

Family-Friendly Support Programs and Work-Family Enrichment among Working Women: The Mediating Role of Organizational Perceptions

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ABSTRACT --The study aims to examine the mediating role of family-supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) between family-friendly support programs (FFP) (flexible work arrangements (FWA), specialized leave options, childcare facilities, financial supports, information and support and others) and work-to-family enrichment (WFE) (developmental-based, affective-based and capital-based) among working women. A quantitative methodology was adopted in this study in which data were gathered through survey questionnaires administered to 163 women employees working in two selected public institutions of higher learning in Sarawak, Malaysia. The hypotheses of the study were analysed using Pearson's correlation analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and Sobel test. The results revealed that FSOP mediates the effect of the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities on WFE (affective based), which highlights the important role played by FSOP in determining the outcome of FFP. Hence, the adoption of work-life balance approach has to take into consideration the context in which it operates in as there is no 'one size fits all' approach that can meet the real needs of various cultures.

Keyword-- Family-Supportive Organizational Perceptions, Work-to-Family Enrichment, Family-Friendly Support programs, Working Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

In retrospect, at the end of World War II women made up 30% of the global labour force. While the number of women in the labour force has expanded largely ever since, there is a downward trend of female labour force participation (FLFP) rate since 1999 when women reached the peak of their labour force participation that is 60 per cent.(1) In an attempt to understand this downward trend, organisational behaviourists and feminists have been debating over factors that influence woman to leave an organization after childbirth and not re-enter.(2) However, Subramaniam Overton, and Maniam (2) demonstrated that flexible work arrangements (FWA) have a positive

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effect on work-life balance, which might be the primary factor on women's decision to work in paid labour. In Malaysia, while equal treatment is given to women at the workplace,(3) the labour force participation rates among Malaysian women remained low at 54.1 per cent in 2015.(4) The FLFP rates were even lower during specific periods in the women's lifecycle that corresponding with the childbearing and childrearing years.(5)

From the 5th Malaysian Population and Family Survey conducted in 2014, it was reported that women left paid labour due to several factors, including childcare issues, getting married, trailing spouse issues and being pregnant. The survey also specified that 18.8 per cent working women have problems in balancing between work and family roles, including no adequate time for family, childcare and oneself. Further to this, the survey also revealed that 34.2 per cent working women would like to have a childcare centre at work, 17.8 per cent working women would like to have a specific leave to take care of sick child, and 13.7 per cent working women would like to have flexible working hours.(6) Under the 11th Malaysia Plan, the Malaysian Government (the Government) had mooted a plan to increase the labour force participation rate of women to 59.0 per cent by the year 2020.(7) The aim was in line with the seventh challenge of the country's aspiration to become a developed nation by the year 2020, which is: Establishing a fully caring society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family.(8)

Consequently, the Government introduced policies and programs related to the advancement of women, such as the 1Malaysia Family First (1MF1st) movement and the National Family Policy. Specifically, the 1MF1st movement, through the National Blue Ocean Strategy, has three key focus areas, namely family perspective commitment, review of policies and laws to be more family-friendly and accessibility to family-friendly services, while the introduction of National Family Policy is to promote a work-life balance (WLB) through more FWA and provision of childcare, day care or respite centres by both public and private sectors.(3) Another Government's initiative to escalate the FLFP rate is the Career Comeback Grant, through Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp) which aims to encourage employers to recruit and retain women on career breaks, empowering them to grow their talent pool and offer career opportunities to women hoping to come back to work. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is also collaborating with TalentCorp and MyStarJob to encourage women that were previously employed to return to work with the launch of flexWorkLife.my portal. This portal allows employers to share their successful experiences in adopting family-friendly support programs and enabling employers to advertise part time or flexible job opportunities to women who would like to return to work.(3) Nevertheless, Noor and Mohd Mahudin (5) emphasized that there are still a lack of family-friendly policies and practices in the workplace, whereby only a few organizations have taken up the initiative to provide on-site or off-site childcare centres and childcare subsidy even though the Government has provided several financial assistance measures such as tax exemption and industrial building allowance. The lack of uptake for these exemptions and allowances indicates a strong need and relevance for assessing the effectiveness of such initiatives. Moreover, the recent New World of Work (NWoW) Index (9) pointed out that Malaysians are not prepared for NWoW, with just 40 out of 100 respondents evaluating themselves exceptionally in embracing new People, Place and Technology standards, setting Malaysia the ninth among 12 nations includes in the study. The study also revealed that 62.5 per cent of respondents said they should have been in the office to access distinctive gear or devices that are only accessible in the workplace.(9)

