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Integrating Occupational Stress, Social Support, and Work Family Conflict in Identifying Employees Mental Health Problems

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ABSTRACT

Worker mental health is an important issue in modern human resource management because it is influenced by work pressure, dual role demands, and the quality of social relationships in the work environment. Based on the Stress-Buffering Model, this study examines how Occupational Stress, Social Support, and Work Family Conflict interact in shaping the mental health conditions of employees at Islamic-based educational institutions. This study aims to analyze the direct influence of Occupational Stress on Mental Health Problems and examine the mediating role of Social Support and Work Family Conflict. A quantitative approach was used through SEM-PLS 3 involving 225 employees of an Islamic Educational Institution in Cilacap Regency who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The results of the study show that Occupational Stress has a significant positive effect on mental health problems. Occupational Stress has also been shown to decrease Social Support and increase Work Family Conflict. In addition, social support has a significant negative effect on mental health problems, while Work Family Conflict has a significant positive effect. Mediation analysis shows that both act as mediating mechanisms in the relationship between Occupational Stress and Mental Health. These findings strengthen the relevance of the Stress-Buffering Model and emphasize the importance of organizational strategies that focus on strengthening Social Support and creating Work Family role balance to improve Employee Psychological Well-being.

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Introduction

Mental health issues in the workplace have become a serious global concern (Bagis, 2025). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reports that around 15% of the global workforce experiences mental disorders, mainly due to work pressure and an imbalance between work and personal life. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic through increased

workloads, economic uncertainty, and changes in work systems such as remote working and digitalization (He et al. 2023; Costin et al. 2023; Abdou et al. 2024). Cross-national studies consistently show that occupational stress is a major predictor of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and burnout (He et al. 2023; Wang & Zhang 2025). Prolonged stressful

conditions also lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover intention (Abdou et al. 2024; Afriandika et al. 2025).

The imbalance between professional demands and personal life often gives rise to Work Family Conflict (Bagis, 2024). When work demands increase and time flexibility decreases, individuals experience role conflict that negatively affects their psychological well-being (Abdou et al. 2024; Wang & Zhang 2025). In contrast, social support plays a crucial role as a buffer against the negative effects of occupational stress. Based on the Stress-Buffering Model (Cohen and Wills 1985), adequate support from coworkers, supervisors, and family can reduce stress and strengthen psychological resilience (He et al. 2023; Costin et al. 2023; Ramadhan et al. 2025).

A similar phenomenon is also evident in Indonesia, particularly in the education sector and Islamic-based institutions, which face high work pressure, moral responsibility, and demands to adapt to the digitalization of learning. Kementrian Ketenagakerjaan (2024) reported an increase in complaints related to occupational stress and emotional exhaustion among educators and foundation employees. Workers in educational institutions often encounter administrative burdens, social pressures, and societal expectations regarding learning quality, which ultimately reduce their psychological well-being (Siswanto et al. 2022; Wang & Zhang 2025; Pradana et al., 2025).

This condition is also experienced by an Islamic Educational Institution in Cilacap Regency. As an institution that oversees various school levels and work units, employees face both professional burdens and spiritual responsibilities. High work pressure, dual roles between work and family, and moral obligations as educators have the potential to generate occupational

stress that affects mental health. In addition, limited organizational resources and the dynamics of foundation-based management contribute to psychological pressure among employees.

Although the relationships among occupational stress, social support, work family conflict, and mental health have been widely examined, most previous studies have focused on industrial and government sectors (Siswanto et al. 2022; He et al. 2023; Wang & Zhang 2025). This creates a research gap, as the context of Islamic educational institutions has distinct social, cultural, and spiritual characteristics that may influence employees' psychological experiences. Furthermore, previous findings regarding the mediating roles of social support and work family conflict remain inconsistent (He et al. 2023), indicating the need for further investigation in religious value-based educational settings.

The Stress-Buffering Model (Cohen & Wills, 1985) explains that social support functions as a buffer against the negative impact of occupational stress on mental health. Individuals with higher levels of social support tend to have better coping abilities and maintain psychological well-being (He et al. 2023; Costin et al. 2023). This theoretical framework is applied to explain the mediating roles of social support and work–family conflict in the relationship between occupational stress and mental health among employees of an Islamic Educational Institution in Cilacap Regency.

