**COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

# Mediating Effects of Coping Strategies on the Relationship between Organizational Support and Work-Family Conflict

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the mediating effects of coping strategies on the relationships between organizational support (supervisor and coworker support) and work-family conflict. A questionnaire survey approach was conducted with the purposive sampling. This study was contributed to 342 married employees from different organizations in the Luangprabang province, Laos. The gathered data was analyzed by employing the Structural Equation Modeling using SPSS Amos 21.0 software. The findings showed that organizational support (supervisor support and coworker support) was not significantly related to work-family conflict. Problem-focused coping was not significantly related to work-family conflict, whereas emotion-focused coping was significantly related to work-family conflict. This is one of the first studies to provide empirical evidence in terms of the mediating effects regarding coping strategies among married employees in Laos. The organizations should consider the coping strategies and the support from supervisors and colleagues in formulating strategies to minimize work-family conflict. Additionally, problem-focused coping is a more meaningful predictor of work-family conflict than emotion-focused coping. Providing the training of the comprehensive coping program to the employees could help them to be sensitive in coping work-family conflict. This study could serve as an important guideline to develop planning strategies in managing work and family role and promoting work-life balance among the employees.

*Keywords*: Work-family conflict; organizational support; problem-focused coping; emotion-focused coping

## INTRODUCTION

A large body of research studies have been done in terms of work-family conflict (WFC) (Lapierre & Allen, 2012). However, even today, many employees are still facing the challenging task of managing work roles as well as family roles based on WFC (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). Consequently, the management of WFC has become increasingly important (Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009). Nevertheless, past studies were mostly carried out in Western countries having similar cultural and family structures (Allen, Herst, Bruck, &

Sutton, 2000; Lu, 2007; Powell et al., 2009; Spector et al., 2004). Casper, Allen, and Poelmans (2014) confirmed that WFC study was lacking outside the United States, although WFC studies had also been increasingly conducted in Asia Pacific countries (Hassan, Dollard, & Winefield, 2010; Sabil & Marican, 2011; Sim & Bujang, 2012), for instance, in Malaysia (Yi Lian & Lian Tam, 2014), in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Spector et al., 2004; Lu et al., 2010), in Bangladesh (Talukder & Vickers, 2014), and other countries. However, this type of study is very limited in Laos.

In Laos, weaknesses of organizational support might lead to WFC of employees. It was found that individualist employees had a positive relation to WFC within organizations (Keoboualapheth, Sabil, & Kock Wah, 2017). It was due to low support from others in which individuals' concentration only remain on self-enhancement and self-sufficiency which led to increased WFC and decreased job satisfaction (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2004). Furthermore, as poverty rate is above 80%, the labor market of Laos is plagued with problems, e.g., low productivity, understaffing, and workers performing multiple roles that lead to work overload (Government of the Lao

PDR and the United Nations, 2013). Furthermore, Frone, Yardley and Markel (1997) indicated that the work overload leads to WFC. In addition, low income has also resulted in low job satisfaction, low commitment, absenteeism problems, job burnout, and low turnover among some workers (Luangprabang Report, 2011; World Bank, 2012). Some of them had to take up more than one job to supplement family income, and putting in more time for work and hence having less time for family (Luangprabang Report, 2011). Thus, devoting more time to work led to imbalances in work-family lives, resulting in WFC as specified clearly in Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) study for grooming attention, time, involvement, or commitment was spent for work compared to family (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

According to Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) opinion, WFC can well be defined as a system based on inter role conflict, in which the pressure role earned from the work, in addition to family domains, can remain reciprocally mismatched and inappropriate to some extent. It occurred when one's family role expectations can be perceived to be unable to get along with the expectations of one's job or vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Diedrick, & Rosenthal, 1964). Three dimensions of conflict that comprise of time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict can be found to be related to WFC as elaborated by (Greenhaus & Beutell's, 1985) work. In addition, Hamid and Mohd Amin (2014) reported that WFC can be associated

with negative consequences such as absenteeism, turnover intention, burnout, stress, satisfaction and employees' well-being in both work and family, and also organizational commitment.

