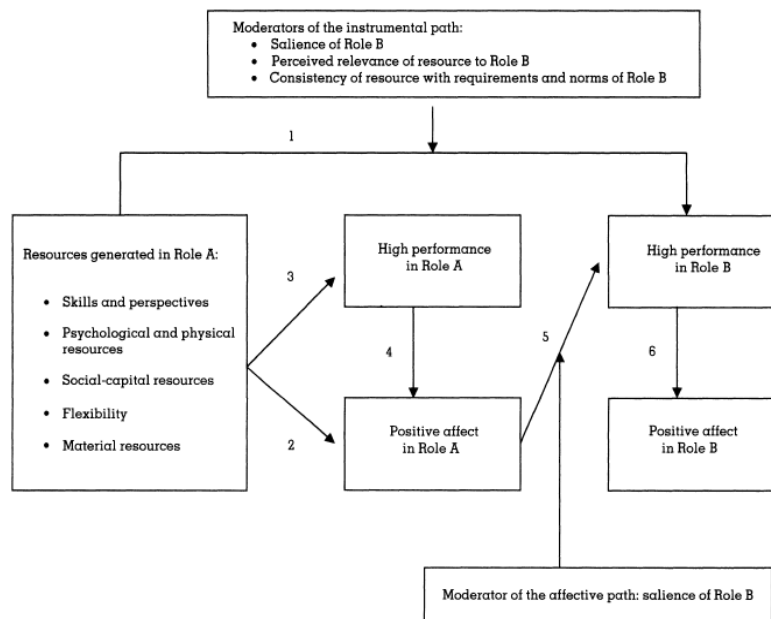


Figure 2.1: Model of Work-Family Enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006)

The foundation theory under this research is by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), specifically the Work-Family Enrichment Theory. This explains how resources, support and experiences from one life domain (work or family) can enhance performance and outcomes in the other. It illustrates how work-family-beneficial interactions could energize a person to obtain resources from one area for enhanced performance and wellbeing in the other.

This study postulates that spouse support is the most significant resource among family resources for the advancement of women in the workplace. As Greenhaus and Powell (2006) indicated, work-family enrichment takes place when resources such as emotional and instrumental support move from the family domain into the work domain, thereby promoting enhanced job performance, career progression, and personal development. Spouses provide emotional support that includes empathy, understanding, and encouragement, thus increasing the psychological resilience and self-esteem of women to cope with stressors at work and achieve professional success.

Such instrumental support includes the sharing of household duties to ease anecdotal financial stress and providing child-care services, as well as ensuring that these support facilities are used appropriately. This will leave the woman in an appropriate position to spend most of her time optimizing her skill set for training and attaining leadership positions at work rather than completing other home-related activities. This aligns with the Resource-Gain Development Pathway by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), which specifies that resources obtained in one sector (family) encourage development and performance in another (work).

The affective pathway, as cited in the theory, derives its relevance from the feelings generated in workplaces by spousal support and positive path for career development, motivation, or job satisfaction. For example, women who stay in such positive homes seem to have a better disposition towards their engagements at work, thus opening doors for upturns in their professional paths.

In contrast, an unsupported marriage can make a woman susceptible to role conflict and anxiety, thus declining productivity, but these demands from children and jobs have little to do with why women face stress in life. Therefore, means that spousal support is an intervention for positively enabling gainful employment through work-family enrichment while reducing the coping costs of work-family conflict.

By and large, the Work-Family Enrichment Theory advanced by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) makes all-encompassing recognition to how support from spouses can be beneficial in professional progression for women. Our argument, therefore, mainly emphasizes spousal support as a crucial building block toward women's advancement in profession through viewing it as a useful family resource, thus making it highly relevant to our inquiry.

Spousal support can mediate the positive feelings generated by receiving support from a spouse into the workplace and thereby make an impact on motivation, job satisfaction, and

career goals according to the Affective Pathway of the theory. For instance, women from favourable homes are usually better able to see the brighter side of things which would boost their engagement in the workplace, thus creating avenues for further advancement in careers.

In comparison, a woman cannot get adequate spousal support to have role conflicts and stress contribute to reduced productivity because of conflicting demands created by the job and the family. This just connects the role of marital enrichment as a relationship that directly contributes to job success because it's all about reducing work-family conflict and promoting work-family enrichment.

Overall, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) Work-Family Enrichment Theory captured quite exhaustively the ways through which the spousal support could impact women's career advancement positively. Our argument thus will mostly emphasize on caring supposes to be criteria well under the family resource in bringing women's advancement in the profession, making it thus highly pertinent to our inquiry.

2.4 Discussion of Past Similar Findings

2.4.1 The effect of emotional support on women's career advancement

The idea of work-family enrichment was first proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), who emphasized that women's career management skills are positively impacted by their spouses' emotional support. According to their results, emotional support improves motivation and job happiness, both of which are critical for career progression. Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2004) also found that emotional support from husbands increases women's professional goals by creating a nurturing atmosphere that boosts ambition and self-esteem.

Another similar study by Jaka and Mateja (2013), the women in the study generally satisfaction with the support they received from their spouses especially in terms of emotional support. Many even credited this spousal support as a crucial factor in their career success, highlighting the significant role it played in helping them achieve in their professional success and career advancement. This indicates that how powerful it is by having supportive husband for a wife or a working mother to advance in their career.

David and Cooper (1984) discovered that women managers experience stress related to their families. For instance, compared to male managers, female managers had more pressure about their careers and disagreements with their husbands or partners, and they did not receive the necessary emotional support from their spouses. Comprehensive articles review by

Heikkinen (2015), emotional support is one of the most valuable behaviours by executive women. This helps them to navigate the demands of their professional and personal lives. Executive women can handle demanding occupations while preserving their wellbeing when they receive emotional support, which builds resilience, confidence, and a sense of security.