This study is important because employees psychological well-being directly affects performance quality and organizational climate in educational institutions. Moreover, this research offers novelty in three main aspects: (1) it focuses on the context of Islamic educational institutions, which has rarely been examined in occupational mental health studies; (2) it employs a dual

mediation model by integrating social support and work–family conflict; and (3) it provides practical contributions for developing adaptive and sustainable strategies for managing employee psychological well-being.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of occupational stress on the mental health of employees at an Islamic Educational Institution in Cilacap Regency and to examine the dual mediating roles of social support and work family conflict. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on occupational stress and mental health through a dual mediation approach, while practically it offers recommendations for strengthening social support policies and work family balance to improve employees' psychological well-being.

Literature Review

Stress-Buffering Theory

Stress-Buffering Theory was put forward by Cohen and Wills (1985), explaining that social support functions as a psychological protection mechanism that is able to reduce or "buffer" the negative impact of stress on an individual's mental well-being. When someone faces high work pressure, adequate social support can reduce threat perception, strengthen coping strategies, and maintain emotional stability. In work organizations, including one of the Islamic educational institutions in Cilacap Regency, pressure can arise from administrative burdens, moral responsibilities, and the spiritual expectations of the community. Employees who have strong social support from coworkers, leaders, and family will feel more valued, thus being able to adapt to the emotional pressures that arise (He et al. 2023; Abdou et al. 2024). Conversely, a lack of social support makes it easier for stress to develop into mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout (Moseley et al. 2021).

Social support is one of the main resources that strengthens psychological resilience to occupational stress (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985; Abdou et al. 2024). Therefore, this theory is relevant for explaining the relationship between occupational stress, social support, work family conflict, and mental health in the context of employees of Islamic educational institutions.

Occupational Stress and Mental Health Problems

Occupational Stress is defined as a state of psychological tension when job demands exceed an individual's ability to adapt (Karasek 1979). Prolonged occupational stress can cause emotional disorders such as fatigue, anxiety, and depression, which lead to decreased motivation and productivity (Bagis et al. 2024; Zhang et al. 2020; He et al. 2023). In educational settings, work pressure often stems from the moral responsibility of educating, policy changes, and the digitalization of learning (He et al. 2023). Several studies have shown that Occupational Stress has a positive influence on mental health disorders (Costin et al. 2023; Wang and Zhang 2025). Thus, the higher the Occupational Stress, the greater the potential for psychological problems to arise among employees of Islamic educational institutions. This relationship between occupational stress and mental health is consistent with stress-buffering theory, which asserts that when job demands exceed an individual's adaptive capacity, the stress will develop into a psychological disorder due to inadequate recovery resources.

H1: Occupational Stress has a significant positive effect on Mental Health Problems.

Occupational Stress and Social Support

Social support reflects an individual's perception of the attention, appreciation, and assistance received from others (Cobb 1976). In the work environment, this support can be

emotional, instrumental, or informational. However, when occupational stress increases, perceptions of social support tend to decrease because individuals feel exhausted, isolated, and experience interpersonal tension (Moseley et al. 2021). Cross-cultural research shows a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and social support (He et al. 2023; Abdou et al. 2024). In Islamic educational institutions, employees facing spiritual and moral pressures without adequate social support are more susceptible to psychological distress (Wang and Zhang 2025; Hakim et al. 2025). Therefore, increased job stress has the potential to reduce individuals' perceived social support.

H2: Occupational stress has a significant negative effect on social support.

Social Support and Mental Health Problems

Social support has an important role in maintaining an individual's psychological balance. Based on Stress-Buffering Theory, strong social support can reduce the impact of external stressors and help individuals interpret work pressure more positively (Cohen & Wills 1985). Several studies have shown that employees with high social support have a lower risk of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and burnout (Duchaine et al. 2020; He et al. 2023). Social support also reduces depressive symptoms (Laham et al. 2021; Alnazy et al. 2021). In Islamic educational institutions, social support based on the values of brotherhood and empathy becomes a spiritual strength that strengthens mental resilience. Therefore, the higher the social support, the lower the likelihood of developing mental health disorders. This relationship aligns with Stress-Buffering Theory, which explains that social support functions as a psychological buffer that can reduce the perception of threat from stress, thus maintaining an individual's mental health when social support is high.

H3: Social support has a significant negative effect on mental health problems.

Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict

Work Family Conflict (WFC) is defined as a condition where work demands interfere with roles and responsibilities within the family (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). High work pressure, time burden, and excessive responsibilities often make it difficult for individuals to maintain a balance between work and personal life (Nikmah et al., 2021). Abdou et al. (2024) found that long working hours and organizational pressure increase the potential for work family conflict, especially in the education sector. In Islamic educational institutions, employees often experience a dilemma between professional responsibilities and family obligations, which strengthens the emergence of role conflict. Therefore, the higher the occupational stress, the greater the likelihood of work family conflict. The relationship between occupational stress and work family conflict is in line with the Stress Buffering Theory which explains that when work demands exceed an individual's adaptive capacity, the pressure drains psychological resources, thus triggering an imbalance in roles between work and family.

