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Family Support, Self-Efficacy, and Work–Life Balance in Working Mothers of Preschool-Aged Children in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between family support and work-life balance among working mothers with children in the golden age in the digital era, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design and involves 268 working mothers with children aged 0–6 years. The instruments used include scales for family support, self-efficacy, and WLB, which have been validated and tested for reliability. Data analysis was conducted using path analysis in JASP software. The results show that family support is directly related to WLB ($p < 0.001$), but not related to self-efficacy ($p = 0.168$). On the other hand, self-efficacy had a significant relationship with WLB ($p = 0.033$), but did not mediate the relationship between family support and WLB. These findings confirm that family support is the primary predictor of achieving WLB among working mothers in the digital age, while the role of self-efficacy as a mediator was not statistically proven.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the times and economic demands have brought significant changes to the roles played by women in society. Today, women no longer only play the roles of wives and mothers within the household, but are also actively contributing in the public sphere, particularly in the workplace. This phenomenon has given rise to what is known as the dual role of women in work and household management. The increasing participation of women in the workforce not only reflects progress in gender equality but also serves as a response to the growing economic needs of families. The number of women working in Indonesia as of February 2024 reached 56.2 million workers (BPS, 2024). Many women contribute financially to support the well-being of their households. On the other hand, the demands of their roles as mothers and household managers remain an integral part of their lives.

Several factors can influence a mother's decision to work outside the home. One of the main reasons mothers work are to help the household head increase financial income to ensure family needs are met (Widiningtyas, 2022). Balancing two roles simultaneously is not an easy task; it requires time management skills, emotional resilience, and environmental support for women to manage both roles effectively. In addition to increasing income, mothers who choose to work often do so to fill their free time, avoid boredom at home, develop interests and skills, and achieve specific goals (Mesakh et al., 2023). For women with higher education backgrounds, working is an effort to develop their potential for self-actualization (Samsidar, 2020) and achieve their aspirations (Fitria Panduwinata et al., 2019). Women with dual roles as mothers and workers often face difficulties in meeting numerous demands and responsibilities. This situation can lead to conflicts between family and work.

In the digital age, there is often a bias between family obligations and work responsibilities among employees. Working mothers face significant pressure to perform well at work while also managing their families. As a result, working mothers experience high levels of stress and anxiety, job burnout, and are unable to achieve the happy and fulfilling family life they desire (Pragathi & Vinayak, 2024). Research by Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2024) shows that digital technology, through devices that are always connected to workers, has a

dual impact on work-life balance. On one hand, this connectivity provides flexibility in balancing work commitments and personal life, making it easier to access work. On the other hand, it can also blur the boundaries between work and personal life, increasing stress due to work demands. Challenges become more complex in the digital age as the boundaries between work and personal time become blurred, leaving many workers feeling overwhelmed and impacting their mental health (Yulistiansyah, 2024).

Increasing work pressure affects women's physical, emotional, and social well-being (Rahmayati, 2021). Additionally, a large survey conducted by the US Department of Labor since the 1990s through the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that working mothers hurt children's cognitive development, such as delayed speech development during the golden age. A study by Maulidiyah, (2022) found that one of the negative impacts of working mothers is their inability to give full attention to their children, even during their rapid growth and development stages.

Early childhood, according to Article 28(1) of Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education, refers to children aged 0–6 years. This period is also known as the golden age of childhood, a crucial stage where the stimulation provided during this time will determine future development (Khoerunissa et al., 2024). In this context, a mother plays a crucial role in ensuring the child's growth and development align with their age. One principle of parenting is spending quality time with the child to create an environment and atmosphere that supports the child's development during the golden age (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2006).

According to a survey by Jakpat, parenting activities place a greater burden on women than men. This indicates that a mother's role is more influential in a child's development. The survey was conducted from February 18–20, 2024, involving 494 respondents who already have children, with a margin of error of less than 5%. The survey offers an interesting perspective on parenting from a gender viewpoint. Mental stress, responsibilities, and social expectations are still mostly carried by women (Wafa, 2025). Research by Milleniva et al., (2023) shows that working women feel pressured when they have to work longer hours while also managing daily family needs, leading to poor work-life balance.