2.4.2 The effect of instrumental support on women's career advancement

In the context of Asia countries such as in India and Indonesia, Agrawal and Singh (2021) revealed that not many men contribute to household work and attempts by women to combine career and family have a negative influence on career advancement. Wives who are perceived their husband as unsupportive often experience career limitations, as they may have to prioritize family obligations over profession duties. In the context of Slovenian women, Tement et al. (2018) discovered that Slovenian women are viewed as "all-arounders" who adeptly balance job, family and housework. This view emphasizes how society expects women to be successful in several fields at once. Slovenian women are seen as strong and flexible, successfully juggling the demands of integrating work and life. Their ability to balance these obligations shows a high degree of skill and dedication, but it also highlights the persistent societal standards that require women to uphold their familial and professional commitments without sacrificing either.

Moreover, a study by Rizel et al. (2023), instrumental is seen as significant contributor which can alleviate some of the burdens that working women face for them to be able to achieve in their career advancement and at the meantime balancing their personal lives. The conflict over the division of the household can be diminished by the presence of domestic help, however, they insisted for most women in the arena of childcare (Dickson, 2020). Additionally, Grossbard-Schetman and Izraeli (1994) emphasized the value of both direct and indirect instrumental support from husbands, such as handling childcare or domestic chores, which may have a big influence on women's career development.

To promote women's advancement, significant transformation is needed in family and organizational structure, such as spouse support in household activities (Saadin et al., 2015). Working women can better concentrate on their professional development when their partners take an active role in family chores including childcare, meal preparation and housekeeping. The dual load that many women experience is lessened by this shared obligation, allowing them to explore possibilities for job growth with fewer limitations.

2.4.3 To determine which spousal support is the most dominant in effecting on women's career advancement.

The combined results indicate that, although the effects may differ depending on the specific situation, both instrumental and emotional support are essential for women's job advancement. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), a favourable work-family dynamic that promotes professional success is produced by combining the two forms of support.

According to Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2004) and Jaka and Mateja (2013), emotional support fosters motivation and confidence, two qualities that are essential for job growth. On the other hand, instrumental assistance directly reduces work-life stress, enabling women to perform better in the workplace (Rizel et al., 2023). Heikkinen (2015) emphasize on the importance of spousal support and whether these spousal supports can change and enhance the women's career advancement. Ocampo et al. (2018) stated that the interactive effects of supportive work and home environments were found to have the strongest positive impact on career success, indicating that a combination of both types of support is essential for women to thrive in their careers. However, at the end, Ocampo et al. (2018) discover that emotional support appears to be a dominant factor, the overall quality and type of spousal support, along with the supportive work environment, play critical roles in women's career advancement.

Therefore, although both forms of assistance are essential, the relative importance of instrumental or emotional support may vary depending on the woman's particular job and family circumstances, the social environment and cultural norms.

2.5 Summary

As a conclusion, this chapter discusses had shown and discussed on these types of spousal support, emotional support and instrumental support as well as their relationship with career advancement. Additionally, it has looked at the relevant theoretical framework, particularly the Work-Family Enrichment Theory, which serves as the study's foundation by showing how experiences in one area may have a good impact on another. The chapter also looked at earlier research with comparable results, providing insightful information on how spousal support might help women advance professionally. Within the framework of this study, this thorough evaluation lays the groundwork for comprehending the relationships between spousal support and career advancement of married working women.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research aims to determine the effect of spousal support on career advancement among married female employees in local authority in Bintulu. In this chapter, it will include a summary of the research's design, demographic, sample size, sampling techniques, and research instrument. Aside from that, this chapter will cover the ethics of study, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey to obtain quantitative data, to measure the intended research objectives. A correlational is used to explore spousal support on career advancement among married female employees in local authority at Bintulu. Specifically, to look at the links between the emotional support and instrumental support and career advancements of the married female employees. This strategy assists the researcher in determining the degree and relevance of the link between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, we assess the emotional support and instrumental support towards the career advancement of the married female employees.

3.3 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The target population consists of 209 married female employees at Bintulu local authority because they actively balance the demands of both work and family, these women make up an appropriate sample for studying how spousal support affects career advancement. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size required to be representative of population can be found based on the total size (N). The study's sample size, based on feasibility and demographic availability, is expected to be 136 respondents, using purposive sampling techniques for quantitative analysis. Purposive sampling method was used in studies, concentrating on choosing participants who fit the requirements of being married women employed by Bintulu local authority. This approach guarantees that those who can offer pertinent insights on the connection between spousal support and career advancement are included. However, the researcher received 108 respondents and only 103 questionnaires were usable.

3.4 Research Instrument

Table 3.1: Description of Research Questionnaire

Section	Number of item(s)	Questions
A: Demographic Information Rizal et al. (2023).	7	1. Job title 2. Age 3. Race 4. Children 5. Education 6. Working Experience 7. How many companies have been working previously?
B: Career Advancement Organizational Growth Scale (OGS) by Spagnoli and Weng (2017).	• Career goal progress (4) • Professionally ability development (4) • Promotion speed (4) • Remuneration Growth (3)	Career goal progress 1. My present job moves me closer to my career goals. 2. My present job is relevant to my career goals and vocational goals. 3. My present job sets the foundation for the realization of my career goals. 4. My present job provides me with good opportunities to realize my career goals. Professionally ability development 1. My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related knowledge. 2. My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related skills. 3. My present job encourages me to accumulate richer work experiences. 4. My present job enables me to continuously improve my professional abilities.

Promotion Speed

1. My promotion speed in the present organization is fast.
2. The probability of being promoted in my present organization is high.
3. Compared with previous organizations and attainable job, my position in the present one is ideal.
4. Compared with my colleagues, I am being promoted faster.

