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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT PRACTICES, WORK-FAMILY BALANCE, AND JOB SATISFACTION ON WOMEN EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN THE SPORTS GOODS MANUFACTURING SECTOR OF SIALKOT

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ABSTRACT

The study serves to examine both the direct and indirect effects of organizational support practices on women employees' performance in the context of Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing and export sector. Grounding its basis on the Social Exchange Theory and the Perceived Organizational Support Theory, our study proposes that work-family balance and job satisfaction have a mediating role between organizational support practices and employee performance.

To serve the purpose, we conducted a quantitative and cross-sectional survey of 255 women employees working in sports goods factories. Multiple tools were used to analyze the data, including the reliability analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and bootstrapped mediation techniques. Organizational support practices came out as the key predictor of work-family balance and job satisfaction, whereas both mediators significantly affect employee performance. Organizational Support Practices also indicate a strong direct effect on performance outputs of women employees.

The findings shed light on the significance of the employee-centric and supportive workplace practices in enhancing women employees' performance outputs in labor-intensive manufacturing setups. Through the generation of empirical evidence from a perspective of the manufacturing sector of a developing economy like Pakistan, this study serves to add to the existing literature on organizational support and employee performance and highlights the importance of such supportive organizational environments for improving both employee productivity and well-being.

Keywords: *Organizational Support Practices, Work–Family Balance, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Women Workers, Manufacturing Industry.*

1.INTRODUCTION

The Sialkot sports goods manufacturing sector enjoys a distinction among the other value-added export sectors of Pakistan and contributes significantly to Pakistan's export in tangible terms and image building in global marketplaces. From making official footballs for the FIFA World Cups to producing cricket bats, gloves, sportswear, and protective gear of a diverse nature, this particular industry has helped generate export revenue while creating jobs for the national economy (Asian Development Bank, 2022) (World Bank, 2024). While the top manufacturers in Sialkot have adopted the latest technology in manufacturing, the majority of the industry still depends on manual skills and precision work, which makes employee performance a crucial contributor to overall organizational competitiveness and sustainability in international markets.

According to the Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Sialkot, the participation of women workers in this sector has increased significantly over the past few years, making up a vital part of

the workforce, yet they remain underrepresented because they work mainly in blue-collar jobs that include stitching, assembly, and finishing. Women in Pakistan face multiple barriers that restrict their ability to work in factories because of cultural traditions, their need to move freely, their safety worries, their childcare duties, and their limited access to necessary workplace resources (International Finance Corporation, 2021) (Asian Development Bank, 2022). The existing limitations impede women's ability to join the workforce while restricting their capacity to work efficiently.

The latest organizational research shows that work environments that deliver both physical and mental support to their staff members create a major impact on employee attitudes and job performance. The organizational support measures, which may include safe transportation options, childcare services, flexible work schedules, family benefits, and gender-sensitive policies, hold special value for female employees who need to manage their professional and home duties (Hasan, Waseem, Sarfraz, & Wajid, 2023) (Nanda, 2022). The implementation of such practices leads to better results because employees experience lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction, and increased dedication to their work. An employee with constant pressure of family and social responsibilities cannot put their mind effectively to work and dispose of their duties amicably (Huo & Jiang, 2023) (Cavagnis, Moussa, & Perea, 2023).

International research shows that organizational support and work-family balance have critical effects on women's employment outcomes, yet Pakistan's manufacturing sector lacks empirical evidence about these factors from its export-oriented sports goods industry. Existing research primarily studies service sectors and urban professional environments, which creates a major research gap on how organizational support practices affect women workers in blue-collar manufacturing settings. Organizations need to address this research gap because it helps them create workplace policies that boost productivity and support gender diversity initiatives.

The study aims to investigate how organizational support practices affect women's performance in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing sector by assessing the role of work–family balance and job satisfaction as mediating factors.

Problem Statement

The existing research shows that organizational support practices positively affect employee outcomes, yet researchers have not established how these practices affect women's performance in physically demanding manufacturing jobs.

