

How Islamic work-life balance mediates work-family conflict and enhances employee performance in religious-based workplaces

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ABSTRACT

Work-family conflict often makes employees feel stressed and tired, which can reduce their performance at work. However, there is still a lack of studies on how Islamic work-life balance can help employees handle this problem, especially in hospitals where religious values are very important. In fact, most existing research focuses on general work-life balance, with very few studies exploring it from an Islamic perspective. This study aims to examine whether Islamic work-life balance (IWB) can mediate the negative effect of work-family conflict (WFC) on employee performance (EP). Data were collected from Islamic hospital staff and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that WFC has a strong negative effect on EP, while IWB has a positive effect on EP and can also weaken the negative effect of WFC on EP. This means that when employees have a better Islamic work-life balance, they can manage work and family demands more calmly and still perform well. The more employees feel supported by Islamic work-life balance, the more they can focus on their work and achieve higher performance, even when facing strong work-family conflicts. These findings show that IWB is not only important for personal well-being but also helps improve overall organizational outcomes in religious-based workplaces.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict; Islamic Work-Life Balance; Employee Performance; Religious; Human Management; Healthcare

JEL Code:

J24, M12, M54, Z12, O15

DOI:

10.31106/jema.v22i1.23753

Article History:

Received 2025-01-09

Reviewed 2025-03-05

Revised 2025-03-27

Accepted 2025-04-04

Licensed:

CC-BY

How to Cite:

Wati, I. R., Fatimah, A., Almadana, A. V., & Winata, L. (2025). How Islamic work-life balance mediates work-family conflict and enhances employee performance in religious-based workplaces. *JEMA: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Akuntansi dan Manajemen*, 22(1), 31-49. doi: 10.31106/jema.v22i1.23753

Introduction

Work-family conflict (WFC) is a significant area of study in organizational behavior and psychology, reflecting the challenges individuals face when the demands of work and family roles are incompatible. This conflict can manifest in various forms, including time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts, each contributing to stress and dissatisfaction in both personal and professional domains (Zulkarnain et al., 2015). As the boundaries between work and family life become increasingly blurred, particularly in the context of remote work and flexible schedules, understanding the implications of WFC is critical for both employees and organizations.

Moreover, many studies show that work-family conflict can seriously hurt employee performance because it makes employees feel stressed and unable to focus on their work. Urooj et al. (2023) found that stress from work-family conflict reduces productivity, showing that organizations need to handle this problem to keep employees happy and engaged. In the same way, Fransiska and Nasution (2023) explained that when family duties disturb work or work disturbs family time, employees find it hard to concentrate, which lowers their performance. Work-family conflict is particularly challenging for women, who often bear the brunt of familial responsibilities, leading to increased anxiety and emotional exhaustion (Zhang et al., 2020). This gendered aspect of WFC underscores the need for organizations to implement supportive policies that acknowledge and address the unique challenges faced by employees. Soomro et al. (2018) also agreed that a good work-life balance can improve employee performance, so companies should pay attention to solving work-family conflict to get better results from their employees.

Work-family conflict can have even worse effects when work and family demands clash strongly. For example, high family conflict often leads to lower work performance, especially for women. This is because women usually have to take care of both work and family, which causes more stress and lower performance (Mufidah et al., 2024). Widyarini and Muafi (2021) also said that work-family conflict reduces employee performance in general. This means that companies must help employees by giving them support and tools to manage work and family responsibilities. If not, employee well-being and productivity will suffer. Additionally, role theory says that social support is very important to reduce the bad effects of work-family conflict. Kebriaei et al. (2016) suggested that organizations should give enough support so employees can handle both work and family demands. Supportive leaders also help employees keep a good balance, which improves performance. However, if

employees do too many extra tasks (high organizational citizenship behavior), this support can make them feel more tired and increase work-family conflict (Deery et al., 2016). That is why having a good work-life balance is important to keep employees healthy and help them perform better.