Remuneration Growth

1. My salary is growing quickly in my present organization.
2. In this organization, the possibility of my current salary being increased is very large.
3. Compared to my colleagues, my salary has grown more quickly.

C: Spousal support Family Support Inventory for Workers (FSIW) by King et al. (1995).	• Emotional support (20)	Emotional Support: 1. My spouse proud of me when I succeed at work. 2. My spouse does not seem very interested in hearing about my workday. 3. My spouse show that he understands how I'm feeling when something is bothering me. 4. My spouse asks me regularly about my workday. 5. My spouse doesn't really mind what job I have, as long as I'm making the money. 6. My spouse helps me feel better after discussing job-related problems.
	• Instrumental support (14)	

-
7. My spouse tries to cheer me up when I've had a tough day at work.
 8. My spouse is interested in my job.
 9. My spouse tries to understand when I'm frustrated by my work.
 10. My spouse always seems to make time for me if I need to discuss my work
 11. My spouse often provides a different way of looking at my work-related problems.
 12. My spouse is happy for me when I am successful at work.
 13. My spouse helps me feel better when I'm upset about my job.
 14. My spouse wants me to enjoy my job.
 15. My spouse enjoy hearing about my achievements at work.
 16. My spouse expresses concern when I have a problem at work.
 17. My spouse reassures me about my job when I need it.
 18. My spouse gives me advice about a problem situation at work when I ask.
 19. My spouse is sympathetic when I'm upset about my work.
 20. My spouse is the one I usually share my work problems with.

Instrumental support

1. My spouse burdens me with things that they should be able to handle on their own. My spouse cooperates with me to get things done around the house.
-

-
2. My spouse would have a hard time managing household responsibilities if I had to go out of town for my job.
 3. My spouse always seems to be demanding something from me.
 4. My spouse do their fair share of household chores.
 5. My spouse is willing to straighten up the house when it needs it.
 6. My spouse leaves too much of the daily details of running the house to me.
 7. My spouse helps me out by running errands when necessary.
 8. My spouse will take on extra household responsibilities if my job gets very demanding.
 9. My spouse helps me out when I'm running late for work.
 10. My spouse helps me with routine household tasks.
 11. My spouse takes care of everything at home if I have to work late.
 12. My spouse leaves me spending too much time picking up after them at home.
 13. My spouse tries to do more of the work around the house when I'm having a difficult week at my job.
-

The research instrument describes the measuring mediums that utilized in this study, such as a questionnaire, with the primary goal of gathering data and responses from the target population, who will be married female employees. The Family Support Inventory for Workers

(FSIW) by King et al. (1995). The women's career advancement will be measured by using Organizational Career Growth (OCG) scale by Spagnoli and Weng (2017).

The questionnaire separated into four sections: A, B and C. Section A will include questions on demographic information. The questionnaire portion will gather basic information such as age, ethnicity, job title and year of working and how many organizations they have been working previously. Section B of the questionnaire will feature questions regarding DV. Section B consists of questions that assessment married female employees career advancement in terms of their career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth. This section, the ordinal scale will be used in that area. Section C of the questionnaire will feature questions regarding IV which are emotional support and instrumental support respectively. The questions will start how spousal support truly influences career advancement among married female employees. Five point of Likert scale that is developed by Dr. Rensis Likert (1932) will be used for this portion of the questionnaire to make it easier for married female employees to respond and avoid misunderstandings.

Table 3.2: Five-point Likert Scale

Scale	Levels
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Slightly Agree
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

3.5 Pilot Test

A pilot test was carried out before the primary data collection to guarantee the validity, reliability and general clarity of the questionnaire for this research. To find any problems with the survey design, improve the questionnaire items and evaluate the efficacy of the data gathering technique, a pilot test is necessary (Hu & Chang, 2017). Cohen et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of pilot testing in improving questionnaire validity, reliability and practicality by utilizing statistical analysis and feedback after sending the questionnaire to a suitable sample. Purposive sampling will be used to choose 30 married working women who meet the target population criteria for the pilot test. An online survey platform such as Google

Forms will be used to invite respondents to fill out the questionnaire. About five to eight minutes is the estimated time needed to finish. Through an open-ended portion, participants will also be asked to offer qualitative input on the questions' relevance, language, and clarity. To obtain in-depth information, questions like "Were any questions unclear or confusing?" and "Were any important aspects of spousal support or career advancement overlooked?" will be included.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity

Heale and Twycross (2015) points out that validity is often defined as the extent to which instrument measure. Validity requires instrument is reliable, but an instrument can be reliable without being valid (Kimberlain & Winterstein, 2008). Validity plays a vital role in ensuring the accuracy of the research finding. Thomas et al. (1992) expresses that face validity is a multifaceted, comprehensive concept that is helpful in assessing how test items seem to responders and other people. Face validity referred where professionals are consulted on whether a tool accurately captures the intended concept. A better understanding of face validity is created by comprehending the links between the assessed variables. Content validity referred to the extent which an instrument represented the factors under the research. The content valid work supported by the literature review. Content validity was further ensuring the consistency of the questionnaire. The questions are provided in simple language for better understanding by respondents. The clear instructions are given in the questionnaire to guide respondents in this research. Statistical validation was carried out using SPSS to further assess the questionnaire and verify its accuracy and dependability.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability relates to the consistency of measure. When taking an assessment designed to assess motivation, a participant should provide about the same answers each time, as mentions by Heale and Twycross (2015). Kimberlain & Winterstein (2008) states that reliability estimates are used to evaluate the stability of the measures administered at different times to the same individual or using the same standard (test-retest reliability) or the equivalence of sets of items from the same test or event using the same instrument. Reliability could be also ensured by minimizing sources of measurement error like data collector bias. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used as an estimate of the reliability of a psychometric test, with a good test if the coefficient is equal or greater than 0.70 (Kılıç, 2016).