Meanwhile, in the United States (U.S.), women are increasingly combining employment with family-care responsibilities. As opposed to Malaysia, the FLFP rates have been increasing in the prime childbearing and childrearing years.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,⁽¹⁾ the FLFP rates were higher for working mothers with older children than for those with younger children. Consequently, there is a growing movement by major cooperation in the U.S. designed to encourage women to re-enter the workforce after their career breaks.⁽¹¹⁾ In Indonesia, Schaner and Das ⁽¹²⁾ found that younger women in urban areas have increased their labour force participation in recent years, largely through paid labour, while younger women in rural areas have reduced their labour force participation, largely by opting out of informal, unpaid labour, which indicated that wage jobs were more desirable than other types of work and that many women exit wage labour due to family and childcare responsibilities. Thus, Schaner and Das ⁽¹²⁾ suggested that women-friendly job placement services could increase FLFP. In conclusion, despite the increasing concerns on WLB issues from both the Government and organizations through the implementation of FFP, working women still face challenges in balancing the conflicting demands of work and family as reflected by the low participation of women in the labour force. Therefore, Government and organizations must find alternate strategies to address the issues, perhaps through a simultaneous attention to both physical and psychological approaches, which is by creating a family-supportive environment in the organization along with the implementation of formal work-family initiatives. In addition, rather than assessing how jobs relate to negative personal outcomes at home government and organizations should put a positive-psychological twist to the current approach by emphasizing on how work and work-family interactions can also be beneficial in personal lives such as WFE.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Malaysian female labour force participation rate for the prime age groups (25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 years) was at 58% whereas male participation was at 80.6%.⁽⁴⁾ This significant difference in labour force participation rate between genders indicates a complex interplay of influences namely political, economic, socio-cultural and technological factors. Taking this into perspective, this current study focuses on the issue of the practices of family-friendly policies in organizations. Specifically, this inquiry investigates the possible mediating effect of family-supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) to the relationship between family-friendly support programs (FFP) and work-family enrichment (WFE). The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model by Allen ⁽¹³⁾ indicates that relationship between FFP and WFE serves as the main framework of this study. Past studies have suggested a consistently weak direct relationship between the two variables.^(14–16) This consistently weak direct relationship might be attributable to a mediating role played by factors such as FSOP. In the Malaysian context, the issue of work-family enrichment was not traditionally a matter of concern as women employees tend to be perceived as putting family ahead of other obligations. However, in the current socio-economic landscape that is primarily characterized by the increased numbers of dual-career families as a necessity, women's traditional role as primary caregivers have been significantly challenged, thus increasing the importance of understanding work family enrichment issues. For this reason, this study examines the possible role of organizational perceptions of family-friendly policies in influencing the relationship between FSOP and WFE.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The general objective of this study is to identify the mediating role of family-supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP) between family-friendly support programs (FFP) and work-to-family enrichment (WFE). Specifically, this study tests the potential mediating role of FSOP between the awareness on the availability of FFP and WFE.