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of enhancing employee performance. In Islamic contexts, the integration of Islamic work ethics into the work-life balance framework provides a unique perspective that emphasizes not only the balance between work and personal life but also the moral and ethical dimensions of work. In Islam, ethics is known as *akhlaq*, which comes from a person's beliefs and religious values and guides all areas of life (Sehhat et al., 2015). These values include goodness (*al-khayr*), righteousness (*al-birr*), equity (*al-list*), justice (*al-'adl*), truth (*al-Haq*), what is right (*al-ma'ruf*), and piety (*at-taqwa*). Work also has a special meaning in Islam because it is seen as noble and sincere (Pardiman, 2018). Ibrahim and Kamri (2013) said that Muslims see work as part of worship, not just for money or physical rewards, but also for cooperation (*at-ta'awun*), worship (*al-ibadah*), helping others (*al-ihsan*), responsibility (*al-amanah*), self-respect (*hifz al-muru'ah*), and trust in God (*at-tawakal*). Moreover, Islamic work ethics (IWE) emphasize balancing professional responsibilities with personal and spiritual obligations. According to Novianti et al. (2024), Islamic work ethics promote a holistic approach to work-life balance, encouraging employees to fulfill their duties while maintaining their spiritual and familial commitments. This ethical framework can significantly influence how employees perceive their work-life balance and, consequently, their performance.

As the modern workplace evolves, managing work-family conflict while maintaining employee performance has become increasingly crucial. One promising approach to addressing this challenge is integrating Islamic work-life balance, particularly within institutions that align with strong ethical and/or religious values. The concept of work-life balance from an Islamic perspective comes from the idea that life should be balanced between the needs of this world and the hereafter (Andriyani & Hasni, 2024). In Islam, employees are encouraged to balance their work not only with worship but also with their family responsibilities. According to Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), work-life balance in Islam is not just about economic gains but also includes moral, psychological, and social aspects, making work both useful and meaningful. Meanwhile, Muafi et al. (2021) and Jati (2022) explain that work-life balance in Islam includes three main indicators: time balance, which refers to managing time fairly between work, worship, and family; involvement balance,

which means giving proper attention and commitment to each role; and satisfaction balance, which is about finding peace and contentment in all areas of life. However, there are limited studies that explore the role of work-life balance in a religious context, particularly from an Islamic perspective. To address this gap, this study aims to examine how the integration of Islamic work-life balance can help reduce work-family conflict and enhance employee performance in organizations with strong religious or ethical orientations.

Literature Review

Role Theory

Role theory, a core concept in social psychology, has been widely discussed and developed since it was first introduced by George Mead and Ralph Linton in the 1930s. This framework explains how people take on different roles in society, each carrying specific expectations and social norms that shape their behavior and influence how others see them (Rimal & Lapinski, 2015). Wolor et al. (2020) suggest that clear communication of job roles and providing necessary resources can foster an environment where employees feel empowered, supported, and able to achieve a balanced work-life dynamic. In organizational contexts, understanding role expectations helps leaders manage conflicts, enhance collaboration, and support employee well-being. Role theory is especially useful in understanding human behavior and has been widely applied in fields like social work to guide practice and improve services. A key idea within this theory is the process of role-taking and role-playing. Role-taking involves understanding and predicting how others think and feel, while role-playing means actively performing a particular role (Taylor et al., 2023). These skills are essential for effective communication and social interaction because they help individuals navigate social expectations smoothly (Arun et al., 2021). However, even though role theory offers valuable insights into how people behave and interact within their social environment, it has not been fully embraced by social workers compared to other social scientists (Hannan & Teater, 2023). This lack of attention is important to address because role theory can greatly support social workers in better understanding client behavior and improving professional practice.

Work-Family Conflict and Employee Performance

The delicate balance between professional and personal responsibilities has long been a topic of interest in organizational psychology and management research. As the demands of the modern workplace continue to evolve, understanding the relationship between work-

family conflict and employee performance has become increasingly important for organizations seeking to optimize productivity and employee well-being (Soomro et al., 2018). Extensive research has explored the complex dynamics between Islamic work-life balance, work-family conflict, and family-work conflict, and their impact on employee performance (Bailyn, 2011). Studies have shown that work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts can have a detrimental effect on job attitudes, leading to reduced job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work effort (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Conversely, effectively managing work-family balance has been linked to improved job performance, increased organizational citizenship behaviors, and reduced turnover intentions (Wu et al., 2024).

H₁: Work-family conflict has a negative impact on employee performance.