Perceived strong relationship between organizational support and individual coping strategies had significantly reduced WFC and this needs further investigation (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). These effects were due to their important association with reducing stress, depression, and increasing satisfaction and well-being (Lyrakos, 2012; Thorsteinsson et al., 2013). Additionally, two types of coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping and emotion-focused-coping showed different results on WFC (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). As expected, inadequate studies are conducted regarding the mediating effects on the relationship of organizational support with that of WFC. For that reason, present research had proposed to test (1) the relationships between organizational support and WFC, (2) the relationships between coping strategies and WFC, and (3) the mediating effects of coping strategies on the relationships between organizational support and WFC among married employees in Laos.

**Organizational Support and WFC**

In Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades's (2002) opinion that the organizational support can well be specified to the level or degree in which workforces identify that the organizations give importance to their work and pay attention to their welfare and good fortune. This organizational support can be based on supervisor support and coworker support (Frone et al., 1997; Stepanova, Ribas, & Maria, 2013) along with emotional as well as instrumental support as discussed by (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams's 1995) study. Emotional support refers to the supervisor and colleagues' perception of being able to share work-family issues and showing understanding in employee's well-being; while instrumental support refers to the supervisor and colleagues' ability to attend to employees' work-family needs on a daily basis and adapting working schedule accordingly (Stepanova et al., 2013). Organizational support has been recognized as an independent predictor for WFC reducing role stressors, and controlling work role as well as family role involvement (Frone et al., 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Past studies showed that organizational support was connected with lower levels of WFC (Hamid & Mohd Amin, 2014; Michel et al., 2011, 2010; Powell et al., 2009; Stepanova et al., 2013; Wadsworth & Owens, 2007) considerably. For instance, Hamid and Mohd Amin (2014) reported that the both supervisor support as well as coworker support can be interrelated with WFC negatively. However, scholars had also suggested that organizational support was needed for further investigation on WFC in different cultures (King et al., 1995; Frone et al., 1997; Wadsworth, & Owens 2007; Michel et al., 2010; Michel et al., 2011), especially from non-Western countries (Brough et al., 2014). Summarizing the above studies, the organizational support has been

allied with compact WFC. Therefore, present research has proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between organizational support and WFC.

**Coping Strategies and WFC**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have vividly described that coping strategies are related to the individual's perpetual changing of mental as well as behavioral efforts with the idea to cope with explicit peripheral or internal needs. Coping strategies can be subdivided into two aspects: problem-focused coping is defined as behavioral coping which includes helping to seek and to take direct action in a challenging situation; while emotion-focused coping is defined as a cognitive process which consist of positive thinking and emotional expression, aiming to attenuate stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Comparing to two types of coping strategies, men appeared to practice more than women in terms of problem-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) strategies as working females experience more work stress than men in Malaysia (Yi Lian & Lian Tam, 2014). Research on coping strategies are widely recognized to assist in buffering individuals' stressors, control role stressors, reducing pressure, and manage work-family interference by decreasing WFC in order to redress work-life balance in organizational subcultures (Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Tement, 2013; Rantanen,

Mauno, Kinnunen, & Rantanen, 2011). In addition, problem-focused coping is recognized to be more helpful as compared to the emotion-focused coping in promoting working parents' well-being (Shinn, Wong, Simko, & Ortiz-Torres, 1989).

However, past studies found inconsistent results. Mauno and Rantanen (2013) reported emotion-focused coping was interrelated with higher levels of WFC and is harmful in terms of job satisfaction as well as family satisfaction as discussed by (Rantanen et al's., 2011) study. In contrast, Parr (2012) found that more emotion-focused coping strengthened the affiliation of WFC with that of higher satisfaction. Moreover, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) study reported that men practice more problem-focused coping as compared to women. In contrast, Torkelson and Muhonen (2008) found that men did not practice problem-focused individualistic coping strategies more often than women. Hence, to date, studies on effective problem-focused and emotion-focused coping yielded inconsistent results (Yi Lian & Lian Tam, 2014). Therefore, this study proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between problem-focused coping and WFC

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between emotion-focused coping and WFC

