

# Testing the Mediating Effect of Emotional Exhaustion and Life Satisfaction in the Influence of Work Family Conflict to Performance

Wisnu Prajogo<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Most research focus on the influence of work family conflict to performance. However not all of them gave consistent results. This leave a research gap concerning the mediating variables between work family conflict to performance. This research explores the use of emotional exhaustion and life satisfaction as mediating variables in the influence of work family conflict to performance. This research uses methods for testing mediating variables as proposed by Barron and Kenny (1986) instead of using structural equation modelling which only testing the path and not the mediating variables effect. Questionnaires were distributed to multiple target respondents of diverse backgrounds that include lecturers and university employees, government employees, employees of a restaurant, employees of small and medium businesses, and employees of a manufacturing business. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed and the returned questionnaires that can be processed as many as 269 questionnaires. This study found that emotional exhaustion and life satisfaction act as partial mediator in the influence of work family conflict and performance.

**JEL classification numbers:** J13

**Keywords:** work family conflict, life satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, performance.

## 1 Introduction

Most research focus on the influence of work family conflict to performance. However, not all research consistent in their findings. This leaves a

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Management, YKPN School of Business, Indonesia

research gap concerning the mediating variables between work family conflict to performance. This research explores the use of emotional exhaustion and life satisfaction as mediating variables in the influence of work family conflict to performance.

Work family conflict is a common phenomenon for an employee. This phenomenon can not be avoided since basically people has dual roles: their roles at home and also their roles in their office. Since people has to perform well in both roles, sometimes it is hard for them to separate their personal lives and their duties in their office, so there comes a conflict that is called work family conflict.

A more complete understanding about the antecedents and consequences of work family conflict will enable the managers to better manage those aspects. If they can manage them well, the manager will benefit from better performance of any employee in the organization. This research explores the relationship among work family conflict, emotional exhaustion, life satisfaction, and performance.

## **2 Main Text**

### **Work Family Conflict**

Everyone who works certainly has dual roles. An employee has an equally important role both at home and in the office. A woman, in addition to being a good employee must also perform very well as a wife and a mother. A man, in addition to be a good employee must perform his role as a father and the head of the family as well. The burden in each role is not easy. Sometimes the demands of the job require an employee to bring office work home, which would interfere with his/her role at home as a father/mother or husband/wife. Sometimes the problem from home is carried over to the office, thereby disrupting the process of employee duties. Since every role demands high performance, not infrequently comes certain role conflict called work family conflict.

Basically the existence of work family conflict has these following three elements: time (i.e. when the time required for one element reduce the available time for another element), the problem (i.e. when problems arise in one element affects the other elements), and behavior (i.e. the unparalleled behavior between two elements).

Related to time, if an employee is spending too much time in the office until he/she can not perform its role as a mother/wife properly, this can cause problems at home. Likewise, if an employee has too much burden of at home (e.g. child care or care of the elderly), his/her responsibilities in the office could be disrupted.

Besides that, high performance demands can make employee stress in the office. The stress at work can then be carried home and create new problems at home. Likewise, if an employee is experiencing stress in at home, his/her performance in the office could be disrupted.

Related aspects of behavior, work family conflict occurs because of unfit between behavior at home and in the office. For example, an employee who became a supervisor and his supervisor duty demands to be firm and hard on subordinates, he or she could do the same thing at home because he/she is affected by the habits in the office, even though the family wants a compassionate father/mother.

Based on the research in this field, the researchers concluded that there are at least three things that make the effect of work family conflict is different for each person. The first is the personal factors which include the abilities, interests, personality, and individual aspirations. Every individual has different personal characteristics. These different personal characteristics will affect how he/she responds to conflict/different pressures. This causes some individuals are more susceptible to work family conflict than other individuals.

The second factor includes family situation, role of parents, culture, and the religion of a person. An employee who comes from a family that tends to understand each other harmoniously with other family members will not vulnerable to work family conflict. On the other hand, people who do not live their religion well, are more vulnerable to work family conflict.

Specific situation can be conducive working environment and friendly working environment. A conducive working environment occurs when the relationship among employees and between employees and boss is good, then the employee will be less likely to be vulnerable to work family conflict. On the other hand, when there is a harsh working environment, this will tend to suppress emotions so that the possibility of work family conflict may occur.