Therefore, achieving work-life balance for working mothers is essential to reducing role conflicts and promoting well-being.

Work-life balance (WLB) is a balanced state of life where an individual can fulfill their responsibilities at work and in the household with minimal role conflicts (Clark, 2000). According to Hudson, (2005) WLB is the level of job satisfaction with different roles in a person's life. Meanwhile, Greenhaus et al., (2003) define work-life balance as the extent to which an individual's performance and satisfaction in their work and family roles are balanced without disrupting either. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to balance work demands and personal life. Employees who maintain a balance between work and personal life tend to be happier, more motivated, and have higher self-confidence (Chasanah, 2025). This is particularly important for working mothers with children in the golden age of the digital era, where technological advancements have blurred the boundaries between personal life and work.

Family support is one of the external factors influencing work-life balance. Findings from a study by Ngangi et al. (2023) indicate that family plays a crucial role in supporting work-life balance. Family support is lifelong support provided by family members to one another, offering assistance directly or indirectly, thereby fostering a sense of care. The actions of family members help individuals align their work responsibilities, thereby improving mental health through positive support from family members (Ramdhaniana & Yuniasanti, 2023). Therefore, women with dual roles require social support from their families to achieve work-life balance (Susilaningrum & Wijono, 2022). Based on research conducted by Abendroth & Den Dulk (2011) and Khairunnisa & Nurdiansyah (2025) on work-life balance satisfaction, it was found that family support has a high relevance to work-life balance.

Internal factors such as self-efficacy can also influence the success of achieving work-life balance. Chandrasekaran et al., (2021) noted in their study that self-efficacy can strengthen work-life balance, as individuals become more confident in their ability to handle the dual demands of work and personal life. Self-efficacy contributes to mature decision-making, efficient time management, and minimizing role conflicts. Employees with high self-efficacy will

have a better ability to maintain work-life balance and reduce work-related stress (Affandi & Sutaningsih, 2023). Individuals with good self-efficacy will have an optimistic attitude in facing challenges, whereas those with lower self-efficacy tend to adopt a pessimistic attitude.

Based on the above discussion, family support and self-efficacy are related to work-life balance among working mothers with children in the golden age in the digital era. Family support provides tangible support and assistance to reduce the physical and mental burdens associated with dual roles. The relationship between family support and self-efficacy also forms an important dynamic. Hapsari & Sarajar, (2024) and Safitri & Citra, (2019) show that working mothers who receive social support tend to have higher self-efficacy. This means that family support can strengthen self-efficacy, which in turn enhances a mother's ability to maintain work-life balance. This model is supported by the findings of Fayaz & Gulzar, (2025), who demonstrated the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between family support and WLB.

From this dynamic, it can be understood that family support not only directly influences WLB but also indirectly through the development of self-efficacy. When a mother feels emotionally and practically supported by her family, she builds the confidence to effectively fulfill her roles.

The phenomenon of work-life balance (WLB) among working mothers in the digital age must be understood through psychological dynamics involving external resources (family support) and internal resources (self-efficacy). Understanding this connection is essential as a foundation for psychosocial interventions and organizational policies that support the well-being of mothers and children in today's era. Therefore, this study simultaneously examines the relationship between family support, self-efficacy, and work-life balance among working mothers with children in the digital age.

In this study, self-efficacy was chosen as a mediator between family support and WLB among working mothers because self-belief plays a crucial role in helping individuals remain optimistic in facing psychological pressures and adapting to the demands of dual roles. With self-efficacy as a mediator, work-life balance levels can be improved. Working mothers can more easily balance the

demands of work and intensive child-rearing in the digital age. This phenomenon of dual roles is an important issue to examine, given its implications for women's quality of life, family dynamics, and policies that support balanced, productive, and reproductive roles.

