

Harmony in hectic: Exploring the relationship between work-life balance and working mothers' happiness through self esteem as mediator

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Keyword : Happiness, self-esteem, work-life balance, working mother	Abstract Social changes have transformed the role of a mother, leading many to pursue professional paths, often posing challenges in balancing work and personal well-being. The objective of this study was to examine the role of self-esteem in the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and the happiness of working mom. This research used a quantitative approach. The respondents of this study were 200 working mothers aged 21 to 64 years who lived in the Greater Jakarta area. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. The measurement instruments used in this study consisted of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Work-Life Balance Scale. The research hypothesis was tested using Macro PROCESS v4.3 by Hayes. The research revealed that work-life balance significantly impacts the happiness of working mothers and self-esteem acts as a mediator between work-life balance and happiness. These findings indicated that a healthy work-life balance leads to increased satisfaction, acceptance, and self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals feel capable, meaningful, and valuable, leading to a positive affect and a better quality of life, which are the sources of happiness.		
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INTRODUCTION

Over time, the role of a mother is no longer limited to taking care of the household. Not few married women choose to work. The results of a survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) showed an increase in the number of female workers from 50.7 million people in 2020 to 51.9 million people in 2021. This figure shows that women are a potential workforce today. In line with this, Annazah (2021) revealed several reasons that influence a mother's decision to choose to work such as contributing to the family economy, becoming a financially independent woman, making self-development through work, and having higher education diploma that supports women to continue their careers. The concept of "working mothers" refers to women who fulfill the dual roles of motherhood and employment outside of their homes, in addition to their responsibilities in raising their children within the household. The term "working mother" can be described as a female individual who possesses the dual-role capacity, i.e., a professional occupation and childcare.

Based on the results of research conducted by Dr. Sarah Damaske and colleagues from Penn University, women who continue to work after marriage will feel happiness from doing multiple activities, namely being able to make self-development into a financially independent woman and still being able to play an active role in child-care. In the Whitehall II Study, women who took part in the family economy would increase their and their partner's health and happiness by 5%. This expectedly will improve gender roles in the household and reduce

marital tensions that have an unfavorable impact on women (O’Neil et al., 2018). Happiness is an ultimate goal. It is a state that individuals want to achieve based on their subjective assessment of positive emotions and pleasant activities, including past satisfaction, optimism in the future, and pleasure in self-involvement in present activities. According to Seligman (2002), happiness can be conceptualized as a cognitive assessment where an individual perceives their life to be progressing positively, accompanied by an ongoing pursuit of significance and fulfillment, and the frequent experience of happy feelings. Happiness is a concept related to a person's positive emotions that will result in positive activities, so s/he is able to perform other positive activities. It is also an important part to fulfill for a working mother.

Happiness at work is one of the important factors that influence work performance. Someone who works happily will have a positive spirit to complete the work assigned and achieve optimal work performance. Happiness at work is more than just having a sense of pleasure, positive affective experiences, good feelings, and enjoyment because it also means having a meaningful work life. A person is considered a happy person when s/he feels positive emotions repeatedly. A person who has positive emotions has a good life with no visible threats (Saenghiran, 2014). Happiness at work is one of the main requirements for employees to be able to achieve optimal work performance. happy employees will have positive thoughts in the workplace that can spread to other employees. To get happiness, it is necessary to pay attention to several things as stated by Seligman (2002): past satisfaction, present happiness, and future optimism.

A happy wife will affect her household happiness. The results of research by Carr et al. (2014) showed that a wife's high level of life satisfaction and happiness will increase the happiness in marriage. In fact, even in unhappy circumstances, a wife can still do her job properly at home. In other words, in the opposite situation, a happy wife can perform her household role very well. A mother's emotional state greatly impacts her parenting and childcare. Children can develop a strong positive character and have high competitiveness if they get good parenting from a happy mother (Zur Raffar et al., 2021). Unhappy mothers often vent their negative emotions on the family, such as due to stress at work; children at home can be one of those affected by their mother's anger. This can trigger feelings of anxiety and guilt in children (Park & Lee, 2022). It is undeniable that deciding to be a working mother can make work a source of both stress and happiness. Stress arises because of the difficulties in living a dual role, and happiness will arise from the achievements of their dual role (Ditasari et al., 2020). A mother has the responsibility to take care of her household, her children, and her husband.