Related to aspects discussed above, basically every employee will try to maintain a balance between work life and personal life (Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). If the balance is reached, then an employee will be able to perform well both in the office and at home. If the balance can not be achieved, performance in the office or at home can be disrupted, which in turn will hurt the company in the long run because the employee is not performing optimally

Such dynamics in the work described in the context of the conflict perspective (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). This perspective explains that the responsibilities and demands at home and in the office will not be compatible, so that the higher demands in one role will interfere with other roles. Thus, the job demands that are too high can interfere with an employee's role at home and demands at home that are too high can also interfere with a person's job in the office.

This view is also rooted in scarcity hypotheses (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002) which states that everyone has limited energy and time. Individuals who underwent dual roles will certainly experience a conflict between the roles. Thus, work family conflict would arise if an employee is unable to separate his role in office and at home. If the office affairs are brought home or vice versa if home affairs are brought to office, this will foster work family conflict.

### Research on Work Family Conflict

WRITER	YEAR	RESEARCH SETTING	INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLES	RESULT
Lin	2013	Employees from various organizations	Job demand	Work family conflict (WFC)	Job demand has positive influence to WFC.
Zhang	2012	Employees from various organizations	Work interfere with family conflict (WIF) Family interfere with work conflict (FIW)	Emotional exhaustion Affective commitment Intention to leave Life satisfaction	WIF has positive influence to emotional exhaustion and affective commitment. FIW has positive influence to intention to leave and has negative influence to life satisfaction and affective commitment.
Beutel	2010	Entrepreneurs	Work schedules	Work interfere with family conflict (WIF) Family interfere with work conflict (FIW) Work Family synergy (WFS)	Work schedules correlates with WIF and WFS.
Beutel	2010	Employees have children under 18 years	Work Family synergy (WFS)	Job satisfaction dimension	WFS has positive influence to job satisfaction dimensions.
Porter & Ayman	2010	Hospital employees	Job flexibility Work family conflict	Intention to leave	Job flexibility has negative influence to WFC. WFC has positive influence to intention to leave.
Thanacoody, <i>et al.</i>	2009	Hospital nurse	Work family conflict (WFC)	Job burnout	WFC has positive influence to job burnout.
Beutel & Berman	2008	Employees from various organizations	Job demand	Work family conflict (WFC)	Job demand has positive influence to WFC.
Boyar, <i>et al.</i>	2008	University employees	Job demand Home demand	Work interfere with family conflict (WIF) Family interfere with work conflict (FIW)	Job demand has positive influence to WIF. Home demand has positive influence to FIW.

Maazerolle, <i>et al.</i>	2008	Athletic trainer	Long working hours Out of town assignment	Work family conflict	Long working hours and out of town has positive influence to work family conflict.
Beutel	2008	Entrepreneurs	Work family conflict (WFC) Work-family synergy (WFS) Work pressure (WP)	Work satisfaction Life satisfaction	WFC has negative influence to work and life satisfaction WFS has positive influence to work and life satisfaction. WP has positive influence to WFC and has negative influence to WFS.
Fu & Shaffer	2001	Administrative staff	Role conflict Role overload	Work family conflict (WFC)	Role conflict and role overload have positive influence to WFC
Carlson & Kackmar	2000	Employees	Role ambiguity Role conflict Time demand Involvement	Work interfere with family conflict (WIF) Family interfere with work conflict (FIW)	Work time demand and FIW has no influence to job satisfaction.  Family satisfaction does not be influenced by family involvement or by family time demands.
Aryee, <i>et al.</i>	1999	Employees from various organizations	Work interfere with family conflict (WIF) Family interfere with work conflict (FIW)	Life satisfaction Family satisfaction Job satisfaction	WIF has negative influence to life satisfaction and family satisfaction. FIW has negative influence to job satisfaction.
Boles	1997	Salesperson	Work family conflict (WFC) Emotional exhaustion Job satisfaction	Intention to leave	WFC has positive influence to emotional exhaustion and has negative influence to job satisfaction. Emotional exhaustion has positive influence to intention to leave. Job satisfaction has negative influence to intention to leave.

