








Social Support and Work-Family Conflict Among Career Women: Implications for Sustainable Workforce Development Planning in West Sumatra, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid rise in female workforce participation in developing economies demands renewed attention to the conditions that sustain women's productive engagement over time. In West Sumatra, Indonesia, female labour-force participation reached 68.50–74.36% in 2022, yet the structural factors governing whether professional women can maintain this engagement sustainably remain insufficiently understood. Work–family conflict (WFC), the inter-role tension arising when occupational and domestic demands are mutually irreconcilable, is a recognised threat to sustainable workforce participation, gender equality, and individual well-being. Social support from spouses, kin networks, colleagues, and supervisors are widely theorised to buffer this conflict, yet its source-specific effectiveness in the sociocultural context of West Sumatra has not been empirically tested. This study examined the correlation between seven dimensions of social support from husbands (SSH), children (SSC), parents (SSP), extended family (SSEF), in-laws (SSI), colleagues (SSCL), and leaders (SSL) and WFC among 60 professional women, using a quantitative correlational design and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0. The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.782\text{--}0.982$) and convergent validity (AVE = 0.814–0.946). Bootstrapping revealed that none of the seven dimensions significantly influenced WFC (all $p > 0.05$), with a collective R^2 of 0.161. These findings suggest that social support alone may be insufficient to explain variations in work–family conflict in this context, indicating the need to consider structural and organisational factors alongside relational resources in workforce development planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable workforce development planning has increasingly recognised that the long-term productive engagement of women in formal employment is not merely a matter of recruitment or entry-level access, but of retention, well-being, and equitable working conditions across the entire career lifecycle [1]. This recognition is institutionalised in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), each of which acknowledges the interconnection between women's employment conditions and broader sustainability outcomes [2]. Despite this normative consensus, the planning mechanisms required to support sustainable female workforce participation remain incompletely specified in many regional development contexts, including the rapidly urbanising provinces of Indonesia.

In West Sumatra, female labour-force participation reached between 68.50% and 74.36% in 2022, reflecting a substantial and growing professional female population [3]. Yet participation statistics alone do not capture the conditions under which women sustain their careers without incurring

disproportionate costs to their health, family relationships, and psychological well-being. A primary mechanism through which these costs are incurred is work-family conflict (WFC), the inter-role tension that arises when the time demands, behavior expectations, and psychological strains of professional and domestic roles are mutually incompatible [4]. Left unaddressed, WFC constrains sustainable career trajectories, contributes to voluntary workforce exit, and perpetuates gender-based occupational inequality [5, 6].

Social support comprising emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal assistance provided by members of an individual's relational network is among the most frequently cited modifiable factors in WFC research [7, 8]. Theoretically grounded in Thoits' [9] coping-resource model and Cohen et al.'s [10] multidimensional framework, social support is hypothesised to buffer the resource-depleting effects of competing role demands, thereby reducing conflict and sustaining occupational engagement. The Work-Home Resources (WHR) model of Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker [11] formalises this logic within a resource-conservation framework that has direct implications for workforce planning: if social support reliably attenuates WFC, then supporting the development of strong relational networks

constitutes a viable workforce sustainability strategy.

However, the translation of this theoretical hypothesis into planning-relevant evidence is complicated by important contextual variables. The effectiveness of social support as a WFC buffer varies considerably across occupational sectors, cultural settings, and family structures [12, 13]. In West Sumatra, the dominant Minangkabau matrilineal tradition creates a distinctive socio-cultural context in which women occupy formal authority within extended-family systems while simultaneously bearing professional and Islamic domestic obligations [14]. Whether this context amplifies or attenuates the buffering function of social support and what this implies for sustainable workforce development planning has received no systematic empirical attention.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the correlational relationship between seven source-specific dimensions of social support from husbands (SSH), children (SSC), parents (SSP), extended family (SSEF), in-laws (SSI), work colleagues (SSCL), and direct leaders/supervisors (SSL) and WFC among 60 professional women in West Sumatra. Using PLS-SEM, the study evaluates both the psychometric quality of the measurement model and the structural significance of each hypothesised path. The findings are interpreted through the lens of sustainable workforce development planning, with direct implications for regional policy design, organisational human resource management, and professional counselling practice.

The study makes three contributions to the scope of sustainable development and planning research. First, it generates source-disaggregated empirical evidence on social support–WFC dynamics in an Indonesian regional context that is underrepresented in the international planning literature. Second, it interrogates the assumption that informal relational resources are sufficient to sustain female workforce participation, thereby reorienting planning attention toward structural and institutional interventions. Third, it integrates social science methodology with sustainable development planning frameworks, demonstrating how PLS-SEM-based workforce research can inform regional gender-equality planning aligned with SDG 3, SDG 5, and SDG 8.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Work-family conflict: Theory and sustainable workforce implications

Greenhaus and Beutell's [4] foundational framework identifies three forms of inter-role incompatibility constituting WFC. Time-based conflict occurs when hours committed to one role structurally constrain availability for the other. Strain-based conflict describes the cross-domain spillover of occupational stress into family functioning, or vice versa. Behaviour-based conflict arises when role-specific behavior expectations in work and family domains are mutually irreconcilable. These three forms map directly onto the resource-depletion processes theorised by the WHR model [11] and have been operationalised in numerous cross-national studies [15].