H4: Occupational Stress has a significant positive effect on Work Family conflict.

Work Family Conflict and Mental Health Problems

Work family conflict is one of the psychosocial factors most strongly influencing workers' mental health. When individuals fail to balance professional and domestic roles, stress arises which can trigger fatigue, depression, and insomnia (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Antino et al. 2022). In the post-pandemic era, these tensions have intensified due to digital responsibilities and moral pressures in education. He et al. (2023) and

Ng et al. (2021) confirm that work family conflict has a direct influence on increased symptoms of anxiety and depression. This means that the higher the role conflict experienced by employees, the greater the potential for mental health disorders to arise. The link between work family conflict and mental health problems aligns with Stress-Buffering Theory, as unmanaged role tension weakens an individual's ability to utilize protective resources, thereby increasing vulnerability to psychological symptoms.
H5: Work Family conflict has a significant positive effect on mental health problems.

The Mediating Role of Social Support

The Stress-Buffering Theory explains that social support not only has a direct influence on mental health, but can also mediate the relationship between Occupational Stress and psychological disorders (Cohen and Wills 1985). High social support can weaken the negative influence of Occupational Stress on psychological well-being by increasing individual self-control and adaptability (Zou et al. 2022; Moseley et al. 2021). In Islamic educational institutions, interpersonal relationships based on religiosity and empathy strengthen the role of social support as a spiritual buffer against work pressure. Therefore, social support functions as a mediating variable that can reduce the impact of Occupational Stress on employee mental health.

H6: Social support mediates the relationship between Occupational Stress and Mental Health Problems.

The Role of Work Family Conflict Mediation

In addition to social support, work family conflict can also function as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between occupational stress and mental health (He et al. 2023; Abdou et al. 2024). As work pressure increases, individuals have less time and energy to fulfill family responsibilities, triggering guilt and emotional stress (Bagis,

2024). Prolonged role conflict can create a repetitive cycle of stress and worsen psychological well-being (Antino et al. 2022). In Islamic educational institutions, the dilemma between da'wah responsibilities and family obligations often increases the intensity of work family conflict. Thus, work family conflict acts as a mediator that strengthens the influence of occupational stress on mental health disorders. The mediating role of work family conflict can be explained through the Stress Buffering Theory because work pressure that is not supported by coping resources encourages the emergence of role imbalance which then strengthens the impact of occupational stress on worsening mental health.

H7: Work Family conflict mediates the relationship between occupational stress and mental health problems.

Research methods

This study is a replication of a study conducted by He et al. (2023) using a quantitative approach. The primary focus of this study is to examine the effect of Occupational Stress on Mental Health Problems, as well as the mediating role of Social Support and Work Family Conflict in this relationship. Overall, this study tests seven hypotheses formulated based on the conceptual model of previous research.

The population in this study came from one of the Islamic educational institutions in Cilacap Regency which consists of elementary, secondary, high school and university education, with a total of 444 employees, consisting of 151 permanent employees and 293 honorary employees. Despite differences in employment status, permanent employees and honorary employees have similar work environments and organizational demands, which supports their classification as one population in this study. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with criterion sampling,

a method of selecting samples based on specific criteria determined by the researcher in accordance with the research objectives (Memon et al. 2025). The criteria used in this study are employees who have a minimum work period of one year. Determination of the number of samples was carried out using the Slovin formula with an error rate of 5% (0.05). Based on the calculation results, the minimum sample size was 210 people. However, to increase the accuracy and reliability of the analysis results, the number of respondents used in this study was set at 225 people.

Data collection was conducted online using Google Forms, which facilitated the distribution of questionnaires to all respondents. Each question item is measured using a five-point Likert scale, namely: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The data obtained were then analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software. This method was chosen because it is able to analyze complex relationship models and test the mediation effects between latent variables efficiently.