IV. MODEL DEVELOPMENT

In this study, the existing theory of JD-R is used to explain and support the relationship between FFP, FSOP and WFE (see Figure 1). Based on the JD-R model, FFP are classified as job resources as these programs provide employees with FWA, specialized leave options, childcare facilities, financial supports, information and support, and others that enable employees to manage multiple life role. Furthermore, FSOP can be characterized as work engagement as these are a form of employees' global perceptions regarding the extent the organization is family-supportive. Meanwhile, WFE is a form of positive outcomes as it is about a situation where the extent to which experiences in one role improves the quality of life in the other role. Accordingly, based on the JD-R model, employees with greater access to FFP gain additional physical and psychological resources that facilitate higher level of FSOP through the motivational process, which in turn lead to increased level of WFE. In other words, work engagement (FSOP) mediates the relationship between job resources (FFP) and positive outcomes (WFE). In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that as flexibility is a form of resources that provides employees with the control and autonomy required to meet both work and family demands, employees who know that they can perform non-work matters such as taking care of a sick child at home during working hours will feel happy and satisfied with their working conditions and this helps them be a better family member.

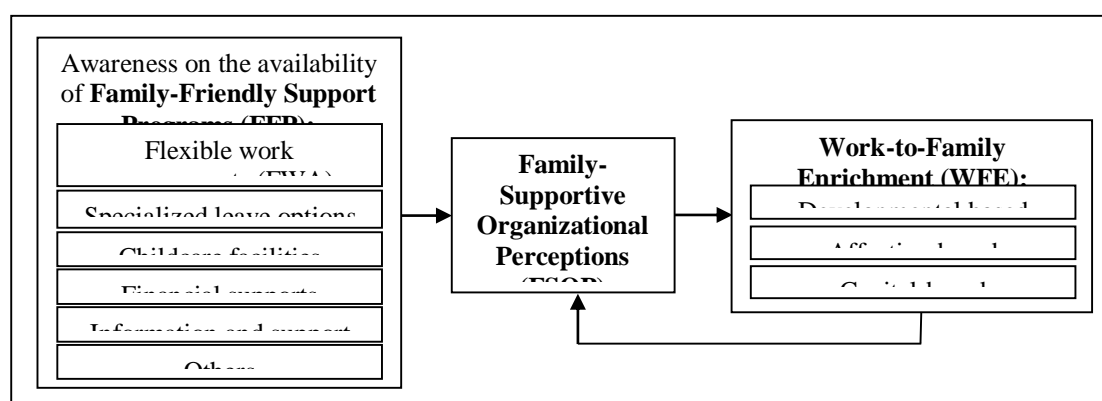


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

The mediating role of FSOP

A large and growing body of literature has demonstrated that the effect of FFP seems to be indirect. Allen (13) reported that the FFP availability has a small effect on job attitudes and experiences, and FFP is indirectly related to work–family conflict and job attitudes through FSOP, which indicated that the positive effect of FFP availability

appeared to be augmented by employee global perceptions that their organization is family-supportive. Moreover, this study stated that employees who perceived less family support from the work environment were less likely to utilize FFP, as employees may be concerned about utilizing FFP when they perceive that the work environment is sending them a message that FFP utilization is not fortified. This study was conducted among 522 individuals employed in a variety of settings, including a technology firm, a utility company, and members of a women's professional business association in the U.S. This is supported by an investigation among general managers in 229 small and medium enterprises representing the metal industry sector of South East Spain by Cegarra-Leiva and Cegarra (16) which revealed insignificant relationship between WLB practices and organizational outcomes, and demonstrated that the effect of WLB practices on organizational outcomes was mediated through WLB culture. Thus, the study suggested that WLB practices do not have a direct effect, but an indirect effect on organizational outcomes through the enhancement of a positive culture toward WLB in the organization.