From a sustainable development planning standpoint, WFC is significant not merely as an individual psychological burden but as a systemic workforce sustainability risk. Smith et al. [15] documented that high WFC drives burnout, reducing the

effective human capital available to service-sector employers. Tu et al. [16] further showed that WFC can increase job stress and subsequently contribute to deviant workplace behavior, indicating that WFC has implications not only for employee well-being but also for organizational functioning. Song et al. [17] demonstrated associations between WFC and depressive symptoms among Korean working women, signalling downstream mental health system costs. Huang et al. [18] linked WFC to anxiety and burnout in a public-sector Chinese sample. Hosseini et al. [19] showed that WFC undermines marital stability and parenting quality intergenerational externalities with direct implications for human capital formation and, therefore, for sustainable regional development.

WFC operates bidirectionally: Work Interfering with Family (WIF) is primarily driven by occupational demand variables such as workload, irregular scheduling, and role ambiguity, whereas Family Interfering with Work (FIW) is more strongly associated with family structure variables including number of dependent children and spousal employment status [20, 21]. For workforce development planners, this bidirectionality means that effective WFC mitigation requires simultaneous attention to both occupational design and family support infrastructure.

2.2 Social support: Dimensions, sources, and workforce relevance

Social support is broadly defined as the emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal assistance provided by members of an individual's social network [9, 10]. Cohen et al.'s [10] functional taxonomy distinguishes: (1) emotional support expressions of empathy and care; (2) instrumental support tangible practical assistance; (3) informational support advice and relevant knowledge; and (4) appraisal support feedback that aids self-evaluation and role management. Each type may differentially attenuate distinct WFC dimensions: instrumental support by reducing time pressure, and emotional support by buffering strain spillover [7].

The source of social support carries distinct planning implications. Family-domain support from spouses, parents, extended kin, and in-laws primarily addresses resource constraints in the home domain, and is most accessible through family policy interventions such as parental leave and childcare subsidies. Work-domain support from colleagues and supervisors is most accessible through organisational policy and management practice interventions [22]. Kossek et al.'s [23] meta-analysis confirmed that work-family specific supervisory support reduces WFC substantially more than general organisational support, a finding with direct relevance to sustainable human resource management planning.

2.3 Work-Home Resources model and conservation of resources theory

Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker's [11] WHR model situates social support within a resource-conservation framework derived from Hobfoll's [24] conservation of resources theory. Related evidence from crossover theory also shows that job demands and WFC can transmit exhaustion across work and family domains, reinforcing the resource-depletion logic underlying the WHR model [25]. The model posits that personal and contextual resources including time, cognitive capacity, emotional energy, and social support are drawn upon

to meet role demands in both domains. When demand-side pressures deplete shared resources faster than they can be replenished, WFC increases. Contextual resources such as social support are hypothesised to offset this depletion by providing additional coping capacity.

Critically, the WHR model also acknowledges that resource effectiveness is contingent on cultural appraisals, organisational climate, and the nature of dominant stressors [11, 26]. This boundary-condition logic is essential for the present study: in contexts where structural demand-side factors workload, inflexible scheduling, absence of formal childcare represent the primary drivers of WFC, social support may be insufficient to offset depletion regardless of its availability, redirecting planning attention to structural rather than relational interventions.

2.4 Gender role theory and the Minangkabau socio-cultural context

Gender role theory establishes that socialised expectations about femininity shape the allocation of time, labour, and emotional investment across life domains, often intensifying WFC for women who internalise norms of domestic centrality [26]. Aarntzen et al. [27] demonstrated that internalised gender stereotypes generate guilt-mediated WFC that persists even when practical support is available a finding with significant implications for understanding why relational support resources may yield weaker-than-expected effects in culturally traditional settings.

West Sumatra presents a uniquely complex gendered planning context. The Minangkabau ethnic group, the world's largest matrilineal society, grants women formal authority over inheritance and household property while simultaneously embedding them within dense extended-family obligation networks and Islamic domestic norms [14]. This configuration may create a cultural baseline of social support that is so pervasive and normatively expected as to suppress statistical variance across the sample a ceiling-effect dynamic that would attenuate any observable correlation between support and WFC. Planning frameworks for this context must account for the possibility that cultural support saturation coexists with structural demand-side WFC that informal resources cannot address.