Work-family Conflict and Islamic Work-life Balance

The relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and Islamic work-life balance is gaining more attention because it shows how Islamic values can help manage work and family demands better. Islamic work ethics, such as honesty, responsibility, and commitment, encourage employees to do their jobs well while also taking care of their family duties (Udin et al., 2022). These values help guide employees to handle work-family challenges with a strong sense of responsibility towards both roles. Rahayuningsih et al. (2018) also found that applying Islamic work values in career planning can improve decision-making and lower the chance of work-family conflict. This supports the idea that using Islamic principles at work can create a more supportive environment that respects work-life balance. Additionally, Islamic work-life balance focuses on the importance of family and community. As Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) explain, work in Islam is not only about earning money but also includes moral, psychological, and social values, making it meaningful and beneficial. Islamic teachings also promote cooperation and strong family bonds, which help reduce stress from work-family conflict (Kusumaningrum, 2023). This communal approach encourages individuals to seek support from their families, enhancing their ability to manage work and family responsibilities effectively.

H₂: Work-family conflict has a positive impact on Islamic work-life balance.

Islamic Work-life Balance and Employee Performance

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) within Islamic work ethics (IWE) plays an important role in improving employee performance. IWE are built on principles of fairness,

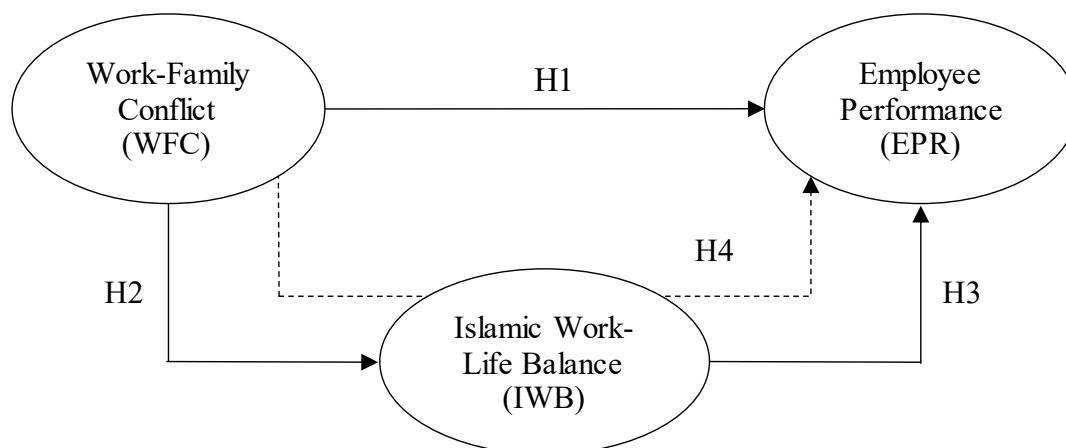
responsibility, and care for the community, guiding employees to act with integrity and dedication in their jobs (Miswanto et al., 2020). The Quran (Chapter 23, Verse 8) describes true believers as those who stay loyal to their trusts and promises, whether to God, others, or society. Muslims are also taught to always give their best effort in every task and to trust God for the results, as shown in the saying from Sunan Ibn Majah (4164): "*If you were to rely upon Allah with true reliance, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds; they leave hungry in the morning and return full in the evening.*" El Garah et al. (2012) define IWE as a set of moral values from the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad that help Muslims know what is right and wrong in their work behavior. Sugiyanto et al. (2020) pointed out that IWE focuses on intentions and social values, which strongly affect job satisfaction and work-life balance. This mindset encourages employees to see their work as an act of worship, giving them a sense of purpose and stronger commitment to their roles (Wijayati & Rahman, 2022). Moreover, Riaz et al. (2021) found that IWE can help reduce the negative effects of job stress and increase work engagement among healthcare workers. This means that strong adherence to Islamic work ethics can lessen stress and support better performance. Adding Islamic leadership principles further strengthens the importance of work-life balance, helping create a supportive and meaningful work environment. Leaders who embody Islamic values can inspire their teams to engage fully in their work while also respecting their personal lives. This is supported by Hasan and Muafi (2023), who found that Islamic emotional intelligence and work-life balance significantly influence organizational commitment, affecting employee performance. Additionally, the concept of *ta'awun*, or mutual assistance, is pivotal in fostering a collaborative work environment that prioritizes both individual and organizational success (Muafi, 2021).

H₃: Islamic work-life balance has a positive impact on employee performance.