In addition to Allen's (13) study, Butts, Casper and Yang (14) found that the availability of work-family support policies have both direct effects on work attitudes and indirect effects through enhanced FSOP. Specifically, the policies availability had small positive relationships with work attitudes, while FSOP generated stronger relationship with work attitudes compared to the policies availability. Hence, the meta-analysis summarized that organizations that offer work-family support policies without establishing a family-supportive environment may yield fewer positive outcomes. Furthermore, based on a two-wave survey among 786 employees in China, Siu et al (17) found that work engagement fully mediated the relationship between family-friendly organizational policies and WFE. This finding supported the motivational process in the JD-R model, whereby the model proposes that role resources are important antecedents of work engagement. The study also proved that work engagement had a greater impact on work– family enrichment compared to role resources variables such as family-friendly organizational policies, supervisor support, job autonomy, and family support. Meanwhile, it has conclusively been shown that supportive organizational culture or climate has positive influence on the utilization rate of FFP. Sutton and Noe (15) stated that one of the reason why family-friendly programs were not effective was due to absence of organizational climate that support such programs.

As a result, employees faced risks and challenges by participating in such programs, including selective implementation of programs among middle management, as well as negative career consequences as they will be classified as not being serious to work. More recently, based on an exploratory study done among 160 married academic staff in a university setting in Malaysia, Noor and Mohd Mahudin (5) reported that some WLB policies may be available in some organizations but underutilized. The study indicated that the uptake of these policies is related to the organizational work culture. In detail, the study found that normally employees are expected to be at the office during working hours, which indicated that they are committed to work, even though they are allowed to work from home and telecommute at certain times. The study also found that women utilized more work-life benefits and policies than men due to the strong traditional cultural norms regarding gender roles that are reflected within the existing organization's work culture with negative consequences to those who take advantage of these policies. Hence, as past studies have suggested that the effect of FFP may be indirect and there were positive influence of supportive organizational culture or climate on the utilization rate of FFP, organizational culture may act as a mediating mechanism in between FFP and its outcomes. Also, combined with the explanation on how FFP

indirectly influence WFE through enhanced FSOP based on the JD-R model, the present study established this hypothesis:

- H₁*** : FSOP will mediate the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FFP (a) FWA; (b) Specialized leave options; (c) Childcare facilities; (d) Financial supports; (e) Information and support; and (f) Others and WFE (Developmental-based)
- H₂*** : FSOP will mediate the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FFP (g) FWA; (h) Specialized leave options; (i) Childcare facilities; (j) Financial supports; (k) Information and support; and (l) Others and WFE (Affective-based)
- H₃*** : FSOP will mediate the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FFP (m) FWA; (n) Specialized leave options; (o) Childcare facilities; (p) Financial supports; (q) Information and support; and (r) Others and WFE (Capital-based).

V. METHOD

Measurements

The study was administered through survey using questionnaires. All measures were translated by the researcher from English to Malay, a national language of the area from where data were collected, based on forward translation method. Prior to the actual survey, a pilot study was conducted to assess the internal reliability of the translated instruments. Based on the outcome of the reliability test for the pilot study, Cronbach's alpha for the 14 FSOP and nine WFE items were 0.720 and 0.916, respectively. Thus, the translated questionnaire is confirmed for its reliability and validity whereby the translated questionnaire is viewed as applicable for the actual study. Consecutively, the researcher performed a reliability analysis on the collected data in the actual study. Cronbach's alpha for the 14 FSOP and nine WFE items were 0.755 and 0.891, respectively. In reference of Coakes and Steed's (18) and Fraenkel and Wallen's (19) study, each of these reliability coefficients is higher than the minimum acceptable level of 0.7. In view of this, both measurements are considered valid and reliable for the study

Measurement for Family-Friendly support programs

Allen's (13) FFP availability score scoring scheme was being adopted to measure FFP. Respondents were presented with a list of 43 most common FFP, which was divided into six categories (flexible work arrangements, specialized leave options, childcare facilities, financial support, information and support, and others), that are currently available in Malaysian public sectors. The list is constructed based on analysis of documents related to FFP, such as service circulars, general order, and the Government publications and reports. Respondents are asked to place a checkmark next to each FFP that they recognize as available in their institutions. FFP that are recognized as unavailable are coded as 0 and FFP that are recognized as available are coded as 1. A total FFP availability score is computed by summing the number of FFP checked by the respondent so that higher scores indicated a

greater number of FFP are recognized as available. As a result, availability score for each of the six categories of FFP would be computed.