Table 3.3: Rule of Thumb Measures for Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

From the output of the Cronbach's alpha, which indicated a high level internal of consistency and reliability for the scale with the levels of measurements would proceed with the data analysis.

Table 3.4: Reliability Test for Pilot test (N=30)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Items
Emotional Support	0.990	0.990	20
Instrumental Support	0.978	0.978	14
Career Goal Progress	0.977	0.979	4
Professional Ability Development	0.971	0.972	4
Promotion Speed	0.957	0.961	4
Remuneration Growth	0.932	0.935	3
Total			49

Table 3.3 shows the result of reliability test for pilot test data using Cronbach's alpha on all variables of this research. The Cronbach's alpha value for dependent variables, emotional support and instrumental support are $\alpha = 0.990$ (N=30) and $\alpha = 0.978$ (N=30). This indicates excellent internal consistency, suggesting that the items are highly reliable. This high level of reliability demonstrates that the scale is highly consistent in its measurement.

The independent variable, career advancement, is measured through four key dimensions, which are career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth. The Cronbach's alpha for all four dimensions of career advancement is $\alpha = 0.977$ (N=30), $\alpha = 0.971$ (N=30), $\alpha = 0.957$ (N=30) and $\alpha = 0.932$ (N=30). This indicating excellent internal consistency. This high value suggests that the items within this scale are very reliably assessing the same underlying construct, ensuring that the measurement is consistent and reliable. Thus, all variables are reliable.

3.6.3 Normality

$$Z = \frac{\text{Skew value}}{SE_{\text{Skewness}}}, Z = \frac{\text{Excess kurtosis}}{SE_{\text{excess kurtosis}}}$$

Figure 3.1 Fisher coefficient

Normality is important to evaluate the data before any formal statical analysis. This is because it can end with wrong conclusion if normality is not evaluated. This research used the Skewness and Kurtosis to test the assumption of the variable's normality. Fisher coefficient was used to determine the Z-score by dividing the skew values or excess kurtosis by their standard errors which is provided by SPSS, it is shown in Figure 3.1. A perfect normal distribution should be return score of 0 or when the Z-score within ± 1.96 , it shows the data have normal distribution.

Table 3.5: Distribution and normality for pilot test data (N=30)

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistics	Statistics	Std. Error	Statistics	Std. Error
Emotional Support	30	-0.220	0.427	-1.625	0.833
Instrumental Support	30	-0.190	0.427	-1.650	0.833
Career Goal Progress	30	-0.093	0.427	-0.682	0.833
Professionally ability development	30	-0.114	0.427	-0.741	0.833
Promotion Speed	30	0.172	0.427	-0.601	0.833
Remuneration Growth	30	0.504	0.427	-0.031	0.833

Table 3.4 shows the skew value and excess kurtosis for each variable which are emotional support with skew value of -0.220 (SE=0.427) and excess kurtosis of -1.625 (SE=0.833), instrumental support with skew value of -0.190 (SE=0.427) and excess kurtosis of -1.650 (SE=0.833). As the four key components of career advancement, career goal progress with skew value of -0.093 (SE=0.427) and excess kurtosis of -0.682 (SE=0.833), professionally ability development with skew value of -0.114 (SE=0.427) and excess kurtosis of -0.741 (SE=0.833), promotion speed with skew value 0.172 (SE=0.427) and excess kurtosis of -0.031 (SE= 0.833).

Table 3.6 Fisher Coefficient, Z-Score for Pilot test data (Total N = 30)

Variables	Z-score	
	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Support	-0.515	-1.9507
Instrumental Support	-0.445	-1.980
Career Goal Progress	-0.218	-0.819
Professionally ability development	-0.267	0.889
Promotion Speed	0.427	-0.7214
Remuneration Growth	1.180	-0.037

Table 3.9 shows the Z-score obtain dividing skew value and excess kurtosis with each own standard error. A perfect normal distribution should be return score of 0 or when the Z-score within ± 1.96 , it shows the data have normal distribution. Emotional support recorded a skewness Z-score of -0.515 and a kurtosis Z-score of -1.951, both within the acceptable range. This indicates that the distribution of responses for emotional support does not significantly deviate from normality. Instrumental support showed a skewness Z-score of -0.445 and a kurtosis Z-score of -1.980. Although the kurtosis value is near the threshold, it remains within acceptable limits, suggesting approximate normality. Career goal progress (Z= of -0.218, -0.819) and professional ability development (Z = -0.267, 0.889), both well within acceptable bounds, thus confirming normality. Promotion speed showed a skewness Z-score of 0.427 and a kurtosis Z-score of -0.721, indicating that the data is symmetrically distributed with no significant issues in kurtosis. Remuneration growth had a slightly higher skewness Z-score of 1.180, which remains within the acceptable range, while its kurtosis Z-score was -0.037, indicating a relatively normal distribution.

3.7 Ethics of the Study

The basic principles of research ethics were followed through. The introductory letters will be given to the selected local authority before the participation of the local authority married female employees to inform them of the nature of the study and to obtain their consent to participate to ensure that no personal information was asked of them to protect their privacy. Participants in this study will be protected from both physical and mental harm by having safeguards in place. Participants were free to stop responding to the survey at any moment for any reason. Additionally, participant data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Participants gave their informed consent when the questionnaire was provided and they were also given a thorough description of the research. The participants will be made aware that their information remained confidential and they can opt out of the survey at any time.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Table 3.7: The timeline process of data collection procedure

Timeline	Activities
April 2025	Week 1: Obtain approval and permission letter from Supervisor and Faculty of Science Cognitive and Human Development (FCSHD) and contact HR executive the local authorities to gain approval for the research. Week 2: Create the questionnaire using Google Forms Week 3: Review and finalize the questionnaire. Week 4: Distribute questionnaires online via email and communication channels (e.g., WhatsApp) to married female employee of public sector in Bintulu.
May 2025	Week 1 - 2: Data collection period, monitor responses and send reminders if necessary. Week 3: Finalize data collection and organize raw data for cleaning. Week 4: Clean and preprocess collected data.
June 2025	Week 1: Perform comprehensive data analysis using relevant statistical methods. Week 2: Start drafting the report based on findings from the data analysis.