Working mothers often experience difficulties in playing their dual roles due to challenges from professional work and from their personal lives. Such challenges occur due to their efforts to work with a heavy workload and meet imminent deadlines, while simultaneously still having other roles as mothers and wives, in which they have to take household responsibilities and meet the needs of their children and spouses (Akbar, 2017). Working mothers are faced with dual roles simultaneously, i.e., as a housewife at home and a worker in the office, requiring them to balance their lives. In fact, balancing professional work and household responsibilities is a challenge commonly faced by working mothers. These mothers face conflicts in childcare, maternal-child relationships, social expectations, work-life balance, and family-work stress. A working mother's inability to deal with these conflicts can lead to dual role stress which will have an adverse impact on

her happiness. This issue is increasingly recognized by parents and professionals (Tripathi et al., 2016).

The concept of work-life balance is commonly understood as an opposite of work-life conflict. The notion of achieving equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal activities stems from the recognition that the obligations associated with work and family might give rise to opposing pressures. Since we all play multiple roles in contemporary society—spouse, daughter, mother, father, employee, friend, and husband—conflicts regarding the requirements of these various roles are unavoidable. Achieving a balance between work and family/private life can be challenging. However, the concept of work-life balance encompasses the pursuit of significant accomplishments and satisfaction in four key domains: job, family, friendships, and personal well-being (Otken & Erben, 2013). In fact, achieving balanced dual roles is desired by working mothers (Chasanah et al., 2021), as indicated by a lack of conflicts between each role (Shaleh et al., 2020). The ability to live balanced roles can result in the feeling of satisfaction and meaningful life, allowing working mothers to feel even happier (Hermayanti, 2014).

Work-life balance is a combination of positive approaches from individuals and organizations to achieve a balanced and satisfied work life and personal life beyond the confines of work (Sen & Hooja, 2018). Employees with better work-life balance in organizations more potentially achieve efficient and effective performance, thus contributing more significantly to organizational growth and subsequent success (Naithani, 2010). Employees who have a healthy work-life balance tend to have improved job performance (Susanto et al., 2022). A positive correlation exists between work-life balance and employee performance (Cahyani et al., 2024). When organizations have work-life balance arrangements in place, it can lead to positive impacts on organizational performance (Wong et al., 2020). Work-life balance can improve job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment, while also reducing stress and increasing productivity (Cahyani et al., 2024). A suitable work-life balance will be beneficial and will support employees to work on projects more professionally. When work-life balance is present, employees are more productive (Susanto et al., 2022). Work-life balance and organizational commitment are positively related to employee performance. Work-life balance is the ability of individuals to improve time and behavior in their work and personal lives; these improvements can either disrupt the balance between work and personal life or provide a source of energy for themselves to live their dual roles (Fisher et al., 2009). When working mothers are able to perform their dual roles properly, they will achieve satisfied and meaningful life, allowing them to feel even happier (Hermayanti, 2014).

Work-life balance is how a person can balance the demands of work with personal and family needs. Work-life balance is a state in which a person has entered adulthood and must have a good decision-making skill when there are many difficult choices that will have consequences in the future; this includes dilemmas in family life and dilemmas in professional work. A person must be able to balance her/his situation between family environment and work environment. Conflicts are often found when someone prioritizes work over family. Such conflicts are usually caused by workplace-related pressure. In addition, work-life balance is an individual's subjective assessment of the harmony of work and non-work activities and life in general (Brough et al., 2014). Fisher et al. (2009) suggest that work-life balance is a way for individuals to optimize time and

behavior in their work and personal lives. However, this can either disrupt the balance of their work and personal lives or provide a source of energy for themselves to live their dual roles. Work-life balance has four aspects: work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, work enhancement of personal life, and personal life enhancement of work.

Happiness at work is deemed necessary because, according to the results of research by (Joo & Lee, 2017), the higher the level of happiness at work, the higher the employee productivity. Happy employees can work optimally because they have positive spirit which makes the existing workload easier to do. Happiness at work is more than just having a sense of pleasure, positive affective experiences, good feelings, and enjoyment because it also means having a meaningful work life. Happy employees tend to show greater levels of productivity, generate fresh ideas, strive to get their work done, use different innovative methods to increase effectiveness, and reduce time spent (Saenghiran, 2014).