Measurement for Family-Supportive organizational perception (FSOP)

Allen's (13) 14-item FSOP scale was used to assess employees' perceptions regarding the extent that the work environment is family-supportive (as shown below). Respondents responded on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) "Strongly disagree" to (5) "Strongly agree". Higher scores signify greater FSOP. The FSOP scale comprised of items such as "Expressing involvement and interest in non-work matters is viewed as healthy". In addition, 11 of 14 items were reverse scored such as "Work should be the primary priority in a person's life".

Measurement for Work-to-Family Enrichment (WFE)

WFE is measured using a total of nine items derived from Carlson et al (20) to measure the extent to which involvement in work facilitates respondents to be a better family member. Respondents responded on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". The higher scores signify greater WFE. The Carlson et al (20) scale was selected for this study as Kacmar et al (21) claimed that this scale as the only validated scale that captures all of the key dimensions of enrichment put forth in the conceptual definition, namely developmental-based, affective-based and capital-based enrichment. The developmental-based scale is comprised of three items such as "Helps me to understand different viewpoints and this helps me be a better family member"; affective-based scale is comprised of three items such as "Puts me in a good mood and this helps me be a better family member"; and capital-based scale is comprised of three items such as "Helps me feel personally fulfilled and this helps me be a better family member".

Sample of study

Sample of the current study were (a) managerial and professional women or non-managerial and non-professional women working in two selected public institutions of higher learning in Sarawak, Malaysia; (b) aged between 25 and 39; and (c) must at least have a child aged six and below. These criteria were established to ensure the respondents have somewhat similar work and family roles.(22) In this study, a total of 313 questionnaires were delivered by-hand by the researcher to the respondents or through relevant HR managers or personnel in charge (PIC). About 188 completed questionnaires were returned (119 from Institution A and 69 from Institution B) within a period of four weeks reflecting 60.1 percent response rate. The respondents from Institution A consisted of working women meeting the research criteria, excluding 35 working women who completed the pilot survey as different respondents were selected for the pilot and actual study. With regard to Institution B, questionnaires were distributed to all female non-academic staff as explicit details of female non-academic staff information from Institution B were unable to be pursued. Of the 69 respondents from Institution B who completed the questionnaires, 24 were discarded as they did not meet the research criteria and one respondent had put the same answers on all the scale. Eventually, only a total 163 questionnaires were usable in the present study indicating a response rate of about 52.1 percent. Demographic profiles of respondents are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 :Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency (n=163)	Percentage (%)
Age		
25 to 29 years	34	20.9
30 to 34 years	78	47.9
35 to 39 years	51	31.3
Marital status		
Married	161	98.8
Divorced	2	1.2
Widowed	0	0
Number of children aged six and below		
One	82	50.3
Two	59	36.2
Three	18	11.0
Four	4	2.5
Job Category		
Managerial and Professional	25	15.3
Non-managerial and non-professional	138	84.7

VI. RESULTS

The mediating role of FSOP between the awareness on the availability of FFP and WFE

The study applied the Sobel test calculator for the significance of mediation to test if FSOP mediated the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FFP and WFE.(23) This calculator utilizes the Sobel test to provide information whether the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator variable is significant. This calculator yields the Sobel test statistic, and one-tailed and two-tailed probability values.

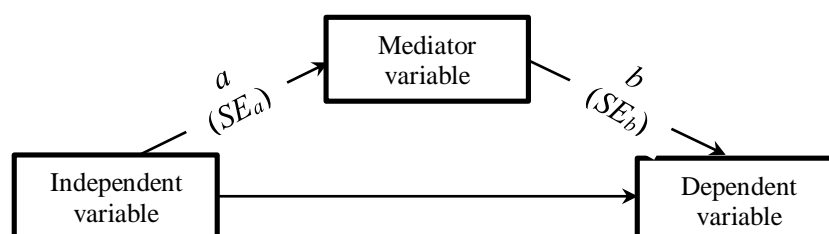


Figure 2: Testing for mediation (23)