	Week 3: Review and analyse the report, making any necessary revisions before submission.
	Week 4: Preparing poster and present findings to the evaluators.
July 2025	Week 1: Submit initial draft to supervisor for feedback and incorporate feedback and refine the report Week 2: Conduct final review of the report for accuracy and coherence and submit the final report.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedure

To guarantee the authenticity and dependability of the findings, the data analysis for this study will adhere to a systematic methodology. To ensure accuracy and completeness, data preparation and cleaning will be done first. Likert scale replies will be given numerical codes for statistical analysis, and incomplete or incorrect responses will be eliminated. For additional analysis, the cleaned data will be imported into statistical programs like Microsoft Excel or Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

The Z-score test was conducted to check for normality and visual inspection using histogram and QQ plot. These methods help to see if the data distribution fulfils the assumptions for regression analysis. The demographic details of the respondents, including age, years of marriage, occupation, and number of children, will be compiled using descriptive analysis. To give a demographic overview, frequencies, percentages, means, median and standard deviations will be computed and displayed using tables and charts.

Regression analysis was used into the test the hypotheses. The predictive impact of instrumental and emotional support on professional progress were ascertained using a multiple linear regression analysis. Regression coefficients (β) and p-values (set at < 0.05) were used to evaluate the importance of predictors.

3.10 Summary

To summarize, this chapter has described the methodology used in executing this research which is in a descriptive design with a quantitative approach. Apart from that, it also described the respondents which are the married female employees of public sector, the instruments used, validity and reliability, the ethics followed when collecting the data from respondents, the data collection procedure and the data analysis procedure which includes the use of the IBM SPSS Statistics Software. Accordingly, this methodology provides a proper and systemic approach with the study objectives, leading to smooth and satisfactory inferences collection towards investigating on the effect of spousal support among married women public sector employees.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the demographics of the respondents and the result of the finding. The findings of the hypothesis testing using multiple regression. A summary concludes this chapter.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic information of respondents

Variables	Frequency (Total respondents: 103)	Percentage (%)
Job Titles		
Clerical/Secretarial	45	43.7
Support staff	2	1.9
Management	6	23.3
Administrative/Executive	24	5.8
Senior management	6	13.6
Technical Professional	12	11.7
Age		
Young Adults (20-29)	14	13.6
Early Career (30 -39)	34	33.0
Mid-Career (40 -49)	23	22.3
Senior Staff (50-59)	32	31.1
Ethnicity		
Bumiputra Sarawak	68	66.0
Malay	24	23.3
Chinese	11	10.7
Number of children		
1 child	19	18.4
2 children	24	23.3
3 children	16	15.5
4 children	14	13.6

5 children and more	21	20.4
No children	9	8.7
Education level		
SPM	12	11.7
STPM	6	5.8
Diploma	28	27.2
Degree	50	48.5
Master	7	6.8
How long you have been working		
1 year	4	3.9
2 years	6	5.8
3 years	7	6.8
4 years	5	4.9
More than 5 years	81	78.6
How many companies been working previously		
1 company	31	30.1
2 companies	39	37.9
3 companies	18	17.5
4 companies	5	4.9
More than 5	10	9.7

Table 4.2: Age

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Young Adults (20-29)	14	13.6	13.6	13.6
	Early Career (30-39)	34	33.0	33.0	46.6
	Mid Career (40-49)	23	22.3	22.3	68.9
	Senior Staff (50-59)	32	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

The table shows the distribution of age in a sample of 103 working married women. Majority 33 or 33% of the respondents were early-career (30-39), followed by senior staff (50-59) has 29 respondents or 28.2%, mid-career was 23 (22.3%) and 14 (13.6%) respondents were young adults (20-29).

Table 4.3: Ethnic

		Ethnic			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bumiputra Sarawak	68	66.0	66.0	66.0
	Malay	24	23.3	23.3	89.3
	Chinese	11	10.7	10.7	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

This table shows the ethnic distribution of a sample of 103 working married women. Most of the women were Bumiputra Sarawak, there were 66 respondents (64.1%), followed by Malay has 23 respondents (27.3%) and Chinese has 11 respondents (10.7%). This local authority only hires Sarawakians.

Table 4.4: Number of children

		No_of_children			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	19	18.4	18.4	18.4
	2	24	23.3	23.3	41.7
	3	16	15.5	15.5	57.3
	4	14	13.6	13.6	70.9
	5 and more	21	20.4	20.4	91.3
	No kids	9	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Based on table above, majority of the female staffs were having 2 children which consist of 24 respondents (23.3%), followed by 5 and more children which consists of 21 respondents (20.4%). 19 respondents (18.4%) only having 1 child and 14 respondents (13.6%) were having 4 children. Lastly, only 9 respondents didn't have any children with 8.7%.

Table 4.5: Education level

		Education_Level			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SPM	12	11.7	11.7	11.7
	STPM	6	5.8	5.8	17.5
	Diploma	28	27.2	27.2	44.7
	Degree	50	48.5	48.5	93.2
	Master's Degree	7	6.8	6.8	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5 shows majority of the respondents were degree holder which consist of 50 respondents (48.5%), followed by diploma holder which consists of 28 respondents (27.2%). 12 respondents (11.7%) were SPM holder, and 7 respondents (6.8%) were master's degree holder. Lastly, only 6 respondents with STPM holder with 5.8%.