METHODS

Types of Research

This study uses quantitative methods. According to Sugiyono (2017) Quantitative research is research that focuses on measuring data objectively and systematically. This method is based on positivist philosophy and is used to study a population or sample systematically. Data collection is conducted using research instruments that have been prepared, followed by quantitative or statistical data analysis, with the primary aim of testing the formulated hypotheses.

Research Subject

Population

The population in this study is working mothers who have children of golden age (0-6 years) in Indonesia. This group was chosen because working mothers who have children in this age range face the challenge of dual roles, requiring work-life balance skills. The research population includes working mothers in various employment sectors, both formal and informal, with the criterion of having children of golden age.

Research Sample

In this study, the researchers used non-probability sampling techniques with convenience sampling, which is a method of sampling based on ease of access and availability of respondents. The sample size in this study was determined using a formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This formula was designed to determine the sample size from an unknown population, with a 94% confidence level and a 6% margin of error. Based on these calculations, the sample size for this study was 268 working mothers with children of golden age.

Table 1. Respondent Data Based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	163	61%
31-40	98	37%
41-50	7	3%
Total	268	100%

Based on a total of 268 respondents, 163 people or 61% were aged 21-30 years, 98 people or 37% were aged 31-40 years, and 7 people or 3% were aged 41-50 years.

Table 2. Respondent Data Based on Occupation

Type of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Formal	123	46%
Informal	145	54%
Total	52	100%

Based on a total of 268 respondents, 123 people, or 46%, work in the formal sector, including civil servants, employees of state-owned enterprises, teachers, lecturers, doctors, notaries, nurses, lawyers, and other professionals. A total of 145 people, or 54%, work in the informal sector, including entrepreneurs, factory workers, salespeople, Grab

drivers, freelancers, merchants, self-employed individuals, tailors, and chefs.

Research Instruments

Work-life balance scale: Work-life balance is measured using the WLB scale developed by Fisher et al., (2009), which includes four aspects: (1) Work

Interference with Personal Life (work interference with personal life), (2) Personal Life Interference with Work (personal life interference with work), (3) Work Enhancement of Personal Life (personal life can enhance work), and (4) Personal Life Enhancement of Work (work can enhance personal life quality). The total WL

B scale consists of 17 items and has been modified by the researcher. The test results showed a score of $\alpha = 0.917$, which means that the work-life balance scale has relatively high reliability.

Family support scale: The family support measurement tool was developed by researchers based on Friedman, (2010) theory and aspects, which include four aspects: (1) emotional support in the form of warmth and empathy felt by family members, (2) informational support in the form of advice and information that facilitates decision-making, (3) instrumental support in the form of concrete assistance to meet daily needs, and (4) appreciative support in the form of positive feedback that confirms the ideas and feelings of family members. This scale consists of 46 items, with test results obtaining a score of $\alpha = 0.979$, which means that the family support scale has relatively high reliability.

Self-efficacy scale: The self-efficacy measurement tool uses a scale adapted from Schwarzer & Jerusalem's (1995) General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), based on aspects developed by Bandura (1977). Self-efficacy consists of three aspects: (1) Level, which is the attitude of self-confidence in being able to face levels of difficulty and challenges, (2) Strength, which is strong confidence in one's ability to overcome difficulties and challenges, and (3) Generality, which is self-confidence in being able to solve various kinds of difficulties. The GSE scale consists of 10 items, with the test results obtaining a score of $\alpha = 0.909$, indicating that the self-efficacy scale has relatively high reliability.

This research employs a Likert scale. The Likert scale is a method for measuring attitudes, views, and perceptions of the public or groups regarding the phenomenon being studied. When completing the scale, respondents are asked to choose the statement that best describes their situation. The methodology includes both positive and negative comments. The response options are SS (Strongly Agree), S (Agree), N (Neutral), TS (Disagree), and STS (Strongly Disagree).