Referring to Figure 2 above, below is the formula that is used to calculate values for a Sobel test for the significance of mediation, where a represents the unstandardized coefficient for the relationship between the

independent variable and the mediator (path a), b represents the unstandardized coefficient for the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable (path b), SE_a is the standard error of the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator (path a), and SE_b is the standard error of the relationship between the mediator variable and the dependent variable (path b):

$$z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2 SE_a^2) + (a^2 SE_b^2)}}$$

Based on the formula above, the study conducted separate multiple linear regression (Enter) analysis between the mediator (FSOP) and the independent variable (the awareness on the availability of FFP); and the dependent variable (WFE) and the mediator variable (FSOP) to find the required parameter values for the Sobel test. It is important to note that Sobel test is done following the Barron and Kenny model.(24) According to Baron and Kenny,(24) four circumstances for mediation include (a) the independent variable is significantly related to the dependent variable; (b) the independent variable is significantly related to the mediator; (c) the mediator is significantly related to the dependent variable; and (d) the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable becomes less or insignificant when the mediator is included.

The present study has satisfied the first condition necessary for mediation, whereby the independent variable (the awareness on the availability of financial supports) ($\beta = .184, p < .05$) did significantly predict the dependent variable (WFE (developmental-based)), and the independent variable (the awareness on the availability of FWA) ($\beta = .402, p < .05$) did significantly predict the dependent variable (WFE (affective-based)). However, it is likewise imperative to note that the mediation is still conceivable notwithstanding when the first condition is not statistically significant. Meanwhile, to test the second and third conditions, the study conducted separate multiple linear regression (Enter) analysis between the independent variable (the awareness on the availability of FFP) and the mediator (FSOP); and between the mediator (FSOP) and the dependent variable (WFE). These analyses were also done to find the required parameter values (a, b, SE_a and SE_b) for the Sobel test to test the fourth condition for mediation.

Table 2: Regression analysis between the awareness on the availability of FFP and FSOP

		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.459	.375		11.902	.000
	FWA	-.322	.071	-.348	-4.539	.000
	Specialized leave options	-.110	.107	-.077	-1.020	.309
	Childcare facilities	.139	.064	.167	2.172	.031
	Financial supports	.018	.065	.022	.281	.779
	Information and support	.030	.053	.046	.562	.575

Others	-.145	.083	-.147	-1.749	.082
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a. Dependent Variable: FSOP

Notes: $R = .450$; $R^2 = .202$; Adj. $R^2 = .172$; ANOVA: $F = 6.591$, $p = .000 < .05$

Result of the enter method between the independent variable (the awareness on the availability of FFP) and the mediator (FSOP) as reported in Table 2 above shows that the awareness on the availability of FWA ($\beta = .322$, $p < .05$) and childcare facilities ($\beta = .139$, $p < .05$) did significantly predict FSOP. Thus, the present study has satisfied the second condition necessary for mediation. The result also indicates that the unstandardized coefficient for the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, a is 0.461, and the standard error of the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, SE_a is 0.135.

Table 3: Regression analysis between FSOP and WFE

Coefficient																
Model	Types of WFE															
	Developmental-Based ^a					Affective-Based ^b					Capital-Based ^c					
	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	
1																
	(Constant)	3.745	.320	–	11.704	.000	4.616	.417	–	11.080	.000	3.855	.374	–	10.295	.000
	FSOP	.077	.094	.064	.816	.451	-.310	.123	-.195	-2.528	.012	-.002	.110	-.001	-.017	.986

- a. Dependent Variable: WFE (Developmental-based)
Note: $R = .064$; $R^2 = .004$; Adj. $R^2 = .002$; ANOVA: $F = .667$, $p = .415 > .05$
- b. Dependent Variable: WFE (Affective-based)
Notes: $R = .195$; $R^2 = .038$; Adj. $R^2 = .032$; ANOVA: $F = 6.389$, $p = .012 < .05$
- c. Dependent Variable: WFE (capital-based)
Notes: $R = .001$; $R^2 = .000$; Adj. $R^2 = .006$; ANOVA: $F = .000$, $p = .986 > .05$