**Organizational Support and WFC: The Mediating Effect of Coping Strategies**

Organizational support operates primarily as coping assistance (Thoits, 1991), as it describes efforts to seek social supports (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). And it is argued here that the relationship of organizational support with WFC can be mediated by coping strategies. As mentioned above, both organizational support and coping strategies leads to low levels of WFC. Mauno and Rantanen (2013) predicted that high-high combination of contextual and dispositional coping resources produced the most positive outcomes in terms of lower WFC. Hence, this study seeks to demonstrate that coping strategies might mediate organizational support and in turn resulted in the most positive outcomes on low WFC. In this case, organizational support includes both instrumental and emotional support from supervisor and coworker (Frone et al., 1997), while coping strategies consist of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping as pointed out by (Lazarus & Folkman's, 1984) study. In other words, the supervisor and colleague could have the ability to attend to employees' work-family needs, and willingness to talk over work-family issues, advice and understandemployees (Adams et al., 1996; Stepanova et al., 2013). On the other hand, employees could have the ability to manage with challenging situations, controlling the stress, demands, and solving the problem and/or with positive thinking and emotional expression, to tolerate stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The consequence of Mauno and Rantanen's (2013) study found that the combination of contextual (coworker, managerial support,

spousal support, sense of control) and dispositional coping resources showed the most positive relation with low WFC among Finnish health care and service employees. However, there are limited studies of the mediating effect of coping strategies on the correlation of organizational support with that of WFC. Therefore, present research has proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4: Problem-focused coping mediates the relationship between organizational support and WFC

Hypothesis 5: Emotion-focused coping mediates the relationship between organizational support and WFC

## METHODOLOGY

### Procedures and Participants

A questionnaire survey approach was conducted with the purposive sampling in this study. Participants were involved in different organizations in Luangprabang province, Laos. Past studies suggested that the study of work life balance should be conducted outside Western coutries with organizational gender of administrative staff, managerial staff from different geographical areas, work context, and job positions (Carlson et al., 2006; Ghislieri, Martini, Gatti, & Colombo, 2011; Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Tement, 2013) as well as married couples with children who have different income and experiences (Baltes, Zhdanova, & Clark, 2011; Brough et al., 2014). However, past studies focused on certain groups of women (Sabil & Marican, 2011). Likewise, further study needed focusing on certain groups of married employees with employees in

Asian countries (Baltes et al., 2011; Brough et al., 2014). Therefore, this study was chosen to be conducted with married employees in public organizations in Lao PDR. According to a table for determining minimum returned sample size for a given population size for categorical data, the population of 2,000 to 4,000 was calculated at a minimum of 323 and a maximum of 351 (Kotrlik & Higgins, 2001). Meanwhile, using SEM, the sample size should be more than 200 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). 3,566 people (1,858 males and 1,708 females) from different organizations in Luangprabang province Laos were selected as research population in this study.

Ethically, after approval letters were obtained, the questionnaire including the introductions and envelopes of return were hand-delivered by the researcher to the secretary sections of various organizations in Luangprabang province, Laos. The questionnaires were sent to target participants and returned after a week to secretary staffs' counters of the organizations. Non-reply after the follow up period was viewed as indicative of a desire not to participate in this study.

This study was conducted with 500 questionnaires, 158 questionnaires were left out due to having very little information and problematical outliers. Hence the usable response rate of 342 respondents and a response rate of 57 % was contributed. Therefore, the participants of the study were 342 married employees, 225 men (response rate 65.8%), and 117 women (response rate 34.2%). Table 1 presents the participants' profile from the various organizations and the number of frequency and percentage is presented.

**Research instruments**

The English language questionnaires were translated into Lao using the procedure of forward and backward translation (Brislin, 1970). The forward and backward translations were performed by two Lao bilingual professional academics independently. The items of questionnaire are scored on a four-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly Agree). The four Likert scale is chosen to avoid neutral having a neutral and ambivalent midpoint (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). This midpoint may not represent the opinion of neither agree nor disagree as mentioned by Kulas, Stachowski, & Haynes (2008) and Tsang (2012). Asún, Rdz-Navarro, and Alvarado (2015) suggested that developing a four-point Likert rating scales using the item factor analysis procedures are equivalent and accurate parameter estimates. The questionnaire items were adopted as follows:

WFC can be measured through an instrument developed by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000). This 9-item questionnaire was scored on a four-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate more WFC. Cronbach alpha was 0.80 for the current study.