### **Emotional Exhaustion and Life Satisfaction as Mediating Variables in the Influence of Work Family Conflict to Performance**

Many research focus on the influence of work family conflict to performance. This research explores two mediating variables: emotional exhaustion and life satisfaction. Emotional exhaustion is an emotional fatigue experienced by individuals during their working life (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). When someone is experiencing high work family conflict, he/she will be emotionally exhausted. The burden that an employee get over and over will make him/her suffer high level of emotional exhaustion which then emotional exhaustion will have negative influence to performance. So, this research argues that there is no direct influence of work family conflict to performance, but the influence is mediated by emotional exhaustion. In this case, we define the first hypotheses as follows:

H1: Emotional exhaustion mediates the influence of work family conflict to performance.

Life satisfaction is the satisfaction that someone feels about the current living conditions (Diener *et al.*, 1985). Someone who has high level of life satisfaction will view his life is enjoyable. Related to work family conflict, someone with high level of work family conflict will not experience a high level of life satisfaction. A high level of work family conflict will ruin someone's life satisfaction. When there is a high level of work family conflict, there will be a lower life satisfaction. When there is a lower life satisfaction, an employee will not be able to work well, so his/her performance will decline. In this case, we argue that the influence of work family conflict is also mediated by life satisfaction. In this case we define the second hypotheses as follows:

H2: Life satisfaction mediates the influence of work family conflict to performance.

## **3 Research Methods**

### **Respondents and data collection methods**

Questionnaires were distributed to multiple target respondents of diverse backgrounds that include lecturers and university employees, government employees, employees of a restaurant, employees of small and medium businesses, and employees of a manufacturing business. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed and the returned questionnaires that can be processed as many as 269 questionnaires.

### Respondents Demographic

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	192	71.4
	Female	77	28.6
Age	Average 39.4 years		
Education	Junior high school	21	7.8
	Senior high school	137	50.9
	1 year diploma	5	1.9
	3 year diploma	25	9.3
	Bachelor	47	17.5
	Master	34	12.6
Job tenure	Average 13.5 years		
Company type	Government employees	36	13.4
	Lecturers	29	10.8
	University employees	90	33.5
	Restaurant employees	16	5.9
	Small business employees	49	18.2
	Sales force from beverage employees	49	18.2

### Variables, operational definition, and measurement

The study started with designing research instruments. This study used previous questionnaires from previous researchers and then adapted the questionnaires to the research setting in Indonesia.

Work family conflict is an issue that arises because of the burden on the job is brought home. This variable was measured using an instrument developed by Netemeyer *et al.*, (1996) which was adapted to the research context.

Life satisfaction is the satisfaction that someone feels about the current living conditions. This variable was measured using an instrument developed by Diener *et al.* (1985) which was then adapted to the research context. Emotional exhaustion is an emotional fatigue experienced by individuals during their working life. This variable was measured using an instrument developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981).

Performance is the achievement of a person on the job according to his/her job description. This variable was measured using instruments of in-role performance developed by Williams and Anderson (1991).

### Testing instrument validity and reliability

Factor analysis was used to test the validity of the items and statements followed by calculating the value of reliability (alpha) for each variable. An item will be preserved (not dropped) if the loading factor equal to or greater than 0.5 with reference to the guidelines set by Comrey and Lee (1992) as quoted Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) which states that the criterion of 0.5 has the ability to explain less over 30% of variance.

After testing the validity, the questionnaire reliability will be measured with Cronbach's Alpha value. The questionnaire revealed reliable if it meets the criteria of reliability expressed by Nunnally (1967) as quoted by Churchill (1979) which is a measure of reliability of 0.50 or 0.60 can already be considered adequate for an exploratory study, although still in the category of low reliability.

To ensure that the items are already prepared can be understood by respondents, reseracher conducted face validity tests involving 5 employees. This face validity is to make sure that the instruments developed to ensure can be understood by respondents.

Factor analysis for the variables work family conflict was based on one single variable. The result of validity test is presented in table below. These results indicate that there is one item to work family conflict was not valid because the value of factor loading  $<0.5$ .