Results of the enter method between the mediator (FSOP) and the dependent variable (WFE) as depicted in Table 3, shows that FSOP ($\beta = .31$, $p < .05$) did significantly predict WFE (Affective-Based). Hence, the present study has satisfied the third condition necessary for mediation. As Table 3 reports, the unstandardized coefficient for the relationship between the mediator (FSOP) and the dependent variable (WFE (Affective-Based)), b is 0.31, and the standard error of the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable, SE_b is 0.123. Accordingly, with all the required parameter values (a , b , SE_a and SE_b) are in place, the study used the Sobel (23) test calculator for the significance of mediation to test the fourth condition necessary for mediation. As previously noted, Sobel test was performed to test variables that fulfil all the first three conditions necessary for mediation only.

Table 4: Result of Sobel test

Test	Statistic test	<i>p</i> - value
Sobel test	2.028	0.043

It appears from Table 4 that the test statistic for the Sobel test is 2.028 with an associated *p*-value of .043. The observed *p*-value does fall below the established alpha level of .05 indicates that the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable (in this case, the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities towards WFE (Affective-based)) is reduced significantly by the inclusion of the mediator (in this case, FSOP) in the model; in other words, there is evidence of mediation. Results of the regression analyses and Sobel test indicate that FSOP mediate the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities and WFE (Affective-based), thus showing support for H_{1g} and H_{1i}. On the other hand, results found that that FSOP do not mediate the relationship between the awareness on the availability of FFP and WFE except for the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities and WFE (Affective-based). Therefore, H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c}, H_{1d}, H_{1e}, H_{1f}, H_{1h}, H_{1j}, H_{1k}, H_{1l}, H_{1m}, H_{1n}, H_{1o}, H_{1p}, H_{1q}, and H_{1r} are not supported, which is consistent with Baron and Kenny (24) that demonstrated mediation to occur if four conditions for mediation as mentioned above are satisfied.

VII. DISCUSSION

The mediating role of FSOP between the awareness on the availability of FFP and WFE

Results of the regression analyses and Sobel test indicate that FSOP mediate the effect of the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities on WFE (Affective-based). These results are consistent with the existing model of JD-R theory and a number of previous studies. As implied in the model, job resources stimulate a fulfilling, positive work-related state of mind (work engagement) and, in turn, this motivational process fosters positive outcomes.(25) Hence, as introduced by JD-R theory, the present study demonstrates that FSOP (work engagement) mediates the relationship between FWA and childcare facilities (job resources) and WFE (affective-based) (positive outcomes). These outcomes are also supported by a study in the U.S. by Allen (13) whom found that FFP availability has a small effect on job attitudes and experiences, and FFP is indirectly related to work–family conflict and job attitudes through FSOP, which showed that the benefits of FFP availability seemed to be intensified by employee global perceptions that their organization is family-supportive. More recently, Butts, Casper, and Yang (14) advocated that the accessibility of work-family support policies have both direct effects on work attitudes and indirect effects through improved FSOP. In particular, the policies availability had small positive correlations with work attitudes, while FSOP created stronger relationship with work attitudes compared to the policies availability.(14)

Accordingly, the present findings suggest that the effect of the awareness on the availability of FWA and childcare facilities alone has little contribution towards WFE (Affective-based), as it seems to be influenced significantly by FSOP. These outcomes highlight the important mediating role played by FSOP. The present results further propose that the implementation of FWA and childcare facilities must be complemented with family-supportive environment to ensure they can effectively increase women’s positive emotional state at work and in

turn at home. For instance, if organizations authorize female workers to leave work during office hours for personal or family matters, at the same time organizations must not assume that working women who take time off to attend to personal matters are not committed to their work. Also, the availability of child day care at workplace may not contribute much to keep women in a positive mood at work and transfer the positive experience to home, unless they are given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities well.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The new empirical evidence suggests that FSOP can profoundly influence WFE (affective-based) and also the other way around from this study suggests the existence of gain spirals among the concepts in the JD-R model, particularly about the motivational process between work engagement and job outcome. This evidence extends the existing model of JD-R that proposes straightforward unidirectional causal relations among job demands, resources and outcomes. The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice.