Organizational support refers to supervisor and coworker support in terms of instrumental support and emotional support. Similarly, support from supervisor

**Table 1: Respondents' Profile**

| Respondents' profile | Sub-Profile | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 225 | 65.8 |
| | Female | 117 | 34.2 |
| Age | 20 to 30 years old | 138 | 40.4 |
| | 31 to 40 years old | 140 | 40.9 |
| | 41 to 50 years old | 36 | 10.5 |
| | 51 to 60 years old | 25 | 7.3 |
| | Over 61 years old | 3 | 0.9 |
| Working experience | Under 10 years of working experience | 243 | 71.1 |
| | 11 to 20 years of working experience | 55 | 16.1 |
| | 21 to 30 years of working experience | 28 | 8.2 |
| | Over 31 years of working experience | 16 | 4.7 |
| Working experience | No children | 150 | 43.9 |
| | 1 to 6 children | 192 | 56.1 |
| Job position | General staff | 183 | 53.5 |
| | Deputy Head of Unit | 7 | 2.0 |
| | Head of Unit | 19 | 5.6 |
| | Deputy Head of Division | 21 | 6.1 |
| | Head of Division | 90 | 26.3 |
| | Deputy Director | 11 | 3.2 |
| | Director | 11 | 3.2 |
| Monthly income | Lower than 100USD per month | 8 | 2.3 |
| | 101-200USD per month | 148 | 43.3 |
| | 201-300USD per month | 128 | 37.4 |
| | 301-400USD per month | 47 | 13.7 |
| | 401-500USD per month | 4 | 1.2 |
| | Higher than 501USD per month | 7 | 2.0 |

and coworkers were measured by means of ten items developed by Dikkers et al. (2007) and eight items were adapted from Thomas and Ganster's (1995) study. Nine items of supervisor support and eight items of coworker support

were recorded on a four-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate more perceived being received from supervisor and coworker support. Cronbach alpha for supervisor support was 0.85 and coworker support was 0.79 respectively for this study.

Problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping were measured by using six pieces as developed by (Guppy et al. 2004) and eight items were adapted from (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub's 1989) study. The items were recorded on a four-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate more problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. In the present research, Cronbach alpha for problem-focused was 0.83 and emotion-focused was 0.76 respectively.

**Analytical Strategy**

This study performed three stages for analytical strategy. In the first stage, the collected data were checked for normality and correction purposes by using SPSS software version 20. It was used for analysis in raw and processed data having statistical significance set at 0.05. In the second stage, the measurement model was performed by using the structural equation modelling (SEM) with AMOS version 21. In this model, the confirmatory factor analysis was to validate single construct and then all constructs were measured in a model (Hair et al., 2010). These validations were to assess whether the measurement model adequately fits the sample data. In the fitness index, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of fit (GFI), and Normal fit index (NFI) range from 0 to 1,

with those above 0.90 suggesting perfect fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) below 0.08 and Chi Square/Degree of Freedom (Chisq/DF) below 3.0 represents a perfect fit (Hair et al., 2010). All parameters for the model were estimated using an AMOS' maximum likelihood algorithm.

In the final stage, a structural model was built when the measurement model was fit. The structural model was (1) to test the relationship between organizational support (supervisor support and coworker support) and WFC, (2) the relationship between coping strategies (problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping) and WFC, and (3) the relationship between organizational support and WFC can be mediated within coping strategies (problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping). For testing mediating effect, it was conducted with the four-step process recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). This method is the most common approach which had been used to test mediation and it is useful primarily in classifying the type of the mediation (MacKinnon & Fairchild, 2009; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen., 2010). The SEM approach is superior to Baron and Kenny's because it estimates everything simultaneously (Zhao et al., 2010).

The four-step process includes, first, the relationship between the initial independent variable and dependent variable (c) should be significant. Second, the relationship between the initial independent variable and the mediator (a) should be significant. Third, the relationship between the initial mediator and the

dependent variable (b) in the presence of the independent variable should be significant. Finally, the initial independent variable must predict the dependent variable (c') in the presence of the mediator. This method compares with the β coefficient (c') and the β coefficient (c). If the β coefficient (c') is closer to zero than the β coefficient (c), and non-significant, it indicates complete mediation in the model; however, if the β coefficient (c') is still significant, it indicates partial mediation in the model. In contrast, if the β coefficient (c') is not closer to zero than the β coefficient (c), it indicates inconsistent mediation in the model. This method obtained 5,000 bootstrapping samples and a 95% confidence interval. Standardized and significant are reported, to show if the each step of the mediation test is met and the proposed media-

tor mediates the proposed relationship or not. The Critical Ratios (CR) are larger than 1.96 in absolute value with significant at the 0.05 level.