2.5 Recent empirical evidence

Studies reviewed in this section were identified through systematic searches of databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using the terms 'WFC', 'social support', 'Indonesia', and 'sustainable workforce', supplemented by backward citation tracing of key theoretical sources. The empirical literature on social support and WFC in Indonesia and comparable regional contexts is instructive but inconsistent. Noor et al. [28] reported that spousal support accounted for 43% of WFC variance among Indonesian bank employees a substantially higher explanatory power than the 16.1% observed across all seven support sources in the present study. Razak and Barath [29] found that social support moderated the WFC-health relationship among Malaysian student-workers, though with modest effect sizes. Wu et al. [30] showed that workplace social support mediated the occupational stressor-burnout relationship among Taiwanese nurses, again confirming domain-specific support effects. Allen et al. [31] employed genetic modelling to show that

shared genetic variance partially accounts for the support-WFC association, complicating purely environmental interpretations. Selvarajan et al. [32] identified personality traits and affective states as moderators of the support-WFC relationship, indicating individual heterogeneity in how support is utilised.

Taken together, these studies confirm that the support-WFC relationship is sensitive to context, source-specificity, and moderating variables. Sustainable workforce development planning in any specific regional context requires locally grounded empirical evidence rather than direct extrapolation from Western or East Asian findings the precise justification for the present study.

2.6 Research hypotheses

Drawing on the theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence reviewed above, seven directional hypotheses were formulated, each reflecting the theoretical expectation that greater social support from a given source is associated with lower levels of WFC:

H1: *SSC is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*
H2: *SSCL is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

H3: *SSEF is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

H4: *SSH is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

H5: *SSI is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

H6: *SSL is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

H7: *SSP is significantly and negatively associated with WFC.*

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A quantitative correlational design was adopted, consistent with standard approaches in social science research for examining relationships between variables without manipulation [33]. This design is well suited to the generation of planning-relevant baseline evidence: it permits estimation of the proportion of variance in a workforce outcome explained by a set of modifiable predictors, thereby informing decisions about where planning resources are most likely to yield sustainable returns.

3.2 Participants and sampling

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling from the professional female workforce of West Sumatra Province, Indonesia [34]. Inclusion criteria required participants to be: (a) female; (b) engaged in full-time formal professional employment; (c) married or in a committed cohabiting partnership; and (d) resident in West Sumatra Province. The final sample comprised 60 career women spanning education, healthcare, and financial services sectors, recruited over a one-month period.

Given the use of purposive and snowball sampling combined with online survey distribution, the sample should be considered non-probability and convenience-based, which may limit the generalisability of the findings beyond similar professional groups.

The sample size of 60 should be interpreted with caution given the relatively high model complexity (seven predictors

and eight latent constructs). While PLS-SEM is known for its tolerance of smaller samples [35], recent methodological guidance emphasises that model complexity must be balanced with statistical power. Therefore, this study is positioned as exploratory rather than confirmatory, aiming to provide initial evidence on source-specific social support in the West Sumatran context.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants, providing contextual information for interpreting the findings within this exploratory sample.

Table 1. Demographic profile of research participants (n = 60)

Category	Group	n	%
Age	Under 30 years	24	40.00
	30–40 years	28	46.67
	Over 40 years	8	13.33
Number of Children	No children	13	21.67
	1 child	22	36.67
	2 children	16	26.67
	3 children	7	11.67
	More than 3	2	3.33
Occupation	Teaching staff (teacher/lecturer)	39	65.00
	Healthcare worker (doctor/midwife/nurse)	11	18.33
	Bank employee	6	10.00
	Private sector employee	4	6.67
Work Tenure	0–5 years	25	41.67
	Over 5 years	35	58.33
Monthly Income (IDR)	Below 2,000,000	21	35.00
	2,000,000–3,000,000	6	10.00
	3,000,000–5,000,000	16	26.67
	5,000,000–10,000,000	17	28.33
Weekly Working Hours	Below 40 hours	29	48.33
	Exactly 40 hours	17	28.33
	Over 40 hours	14	23.33

The sample is dominated by participants from the education sector, which should be considered when interpreting the results.

To address potential overparameterisation, additional robustness checks were conducted using simplified specifications (see Section 4.3), including aggregated support models and sensitivity analyses.

3.3 Instrumentation

Two validated psychometric instruments were administered. The Social Support Scale was adapted from Cohen’s multidimensional framework to assess support received from seven relational sources: SSH, SSC, SSP, SSEF, SSI, SSCL, and SSL [10]. Each subscale measured emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support dimensions across 31 items rated on a semantic differential scale. The WFC Scale comprised 27 Likert-format items spanning time-based and strain-based WFC dimensions, adapted from Greenhaus’s framework [4]. Table 2 summarises the instrument structure.

Instrument development followed a systematic process: literature review to identify construct indicators, expert panel review for content validity, and Bahasa Indonesia translation

with back-translation to ensure semantic equivalence. A pilot test with 20 career women external to the main sample confirmed item clarity prior to full-scale data collection.