The research still needs to determine whether organizational support directly boosts worker performance or whether it functions through psychological pathways, which include work–family balance and job satisfaction.

The existing research mostly centers on service-sector and white-collar environments, which creates an absence of research in manufacturing contexts that focus on exports. This research study investigates how organizational support practices affect women employees' performance in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing industry through the mediating effects of work–family balance and job satisfaction.

Research Objectives

To study how organizational support practices affect the work–family balance of women workers.

To study how organizational support practices affect the job satisfaction of women workers.

To study how work–family balance affects employee performance.

To study how job satisfaction affects employee performance.

To study how organizational support practices affect employee performance.

To study if work–family balance acts as a mediator between organizational support practices and employee performance.

To study whether job satisfaction has a mediating role between organizational support practices and employee performance.

Literature Review:

Organizational Support Practices & Women Employees

Organizational support practices refer to employer-initiated policies, benefits, and managerial actions that demonstrate their dedication to employee wellness while helping workers balance their job and personal responsibilities. Contemporary research shows that such practices positively influence employee attitudes and behaviors, which include work performance, especially under conditions of high job demands and limited external help.

The research by Hasan et al. (2023) demonstrates that employees deliver better work output when organizations provide support, as this creates a secure work environment and boosts their drive during stressful times. Employees in developing countries need organizational support as their primary resource, given the absence of formal social support systems available in other countries. Nanda R. (2022) found that women workers in manufacturing industries gain greater advantages from family-oriented workplace policies, which include transport services, childcare assistance, and flexible work hours, because these policies help them overcome obstacles that prevent them from maintaining their jobs.

Research from Pakistan shows that companies that provide childcare services and safe transportation, and create human resource policies that consider gender differences, achieve better employee retention, loyalty towards the organization, and productivity rates among their female workers in industrial environments (International Finance Corporation, 2021) (Asian Development Bank, 2022). The study's results demonstrate that workplace support systems provide significant benefits to women employees who work in manufacturing environments that require physical labor.

Mediating Mechanism of Work-Family Balance

Work-family balance describes how well people handle their job and family duties without creating any conflicts between the two. In a setting of manufacturing sector, women employees may find it difficult to maintain the balance owing to strict work schedules, extended working hours, while traditional gender-based responsibilities await in their domestic environments (Hofäcker & König, 2013).

Empirical evidence shows that organizational support practices help employees to achieve better work–family balance. Riquelme-Segura et al. (2024) demonstrate that family support programs at work lead to better work–family balance, which results in increased job satisfaction and improved employee well-being. The study by Cavagnis et al. (2023) finds that women employees experience less work–family conflict when their workplace provides supportive policies as essential protection against such challenges.

In the particular case of Sialkot's Sports Goods industry, work-family balance is indeed a critical mechanism linking organizational support initiatives to women employees' outputs in the wake of their dual responsibilities under constrained conditions.

Job Satisfaction & Employee Performance

Job satisfaction represents employees' overall evaluation of their job experiences and is widely recognized as a central determinant of performance. Research shows that happy workers demonstrate increased motivation and dedication while working beyond their normal duties, which leads to better performance in both their primary job responsibilities and their overall work environment.

Judge et al. (2017) demonstrate that job satisfaction directly affects both productivity levels and positive workplace conduct. Organizational support practices lead to enhanced job satisfaction for employees in developing countries, according to empirical research that proves this relationship (Hasan, Waseem, Sarfraz, & Wajid, 2023). Work–family balance demonstrates positive effects on job satisfaction through its ability to decrease stress levels and avoid exhaustion (Riquelme-Segura, Barriga-Medina, & Rojas-Méndez, 2024)

The literature demonstrates that organizational support practices provide a sequential process which helps employees achieve work–family balance that results in increased job satisfaction, which simultaneously boosts performance among women workers.

Theoretical Framework:

The study uses Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organizational Support Theory to demonstrate how organizational support influences employee attitudes and work performance.