Table 4.6: How long have you been working

How_long_have_you_been_working					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	3.9	3.9	3.9
	2	6	5.8	5.8	9.7
	3	7	6.8	6.8	16.5
	4	5	4.9	4.9	21.4
	More than 5 years	81	78.6	78.6	100.0
Total		103	100.0	100.0	

Table above shows majority of the respondents were working more than 5 years which consist of 81 respondents (78.6%), followed by 3 years of working which consists of 7 respondents (6.8%). 6 respondents (5.8%) working for 2 years within the organization and 5 respondents (4.9%) were 4 years of working. Lastly, only 4 respondents working for a year within the organization with 3.9%.

Table 4.7: How many companies been working previously

How_many_companies_been_working_previously					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	31	30.1	30.1	30.1
	2	39	37.9	37.9	68.0
	3	18	17.5	17.5	85.4
	4	5	4.9	4.9	90.3
	More than 5	10	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total		103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 shows majority of respondents previously work at least 2 companies previously compared to other number of companies group which consist of 39 respondents (37.9%), followed by working 1 company previously recorded 31 respondents (30.1%). 18 respondents (17.5%) used to work at 3 companies previously and 10 respondents (9.7%) worked with more than 5 companies before settling down with the current organization. Lastly, only 5 respondents used to work with 4 companies previously with 4.9%.

4.3 Hypotheses Analysis

4.3.1 Regression Analysis

In this study, regression analysis is used to examine how two independent variables, emotional support and instrumental support, predict the dependent variable, which is women's career advancement. This method allows the researcher to assess the combined and individual effects of both types of spousal support in explaining variations in career advancement among married working women.

Table 4.8: Model Summary

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.795 ^a	.632	.625	.58868

a. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_INSTRUMENTALSUPPORT, MEAN_EMOTIONALSUPPORT
b. Dependent Variable: MEAN_CA

Table 4.9: ANOVA Table

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59.592	2	29.796	85.981	.000 ^b
	Residual	34.654	100	.347		
	Total	94.246	102			

a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_CA
b. Predictors: (Constant), MEAN_INSTRUMENTALSUPPORT, MEAN_EMOTIONALSUPPORT

Table 4.10: Coefficients

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.907	.190		4.764	.000
	MEAN_EMOTIONALSUPPORT	.566	.083	.699	6.790	.000
	MEAN_INSTRUMENTALSUPPORT	.100	.088	.116	1.127	.263

a. Dependent Variable: MEAN_CA

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of emotional support and instrumental support on women's career advancement. Based on table 4.9, the ANOVA table, when both emotional support and instrumental support combined, these two variables significantly effect as much 63.2% (R square value = 0.632) of the variance in women career advancement, where the p value is less than 0.001.

Objective 1: To examine the effect of emotional support on women's career advancement

H_{a1}: There is a significant effect between the emotional support and women's career advancement.

In this hypothesis, the researcher was concerned with verifying the effect of emotional support on career progression in women, Emotional support ($\beta = 0.699$, $p < 0.001$) from the Coefficients table is a statistically significant predictor of career progression with a strong positive effect. As the p-value is well below the threshold of 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}) is accepted. These results suggest that emotional support from spouses contributes a lot to helping women to advance professionally. Support can either be in terms of advice, understanding and sympathizing, which can contribute and help women feel motivated and confident in pursuing their careers.

These findings are consistent with the findings of A and R (2024) that by providing spouse support through emotional support can increase the confidence and psychological well-being as well as motivation of women to take opportunities for advancement within their career. Besides that, this result confirms the research by Ocampo et al. (2018), where married managers would be likely to get consideration for promotion and training opportunities for professional growth if they are given emotional support and timely advice regarding work issues from their spouses. Thorough articles review by Heikkinen (2015), emotional support is one of the most valued behaviours by executive women. This helps them cope with the demands of their working and personal lives. Executive women can cope with demanding jobs while ensuring their well-being when they have emotional support, which builds resilience, self-efficacy, and a sense of security. Moreover, the study supports the Work-Family Enrichment Theory (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006), with the argument that family experiences have the capacity to enrich work performance and satisfaction. The emotional support is also a significant element that helps the women in dealing with the two worlds' pressures so that they are not distracted and promote in their professional lives.

Objective 2: To examine the effect of instrumental support on women's career advancement

H_{a2}: There is a significant effect between the instrumental support and women's career advancement.

Instrumental support has a beta value of 0.116 with p-value of 0.263. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the analysis indicates that instrumental support does not significantly predict women's career advancement in this study. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a2}) is not accepted. This means that, even though instrumental support does contribute to women's career development and helpful, but instrumental support is not a statistically significant factor in influencing career development among married working women.

This finding is also aligned with the research of Ezzedeen & Ritchey (2008) that found most of the working women giving greater priority to emotional support compared to instrumental support. Their study explained that instrumental help can be readily outsourced or purchased, whereas emotional support is highly personal and cannot be substituted, thus affecting women's career development and satisfaction more. Besides that, Singh et al. (2023) stated that emotional support is related to career advancement. According to their study, emotional support provides individuals, particularly women, with the ability to pursue their career goals through enhancing their confidence and motivation. Feeling supported encourages women to seek promotions, take on challenging assignments, and deal with office politics more effectively. In addition, this result supports the perception of the Work-Family Enrichment Theory that all types of support are not equally significant to career advancement. Emotional support appears to have a stronger and more lasting effect, while instrumental support may play a more peripheral role.