Table 2. Research instrument overview

Instrument	Dimensions	Items	Reference
Social Support Scale	(1) Emotional Support; (2) Appraisal Support; (3) Instrumental Support; (4) Informational Support	31	[10]
Work-Family Conflict (WFC) Scale	(1) Time-Based Conflict; (2) Strain-Based Conflict	27	[4]

3.4 Data collection

Data were collected via a structured online survey administered through Google Forms over a one-month period in West Sumatra Province. Participants were contacted through institutional networks in the education, healthcare, and banking sectors. Informed consent was obtained electronically; all data were pseudonymised before analysis to ensure participant confidentiality. Snowball referrals were used to extend reach within specialist occupational groups.

3.5 Analytical strategy: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0 [36]. PLS-SEM was selected over covariance-based SEM because it imposes no multivariate normality assumption, performs reliably with small-to-medium samples, and is suited to exploratory research contexts in which theoretical models are not yet fully established [34]. Analysis followed a two-stage protocol: outer model (measurement) evaluation preceded inner model (structural) testing.

Measurement model adequacy was assessed via: (1) individual indicator loadings ≥ 0.70 for item-level convergent validity; (2) Cronbach’s Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70 for internal consistency; (3) Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50 for construct-level convergent validity; and (4) the Fornell–Lareker criterion for discriminant validity [37]. Structural model evaluation focused on R^2 and path coefficients estimated via bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (significance threshold: $T > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) [35].

4. RESULTS

4.1 Outer model evaluation

4.1.1 Convergent validity: Indicator loadings

Table 3 reports loading factor values for all 30 indicators across the eight constructs. Every loading exceeded the 0.70 threshold required for individual indicator reliability, confirming that each item is a valid measure of its intended construct. Loadings were highest for the SSH subscale (range: 0.960–0.979), consistent with the prominent role of spousal support theorised in the WFC literature. WFC indicators also demonstrated strong loadings (WFC1 = 0.945; WFC2 = 0.857), confirming adequate criterion coverage.

Table 3. Indicator loading values (convergent validity)

Indicator	Construct	Loading	Status
SSC1	Social Support from Children (SSC)	0.901	Valid
SSC2	Social Support from Children (SSC)	0.883	Valid
SSC3	Social Support from Children (SSC)	0.940	Valid
SSC4	Social Support from Children (SSC)	0.940	Valid
SSCL1	Social Support from Colleagues (SSCL)	0.880	Valid
SSCL2	Social Support from Colleagues (SSCL)	0.934	Valid
SSCL3	Social Support from Colleagues (SSCL)	0.958	Valid
SSCL4	Social Support from Colleagues (SSCL)	0.929	Valid
SSEF1	Social Support from Extended Family (SSEF)	0.908	Valid
SSEF2	Social Support from Extended Family (SSEF)	0.922	Valid
SSEF3	Social Support from Extended Family (SSEF)	0.945	Valid
SSEF4	Social Support from Extended Family (SSEF)	0.935	Valid
SSH1	Social Support from Husbands (SSH)	0.977	Valid
SSH2	Social Support from Husbands (SSH)	0.979	Valid
SSH3	Social Support from Husbands (SSH)	0.975	Valid
SSH4	Social Support from Husbands (SSH)	0.960	Valid
SSI1	Social Support from In-laws (SSI)	0.948	Valid
SSI2	Social Support from In-laws (SSI)	0.947	Valid
SSI3	Social Support from In-laws (SSI)	0.957	Valid
SSI4	Social Support from In-laws (SSI)	0.916	Valid
SSL1	Social Support from Leaders (SSL)	0.858	Valid
SSL2	Social Support from Leaders (SSL)	0.928	Valid
SSL3	Social Support from Leaders (SSL)	0.930	Valid
SSL4	Social Support from Leaders (SSL)	0.926	Valid
SSP1	Social Support from Parents (SSP)	0.917	Valid
SSP2	Social Support from Parents (SSP)	0.925	Valid
SSP3	Social Support from Parents (SSP)	0.948	Valid
SSP4	Social Support from Parents (SSP)	0.916	Valid
WFC1	Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	0.945	Valid
WFC2	Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	0.857	Valid

4.1.2 Reliability and construct-level convergent validity

Table 4 reports Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability, and AVE for all constructs. All α values exceeded 0.78 and all CR values exceeded 0.89 well above the 0.70

minimum confirming strong internal consistency. AVE values ranged from 0.814 to 0.946, all above the 0.50 convergent validity threshold, indicating that each construct explains more variance in its indicators than is attributable to measurement error. These results provide a sound psychometric basis for structural model testing.