First, the current study highlights the importance of providing FFP in an organization, as failure to do so may result in reduced quality of life from work to home, which in turn may lead to lower job satisfaction, affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviours that could be detrimental to the organizations.(26). Second, the study suggests that there is a definite need for organizations to decide on the most appropriate FFP to be applied in order to benefit from the positive outcome of FFP towards women's level of WFE. For instance, it seems that organizations may enhance the opportunity for the working women to transfer the diverse perspectives, knowledge and skills that women have gained from work to home and in turn help women become a more open minded, experienced and skilful person in a family, by providing financial supports such as elderly care and childcare subsidies, dependent health care and loan schemes. The results of this research also support the idea that FWA such as flexible working hours are important to put working women in a decent state of mind and make them feel contented and joyful at work, which in turn embolden positive spirits at home.

Third, another important practical implication is that this study provides evidence that family-supportive environment is not suitable to be practiced in Malaysia, as it decreases the quality of life from work to home rather than facilitate them because most working women in Malaysia tend to be monochronic individuals who prefer to separate work and home rather than combining them. Hence, organizations could not simply adopt a 'one size fits all' approach to design and develop work-life balance initiatives as it might be ineffective or even disadvantageous in terms of meeting the real needs of various cultures.

Last but not least, this study provides suggestion to the practitioners that are determined to design FWA and childcare facilities to also consider establishing a family-supportive environment as a key determinant of the programs' effectiveness. For example, if organizations wish to implement work-from home program, at the same time they must not have a perception that if their employees are not in the office all the time during working hours, employees are perceived as not committed to work although they are allowed to work from home at certain times.

The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the body of knowledge. Specifically, the current finding adds to a growing body of literature on how work can be gainful in individual family life by exchanging the dependent variable to work-family enrichment, rather than giving further evidences on how jobs relate to negative personal outcomes at home through studies that linked FSOP with work-family conflict. Additionally, the

study has confirmed the findings of Allen (13) and Butts, Casper and Yang (14) which found that the effect of FFP may be indirect. The current study offers new empirical evidence about the indirect relationship between FWA and childcare facilities and WFE (Affective-based), with FSOP as a mediator. The inclusion of FSOP as mediating mechanism builds a greater understanding and different perspective about the process by which FWA and childcare facilities are linked to WFE (Affective-based).

IX. FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has posted several questions in need of further investigation. The questions include confirming the applicability of the FSOP construct created by Allen (13) to a monochronic culture. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no general agreement about this finding in Malaysia to date. Therefore, future research may replicate the present study to different target population in other sectors or industries in the country, or in other countries where the cultures are likely to be monochronic as well. More information on FSOP in a monochronic culture would help to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter. As opposed to that, future research may adapt the construct to fit in the context of where the data is going to be collected. Another potential avenue for further research is the selection of independent variable to measure the FFP score. In particular, this study used the awareness on the availability of FFP as independent variable to measure the FFP score, although it was consistent with prior research.(13) More research is required to measure actual FFP utilization or level of satisfaction with FFP rather than awareness on the availability of FFP. Also, it would be interesting to compare the findings at the job category level as the nature of works for each job category is different. In particular, managerial and professional women normally have more complex duties and responsibilities compared to non-managerial and non-professional women. Last but not least, as Greenhaus and Powell (27) describe work-family enrichment as bi-directional, future research should therefore concentrate on the investigation of both WFE and family-to-work enrichment. This is to provide understanding on how the variables in this study could also be associated to family-to-work enrichment.

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