The ability to accept oneself is one of the key criteria for employees in managing all the demands that arise in both their personal and professional lives. People with a strong sense of self-acceptance are able to suppress the emotions that can come from any expectation imposed on them because they can accept themselves the way they are (Sarwono, 2002). Self-esteem has also been found to influence happiness. A person with higher levels of self-esteem will generally be more satisfied with their life (Diener, 2000). Previous studies have found that people with higher self-esteem feel less depressed and less anxious (Cast & Burke, 2002) and experience greater life satisfaction (Breton, 2007).

The link between work-life balance and employee happiness has been widely discussed, yet the factors that mediate this relationship remain insufficiently explored. Many studies have focused on job satisfaction rather than overall happiness, even though the latter plays a crucial role in organizational success (Adnan Bataineh, 2019). Employees with a good work-life balance often experience greater well-being and show stronger commitment to their work (Alias et al., 2018). However, it is still unclear how work-life balance contributes to happiness, particularly through the role of self-esteem. As a key psychological resource, self-esteem helps individuals navigate the demands of both work and personal life, which may, in turn, strengthen the positive effects of work-life balance on happiness (Orth & Robins, 2022). While existing research acknowledges the significance of work-life balance in promoting employee well-being, only a few studies have examined whether self-esteem acts as a bridge between the two (Joo & Lee, 2017).

This study aimed to investigate the impact of self-esteem on the relationship between work-life balance and the happiness of working mothers to address the gaps identified in prior research and offering a more comprehensive perspective on employee well-being. The research questions of this study are: How does work-life balance affect the happiness of working mothers, and what role does self-esteem play in mediating this relationship? By exploring these dynamics, this study provides valuable insights into the psychological and emotional well-being of working mothers—an increasingly relevant topic in today's workforce.

The findings of this study can help organizations and policymakers develop workplace policies that support work-life balance, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being for employees. Beyond workplace applications, this research also holds personal and social significance. It

highlights the importance of self-esteem in maintaining happiness, offering practical implications for working mothers in managing their personal and professional lives. Additionally, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on these relationships, serving as a foundation for future research on well-being, job satisfaction, and mental health. A deeper understanding of these dynamics benefits not only working mothers but also broader discussions on work-life integration and gender roles in professional settings.

Based on the abovementioned description, the hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H1. Work-life balance affects working mothers' happiness.

H2. Self-esteem positively mediates the relationship between work-life balance and happiness of working mothers.

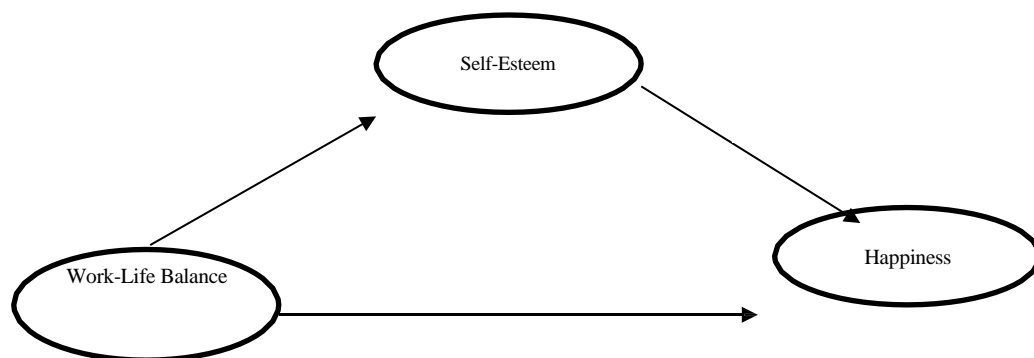


Figure 1 Theoretical 3-variable linkage

METHOD

This study used a quantitative technique due to its ability to characterize research challenges in terms of trends or the need for an explanation of variation correlation. To solve issues and obtain results applicable to a broad range of situations, quantitative research uses exact measuring procedures for variables, regardless of the time, location, or type of data collected (Arsyam & Tahir, 2021). According to Zaluchu (2021), quantitative approaches are typically employed in research that makes use of mathematical analysis and similar techniques, necessitates field measurements via surveys or questionnaires, and concentrates on the empirical and behavioristic details of the phenomena or behaviour being studied. This research employed a quantitative methodology using measurement along with static analysis. This study used a cross-sectional design and analytical correlation as a research method. It is a methodology for simultaneously examining the connection between risk factors and independent and dependent variables.