## RESULTS

### Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

A test of the measurement model yielded satisfactory fit to the data: with RMSEA= 0.042, it has met the recommended cutoff point of less than 0.08; GFI= 0.972, CFI= 0.968, and NFI= 0.920, they have met the recommended cutoff point of more than 0.9; and Chisq/df= 1.614, it has also met the recommended cutoff point of less than 3.0. All factor loadings of the indicators of the latent variables were significant (p< 0.001), indicating that all these talent
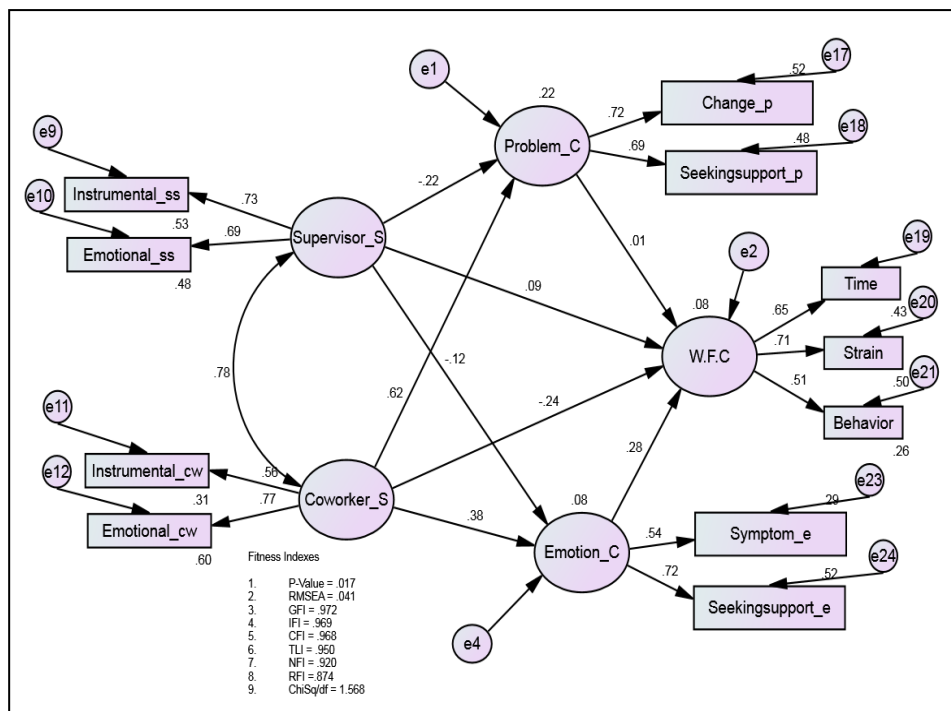


**Figure 1: Formative Structural Model**

constructs were well represented by their indicators. Thus, the structural model was built (see Figure 1). The mediating model fitted to the data perfectly: with RMSEA= 0.041, GFI= 0.972, CFI= 0.968, NFI= 0.920, and Chisq/df= 1.568.

## Direct Effect of Organizational Support on WFC

To examine Hypotheses 1, the result showed that supervisor support was not significantly related to WFC, $\beta$= 0.067, p= 0.723 and coworker support was not significantly related to WFC, $\beta$= -0.136, p= 0.479. In other words, organizational support was not significantly related to WFC. It means that perceived high instrumental and emotional support from supervisor support and coworker support would decrease WFC. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported by this finding of this study.

To examine Hypotheses 2, and Hypotheses 3, the results showed that problem-focused coping was not significantly related to WFC ($\beta$= 0.011, p= 0.920, whereas emotion-focused coping was significantly related to WFC, $\beta$= 0.289, p= 0.007). It means that coping with challenging situations, controlling the stress, demands, and solving the problem would not be significantly related to WFC; whereas coping with emotional expression would be significantly related to WFC. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was not supported by this finding, but Hypothesis 3 was supported by this finding.

## Mediating Effect of Problem-Focused Coping

To examine Hypothesis 4, the four-step process for testing the mediating effect was confirmed that problem-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between organizational support and WFC. First, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= 0.067, p= 0.723. Second, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on problem-focused coping, $\beta$= -0.276, p= 0.232. Third, problem-focused coping did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= 0.011, p= 0.920. Finally, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= 0.078, p= 0.704. In other words, the $\beta$ coefficient (c') between supervisor support and WFC was non-significant, $\beta$= 0.289, and it was not closer to zero than the $\beta$ coefficient (c) between supervisor support and WFC, $\beta$= 0.067. Therefore, problem-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between supervisor support and WFC.

