

# Female Employees' Work-Family Balance: The Role of Authentic Leadership During Work from Home (WFH)

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine whether perceived authentic leadership affects work-family balance for female employees while working from home. This study was a quantitative research with an online survey method. A total of 89 married women participants filled out the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) and the Work-family Balance Scale. Data analysis is performed with simple linear regression analysis using SPSS version 25. This study showed that the level of perceived authentic leadership influence on work-family balance for female employees during work from home is 9.1%, while 90.9% is influenced by other factors not explained in this study. Further research may explore the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire and its potential as predictor for other variables in various setting.

**Keywords:** *Authentic leadership, work-family balance, work from home*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 Pandemic has brought so many impacts and changes in every aspect of human lives. One of the changes is the limitation of social activity in the communal area, including the office or work environment. The limitation of social activity is one of the recommendations that World Health Organization states to minimize the infection of the coronaviruses [26]. In Indonesia, the implementation of WHO recommendations resulted in social activity restriction program, which also applied in working activity. As a result, the concept of *Working from Home* or WFH is applied in many offices. As a part of *telecommuting*, the concept of WFH is a process of where workers or employees manage their responsibility and task without leaving their residence by utilizing the usage of the technology [13,14]

Although the goal of WFH is to minimize the infections of coronavirus, the application of WFH might affect employees negatively. Previous studies show that the employees have difficulties managing the boundaries of their working hours and a clear line between their work, family, and other problems, which results in overwork and demotivation [14,22].

Furthermore, the employee is likely to lose their focus during work since they face much more distraction during WFH that frequently comes from their family [23].

The serious challenge for the employees during WFH is the difficulties in controlling their role as workers and as family members. The conflict of the role became much more complex since both roles are lived in the same place. Thus, WFH violates the line between both roles, which can drain employees' psychological resources [17].

The conflict between work and family roles is closely related to the concept of *work-family balance*. *Work-family balance* is generally defined as the involvement of two roles and the sense of satisfaction in conducting those roles, which are characterized by a minimum amount of conflict [11,15,24]. Thus, it consists of three components: *time balance*, *involvement balance*, and *satisfaction balance* [15]. The concept of work-family balance is required for male and female employees since it can help them work effectively and feel satisfied in their two roles [16,19].

Although both genders need it, the result might have differed. Several studies show that female employees have a lower work-family balance compared to male employees since they experience a higher level of conflict between two roles [17,18].

Those results were established because female employees tend to have a significant role in parenting and value their work more than male employees [10]. In the WFH context, female employees' work-family balance might worsen since it became more uncontrollable and resulted in increased workload along with their household work [1].

As the employees' psychological resources are already drained because of WFH and conflict of role, the presence of a leader can be essential to secure or even improve employee psychological state. Based on *job-demands resources theory*, a leader can function as job resources that can provide social support, which can stimulate positive empowerment for the employee, such as employee's personal growth, learning and development, job performance, motivation, health, and achieving work objectives [5-8]. One of the most effective resources for supporting employees' psychological is *authentic leadership* [12]. The reason is that authentic leadership possesses characteristics such as being transparent, fair, and aware of self-development.

Authentic leadership can be defined as the leadership style that emphasizes strength and awareness of human potential [4,9]. Furthermore, this type of leadership consists of several components such as *self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective* [25].

In the study conducted by Lyu, Wang, Le, and Kwan, H. K. [21], *authentic leadership* can be an essential resource for minimizing the conflict between work and family roles or, in other words improving the work-family balance. In that context, *authentic leadership* is a part of the organizational initiative to improve employee work-family balance. Furthermore, the presence of a good leader, especially with authentic style, is important for female employees compared to male employees. Female employees perceive the leader as an important source of support, especially for their psychological state [12]. It can be assumed that a lower work-family balance that tends to be experienced by the female employee can be developed with the *authentic leadership style*.

Based on the explanation above, this study focuses on examining the effect of the perception of authentic leadership style on the work-family balance among female employees during work from home.

*Hypothesis: Authentic leadership style will contribute to work-family balance among female employees during work from home.*

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Procedure and Participant

The present study used a cross-sectional survey design where the data was collected directly by the researchers from 311 employees from Celebes Island, Indonesia. The survey was conducted using an online platform (google form) and was held from March to May 2021. The sampling method in this study was purposive sampling, and the numbers were determined with power analysis using G\*Power 3.1 software. With the  $\alpha$  level of .05, power of .95, medium effect size (.15), and one predictor in regression, the estimated sample size needed for this study was 89 participants.

A total of 331 employees completed the online surveys from several companies in Celebes Island, Indonesia, either from a public company or state-owned company. From the total 331 respondents, only 89 female employees and have a marital status selected for the hypothesis testing. Among female employees who completed, 63% work for private companies, and 37% work for a state-owned company. As for their intensity working from home, only 8% fully worked from home, 15% worked from home for 3 to 4 days, 39% had a permanent shift to come to the office, and 38% almost fully worked in the office.