Table 1.
Definition Operational

Variable & Sources	Operational Definition	Indicator
Occupational Stress (Shukla and Srivastava 2016)	Occupational stress is the stress experienced by the persons due to their role (job) in the organization.	1. Stress arises as a response to excessive work pressure. 2. Stress occurs when workers feel unable to cope or control their decisions under work demands. 3. Stress has the potential to negatively impact mental and physical health.
Social Support (Habtu et al. 2025)	Social support refers to the assistance and emotional resources provided by colleagues, supervisors, and family members that help individuals cope with work-related stress and maintain psychological well-being.	1. Social support, which assesses the comfort of the work environment 2. Social support, which assesses a sense of community 3. Support from coworkers 4. Assistance from coworkers 5. Relationship with superiors 6. Relationship with coworkers
Work Family Conflict (Kim et al., 2025)	Work family conflict refers to an inter-role conflict that arises between the work and family domains, placing role pressures on the individual worker.	1. Stress-based WFC 2. Time-based WFC 3. Behavior-based WFC
Mental Health Problem (Kashyap and Singh 2017)	Mental health problems refer to psychological distress characterized by symptoms of	1. Anxiety and Depression 2. Social Dysfunction 3. Loss of Confidence

	anxiety and depression, social dysfunction, and loss of confidence.	4. Insomnia
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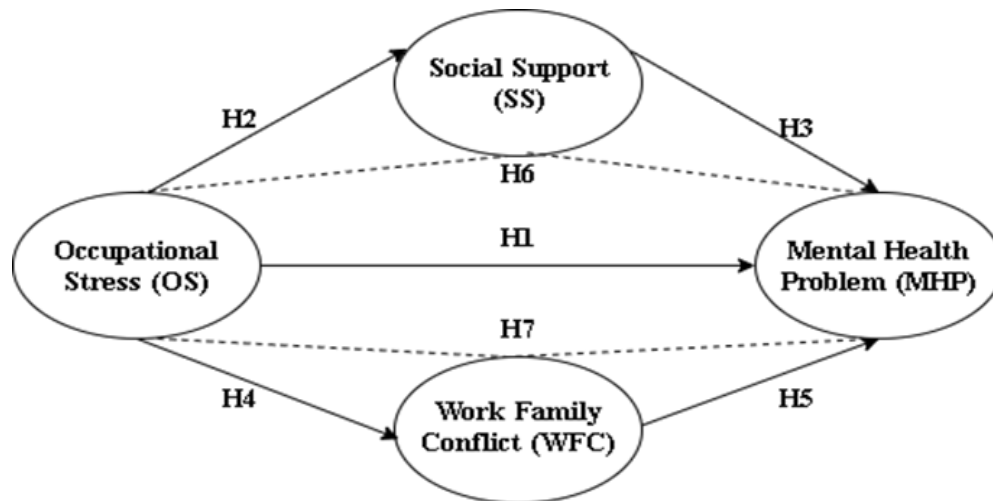


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results and Discussion

Table 2.
Demographic Respondents

Identity	Information	Frequency	Presentage
Gender	Man	98	41,36
	Woman	127	56,4
Age	18 – 25	16	7,1
	>25 – 30	21	9,3
	>30 – 35	28	12,4
	>35 – 40	34	15,1
	>40 – 50	85	37,8
	≥50	41	18,2
Final Education	SMP	2	0,9
	SMA	51	23,0
	Diploma (D3)	13	5,8
	Bachelor (S1)	141	62,7
	Magister (S2)	17	7,6
Employee Status	Permanent	137	60,9
	Contract	88	39,1
Long Time Working	>1– 3	39	17,3
	>3 – 6	22	9,8
	>6 – 9	20	8,9
	≥9	144	64,0

Source: SPSS Process Result, 2025

Based on demographic data on 225

respondents, the characteristics of the research sample show that the majority of respondents are female and show that the 40-50 year age group dominates with a bachelor's degree educational background and most respondents have permanent employee status with work experience of ≥ 9 years. These demographic characteristics indicate that the findings primarily represent the psychological conditions of employees with stable employment status and long work experience in a mature working-age group.

The data management process in this study was carried out using the PLS 3 method. PLS analysis aims to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables in the model. Furthermore, PLS analysis can provide additional information that can be interpreted through relatively simple analysis procedures (Hair et al. 2021). The research findings produced are presented as follows.