Social Exchange Theory

In Social Exchange Theory (SET), all interactions in the workplace are mutualistic and reciprocal, as favorable treatment from the organization encourages positive attitudes and behaviors from employees as a result.

Organizations that implement supportive practices demonstrate their commitment to employee well-being, resulting in workers delivering better performance, increased job satisfaction, and work dedication. The present study defines organizational support practices as the resources

that employers provide to their employees while they deliver care through their support. Women employees who perceive higher levels of support will show increased job satisfaction and work engagement, which will lead to better job performance.

Perceived Organizational Support Theory

The theory of perceived organizational support explains that employees form general beliefs about their organization's treatment of their work efforts and their well-being. Employees who have strong perceptions about their work environment will experience stronger emotional ties to their job and higher levels of contentment and work motivation. The organizational support practices, which include managerial understanding, family-sensitive policies, and a respectful work environment, help female manufacturing workers by decreasing their role strain while enhancing their organizational value perception. The two perceived factors will improve work–family balance together with job satisfaction, which will enhance performance results.

Hypothetical Framework:

Based on Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organizational Support theory, this research demonstrates that organizational support practices directly affect women employees' performance while also building work–family balance and job satisfaction.

Organizational support practices represent employer-initiated actions that signal care, value, and recognition. Women workers who see more organizational support will reach better work-life balance results, together with higher job satisfaction levels. The psychological and role-based results will improve employee work performance.

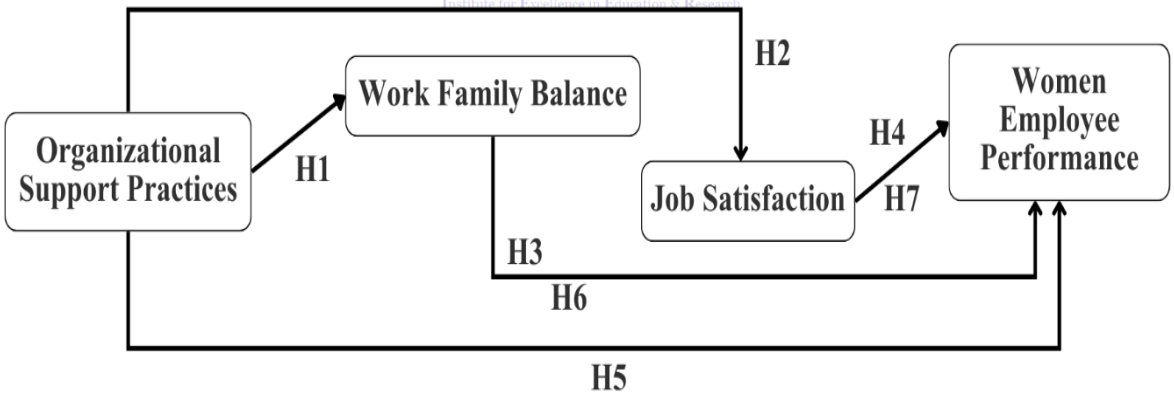
The proposed model, therefore, assumes:

A direct relationship between employee performance and supportive organizational practices.

A direct correlation between organizational support practices and the mediating variables (work-family balance and job satisfaction).

Direct relationships between the mediators and employee performance.

Indirect (mediated) relationships between organizational support practices and employee performance through work–family balance and job satisfaction.



Hypotheses Development

H1: Organizational support practices have a positive and significant effect on women employees' work–family balance.

H2: Organizational support practices have a positive effect on job satisfaction among women employees.

H3: Work–family balance has a positive and significant effect on employee performance among women employees.

H4: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance among women employees.

H5: Organizational support practices have a positive and significant effect on employee performance among women employees.

H6: Work–family balance positively mediates the relationship between organizational support practices and employee performance among women employees.

H7: Job satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between organizational support practices and employee performance among women employees.