Table 4. Reliability and convergent validity statistics

Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
SSC	0.945	1.191	0.954	0.840
SSCL	0.945	0.983	0.960	0.857
SSEF	0.946	0.953	0.961	0.860
SSH	0.982	1.031	0.986	0.946
SSI	0.959	1.001	0.969	0.887
SSL	0.932	0.969	0.951	0.830
SSP	0.947	1.035	0.960	0.858
WFC	0.782	0.897	0.897	0.814

Note: SSH = Social Support from Husbands; SSC = Social Support from Children; SSP = Social Support from Parents; SSEF = Social Support from Extended Family; SSI = Social Support from In-laws; SSCL = Social Support from Work Colleagues; SSL = Social Support from Direct Leaders/Supervisors.

4.1.3 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion [37]. For every construct, the square root of the AVE exceeded its highest inter-construct correlation, confirming that constructs are empirically distinct. Cross-loading inspection (Table 5) further confirmed that each indicator loaded highest on its intended construct, with notably low cross-loadings onto the WFC construct, consistent with the null structural findings reported below.

4.2 Inner model evaluation

4.2.1 Coefficient of determination (R^2)

Table 6 presents R^2 and adjusted R^2 values. The R^2 of 0.161 indicates that the seven social support dimensions collectively account for 16.1% of WFC variance. The adjusted R^2 of 0.048 reflects the parsimony correction for seven predictors in a sample of 60. By Hair et al.'s [35] benchmarks where 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 represent weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power respectively the model falls below the weak threshold. The remaining 83.9% of unexplained variance constitutes a critical signal for workforce development planners: structural and institutional factors not represented by social support dominate the determination of WFC in this population.

4.2.2 Hypothesis testing via bootstrapping

Table 7 reports bootstrapping results for all seven hypothesised paths. Statistical significance requires $T > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$. All seven paths failed to meet this threshold: T-statistics ranged from 0.199 (SSC) to 1.463 (SSEF), and p-values ranged from 0.144 to 0.842. Accordingly, all seven hypotheses (H1–H7) are rejected. Path coefficients were mixed in sign and modest in magnitude: SSC ($\beta = -0.058$), SSCL ($\beta = -0.382$), SSEF ($\beta = -0.663$), SSH ($\beta = -0.180$), SSI ($\beta = 0.323$), SSL ($\beta = 0.185$), and SSP ($\beta = 0.524$). The mixed directionality and absence of significance reinforce the conclusion that WFC in this sample is not systematically governed by social support from any relational source.

Table 5. Cross-loading values selected indicators

Indicator	SSC	SSCL	SSEF	SSH	SSI	SSL	SSP	WFC
SSC1	0.901	0.630	0.696	0.633	0.593	0.599	0.679	-0.085
SSCL3	0.565	0.958	0.838	0.393	0.684	0.864	0.737	-0.243
SSEF3	0.699	0.872	0.945	0.468	0.715	0.795	0.825	-0.278
SSH2	0.616	0.512	0.568	0.979	0.645	0.455	0.650	-0.152
SSI3	0.522	0.675	0.705	0.614	0.957	0.645	0.645	-0.107
SSL3	0.605	0.895	0.805	0.425	0.694	0.930	0.719	-0.183
SSP3	0.722	0.800	0.872	0.606	0.666	0.712	0.948	-0.206
WFC1	-0.226	-0.257	-0.262	-0.172	-0.064	-0.195	-0.168	0.945
WFC2	-0.167	-0.240	-0.238	-0.061	-0.148	-0.225	-0.139	0.857

Note: SSH = Social Support from Husbands; SSC = Social Support from Children; SSP = Social Support from Parents; SSEF = Social Support from Extended Family; SSI = Social Support from In-laws; SSCL = Social Support from Work Colleagues; SSL = Social Support from Direct Leaders/Supervisors.

Table 6. Coefficient of determination

Dependent Variable	R ²	R ² Adjusted	Planning Interpretation
Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	0.161	0.048	Social support explains 16.1% of WFC variance; 83.9% attributed to other structural/institutional factors

Table 7. Bootstrapping results structural path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Path (Hypothesis)	Orig. β	Mean β	SD	T-Stat	P-Value	Decision
SSC → WFC (H1)	-0.058	-0.067	0.289	0.199	0.842	Rejected
SSCL → WFC (H2)	-0.382	-0.373	0.432	0.885	0.377	Rejected
SSEF → WFC (H3)	-0.663	-0.493	0.453	1.463	0.144	Rejected
SSH → WFC (H4)	-0.180	-0.095	0.256	0.704	0.482	Rejected
SSI → WFC (H5)	0.323	0.229	0.223	1.447	0.149	Rejected
SSL → WFC (H6)	0.185	0.154	0.284	0.652	0.515	Rejected
SSP → WFC (H7)	0.524	0.381	0.371	1.413	0.158	Rejected

Note: Significance threshold $T \geq 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$. All paths fall below this threshold. SSH = Social Support from Husbands; SSC = Social Support from Children; SSP = Social Support from Parents; SSEF = Social Support from Extended Family; SSI = Social Support from In-laws; SSCL = Social Support from Work Colleagues; SSL = Social Support from Direct Leaders/Supervisors.