Participants

The population in this study consisted of working mothers in the Greater Jakarta area. The sample in this study involved 200 working mothers. The inclusion criterion was working mothers aged 21 to 64 years. This age limit was used considering the average age of graduation from college/university, and the limit of

productive working age according to the results of a population census conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2020. This study did not set any inclusion criteria regarding the type of employment, so the respondents came from a variety of professions across both formal and informal sectors, including office workers, educators, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, and freelancers. This approach was used to ensure more representative findings which can provide a broader understanding of the dynamics of work-life balance and happiness among working mothers, without any limitation to a specific type of job. The data collection process used non-probability sampling, specifically the purposive sampling technique. The questionnaires were delivered by both the authors themselves and key persons who possessed convenient access to the targeted respondents.

Measurement

The measurement of happiness in this study was conducted using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (29 items) developed by Hills & Argyle (2002). The present survey assesses the broader dimensions of happiness and seems to capture the concept of eudemonic well-being (Maltby, et al., 2005). The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire refers to the Authentic Happiness theory (Seligman, 2002). This measuring instrument was chosen because it refers to the same theory and aspects as the underlying theory of the research. This study measured several aspects: past satisfaction, present happiness, and future optimism.

The adaptation process of the measurement scales followed a structured approach to ensure their accuracy and cultural relevance. First, the original instruments: the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002), the Work-Life Balance Scale (Fisher et al., 2009), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were translated into the target language by two independent bilingual translators. The two translations were then compared and synthesized into a single, unified version, ensuring consistency while addressing any discrepancies. To further verify the accuracy of the translation, a separate team of bilingual translators conducted a back-translation, converting the text back into the original language. This allowed for a comparison with the source material to check for any unintended shifts in meaning. An expert judgement then reviewed the translated version, focusing on conceptual, semantic, and cultural appropriateness. Any ambiguous wording was refined to better suit the study population. Finally, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents to evaluate the clarity and readability of the adapted scales. Feedback from this stage led to minor adjustments before the final validation process, ensuring that the instruments remained both reliable and meaningful for the participants.

In the present study, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire alpha coefficient was 0.92, indicating excellent internal consistency. This means that the items in the questionnaire consistently measured the construct of happiness. The author conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the construct validity. The first CFA analysis showed a poor model fit, in a Chi-Square value = 191.61 df = 27 P-value = 0.00000 RMSEA = 0.129. This result suggested that the original model did not adequately represent the data. Then we modified the model, resulting in a Chi-Square value = 27.22 df = 18 P-value = 0.07492 and RMSEA = 0.047. This means that the model fit, so this unidimensional model was accepted. Based on the CFA result, the t-values of all the items were >1.96 and there were no items with negative factor loadings except items 25, 26,

28, and 29. This means that all the items except items 25, 26, 28, and 29 could be used for the next stage of measurement.

The Work-Life Balance Scale developed by Fisher et al. (2009) refers to the work-life balance theory of Fisher et al. (2009). This scale consists of 21 items. This study used this WLB scale, with an addition of several items taken from the measuring instrument developed by Dwianti (2020). Click or tap here to enter text.. This scale was adjusted to the criteria of the research subject, with a scale of 1 to 4, with four aspects of work-life balance, namely work interference with personal life, personal life enhancement by work, work enhancement by personal life, and personal life interference with work. The Cronbach's alpha of Work-Life Balance Scale was 0.88, meaning that the items within the scale were reliable in terms of measuring the work-life balance construct. Further, the author conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the construct validity, ensuring that the scale measured the intended dimensions of work-life balance. Initially, the model showed poor fit, with Chi-Square value = 29.12, $df = 5$, $P\text{-value} = 0.00002$, $RMSEA = 0.144$. Since the model did not meet the validity criteria, modifications were made 3 times to improve the model fit. After 3 modifications, the final CFA results showed Chi-Square value = 0.61 $df = 2$, $P\text{-value} = 0.73544$, and $RMSEA = 0.000$. This means that the model fit, so the unidimensional model was valid and appropriate for the study. Based on CFA result, the t -values of all the items were >1.96 and there were no items with negative factor loadings except items 17, 19, and 20. This means that all the items except items 17, 19, and 20 could be used for the next stage of measurement.