Islamic Work-life Balance as a Mediator

The relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and employee performance is a critical area of study, particularly when viewed through the lens of Islamic work-life balance (WLB). Islamic work-life balance emphasizes the importance of fulfilling both professional and familial responsibilities. The Islamic perspective on work-life balance encourages employees to manage their time effectively between work and family, thereby reducing conflicts that may arise from competing demands (Muafi, 2021). This balance is essential for maintaining psychological well-being and enhancing job satisfaction, which are important for

Figure 1. Research Framework



optimal employee performance (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Integrating Islamic work ethics into organizational practices can lead to a supportive environment that in the future can enhances employee engagement and commitment, ultimately improving performance outcomes (Caniago & Mustoko, 2020). Research indicates that work-family conflict can lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased stress, negatively impacting employee performance (Widyarini & Muafi, 2021). However, when organizations promote a culture that aligns with Islamic values, such as mutual support and respect for family obligations, employees are more likely to experience reduced work-family conflict. For instance, the study by Stankevičienė et al. (2021) demonstrates that work-life balance is a mediator between work culture and employee well-being, suggesting that a supportive work environment can alleviate the adverse effects of work-family conflict. This aligns with the findings of Riaz et al. (2021) who highlight that Islamic work ethics can moderate the relationship between job stressors and work engagement, indicating that adherence to these ethics can buffer the negative impacts of work-family conflict.

H4: Islamic work-life balance mediates the impact of work-family conflict on employee performance.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research framework. The framework emphasizes the role of Islamic work-life balance in reducing the negative effects of work-family conflict and in enhancing overall employee performance.

Methods

This research is a quantitative study that aims to examine the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), Islamic work-life balance (IWB), and employee performance (EPR).

Specifically, the study investigates the direct effects of WFC on IWB and EPR, the effect of IWB on EPR, and the mediating role of IWB in the relationship between WFC and EPR. To measure each variable, validated instruments adapted from previous studies were used. Work-family conflict was measured using eight items developed by Gutek et al. (1991), which include items that assess time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts arising from incompatible demands between work and family roles. Islamic work-life balance was measured using four indicators developed by Marks and MacDermid (1996), which were contextualized to reflect Islamic ethical values. Employee performance was measured through six items adapted from Yousef (2000), focusing on work output, task quality, punctuality, and job effectiveness. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The detailed item measurements of each variables are shows in Table 1.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Items		Factor Loadings	Reliability	
Work-Family Conflict (WFC)				
WFC1	My job stops me spending quality family time.	0.739	Cronbach's Alpha	0.789
WFC2	I lose family time because of my work duties.	0.716	Comp. Reliability	0.855
WFC3	No time left for activities at home.	0.683	AVE	0.641
WFC4	I am often distracted by thoughts of work while spending time with my family.	0.773		
WFC5	Work often makes me irritable or short-tempered at home.	0.762		
Islamic Work-Life Balance (IWB)				
IWB1	My work, family, and religion feel balanced.	0.871	Cronbach's Alpha	0.810
IWB2	Balancing work, family, and religion is hard.	0.814	Comp. Reliability	0.887
IWB3	My work-family-religion balance feels right.	0.867	AVE	0.724
Employee Performance (EPR)				
EPR1	I pay attention to quality when working.	0.851	Cronbach's Alpha	0.912
EPR2	I pay attention to quantity when working.	0.799	Comp. Reliability	0.932
EPR3	I work on time.	0.846	AVE	0.695
EPR4	I work effectively.	0.821		
EPR5	I work independently.	0.870		
EPR6	I am committed to my work.	0.813		

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	EPR	WFC	IWB
EPR1	0.851	-0.606	-0.254
EPR2	0.799	-0.485	-0.210
EPR3	0.846	-0.595	-0.244
EPR4	0.821	-0.546	-0.303
EPR5	0.870	-0.606	-0.292
EPR6	0.813	-0.587	-0.271
WFC1	-0.323	0.739	0.629
WFC2	-0.299	0.716	0.660
WFC3	-0.313	0.683	0.482
WFC4	-0.748	0.773	0.377
WFC5	-0.744	0.762	0.338
IWB1	-0.373	0.587	0.871
IWB2	-0.169	0.570	0.814
IWB3	-0.244	0.529	0.867

Furthermore, the population of this study consisted of employees working at one of the top hospitals in Central Java Province, which has been recognized for its excellent digital transformation in Indonesia's Social Security Administration Agency for Health (BPJS Kesehatan) services and for achieving Paripurna (excellent) accreditation status. This study employed a saturation sampling technique, meaning that every member of the population was included as a research participant. As noted by Hair (2007), saturation sampling is used when the population size is relatively small or when the researcher aims to reduce sampling error as much as possible. By using this approach, the study included all 100 employees, ensuring complete data coverage and accurate representation of the entire employee group.