Objective 3: To examine which spousal support is the most dominant in effecting on women's career advancement

The model summary table shows that the model has an R value of 0.795, indicating a strong positive correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable. The R Square is 0.632, meaning that 63.2% of the variance in women's career advancement can be explained by emotional and instrumental support combined. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 85.981, p < 0.001$), confirming that the model. When comparing the two types of support, emotional support stands out as the more influential factor in promoting career advancement among married working women. The analysis shows that emotional support has a strong and statistically significant impact ($\beta = 0.699, p < 0.001$), while instrumental support does not show a meaningful effect ($\beta = 0.116, p = 0.263$). This suggests that emotional support, which includes expressions of empathy, encouragement, and understanding, plays a more critical role in helping women navigate their professional journeys.

These findings are consistent with the study by Beach et al. (2006), which highlighted that emotional or non-directive support tends to have a more positive impact compared to practical or directive assistance. Emotional support not only helps women feel valued and understood but also strengthens their confidence and motivation to pursue career goals. Another such study conducted by Jaka and Mateja (2013), the women in the study were generally content with the support they received from their spouse's specifically emotional support. The majority attributed this marital support as a secret to their professional achievements, observing the significant role it played in ensuring that they were successful in professional success and career growth. Overall, the results reinforce the principles of the Work-Family Enrichment Theory, emphasizing that the emotional quality and depth of support from spouses can significantly enrich women's experiences in the workplace and contribute to their long-term career development.

4.4 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the result by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0. Regression analysis was used to analyse hypothesis and the objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is represented in five sections. The first section contributes to the discussion and summary of the study and is followed by the implications of the study. After that are recommendations for future studies and conclusions.

5.2 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify and better understand the impact of these two spousal supports, instrumental and emotional, on women's career advancement at the Bintulu local authority. Little research has been done on the causes and effects of these dimensions, and most of the research has been conducted outside of Malaysia. The researcher was concentrating on two aspects of spousal support: emotional support and spousal support. To ascertain the effect of spousal support on women's career advancement, this study had three specific objectives. Finding out how emotional support and instrumental support effect women's career advancement, as well as which type of spousal support has the biggest impact on women's career advancement, were the goals.

This study involved selecting 136 married female staff members from the Bintulu local authority, which is made up of 18 departments. Each department has fewer than 11 married female employees, making the sample size manageable and relevant to the research focus. Out of the 136 selected, 108 responded to the questionnaire, and 103 responses were found to be usable for analysis. The Bintulu local authority was a suitable setting for this research because it employs a significant number of married women, aligning well with the study's aim to explore spousal support and career advancement. To collect data efficiently and cost-effectively, the researcher used an online questionnaire. This method also offered flexibility for both the researcher and the participants. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections. Section A focusing on demographic of respondents which consists of 7 basic questions: age, job title, ethnicity, working years and how many companies they have been working previously. Section B explored on women's career advancement that covering 4 components: career goal progress, professionally ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth. Section C examined spousal support, which broken down into 2 parts: emotional support and instrumental

support. This section aimed to understand how respondents perceive their spouse's support in both their professional journey and daily life.

This study was conducted to achieve objective in chapter one. Based on the objective, the hypotheses were form and being tested by using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0. Statistical applications of data analysis can be divided into two which are descriptives and multiple regression analysis. Descriptives analysis was mainly used to describe what was going on with the data and the overall understanding of the data so that the readers can comprehend well on the data. Demographics characteristics such as age, ethnicity, job title, number of children, how long you have been working, and how many companies been working previously being analyse using descriptive data. Moreover, multiple regression played its role to determine predict the relationship between independent variable (spousal support) and the dependent variable which is the women's career advancement.

The findings of this survey indicated that most respondents to this survey were 30 - 39 years old women, as opposed to other age groups. Most of them were working as clerical or secretarial positions. In terms of ethnicity, majority were Bumiputra Sarawak. Majority respondents having at least 2 kids and held degree holder. Lastly, most of the respondents have been working more than 5 years and had previously work at least 2 companies previously compared to other number of companies group.

The findings of this study show that all three research objectives were successfully achieved. Most notably, there is a significant relationship between spousal support and the career advancement of married women working in the local authority. This means that the support women receive from their spouses, whether emotional or practical, can have a meaningful impact on how they grow and progress in their professional lives. These results are consistent with the Work-Family Enrichment Theory proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), which suggests that positive experiences and resources gained in the family domain can enhance performance and satisfaction in the work domain. In other words, when women feel supported at home, they are more likely to thrive at work. This study adds to the growing body of evidence that a strong, supportive home environment can be a powerful driver of professional success.

Table 5.1: Multiple Regression Analysis

Test Performed	Hypothesis	Result of the hypothesis test	Analysis
Multiple Regression	H_{a1} There is a significant effect between the Emotional support and women's career advancement.	$\beta = 0.699$, P value < 0.001 Accepted	R = 0.795, $R^2 = 0.632$, P < 0.001) In overall, both emotional and instrumental significantly influence on the women's career advancement as much as 63.2% From the coefficient table, emotional support shows significant influence (p>0.001) on women's career advancement compared instrumental support (p=0.263) that does not have a significant effect on women's career advancement.
	H_{a2} There is a significant effect between the Emotional support and women's career advancement.	$\beta = 0.116$, P value = 0.263 Rejected	Emotional support shows significant influence (p>0.001) on women's career advancement compared instrumental support (p=0.263) that does not have a significant effect on women's career advancement.

5.3 Implication of the Study

Based on the finding, several implications towards human resource practitioners and organizations can be discussed.

5.3.1 Cultural Relevance in Malaysia

This study provides important insights into the role of family dynamics within Malaysian society, where women often balance traditional caregiving responsibilities with professional ambitions. The findings show that emotional support from spouses is particularly impactful, reflecting the cultural importance of emotional connection and relational harmony in Malaysian households. Understanding this cultural nuance can help local communities and policymakers better support women in dual-role settings. Mee et al. (2013) discovered one of the main barriers towards women's career advancement in Malaysia is that Malaysian women often struggle to manage the competing demands of work and family responsibilities.