The RSES, developed by Rosenberg, is a 10-item self-report measure of global self-esteem. Items are rated from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). In the present study, the RSES alpha coefficient was 0.80. Examples of items include: "I can do things as well as most other people."; "I take a positive attitude toward myself. This means that the items in the questionnaire consistently measured the self-esteem constructs. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess construct validity, ensuring that the scale appropriately measures the unidimensional global self-esteem constructs. Several statistical indicators were examined: Chi-Square value = 0.49, $df = 2$, $P\text{-value} = 0.78194$, $RMSEA = 0.000$. Based on these results, the model fit suggested that the unidimensional model of self-esteem was valid for this study. Based on the CFA result, the t -values of all the items were >1.96 and there were no items with negative factor loadings. Since all the items met the criteria, the scale was deemed appropriate for further analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

The researcher used descriptive analysis to process the demographic data using SPSS 23.0. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the work-life balance, self-esteem, and happiness scales were assessed using a factor analysis method known as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – the results are described in the instrument section. This analysis was conducted using Lisrel 8.80 software. The internal consistency of the scales was also evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure reliability. A Cronbach's Alpha value of ≥ 0.70 was considered an acceptable level of reliability, indicating that the scales used in the study were internally consistent and suitable for measuring the intended constructs.

Furthermore, the research hypothesis was tested using PROCESS Macro v4.3 by Hayes. The research

hypothesis was tested using the PROCESS v4.3 software developed by Hayes (2013), which involves conducting a direct regression analysis with a moderating effect. The PROCESS macro is regarded as the most recent and simplest test that offers several program possibilities due to its one-step operation (Hayes, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, in terms of age, the majority of the respondents were in the age range of 21-35 years with a total of 129 respondents (54.9%), followed by the age range of 36-50 years with a total of 99 respondents (42.1%), and the age range of 50-64 years with a total of 7 respondents (3%). In terms of working time, the respondents were divided into three groups, namely full-time employment (>40 hours / week) with the highest percentage of 72.8% (171 respondents), followed by part-time employment (<40 hours / week) with a percentage of 26.8% (63 respondents), and irregular employment with a percentage of 0.4% (1 respondent).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

No	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	21-35 years old	100
		36-50 years old	93
		50-64 years old	7
2	Full-time/Part-time	Part-time(<40hour/week)	63
		Full-time(>40hour/week)	136
		Irregular	1
3	Domicile	Jakarta	47
		Bogor	42
		Depok	37
		Tangerang	66
		Bekasi	43

Source: Data (2023)

Table 2 presents the results of testing hypothesis 1, i.e., the impact of work-life balance on working mothers' happiness. The analysis revealed ($p < 0.05$) a statistically significant and positive relationship between work-life balance and happiness among working mothers in Greater Jakarta. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 2. Mediation Analysis

	Antecedent				Consequence		
	Coeff	SE	P		Coeff	SE	P
Work-Life Balance	.30	.02	.00	c'	.48	.08	.00
Self Esteem	-	-	-	b	1.39	.18	.00
Constant	13.13		1.48		9.16	4.75	.06
			R2 = .38				R2 = .49
F (1, 256) = 159.06, $p < 0.05$					F (1, 255) = 123.21, $p < 0.05$		

Total Effect = .90, LLCI = .75, ULCI = 1.04

Indirect Effect = .41, LLCI = .30, ULCI = .54

Source: Data (2023)

As shown in Table 2, self-esteem partially mediated the effect of work-life balance on happiness in working mothers, so H2 was accepted. The R2 value in column M (Self-Esteem) was 0.38, indicating that 38% of the variance of self-esteem was explained by work-life balance, while the R2 value in column Y (Happiness) was 0.49, indicating that 49% of the variance of happiness was explained by self-esteem and work-life balance. Based on the analysis of the mediating effect in Table 2, there was a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.30$; $p < 0.05$); work-life balance and happiness ($\beta = .48$; $p < 0.05$); as well as self-esteem and happiness ($\beta = 1.39$; $p < 0.05$).