For analysis purposes, this study used Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Hair (2007), PLS-SEM is an appropriate method when the research focuses on prediction, involves complex structural models with many constructs and indicators, or aims to explore and expand existing theories (exploratory research for theory development). In this study, hypothesis testing was carried out using PLS-SEM to examine the relationships among variables and validate the four proposed hypotheses. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suited for handling complex models and offers more strong predictive capabilities, allowing for a deeper understanding of the relationship between WFC,

IWB, and EPR. The analysis involves predictive relevance using Q-square to measure the model's ability to explain variance in the dependent constructs. To ensure convergent validity and reliability, this study used a minimum loading factor value of 0.70 for indicator validity, assessed discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and evaluated construct reliability through composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values, with a minimum threshold of 0.60 for both (Nazaruddin & Hasna, 2023).

Table 1 shows that all item loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, showing strong relationships with their respective latent variables. For EPR, the loading values range from 0.799 to 0.870, indicating high internal consistency. WFC indicators have loadings between 0.683 and 0.773; although WFC4 is slightly below 0.70, it is still acceptable for exploratory research. IWB construct shows strong loadings from 0.814 to 0.871, confirming good convergent validity. Additionally, Table 1 shows that all constructs are reliable, as the values of composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE) are all higher than 0.60. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, the cross-loading results demonstrate that each indicator correlates more strongly with its own construct than with others, supporting good discriminant validity.

Result and Discussion

Based on the research findings (Table 3), work-family conflict influences employee performance with an estimated coefficient value of -0.853 and a t-statistic of 10.105, with a probability of $0.000 < 0.05$. It can be concluded that work-family conflict significantly affects employee performance. Thus, the first hypothesis (H_1), "work-family conflict negatively affects employee performance," is proven and accepted. This means that the higher the level of work-family conflict perceived by employees, the lower their performance tends to be, as they experience more stress and find it harder to focus on their work tasks effectively. Later, based on the research findings, there is an influence of work-family conflict on Islamic work-life balance with an estimated coefficient value of 0.662 and a t-statistic of 12.948, with a probability of $0.000 < 0.05$. It can be concluded that work-family conflict significantly affects Islamic work-life balance. Thus, the second hypothesis (H_2), "work-family conflict positively affects Islamic work-life balance," is proven and accepted. This indicates that employees perceive higher levels of work-family conflict, and they tend to strengthen their Islamic work-life balance. In other words, nurses experiencing work-family conflict are motivated to improve their balance between work, family, and religious duties. As a result, they can fulfill their roles more effectively as employees, family members, and community members. This

shows their ability to manage time and energy between professional responsibilities and personal or family needs. These findings align with Iftikhar et al. (2023), who explained that work-family conflict can encourage individuals to seek better solutions for maintaining an Islamic work-life balance.

Furthermore, based on the research findings (Table 3), Islamic work-life balance influences employee performance with an estimated coefficient value of 0.249 and a t-statistic of 2.405, with a probability of $0.000 < 0.05$. It can be concluded that there is a significant effect of Islamic work-life balance on employee performance. Thus, the third hypothesis (H_3), “Islamic work-life balance positively affects employee performance,” is proven and accepted. This means that the higher the level of Islamic work-life balance perceived by employees, the better their performance. Employees with strong Islamic work-life balance are more likely to be focused, motivated, and able to maintain high work quality while fulfilling their family and religious responsibilities. Conversely, if the level of Islamic work-life balance is low, employee performance will decrease. Employees with a good balance between work and personal life are more capable of completing their tasks effectively and efficiently. Employees who have a balance between work and personal life tend to have a better mood at work, which can help them be more focused and productive. Good psychological well-being can help employees focus on their work and improve their performance. The research findings are consistent with those reported by Soomro et al. (2018), which affirm that Islamic work-life balance positively influences performance.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Std. Deviation	t-value	Prob.	Decision
H ₁ WFC -> EPR	-0.853	0.084	10.105	0.000	Accepted
H ₂ WFC -> IWB	0.662	0.051	12.948	0.000	Accepted
H ₃ IWB -> EPR	0.249	0.104	2.405	0.017	Accepted
H ₄ WFC -> IWB -> EPR	0.165		2.260	0.024	Accepted