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Test Statistics	Values
N (Number of Samples)	268
Mean	0.000
Std. Deviation	7.653
Most Extreme Differences (Absolute)	0.053
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.064

Source: Output SPSS Version 22 IBM for Windows

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test above, a significance value of 0.064 ($p > 0.05$) was obtained. This means that the residual distribution is not significantly different from the normal distribution, so it can be concluded that the

assumption of residual normality is fulfilled. In addition to the statistical test, the normality of the residuals is also supported by the mean residual value, which is very close to zero (0.000), and the standard deviation of 7.653.

Table 4. Linearity Test Results

Variable	F	P	Description
Work Life Balance – Self-efficacy	3,795	0,000	Non-linear
Work Life Balance –Family Support	1,303	0,071	Linear

Source: Output SPSS Version 22 IBM for Windows

The linearity test aims to determine whether the independent and dependent variables have a linear relationship. Decisions can be made in two ways. First, based on the SPSS significance value, if it is > 0.05 , then a linear relationship is declared, while if it is < 0.05 , then it is said to be non-linear. Second,

based on a comparison of the calculated F and table F, if the calculated $F < \text{table } F$, then a linear relationship exists. Otherwise, if the calculated F value is greater than the table F value, then there is no linear relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Hypothesis testing was performed using JASP software through a path analysis approach within a mediation analysis framework. with parameter

estimation using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method and the Delta method approach to calculate standard error and confidence intervals.

Tabel 5. Direct Effects

Path	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
X → Y	0.027	0.002	17.355	< 0.001	0.024	0.030

Source: Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program

The results of the analysis show that family support has a significant direct effect on work-life balance. The estimated value is 0.027, with a standard error of 0.002, $z = 17.355$, and $p < 0.001$. The 95% confidence interval is in the range of 0.024 – 0.030, which does not include zero. These findings indicate that the higher the level of family support

received by working mothers, the higher the perceived balance between work and family roles. These results confirm the hypothesis that social support from the family environment plays a direct and important role in creating work-life balance for mothers amid dual demands.

Table 6. Indirect Effects

Path	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
X - Z - Y	-0.000278	0.000240	-1.158	0.247	-0.000749	0.000193

Source: Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program

Testing of the indirect path shows that self-efficacy does not significantly mediate the relationship between family support and work-life balance. The estimated value for this mediation path is -0.000278, with a standard error of 0.000240, $z = -1.158$, and $p = 0.247$. The 95% confidence interval is -0.000749

- 0.000193, which includes zero. This indicates that the indirect relationship from family support to work-life balance through self-efficacy is not statistically significant. Thus, there is no empirical evidence supporting the mediating role of self-efficacy in this model.

Tabel 7. Path Coefficients

Path	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Z → Y	-0.090	0.042	-2.132	0.033	-0.172	-0.007
X → Y	0.027	0.002	17.355	< 0.001	0.024	0.030
X → Z	0.003	0.002	1.379	0.168	-0.001	0.008

Source: Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program

Further analysis of the mediation pathways shows that: The pathway from family support to self-efficacy yielded an estimate of 0.003, with a standard error of 0.002, $z = 1.379$, $p = 0.168$, thus not significant. Meanwhile, self-efficacy has a significant relationship with work-life balance, with an estimate of -0.090 , standard error 0.042, $z = -2.132$, $p = 0.033$.

This means that self-efficacy has a relationship with work-life balance, while family support does not have a significant relationship with self-efficacy, so the mediation conditions are not met. Therefore, self-efficacy cannot be considered a mediator in this model.