Alongside with supervisor support, coworker support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= -0.136, p= 0.479 as the first step. Second, coworker support did not have a significant effect on emotion-focused coping, $\beta$= 0.382, p= 0.079. Third, emotion-focused coping had a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= 0.289, p= 0.007. Finally, coworker support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta$= -0.220, p= 0.252. In other words, the $\beta$ coefficient (c') between coworker support and WFC was non-significant, $\beta$= -0.220, and it was not closer to zero than the $\beta$ coefficient (c) between coworker support and WFC, $\beta$= -0.136. Therefore, emotion-focused cop-

ing does not mediate the relationship between coworker support and WFC.

In short, problem-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between organizational support (supervisor support and coworker support) and WFC. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

## Mediating Effect of Emotion-Focused Coping

To examine Hypothesis 5, the results showed that emotion-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between organizational support and WFC. First, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= 0.067$, p= 0.723. Second, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on emotion-focused coping, $\beta= -0.129$, p= 0.525. Third, emotion-focused coping had a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= 0.289$, p= 0.007. Finally, supervisor support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= 0.082$, p= 0.653. In other words, the $\beta$ coefficient (c') between supervisor support and WFC was non-significant, $\beta= 0.082$, and it was not closer to zero than the $\beta$ coefficient (c) between supervisor support and WFC, $\beta= 0.067$. Therefore, emotion-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between supervisor support and WFC.

On the other hand, coworker support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= -0.136$, p= 0.479 as the first step. Second, coworker support had a significant effect on emotion-focused coping, $\beta= 0.382$, p= 0.079. Third, Emotion-focused coping did have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= 0.289$, p= 0.007. Finally,

coworker support did not have a significant effect on WFC, $\beta= -0.220$, p= 0.252. In other words, the $\beta$ coefficient (c') between coworker support and WFC was non-significant, $\beta= -0.220$, and it was not closer to zero than the $\beta$ coefficient (c) between coworker support and WFC, $\beta= -0.136$. Therefore, emotion-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between coworker support and WFC.

In short, emotion-focused coping does not mediate the relationship between organizational support (supervisor support and coworker support) and WFC. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. Summarizing the above results, coping strategies does not mediate the relationship between organizational support and WFC among married employees in Luangprabang province, Laos.

## DISCUSSIONS

The present study makes an important contribution to the work-life balance literature. As studies of a similar nature are limited in Laos; particularly the mediating effects of coping strategies on the relationship between organizational support and WFC. Hence, present research is the first study to provide empirical evidence of mediated coping strategies as well as organizational support on WFC among married employees in Laos.

The first hypothesis was not supported with organizational support such as supervisor support and coworker support was not significantly related to WFC. These findings stated that perceived higher levels of emotional and instru-

mental support from supervisor and coworker which was not significantly related to WFC. The married employees in Laos had received positive emotion from their supervisor and colleagues who were able to talk over work-family issues, understand employees and provide advising. At the same time, they had received the instrumental assistance, which is their supervisor and colleagues' ability to attend to their work-family needs on a daily basis and adapt the schedule accordingly (Stepanova et al., 2013). Thus, this study was not supported in the conceptual framework recommended by Adam et al. (1996) suggesting that perceived higher levels of emotional and instrumental support which were linked with low levels of WFC are significantly associated with job and life satisfactions. perceived support was directly related to reduce role pressures, thereby producing less time demands, less strain, and more flexible expectations for in-role behavior as mentioned by (Greenhaus & Beutell's, 1985) idea.

The results of this study were not in line with the results of past researches in Eastern countries and Western countries. For instance, the supervisor and coworker support were associated and somehow played a role in reducing levels of WFC which was significantly associated with work overload, work time commitment, and work distress as discussed in (Frone et al.'s, 1997) work. They were related to WFC negatively which significantly associates with work-family balance (Powell et al., 2009; Michel et al., 2010; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013) in the Western countries. In Eastern countries, Lu

(2007) found that organizational support can reduce WFC and improve psychological and physical well-being of working women in Taiwan, China. Supervisor support and coworker support was negatively related to WFC among Malaysian nurses (Hamid & Mohd Amin, 2014; Rashid, 2016). Thus, the findings of the present study appeared to be inconsistent with past studies in Western or Asian countries.