5.3.2 Policy Implications for Organizations

The results of this study suggest that organizations, particularly in the public sector, should take a more holistic approach to employee support by going beyond standard family-friendly policies and actively promoting emotional well-being initiatives. Programs such as employee assistance services, spousal engagement workshops, and work-life balance campaigns can help foster a culture that encourages emotional support at home, which in turn can positively influence women's career growth. When women feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to thrive professionally, leading to greater job satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and stronger gender representation in leadership roles. By investing in emotional well-being, organizations not only support individual employees but also build a more inclusive and empowering workplace overall.

5.3.3 Theoretical Contribution

This study extends the Work-Family Enrichment Theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) by confirming that emotional support, as a family-based resource, significantly enhances women's performance and career progression, especially in the Malaysian context, which has its own socio-cultural expectations for married women. It adds empirical value by differentiating the impacts of emotional and instrumental support, offering a more nuanced understanding of how family resources contribute to professional success.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, a few recommendations can be made to the organization, community, individual and future research.

5.4.1 Organizational

Organizations have an opportunity to support working women by creating family-friendly policies that go beyond just financial or material assistance. One meaningful step could be for HR departments to offer awareness programs or workshops that include both employees and their spouses, helping them understand how emotional support at home can positively impact a woman's career. It's also important for managers to be trained to recognize the role emotional well-being plays in professional success. By fostering a workplace culture that values work-life balance and emotional resilience, organizations can create an environment where women feel truly supported, both at work and at home.

5.4.2 Future Researchers

Future researchers should consider the limitations faced in this study to design better research in the future. The resolves of limitation encountered in the previous researchers will give advantage in the following researchers to improve research findings and conclusion. Future researchers are encouraged to explore other variables that may influence career advancement, such as marital satisfaction, spousal occupation, or even cultural beliefs. Moreover, future researchers should consider various type of data collection. For instance, qualitative studies, such as in-depth interviews, may uncover deeper insights into the emotional challenges women face in balancing career and family. Besides that, a comparative study between public and private sectors or across different ethnic groups in Malaysia could also provide more nuanced understanding. This research is only focusing on public sector. It may provide less significant outcome compare with the private sector. It may be due to culture and processes of teamwork are different if compared with another sector.

5.4.3 Cultural Relevance

Given Malaysia's traditional views on gender roles, this study emphasizes the importance of encouraging shared emotional responsibility within households. Raising awareness through community or national campaigns could help challenge outdated norms and inspire husbands to be more emotionally present and supportive partners. Education systems and media also have a powerful role to play in reshaping public attitudes, promoting the idea

of equal partnerships in marriage and family life and helping build a culture where emotional support is seen as a shared responsibility, not just a woman's role.

5.4 Conclusion

This study puts into perspective how important spousal support is in allowing women to develop their careers, especially in Malaysia, where work and family life is such a personal and sometimes complex undertaking. The study shows that while emotional as well as functional spousal support helps, it is the emotional support that does the best. Support, sensitivity and compassion from a partner are not sweet niceties; they're a requirement. Naturally, housework can help ease the day-to-day load, but it's the emotional connection that gives women the strength and confidence to pursue their dreams.

More than a collection of figures, this research uncovers a compelling story: supportive relationships at home can unlock potential in the workplace. It reminds us how critical it is to support and recognize emotional well-being not just in families but also in the workplace. Most successes are not individual and behind many enabled women is a partner who listens, supports and believes.

The hope is that this research will inspire families, communities and organizations to view the whole person, not just the job title. By creating homes and workplaces in which women can feel empowered, we can allow them to thrive without having to abandon their dreams or loved ones. Most importantly, this research opens the door for future research to consider even more avenues of helping Malaysian working women and working women around the world.

Appendix

Appendix A: Consent letter

Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIMAS/NC-16.03/04-13/01 Jld.42 (16)



22 April 2025

En. Shah Razis Bin Johari
Pengurus Perkhidmatan Sumber Manusia
No. 1, Wisma Bintulu
Bintulu Development Authority (BDA)
Jalan Tanjung Kidurong
97007, Bintulu
Sarawak

Tuan,

Permohonan Menjalankan Kajian/Soal Selidik Bagi Projek Tahun Akhir

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas dirujuk,

Dengan ini disahkan bahawa pelajar **Jasmine Dickens Charles (84103)** adalah pelajar **Program Pembangunan Sumber Manusia**, Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Beliau sedang menjalankan kajian untuk menyiapkan Projek Tahun Akhir bagi memenuhi syarat bergraduat program tersebut.

Maklumat lanjut tentang pelajar dan kajian adalah seperti berikut:

Tajuk Kajian	: <i>"The Effect of Spousal Support on Women's Career Advancement"</i>
Penyelia	: Dr Agatha Lamentan anak Muda
No.Telefon Penyelia	: 082-583701/4152
E-mel Penyelia	: malamentan@unimas.my
No.Telefon Pelajar	: 011-25165671
E-mel Pelajar	: 84103@siswa.unimas.my

Sehubungan itu, sukacita kiranya pihak tuan dapat memberikan kerjasama kepada pelajar berkenaan untuk mendapatkan maklumat yang diperlukan. Segala maklumat yang diperolehi akan hanya digunakan untuk tujuan akademik semata-mata dan dijamin akan kerahsiaannya.

Di atas kerjasama yang diberikan oleh pihak tuan, kami dahului dengan ucapan setinggi-tinggi terima kasih.

Sekian,

Yang benar,

Julia Anak Clifton Akoi@Empadeng
Penyelaras
Program Pembangunan Sumber Manusia

s.k – Ketua Penolong Pendaftar, FSKPM

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