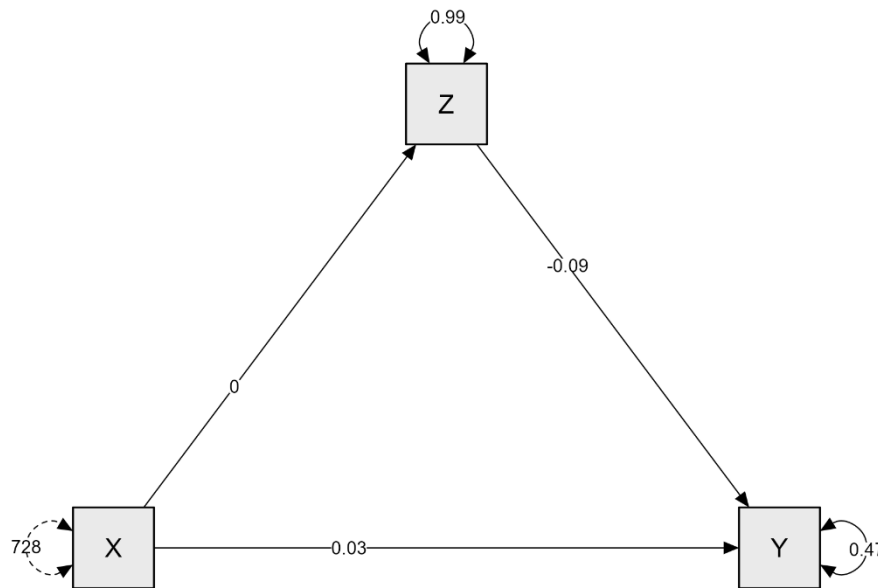


Figure 1. Path Plot

Source: Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that family support contributes significantly to improving work-life balance in working mothers directly, without the mediating role of self-efficacy. Although self-efficacy is related to work-life balance, family support is not related to self-efficacy, indicating that self-efficacy does not bridge the relationship between family support and work-life balance. These findings emphasize the importance of family support as the primary external

source in creating work-life balance for working mothers and open the opportunity for further research to explore other psychological mediators that may be more appropriate in this context.

Discussion

The path analysis results indicate that the first finding shows that self-efficacy does not play a mediating role in the relationship between family support and work-life balance among working mothers with children of golden age in the digital era. Although theoretically, self-efficacy plays an important role in helping individuals manage dual roles through belief in one's own abilities (Bandura, 1977). The results of this study show that such beliefs are not automatically formed through family support. In the context of modern complex life, family support plays a more direct role in shaping life balance than through internal psychological pathways such as self-efficacy. These findings are inconsistent with those of Fayaz & Gulzar, (2025), who stated that self-efficacy can function as a mediator between family emotional support and work-life balance. This indicates that the role of self-efficacy as a mediator can be highly contextual and influenced by other factors such as workload, digital demands, and personal characteristics.

Furthermore, the research results show that family support plays a direct role in improving work-life balance among working mothers. This finding reinforces previous studies, such as those by Khairunnisa & Nurdiansyah (2025) and Ramdhanita & Yuniasanti (2023), which state that family support in the form of practical assistance, emotional empathy, and involvement in child care can alleviate the psychological burden and role of mothers in juggling their dual roles as workers and caregivers. During the child's golden age, the child's physical and emotional needs are at a critical point. The presence of support from a spouse or extended family provides space for mothers to continue fulfilling their productive roles without sacrificing essential childcare aspects.

There is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and work-life balance. This aligns with the

views of Chandrasekaran et al., (2021) and Fitri et al., (2023), who emphasize that self-efficacy is a protective factor that helps individuals manage time, cope with stress, and set priorities effectively. However, in the context of this study, self-efficacy is not strong enough to serve as a mediator between family support and dual role balance. Mothers with high self-efficacy still require concrete support to fulfill their parenting roles amid the pressures of digitalization and complex multitasking.

This finding indicates no significant relationship between family support and self-efficacy. In other words, feeling supported by family does not automatically enhance a mother's confidence in her ability to manage dual roles. This can be explained through the perspective that self-efficacy is more influenced by personal experiences, past achievements, and autonomy in decision-making (Zimmerman, 2000; Bandura, 1977). In this study, self-efficacy appears to be formed through a longer internalization process, not just from social interaction or emotional support.