### 2.2. Measurement

*Authentic Leadership Questionnaire* is a 16 item self-reported questionnaire developed by Walumbwa et al. [25]. The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire is designed to measure employee perspective toward the supervisor's leadership style and consists of four elements: *self-awareness, transparency, ethical/moral, and balance processing*. The ALQ presented in a Likert-Scale with four types of responses available on each item, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). This study used the adapted and translated version of ALQ by Adriansyah [2]. The adapted version has an items factor loading range from .836 to .949 with AVE .701. Using 311 respondents from this study, only 15 items have factor loading above .05 with RMSEA .071. After eliminating one item with a factor loading value below .05, the RMSEA value changed to .056.

**Work-Family Balance Scale** was originally constructed by Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw [15]. that consists of three elements: *time balance*, *involvement balance*, and *satisfaction balance*. The scale presented in a Likert-Scale with four types of responses available on each item range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The adapted version was composed of 17 items with a *corrected total-item correlation* value range from .305 to .677 and *Cronbach alpha* value .860. The CFA was performed using 311 respondents to see the validity and reliability of the scale in this sample. Only ten items have factor loading above .05 with RMSEA .144. After eliminating 7 item that has factor loading below .05, the RMSEA value changed to .054.

**2.3. Data Analysis**

The data from 89 female employees were statistically analyzed with linear regression analysis. The assumptions of the test were fulfilled, both normality test and linearity test. The data were normally distributed with a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test value above .05 (sig. .093), and it was also linear with a linearity test value below .05 (.003) and deviation from linearity above .05 (.489). The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v.25 for Windows.

**3. RESULT**

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis results on the *perceived authentic leadership* variable, the researcher normalized the scores using the mean and standard deviation of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) scale. In the descriptive data table above, the mean value of the ALQ scale is 46.07 (rounded to 46), and the standard deviation is 6.134.

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis results on the *Work-Family Balance* variable, the researcher normalized the scores using the mean and standard deviation of the Work-Family Balance (WFB) scale. In the descriptive data table above, the mean value of the WFB scale is 29.65 (rounded to 30), and the standard deviation is 5.240.

The Linear Regression Analysis shows a significant model ( $F(1,87) = 9.85, p < .01$ ). The analysis also shows R Square value (0.102) and Adjusted R Square is (0.091). This value shows that the contribution of authentic leadership perceptions with Work-Family Balance simultaneously is 9.1%, the remaining 90.9% explains other things besides authentic leadership perceptions with Work-Family Balance. The analysis also shows that Authentic leadership predicts Work-Family Balance significantly ( $t = 3.138, p < .01$ ), with the coefficient value of the effect of authentic leadership perception on Work-Family Balance being 0.272.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

Variable	Min. Value	Max. Value	Mean	SD
Authentic Leadership	15	60	46.07	6.134
Work-Family Balance	19	40	29.65	5.240

Note: N=89 (all female); Mean= the average value of total score; SD= standard deviation;

**Table 2.** Linear regression analysis

Variable	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Std. Error of the Estimate
			.32	.10	9.85**	
Authentic Leadership*Work-Family Balance	.27**	3.14				4.995

Note: N=89; dependent variable= Work-Family Balance; \*\*\*p< .001, \*\*p< .01 and \*p< .05; Significance of estimates was based on 95% confidence of interval.

**4. DISCUSSION**

The global Covid-19 pandemic is an epidemic that has attacked almost all countries in the world, including Indonesia [20]. Thus, most activities are conducted from home, including work. The employees were asked to WFH.

Employees who did WFH during Covid-19 indicated that one of the distractors during WFH came from the family [23]. Women experience role conflict during WFH [1]. Gender roles and *work-family interference* have made WFH challenging for some individuals, especially for many female employees. Unlike men, female employees are expected to take

care of their families while maintaining regular performance. The WFH mode can violate work/family boundaries, create high demands, and drain employees' psychological resources [12].

This study obtained results from respondents with WFH backgrounds ranging from 25-100%. This is in accordance with the researchers' estimates based on several references that the difficulty or low *work-family balance* for married women during WFH.

Regarding the JD-R theory, female employees need the support of the leader. At the same time, leader authenticity is a significant psychological resource. Compared to male employees, female employees see leadership as an important source of support, especially for their psychological state [12]. In addition, some studies reveal that an *authentic leadership* style can be a resource for *work-family balance* [21].

Based on the regression test, there is an effect of *perceived authentic leadership* style on *work-family balance* for female employees during WFH. It is marked with a significance value of 0.002. In addition, there is an effect of perception of authentic leadership style on work-family balance for female employees during WFH by 9.1%. This means that the research hypothesis is accepted.

The results of this study are consistent with previous studies. Previous studies showed that the *perceived authentic leadership* style had a significant effect on *work-family balance* for female employees during WFH [3]. *Authentic leadership* styles become resources for *work-family balance* [21].

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research that has been described previously, there are several conclusions in this study. There is an effect of perception of *authentic leadership* style on *work-family balance* for female employees during WFH by 9.1%. This means that the research hypothesis is accepted. In this study, the researcher realized there were some limitations obtained during the research process. The spread of measuring instruments online makes researchers unable to control the situation of respondents in filling out measuring instruments. In addition, many items are dropped because they are invalid.

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