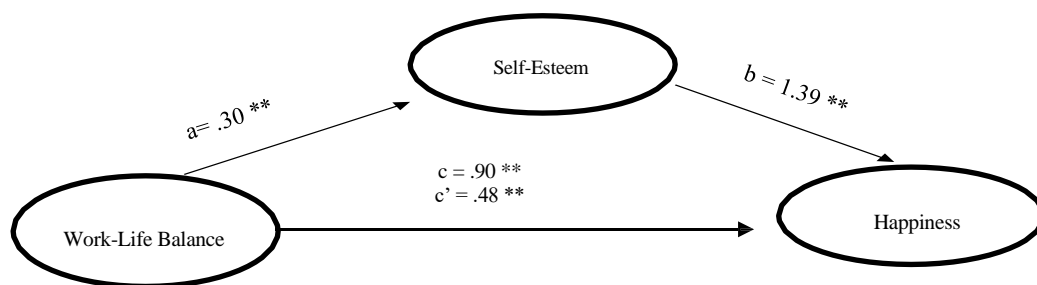


Figure 2. Mediating effect of self-esteem

Notes: ** $p < 0.05$

Furthermore, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between work-life balance and self-esteem mediated by happiness ($\beta = 0.90$; $p < 0.05$). If the coefficient value c' decreases but is still significant ($c' \neq 0$), it is stated that partial mediation occurs (Kim, 2016). Based on the results of this study, there was a decrease in the value of c (previously 0.90 to 0.48). This means that the effect of work-life balance on happiness reduced due to the presence of self-esteem variables.

This study examined the mediating effects of self-esteem on the relationship between work-life balance and happiness in working mothers. As expected, the correlational findings of this study showed that work-life balance had a relationship with self-esteem and happiness. These results are consistent with previous studies, that reported an association between work-life balance and self-esteem (Sharma & Afroz, 2019) and happiness (Dhingra & Dhingra, 2021; Otken & Erben, 2013; Ullah & Siddiqui, 2020). In this study, work-life balance was one of the important factors in creating a balanced quality of life between work life and family or personal life. Research conducted by Otken & Erben (2013) also demonstrates that work-life balance has a positive impact on happiness. Happy individuals tend to live longer and live healthier lives because they have balanced family life and work life (Achor, 2010). This finding is consistent with the theory of role enhancement, as proposed by Sieber in (Quach, 2017), which suggests that the roles individuals undertake can have a positive influence on their overall well-being. Individuals' engagement in diverse roles contributes to heightened energy levels and facilitates the acquisition of enriching experiences. The findings of this study indicated a strong correlation between work-life balance and happiness.

The results of this study are also in line with Hutagalung (2022) who states that employees who have

competence, motivation, and a comfortable environment from their personal lives will experience an increase in the sense of comfort at work and a decrease in stress levels, making it easier for them to feel happy. Working mothers who can run their personal lives well will have the motivation to improve their competence. The ability of working mothers to handle household tasks properly will make them feel more comfortable at work, help them manage work stress properly, and help them achieve better career, eventually allowing them to feel happiness. In line with research by Elnanto & Suharti (2021), work-life balance can reduce stress and increase happiness. This can create conditions where working moms have energy and positive feelings when they spend time with their family.

Based on the result of this study, self-esteem partially mediated the effect of work-life balance on happiness in working mothers. The analysis revealed that the direct impact of work-life balance on happiness was comparatively smaller than the indirect impact of work-life balance on happiness (0.90 to 0.48). This finding highlighted the significance of self-esteem in mediating the association between work-life balance and happiness. This can be attributed to the influence of external factors on work-life balance, which is particularly challenging for working mothers due to a range of circumstances that are often beyond their control. According to Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2004), individuals possess a reasonably stable nature, which enables them to adapt to environmental changes appropriately. Therefore, it may be argued that internal variables have a relatively bigger influence on the happiness of working mothers compared to external circumstances.