4.3 Multicollinearity and sensitivity analysis

To assess potential multicollinearity among predictors, inner VIF values were examined. Several constructs demonstrated elevated correlations (see Table 5), suggesting possible redundancy across support sources. Although VIF values remained within acceptable thresholds (< 5), the high conceptual overlap indicates a risk of suppression effects, where the inclusion of multiple correlated predictors reduces the apparent significance of individual paths.

To evaluate robustness, three alternative model specifications were tested:

- (1) single-source models (each support variable separately predicting WFC),
- (2) aggregated support model (combined social support index), and
- (3) second-order construct model distinguishing family vs work support.

Results indicated that SSH showed stronger effects in single-predictor models, consistent with prior findings [28], but became non-significant in the full model. This pattern strongly suggests suppression due to multicollinearity.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Why social support does not significantly predict work-family conflict: Structural explanations

The rejection of all seven hypotheses, despite a psychometrically sound measurement model, points to theoretically important boundary conditions on the social

support-WFC relationship. Rather than indicating a failure of social support theory, these findings reveal the conditions under which informal relational resources are insufficient to address WFC, a conclusion with direct implications for sustainable workforce development planning.

The most plausible structural explanation is demand dominance: when objective occupational demands workload, shift hours, performance targets, administrative burden deplete shared resources at a rate that exceeds what social support can replenish, the WHR model [11] predicts that support will have no detectable effect on WFC. This interpretation is consistent with Hosseini et al.’s [19] qualitative evidence that rigid work schedules and absence of formal childcare are primary WFC drivers in Islamic-majority cultural contexts comparable to West Sumatra, and with Zhao et al.’s [38] finding that work stress in the teaching profession generates conflict patterns that are not easily ameliorated by relational support alone. Given that 65% of the present sample are teaching staff, this sector-specific dynamic is particularly salient for workforce planners in West Sumatra.

The following interpretation should be understood as contextual and exploratory, as the present study did not directly measure cultural norms, support expectations, or internalised gender roles. Therefore, this explanation should be interpreted cautiously and warrants further empirical investigation.

A complementary explanation involves cultural support saturation. The Minangkabau matrilineal system embeds women within dense extended-family networks that are normatively obligated to provide assistance. When social support functions as a cultural constant rather than a variable resource, statistical variance in support levels is suppressed

across the sample, making associations with outcome variables statistically undetectable a ceiling effect analogous to that documented in collective cultural contexts by Lakey and Orehek [39]. For planners, this implies that additional investment in informal support networks yields diminishing returns in this context; structural interventions are the marginal route to WFC reduction.

A third explanation concerns measurement scope. The model's R^2 of 0.161 unambiguously indicates that 83.9% of WFC variance is explained by factors not represented in the model. It is important to note that structural factors such as workload, scheduling inflexibility, and institutional childcare availability were not directly measured or tested in this study; their salience is therefore inferred from the residual unexplained variance in R^2 and from convergent evidence in the broader empirical literature, not from direct empirical testing within the present data. Other unmeasured relational factors, such as community support networks or peer solidarity among professional women, may similarly explain portions of the unexplained variance and warrant inclusion in future models. Variables such as job autonomy, commuting burden, workplace flexibility policies, institutional childcare access, individual self-efficacy and emotional regulation capacity, and organisational gender climate are each theoretically and empirically relevant WFC predictors that were not included. The omission of these variables reflects a study design that was necessarily scoped to test the social support hypothesis; future model extensions must incorporate these structural and individual-resource dimensions to produce planning-actionable explanatory power.

5.2 Comparison with international literature

The divergence between the present findings and comparable international studies is theoretically informative. Noor et al. [28] reported that spousal support alone explained 43% of WFC variance among Indonesian bank employees a result dramatically more powerful than the non-significant SSH path ($\beta = -0.180$, $p = 0.482$) observed here. This discrepancy likely reflects suppressor dynamics: in the present model, six additional support sources are simultaneously entered, and the high inter-construct correlations visible in Table 5 introduce multicollinearity that inflates standard errors and attenuates individual path significance. The planning implication is that source-aggregated models overestimate the actionable impact of any single support source, reinforcing the need for multi-source designs.

The contrast with Noor et al. [28], who found a strong and significant effect of spousal support, represents one of the most theoretically important findings of this study. Rather than contradicting prior research, this discrepancy highlights the importance of model specification. When spousal support is examined in isolation, its effect may appear substantial. However, when multiple highly correlated sources of support are included simultaneously, the unique contribution of each source becomes difficult to isolate.

This suggests that prior findings may partly reflect shared variance across support sources, rather than purely independent effects. From a methodological standpoint, this underscores the importance of testing both isolated and combined models in social support research.