The second hypothesis was not supported, with problem-focused coping not significantly related to WFC. The third hypothesis was supported, with emotion-focused coping significantly related to WFC. These outcomes were not supported by Shinn et al. (1989) and Mauno and Rantanen (2013) which is problem-focused coping was found to be positively associated with lower WFC, while emotion-focused coping was found to be positively allied with higher WFC. For instance, problem-focused coping was positively related to low WFC (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013) and low work interfering family conflict (Baltes et al, 2011). It was also found to be associated with positive well-being of working parents (Shinn et al., 1989), higher satisfaction with family life despite high family to work conflict than emotion-focused coping (Rantanen et al., 2011). Finally, these results were not supported by Parr's (2012) study in which it was found that more emotion-focused coping was strengthened to lower conflict and increase satisfaction while higher levels of problem-focused coping were related to fewer depressive symptoms in German adolescents and adults.

The fourth hypothesis was not supported, with problem-focused coping found not to be mediated in terms of the association of supervisor support, coworker support, and with that of WFC. The final hypothesis was also not supported, with emotion-focused coping found to have inconsistent mediation in the relationship between supervisor support, coworker support and WFC. In other words, mediated coping strategies were not found to influence WFC. One possible explanation was that even organizational support had a significant relation to coping strategies, while problem-focused coping had no significant relation to WFC and emotion-focused coping had a significant relation to WFC. However, the direct effect of organizational support had no significant relation to WFC which is indicated as no mediation. The other reason was that the indirect effect of organizational support had no significant relation to WFC in the presence of the mediator such as coping strategies. In comparison, its beta coefficient was not closer to zero than the beta coefficient of the direct effect of organizational support and WFC (Baron & Kenny, 1986). These outcomes did not support the findings of (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013) in which a combination of high contextual (coworker, managerial support) and dispositional coping resources (coping strategies) showed the most positive relation to low WFC. However, these different results supported to Kwok, Cheng, and Wong (2014) study, they had in fact argued that the results attained in Western countries may not be generalized to workers in other Asian countries, and other regions

of the world (Spector et al., 2004). Hence, to date, studies on effective problem-focused and emotion-focused yielded inconsistent outcomes (Yi Lian & Lian Tam, 2014).

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has important implications for employees and organizations. WFC were decreased through high levels of organizational support among the married employees. Under these circumstances, the supervisors and coworkers had provided their instrumental and emotional assistance, such they had attended to employees' work-family needs, and had been willing to talk over WFC, advice and understand the situation of the employees (Adams et al., 1996; Stepanova et al., 2013). Therefore, the employees should encourage both emotional assistance and instrumental assistance amongst their subordinates. The organizations should consider organizational support in formulating strategies to decrease WFC of the employees. This support could lead to decrease WFC of the employees in the organizations.

The study found that emotion-focused coping had a directly significant relation to WFC among married employees. This was due to the employees who had high levels of WFC as a result of perceiving a higher level of emotion-focused coping. The organizations should train the employees to understand about the role of emotion-focused coping on WFC.

Unfortunately, the mediating effects of coping strategies could not indeed medi-

ate the relationship between organizational support and WFC for married employees in Laos. In this case, two types of coping strategies, including problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping could be used together. Hence, the mediating effects of coping strategies could be encouraged to the work-life balance of married employees.

This study recommended, first, the present study to utilize a cross-sectional design, to collect data at a single time point with different public organizations in Luangprabang province, Laos. The results could not be generated overall to other organizations in the country and other private sections. Using a mixed method approach in future research would rectify this limitation. Second, the mediating role of coping strategies on the relationship of organizational support with WFC needs more comprehensive understanding and it could take place in Eastern countries.

## CONCLUSION

This study to lays the groundwork for future studies and demonstrates the work-life balance better for employees in organizations. The findings showed that the perceived high level of emotional and instrumental support from organizational is of non-significant relation to WFC. Emotion-focused coping influenced WFC, but problem-focused coping did not influence WFC. The results suggested that the employee who has experience using emotion-focused coping would have increased WFC, whereas who has experience using problem-

focused coping would not have increased WFC. These types of copings should be separately used as different strategies to overcome WFC. Thus, providing the training of the comprehensive coping program to the employees could help them to be sensitive in coping with WFC. Ultimately, mediated coping strategies and organizational support did not play an important role in relating to lower WFC. Therefore, organizations should consider the findings of this study in formulating strategies to avoid WFC and to achieve the work-life balance of employees. Further research must be undertaken to test the robustness of the findings in non-Western context.

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