Methodology

We used a quantitative cross-sectional study design to investigate how organizational support practices affected work–family balance and job satisfaction, which in turn affected employee performance among women employees in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing sector. We conducted a survey to evaluate the proposed parallel mediation model.

We collected data from 255 women employees using a structured questionnaire administered within sports goods manufacturing units. We selected study participants by using a convenience sampling method. The instrument contained demographic items along with multi-item scales that assessed organizational support practices through 8 items and work–family balance through 5 items, job satisfaction through 5 items, and employee performance through 5 items. All responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The study used multiple regression analysis to assess direct effects and followed with bootstrapping mediation analysis, which produced 95% confidence intervals to evaluate how organizational support practices impacted employee performance through work–family balance and job satisfaction. All constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of .70. The mediation effect became statistically significant when the confidence interval range did not include the zero value.

Results:

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all study variables.

Table 1

Construct	Items	α	Mean	SD
Organizational Support Practices (OSP)	8	.919	2.96	0.93
Work–Family Balance (WFB)	5	.856	3.08	0.92
Job Satisfaction (JS)	5	.870	3.03	0.94
Employee Performance (EP)	5	.901	3.01	0.99

All constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency (α > .85), indicating high reliability. Mean values suggest moderate levels of perceived support and job-related outcomes among respondents.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 reports Pearson correlation coefficients among study variables.

Table 2 - Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
OSP	2.96	0.93	—			
WFB	**3.08**	**0.92**	**.605*** **	—		
JS	3.03	0.94	.591***	.365***	—	
EP	**3.01**	**0.99**	**.642*** **	**.556*** **	**.549*** **	—

***p < .001

All correlations are positive and statistically significant. The strongest relationship was

observed between organizational support practices and employee performance (r = .642), indicating a substantial association.

Regression Analysis

Organizational Support Predicting Mediators

Table 3 - Regression Results: Organizational Support → Mediators

Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2
WFB	OSP	0.608	0.050	.614	12.22	< .001	.389
JS	OSP	0.607	0.052	.597	11.56	< .001	.356

Organizational support practices significantly predicted work–family balance and job satisfaction, explaining 38.9% and 35.6% of their variance, respectively. Thus, H1 and H2 were supported.

Mediators Predicting Employee Performance

Table 4 - Regression Results: Mediators → Employee Performance

Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2
EP	WFB	0.556	0.061	.556	9.12	< .001	.309
EP	JS	0.549	0.059	.549	9.30	< .001	.302

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Both work–family balance and job satisfaction significantly predicted employee performance. H3 and H4 were supported.

Direct Effect of Organizational Support on Performance

Table 5 - Regression Results: Organizational Support → Employee Performance

Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2
EP	OSP	0.694	0.052	.650	13.25	< .001	.419

Organizational support practices had a strong positive effect on employee performance, explaining 41.9% of the variance. H5 was supported.

Full Model (IV + Mediators)

Table 6 - Multiple Regression: OSP, WFB, JS → Employee Performance

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
OSP	0.362	0.071	.339	5.11	< .001
WFB	0.278	0.062	.258	4.48	< .001
JS	0.268	0.059	.255	4.55	< .001

Model Fit: $R^2 = .521$, $F(3, 251) = 90.71$, $p < .001$
The model explained 52.1% of the variance in employee performance. Organizational support remained significant but reduced in magnitude (β decreased from .650 to .339), indicating partial mediation.

Mediation Analysis

Bootstrapping (95% confidence intervals) was used to examine indirect effects.

Table 7-Bootstrapped Indirect Effects

Indirect Path	Effect	LLCI	ULCI	Result
OSP → WFB → EP	0.169	0.097	0.248	Supported
OSP → JS → EP	0.162	0.091	0.242	Supported

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Since confidence intervals do not include zero, both mediation effects are significant.
Because the direct effect of organizational support on performance remained significant in the full model, work–family balance and job satisfaction function as partial mediators.