Based on the above findings, family support is the primary predictor of work-life balance, while self-efficacy does not play a mediating role in this relationship. Family support serves as a tangible external resource that directly contributes to mothers' work-life balance, whereas self-efficacy, although correlated with WLB, cannot mediate the influence of family support. The absence of a mediating role for self-efficacy in this study may also be linked to the psychosocial conditions of working mothers in the digital age, who tend to face blurred boundaries between work and personal life due to technology. These challenges require direct support from partners, parents, or other family members in the form of time, effort, and attention, which cannot be replaced solely by personal belief.

CONCLUSION

This research is driven by the growing urgency of the dual role played by working mothers in the digital age, especially for those with children in their golden years (0–6 years old). During this period, children need intense emotional and physical presence from their parents, while mothers are also expected to perform their professional roles optimally. Technological advancements have expanded workloads into the domestic sphere, blurring the boundaries between personal life and work. In this context, work-life balance (WLB) emerges as a critical issue requiring analysis, particularly from the perspective of social support and internal psychological resources.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between family support and work-life balance among working mothers with children in the golden age, as well as to test whether self-efficacy acts as a mediating variable in this relationship. Based on the path analysis results and discussion, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

Self-efficacy does not act as a mediating variable in the relationship between family support and work-life balance. The indirect path values between family support, self-efficacy, and work-life balance (WLB) were not significant, thus rejecting the hypothesis. This indicates that working mothers' confidence in their abilities is insufficient to bridge the influence of external support on life balance. The complexity of mothers' roles in the digital age appears to require more concrete support than relying solely on internal strength.

There is a significant direct relationship between family support and work-life balance. The path estimation values indicate that family support directly contributes positively to achieving WLB. This strengthens the hypothesis and confirms that family support, whether in the form of emotional or instrumental support, is a key factor in reducing role conflict and creating balance between work responsibilities and child-rearing.

Additionally, there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and work-life balance. Although self-efficacy does not act as a mediator, the results show a significant direct influence between self-efficacy and WLB. This hypothesis is accepted, indicating that an individual's confidence in handling dual role challenges remains an important factor in achieving work-life balance,

even though it is not the primary mediator in this model. Finally, there is no significant relationship between family support and self-efficacy. This suggests that, among the working mothers studied, self-efficacy is not directly influenced by family support. Self-efficacy is more likely influenced by other factors such as personal experience, work environment, or education.

Overall, family support emerges as the strongest predictor of work-life balance, while self-efficacy functions as an additional predictor, not as a mediator linking the relationship between the two. This study reinforces that a social support system-based approach is more relevant to apply in policy design and interventions aimed at improving work-life balance for working mothers.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, the quantitative correlational and cross-sectional research design means that the relationship between variables can only be explained in terms of association, not causality. Therefore, the findings cannot be used to draw absolute conclusions about the direction of the relationship. Second, the use of self-report instruments may increase the potential for social bias and responses that are not entirely objective, particularly among working mothers who may provide idealized answers regarding their self-efficacy or work-life balance. Additionally, the low values for family support and the insignificant self-efficacy indicate that there may be other more relevant variables acting as mediators between family support and work-life balance, such as coping strategies, work flexibility, or religiosity, which were not explored in this study.

Based on the overall findings and considerations of the limitations mentioned above, it can be concluded that family support plays a primary role as a predictor in achieving work-life balance, while self-efficacy does not significantly mediate this relationship. The findings of this study contribute importantly to the development of industrial and family psychology theory, particularly in understanding the dynamics of dual roles among working mothers. Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the concept that family support is a crucial external resource in shaping work-life balance, while also showing that self-efficacy is not always an effective mediator in the context of complex dual pressures, such as those experienced

by working mothers in the digital age. This adds to the understanding that psychological mediation through self-efficacy is contextual and can be influenced by situational and personal characteristics.

Practically, the findings of this study indicate the need for family-based intervention approaches to support the work-life balance of working mothers. Tangible support from family members, whether in the form of emotional or instrumental assistance, or involvement in childcare, needs to be strengthened through family education programs and the development of more flexible and family-friendly work policies. Thus, organizations, policymakers, and psychology professionals can design more contextual strategies to help working mothers achieve a healthy and sustainable role balance.

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