Table 4. R-square Test

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
EPR	0.508	0.498
IWB	0.438	0.432

Moreover, Table 3 also shows that there is an influence of work-family conflict on employee performance through Islamic work-life balance (H_4), with a t-statistic of $2.260 > 1.96$ and a significant p-value ($0.024 < 0.05$), where the value is less than 0.05 (at a significance level of 5%). Thus, the indirect influence of work-family conflict on employee performance through Islamic work-life balance is significant and acts as a mediating variable in the influence of work-family conflict on employee performance. A low level of Islamic work-life balance, caused by high work-family conflict faced by employees, tends to reduce employee performance. The lower the level of Islamic work-life balance caused by increasing work-family conflict experienced by an employee, the likelihood of decreasing the performance of that employee, and conversely, the higher the level of Islamic work-life balance caused by decreasing work-family conflict experienced by an employee, the tendency will increase the performance of that employee. This is in line with Taşdelen-Karçkay and Bakalim (2017), who demonstrated that work-life balance fully mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and life satisfaction, indicating that achieving balance can lead to improved overall well-being and performance. The results of this study provide theoretical implications that support and expand previous research. First, the findings confirm that work-family conflict can decrease employee performance, which is in line with Yusuf and Hasnidar (2020), who reported a negative and significant correlation between these variables. Second, the study suggests that work-family conflict can enhance Islamic work-life balance, consistent with Pandu (2017), who found a positive and significant relationship between the two. Third, the findings indicate that Islamic work-life balance can improve employee performance, supporting the work of Soomro et al. (2018), who showed that employees with strong Islamic work-life balance perform their tasks more effectively and efficiently. Finally, this study confirms that Islamic work-life balance mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and employee performance, demonstrating its important role in supporting employees to maintain high performance despite facing work-family challenges.

Additionally, Table 4 shows the employee performance variable's adjusted R-squared value of 0.498. This means that work-family conflict influences employee performance by 49.8%, with the remaining explained by other variables outside the research model. The adjusted R-squared value is 0.432 for the Islamic work-life balance variable. This indicates that the ability of the work-family conflict model to explain work-life balance is 43.2%, with the rest being influenced by variables outside the research model. Lastly, the Q-square value of the study was found to be 0.388, which is higher than zero. This result indicates that the model has good predictive relevance, meaning it can reliably explain and predict the variance

in the dependent constructs. Overall, this finding shows that the structural model not only meets statistical significance but also has practical relevance in capturing and forecasting the relationships among the study variables.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study explored how Islamic work-life balance mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and employee performance in a religious-based hospital setting. The findings show that work-family conflict has a direct negative effect on employee performance, making employees feel more stressed and less focused. Interestingly, work-family conflict also encourages employees to strengthen their Islamic work-life balance as a way to cope with these pressures. In turn, Islamic work-life balance has a positive impact on employee performance and helps reduce the negative effects of work-family conflict. This study adds new insights to the business and management literature by highlighting the importance of integrating religious-based values into work-life balance strategies. It suggests that organizations, especially those with strong religious or cultural foundations, should actively support practices that help employees maintain balance in order to sustain high performance.

However, this study faced certain limitations. Authors encountered challenges in collecting data due to the demanding nature of healthcare professionals' roles, which affected response rates and availability. Additionally, when distributing the questionnaire, the study did not differentiate job levels among employees, which may have introduced potential bias in the responses. In the future, other studies should include different job levels to better understand how work-family conflict and Islamic work-life balance affect employees across various positions. They are also encouraged to examine additional mediating variables, such as life satisfaction and work engagement, to gain deeper insights into employee behavior and performance. Furthermore, future studies could involve more religious-based healthcare institutions with larger and more diverse sample sizes to improve the generalizability and richness of the findings.

Disclosure the Use of AI Technologies

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Grammarly-AI to translate, paraphrase, and correct the grammar. After using these tools/services, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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