Discussion:

The research study investigated how organizational support practices affect women employees' performance in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing industry through both direct and indirect pathways. The results from the study support the parallel mediation in line with Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organizational Support.
The results demonstrate that organizational support practices serve as a primary factor that determines both work–family balance and job satisfaction outcomes. When women employees perceive managerial care and workplace respect, and supportive organizational policies, they achieve better work and family role balance and develop positive job attitudes, according to the study results. Our findings support Social Exchange Theory, which states that organizations that treat employees well will receive positive employee reactions. Organizational support functions as an essential resource that helps women in manufacturing environments who handle dual role responsibilities to achieve both mental and role-based stability.
It was also observed that both work–family balance and job satisfaction serve as important predictors for employee performance, respectively. Employees who reported better role balance and higher job satisfaction also demonstrated stronger task performance. The evidence demonstrates that performance outcomes depend on both structural elements and employees' personal experiences regarding their balance and satisfaction. The results hold particular significance for laborious work settings because those environments depend

on workers who maintain their productivity and concentration throughout their entire workday.

Whereas, a strong direct effect of organizational support practices on employee performance was noted. It remained a significant predictor, indicating partial mediation even after accounting for work-family balance and job satisfaction. This indicates that organizational support has a direct impact on performance through behavioral reciprocation and an indirect impact through psychological mechanisms. The explanatory power of the full model ($R^2 = 0.521$) further indicates that organizational support and the two mediators together account for a substantial proportion of variance in performance.

The research results demonstrate how organizational support leads to better performance output through its mediation relationship with work–family balance and job satisfaction. The research demonstrated that organizations that support their employees get better work results because they boost employee satisfaction and decrease employees' work-related stress in their personal lives.

The research shows that supportive workplace practices hold strategic value in export-oriented manufacturing sectors. The organizational support system provides women employees with both psychological and functional resources, which help them achieve better performance results. The study shows direct and indirect pathways to prove its findings, which extend existing research into blue-collar manufacturing environments while showing empirical results from a developing economy setting.

Conclusion:

The research examined how organizational support practices affected the performance of women employees in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing sector while studying how work–family balance and job satisfaction functioned as mediators between these two factors. The research results show that organizational support practices directly impact employee performance while also creating paths through which their effects reach employees. Organizational support leads to better work–family balance and job satisfaction, both of which serve as independent factors that enhance performance results.

The study shows that work–family balance and job satisfaction serve as partial mediators because supportive workplace practices lead to better performance not only through reciprocity of employees but also through psychological and role-based mechanisms. The complete model explains a major portion of employee performance variation while demonstrating that organizational support functions as the main factor for labor-intensive manufacturing environments.

The study provides empirical evidence from a developing country's export-oriented manufacturing sector to show how organizational support affects employee performance based on existing research. The study shows how supportive work environments need to be established because they benefit women workers who have to manage their work and home duties. The research demonstrates that organizations can use their support practices as a strategic resource to enhance both employee well-being and performance results.

Limitations & Future Directions:

The research study presents its findings as valid evidence but requires additional research because it uses a cross-sectional design, which restricts causal relationship testing between the studied variables. The results support the proposed relationships between the variables, but longitudinal or time-lagged designs would provide stronger evidence for determining the directionality of effects. Moreover, the use of self-reported measures to collect data might have introduced common method bias and social desirability bias. The future research should use supervisor-rated performance and objective productivity indicators to improve measurement accuracy.

The research investigated only women who worked in Sialkot's sports goods manufacturing industry. The specific context offers important insights for the industry under study, yet the findings lack applicability to other sectors and geographical areas and male worker groups. Future studies should test the same models in various manufacturing industries, while researchers should compare the results between male and female participants to study their different mediation methods.

The model successfully described most employee performance variations; however, it failed to investigate important individual and organizational factors. Future research may investigate work engagement and organizational commitment as mediators while examining marital

status and number of dependents and tenure as moderating factors to determine their impact on the relationship boundaries.

The future research may use longitudinal designs and multi-source data and larger industry samples to create stronger evidence about how organizational support practices affect employee performance across various organizational environments.

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