Kossek et al.'s [23] meta-analytic finding that work-family specific supervisory support reduces WFC more effectively than general support is not contradicted by the non-significant

SSL path in the present study; rather, it highlights a measurement precision issue. The SSL subscale in this study captured general leader supportiveness rather than work-family specific supervisory facilitation behaviours the dimension most relevant to WFC reduction in Kossek et al. [23]'s analysis. Future workforce development research in this context should incorporate validated work-family specific supervisory support instruments to test this distinction.

The comparison with Pluut et al.'s [8] Dutch dual-buffering study is equally instructive. The additive support effects observed in that study occurred within a highly institutionalised context of statutory flexible-work rights, generous parental leave, and egalitarian gender norms structural conditions that effectively convert relational support into actionable WFC-reduction resources. The absence of equivalent institutional infrastructure in the present context renders relational support less functionally effective, even when subjectively perceived as available. This cross-national comparison demonstrates that sustainable workforce development planning cannot rely on informal support norms in the absence of formal institutional complements.

5.3 Gender norms, childcare, and internalised role conflict

Gender role theory [26] provides a further explanatory layer. Aarntzen et al. [27] demonstrated that working mothers who internalise gender stereotypes experience guilt-mediated WFC that persists even when practical support is available. In West Sumatra's Minangkabau context where Islamic domestic norms overlay the matrilineal expectation of female household centrality career women may experience a cognitively internalised form of role conflict that no amount of interpersonal support can fully address without accompanying shifts in cultural norms and organisational expectations. Yuan et al. [40] similarly found that work-related stress produces chained burnout effects among Chinese female nurses that are mediated by WFC, suggesting that gender-specific occupational stress mechanisms require targeted, sector-specific interventions.

The parental profile of the sample is also significant: 78.33% of participants had at least one child, and 15% had three or more. The concrete time demands of parenting impose structural constraints that instrumental support can only partially offset. The composite WFC score used as the outcome variable in this study may mask differential support effects across WFC dimensions: instrumental support might buffer time-based conflict while emotional support addresses strain-based conflict, but aggregation into a single score obscures these distinctions. Disaggregation of WFC into its component dimensions in future research would provide more precise planning-relevant evidence.

In addition to structural explanations, a measurement-related limitation should also be considered. A key limitation of the present model is the aggregation of WFC into a single composite construct. Prior research distinguishes between time-based and strain-based conflict, as well as bidirectional forms (WIF vs FIW). It is plausible that different types of social support operate selectively across these dimensions. For example, instrumental support may reduce time-based conflict, while emotional support may buffer strain-based conflict.

The use of a global WFC score may therefore obscure meaningful relationships. Future studies should model these dimensions separately to improve explanatory precision.

5.4 Guidance, counselling, and workforce sustainability

While the present findings indicate that informal social support does not significantly attenuate WFC, they do not diminish the importance of professional guidance and counselling as a workforce sustainability intervention. Counselling services embedded within workplace employee assistance programmes can target the individual cognitive and emotional mechanisms internalised gender guilt, coping self-efficacy deficits, role boundary management skills that perpetuate WFC at a level that relational support cannot reach [41]. The quality and specificity of support provided may be improved by family counseling interventions that consider spouses, parents, and in-laws as active participants in role negotiation rather than just as passive support providers [42]. Group guidance services allowing career women to share strategies, normalise their experiences, and develop collective coping repertoires represent a resource-efficient complement to structural workforce planning interventions [43].

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

6.1 Reorienting workforce planning: From relational to structural considerations

These findings provide initial planning considerations for selected professional sectors in West Sumatra (particularly education, healthcare, and finance), rather than generalisable conclusions at the provincial level. The results suggest that sustainable female workforce participation may benefit from greater attention to structural and institutional factors, rather than relying solely on informal social support networks.

Given that a substantial proportion of WFC variance remains unexplained by social support, the findings indicate the potential importance of working conditions such as scheduling flexibility, workload management, childcare support, and leave policies in supporting women's long-term workforce participation.

In practical terms, these insights may inform preliminary strategies within specific sectors. For instance, organisations in education, healthcare, and financial services may consider exploring flexible scheduling arrangements, evaluating workload distribution, and improving access to childcare support. Such measures should be interpreted as exploratory considerations rather than prescriptive policy recommendations, given the study's sample size and methodological scope.

6.2 Gender-responsive planning and SDG 5

Sustainable workforce development planning that is genuinely gender-responsive must address not only formal access barriers but the normative and structural conditions that determine whether women's workforce participation is sustainable across the career lifecycle. SDG 5 specifically calls for the elimination of discriminatory social norms and the recognition and valuation of unpaid care and domestic work [2]. The present findings showing that even dense social support networks do not attenuate WFC reinforce the argument that WFC reduction requires structural redistribution of caregiving responsibility, not merely the intensification of women's relational resource management.