CODE	STATEMENT	FACTOR LOADING
WFC1	The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	0.767
WFC2	The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	0.879
WFC3	Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	0.887
WFC4	My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	0.888
WFC5	Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	$<0,5$

Factor analysis performed for the variable performance was conducted as a single variable. The result of validity test is presented in table below. These results indicate that all items are valid for this variable.



CODE	STATEMENT	FACTOR LOADING
KIN1	Adequately completes assigned duties.	0.732916
KIN2	Perform tasks that are expected of me.	0.766927
KIN3	Engages in activities that will directly affect my performance evaluations.	0.665551
KIN4	Fails to perform essential duties (R).	0.59958
KIN5	Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description.	0.766543
KIN6	Meets formal performance requirements of the job.	0.782363
KIN7	Neglects aspects of the job I am obliged to perform (R).	0.763772

Factor analysis for the variables life satisfaction was based on one variable. The result of validity test is presented in table below. These results indicate that all items are valid for these variables.

CODE	STATEMENT	FACTOR LOADING
LS1	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	0.657474
LS2	The conditions of my life are excellent.	0.695291
LS3	I am satisfied with my life.	0.7948
LS4	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	0.671952
LS5	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	0.556614

Factor analysis performed for the variables emotional exhaustion was conducted as a single variable. Below is the result of validity test. These results indicate that all items are valid for this variable because the entire value of factor loading > 0.5.

CODE	STATEMENT	FACTOR LOADING
EH1	I feel emotionally drained from my work	0.696125
EH2	I feel used up at the end of the workday	0.605842
EH3	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job Working with people all day is really a strain for me	0.817027
EH4	I feel frustrated by my job	0.793029
EH5	I feel I'm working too hard on my job Working with people directly puts too much stress on me	0.644195

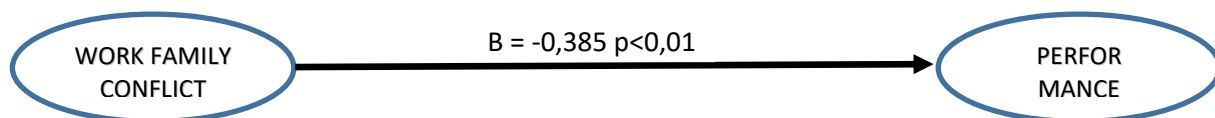
Having tested the validity, reliability testing is carried out for each variable. The reliability calculation is done by calculating Cronbach alpha values for each variable. In the following table it appears that all variables meet reliability criteria Cronbach alpha values above 0.6.

VARIABLE	ALPHA
Work family conflict	0.884426849
Emotional exhaustion	0.763214389
Life satisfaction	0.739331115
Performance	0.851402913

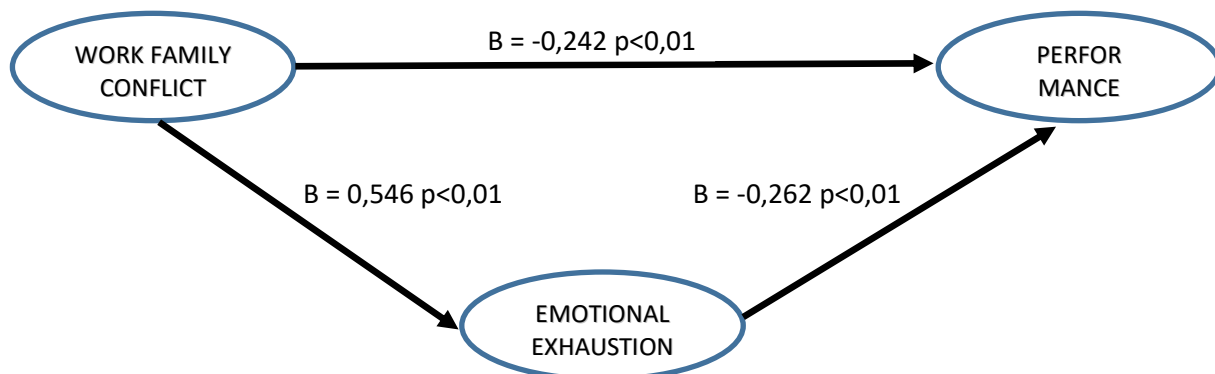
## 4 Result and Discussion

### Emotional Exhaustion as Mediating Variable in the Influence of Work Family Conflict to Performance

The mediating effect of emotional exhaustion to the influence of work family conflict to performance was tested using procedures explained by Barron and Kenny (1986). First, the direct influence of work family conflict to performance was tested. The result is explained in figure below:



The requirement of testing the mediating effect is there must be a significant direct relationship. From the figure above we know that there is a significant negative relationship. The next step is involving mediating variable in figure below:

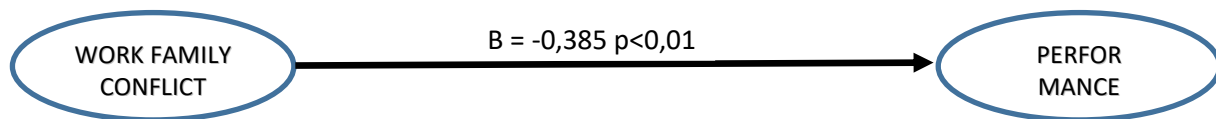


Before testing the mediation, there are two requirements to be met. The first is the influence of work family conflict to emotional exhaustion should be significant and it is fulfilled. The second one is the influence of emotional exhaustion to performance should be significant and it is fulfilled.

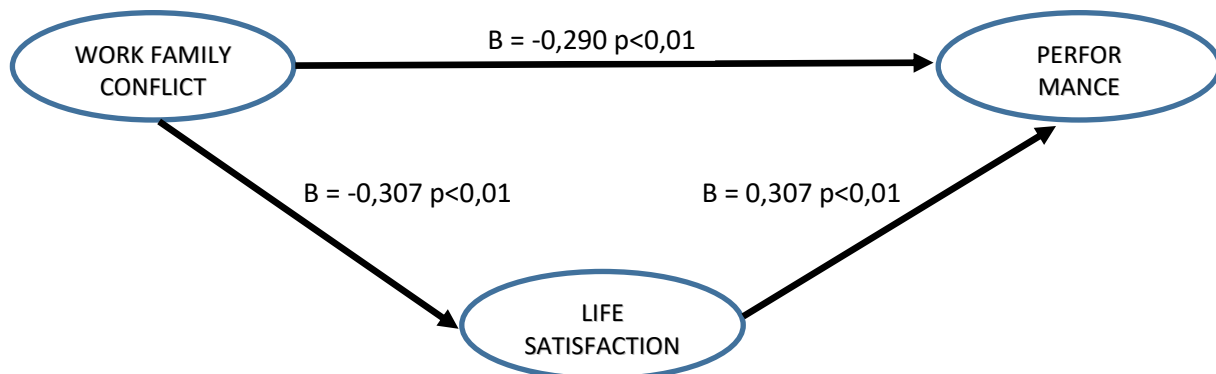
Full mediation will happen if there is a significant influence of work family conflict to performance in the first model (without mediating variable) and there is no more significant influence in the second model (with mediating variable). Partial mediation will happen if there is a significant influence of work family conflict to performance in the first model (without mediating variable) and there is still significant influence in the second model (with mediating variable), but the influence is weaker in the second model. In this case, there is a partial mediation of emotional exhaustion to the influence of work family conflict to performance.

### Life Satisfaction as Mediating Variable in the Influence of Work Family Conflict to Performance

The mediating effect of life satisfaction to the influence of work family conflict to performance was tested using procedures explained by Barron and Kenny (1986). First, the direct influence of work family conflict to performance was tested. The result is explained in figure below:



The requirement of testing the mediating effect is there must be a significant direct relationship. From the figure above we know that there is a significant negative relationship. The next step is involving mediating variable in figure below:



Before testing the mediation, there are two requirements to be met. The first is the influence of work family conflict to life satisfaction should be significant and it is

fulfilled. The second one is the influence of life satisfaction to performance should be significant and it is fulfilled.

In this case, there is a partial mediation of life satisfaction to the influence of work family conflict to performance.

## 5 Conclusion

This research explores the mediating effect of life satisfaction and emotional exhaustion into the influence of work family conflict to performance. This study found that emotional exhaustion and life satisfaction act as partial mediator in the influence of work family conflict to performance.

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