The finding of this study is in line with studies by Otken and Erben (2013), Elnanto and Suharti (2021) and Sharma and Afroz (2019), which show that work-life balance is related to self-esteem and happiness, while self-esteem is related to happiness. Self-esteem acts as a mediator between work-life balance and happiness. When a person feels capable of managing her/his work and personal life, and at the same time has strong self-esteem, this can create an environment where happiness can flourish. When one can give enough time to oneself, it can increase the feeling of self-worth and self-value, which can strengthen self-esteem. With a good work-life balance, a person can achieve success both at work and in personal life. This achievement can provide a positive boost to self-esteem as one feels able to cope with various roles and responsibilities successfully. With increased self-esteem, one tends to have a more stable emotional foundation, which can strengthen her/his overall happiness (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

When a working mother can achieve a good balance between work and personal life, this can provide a feeling of competence and worth. In this case, self-esteem may increase when the mother believes in her capacity to successfully play her dual role as a worker and mother. Being able to achieve balance in this dual role can create a positive sense of accomplishment, which can improve self-esteem and result in satisfaction (Khan et al., 2021). Work-life balance allows working moms to have time for themselves, pursue hobbies, or take a break. This can provide opportunities to soak in positive moments, strengthen self-esteem, and increase overall happiness. A good work-life balance in working mothers can form a solid foundation for increased self-esteem and happiness.

When working mothers can properly manage work and family responsibilities, it creates a feeling of competence and worth (Wang et al., 2022). The control that work-life balance gives over personal time and

decisions helps increase feelings of independence and competence. Flexibility in work arrangements provides space to pursue personal interests and self-care. By successfully playing the dual role as a worker and mother, working mothers can feel a sense of fulfillment and pride, which in turn contributes to improved self-esteem and increased overall happiness.

Although the findings of this study indicated that self-esteem served as a mediator in the relationship between work-life balance and happiness among working mothers, some studies have reported different results. For instance, research by Gröpel & Kuhl (2009) suggests that, under certain conditions, conflicts between work and personal life can negatively impact individual well-being. This implies that work-life balance does not always contribute positively to happiness, particularly when other factors such as high job pressure or financial instability play a more dominant role in shaping overall well-being. These varying research findings highlight that while self-esteem plays a crucial role in the mediation process, external factors may either weaken or strengthen this relationship. Therefore, further research that takes contextual factors into account is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics between work-life balance, self-esteem, and happiness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and hypothesis testing, there is a significant influence of work-life balance on the happiness of working mothers. Self-esteem acts as a mediator between work-life balance and happiness. When a person feels capable of managing his/her work and personal life, and at the same time has strong self-esteem, this can create an environment where happiness can flourish. When working mothers who play dual roles as a mother and worker can achieve job satisfaction or have a healthy work-life balance, it will influence the acceptance by others and belief in themselves, thus allowing them to contribute positively with high self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals who believe they are capable, meaningful, and valuable feel good about themselves (positive affect) by experiencing a better quality of life. Positive affect and perceived good quality of life are some of the sources of happiness.

This study has limitations, namely a population with an overly broad scope and demographic information about working mothers that was not explored in depth. The author did not search for particular demographic information which may have an influence on the happiness of working mothers, such as the number of children, age of children, and length of work. However, all the limitations of this study do not cast doubt on the theories used that have been existed previously. The results of this study expectedly increase working mothers' awareness of the importance of true happiness for their lives. Working mothers will feel happier when they are able to balance their dual roles properly between work and personal life as well as when they receive support from their husbands to perform these roles. When working mothers are aware of work-related matters that may interfere their personal lives, they can then anticipate them and try to find solutions, so these matters will not disrupt their personal lives. For examples, good time management so they can set working time limit, a schedule of time spent with family, and a schedule for me-time to take a break from the dual role routine. For working mothers, it is good to know how to make their work have a positive impact on them when they return home after work. By doing so, they can enjoy their personal life better,

without any work-related burden that may disturb them. This can be done by creating a comfortable work environment that keeps them happy during work until it is time to go home and and by having a suitable job, so it is easier for them to be grateful and happy.

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