Regional governments and educational institutions in West Sumatra should institutionalise gender mainstreaming in human resource policies, including training for leaders and supervisors in work-family specific supportive management behaviours — a form of leader support that, unlike the general SSL construct measured in this study, has demonstrated WFC-reducing effects in the international literature [23]. Development planning documents should incorporate gender-disaggregated WFC indicators as monitoring tools for SDG 5 progress at the provincial level.

6.3 Well-being, mental health infrastructure, and SDG 3

SDG 3's commitment to well-being for all is directly threatened by unresolved WFC. The documented associations between WFC and depression [17], anxiety [18], burnout [15], and impaired parenting [19] indicate that career women in West Sumatra experiencing high WFC without effective mitigation resources face compounding health risks. Sustainable development planning must therefore incorporate investment in professional mental health and counselling infrastructure as a workforce sustainability measure, not merely a welfare provision.

Practical planning recommendations include: (a) integrating professional counselling services within workplace employee assistance programmes across the education and healthcare sectors; (b) training guidance and counselling professionals in WFC specific intervention competencies, including cognitive-behavior boundary management, role negotiation, and family systems approaches; (c) establishing community-based counselling referral networks that are accessible to career women in both urban and peri-urban areas of West Sumatra; and (d) incorporating WFC related well-being outcomes into periodic provincial health surveys to enable longitudinal monitoring aligned with SDG 3 targets.

6.4 Planning for intergenerational sustainability

Effective WFC mitigation among the current generation of professional women in West Sumatra carries intergenerational sustainability returns. Research consistently demonstrates that maternal WFC is associated with reduced parenting quality, elevated child stress, and diminished child educational engagement [44] factors that compromise the human capital formation processes on which sustainable regional development ultimately depends. Investment in WFC reduction is therefore not a welfare cost but a long-run human capital investment with compounding returns across generations. Provincial development plans that situate workforce gender equity within an intergenerational sustainability framework are better positioned to mobilise political commitment and cross-sector resource allocation for the structural interventions this study identifies as necessary.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the correlational relationship between seven source-specific social support dimensions and WFC among 60 professional women in West Sumatra, Indonesia, using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.0. The measurement model demonstrated strong psychometric quality throughout: all 30 indicator loadings exceeded 0.85, Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.897 to 0.986, and AVE values ranged

from 0.814 to 0.946. Despite this methodological rigour, bootstrapping revealed that none of the seven social support dimensions from SSH, SSC, SSP, SSEF, SSI, SSCL, or SSL significantly influenced WFC (all $T < 1.96$; all $p > 0.05$). The collective R^2 of 0.161 indicates that social support accounts for only 16.1% of WFC variance, with 83.9% attributable to factors not captured in the model.

The theoretical contribution of these findings is twofold. First, they challenge the universality of the social support buffering hypothesis by demonstrating that its effectiveness is contingent on cultural baseline support levels, the nature of dominant structural stressors, and the availability of institutional complements that convert relational resources into actionable conflict reduction. In the Minangkabau socio-cultural context of West Sumatra, where social support may function as a cultural constant and where demand-side structural factors appear to dominate WFC determination, interpersonal relational resources operate below their theoretical buffering potential. Second, the findings integrate social support theory with sustainable workforce development planning discourse, repositioning WFC as a structural planning problem rather than a relational management challenge.

The practical contribution is a set of evidence-based recommendations for sustainable workforce development planning in West Sumatra aligned with SDGs 3, 5, and 8: flexible scheduling and workload governance in public-sector education and healthcare; institutional childcare provision and employer incentive frameworks; supervisor training in work-family specific supportive management; integration of professional counselling services within workplace employee assistance programmes; and incorporation of gender-disaggregated WFC indicators into provincial human development monitoring systems.

Several limitations bound these conclusions. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. The sample of 60, while adequate for PLS-SEM, restricts statistical power and limits generalisability beyond the study context. Self-report measurement introduces the possibility of common method bias. The composite WFC outcome masks potentially differential effects across time-based and strain-based conflict dimensions. The model's low R^2 signals the importance of unmeasured structural, organisational, and individual-resource variables.

The findings should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that social support is unimportant, but rather that its effects are context-dependent, method-sensitive, and potentially obscured in multi-source models with limited sample sizes.

Future research should address these limitations through larger, longitudinal, mixed-method designs that integrate quantitative WFC measurement with qualitative exploration of structural and cultural mechanisms. Comparative studies across West Sumatra's diverse occupational sectors and ethnic subgroups would yield contextually richer planning evidence. Extended models incorporating workload intensity, job autonomy, organisational climate, individual self-efficacy, and institutional policy variables would substantially improve explanatory power. Such research is essential for constructing an evidence base adequate to support the gender-responsive, sustainability-oriented workforce development planning that West Sumatra's professional women need and that the SDG framework demands.

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