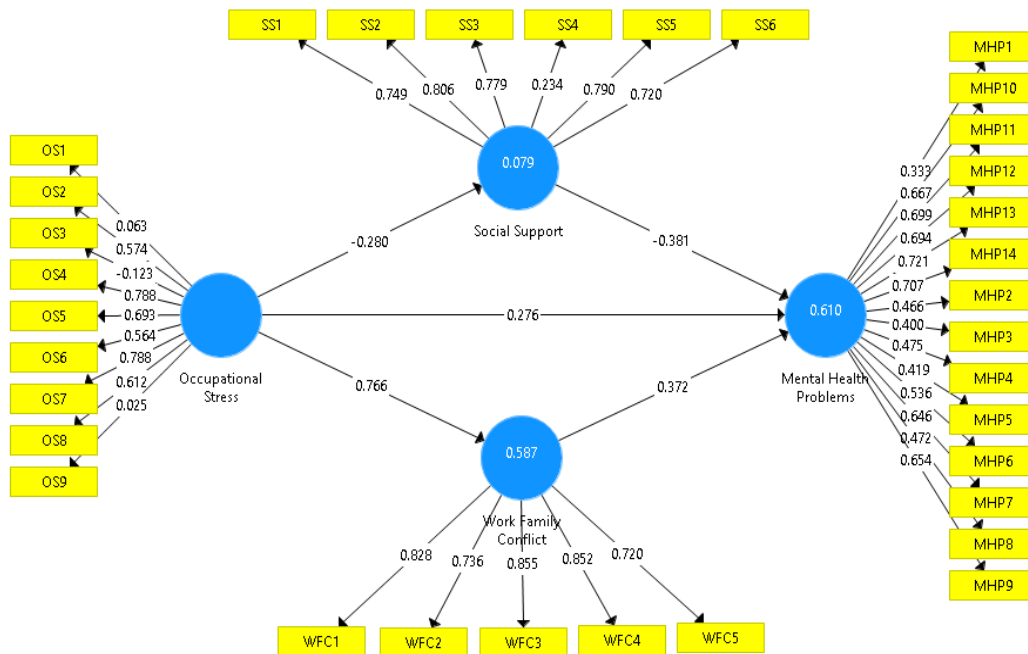


Figure 2. Full Path Analysis

Figure 2 shows the results of the data analyzed in two rounds, and the OS.1, OS.2, OS.6, OS.9, SS.4, MHP.1, MHP.2, MHP.3, MHP.4, MHP.5, MHP.6, MHP.8, OS.3, WFC.5 and MHP.10 indicators were eliminated because

these indicators had outer loading values below 0,5. Meanwhile, if the outer loading value is above 0,5 the indicator is considered appropriate (Hair et al. 2021).

Table 3
Outer Loading

Statement Items		Outer loading
OS.1	I have a lot of work and need a lot of time to do it	0,063
OS.2	I feel so overwhelmed that even a day without work feels bad	0,574
OS.3	I rarely take leave	-0,123
OS.4	Many people in my office are bored with the demands of the company	0,788

OS.5	My job makes me nervous	0,693
OS.6	The impact of the work I do is too high on me	0,564
OS.7	Often, my work becomes a big burden	0,788
OS.8	Sometimes, when I think about work my chest feels tight	0,612
OS.9	I feel embarrassed to take leave	0,025
SS.1	There is a calm and pleasant atmosphere where I work	0,749
SS.2	There is a good unity spirit	0,806
SS.3	My coworkers are always there for me	0,779
SS.4	People understand that I can have a bad day	0,234
SS.5	I get along well with my supervisor	0,790
SS.6	I get along well with my coworkers	0,720
WFC.1	My job constantly interferes with my time with my family	0,828
WFC.2	My work schedule is erratic and it affects my family and social life	0,736
WFC.3	My job usually requires extra hours to complete so I can't attend any celebrations with my family	0,855
WFC.4	My job makes me too tired to enjoy moments with my family	0,852
WFC.5	My job makes me ignore other coworkers	0,720
MHP.1	I am able to concentrate on what I am doing	0,333
MHP.2	I feel that I am less capable of solving problems as usual	0,466
MHP.3	I feel happy in carrying out my daily activities	0,400
MHP.4	I feel that I am useless in my job	0,475
MHP.5	I am able to make decisions easily at work	0,419
MHP.6	I've been feeling tense or stressed lately	0,536
MHP.7	I feel that I cannot enjoy things that usually bring me pleasure	0,646
MHP.8	I am able to face difficulties at work well	0,472
MHP.9	I feel sad or depressed for no apparent reason	0,654
MHP.10	I lost confidence in my own ability	0,667
MHP.11	I feel that I am becoming more irritable or angry easily	0,699
MHP.12	I feel that my general condition is worse than usual	0,694
MHP.13	I've been having trouble sleeping well the last few weeks	0,721
MHP.14	I often wake up at night and have trouble getting back to sleep	0,707

Source: SmartPLS Algorithm Process Result, 2025

Based on the analysis results, it shows that all variables have outer loading values above 0.6. High outer loading values indicate that the indicators are able to adequately represent the construct being measured. The outer loading analysis was carried out in two rounds, where indicators OS.1, OS.2, OS.6, OS.9, SS.4, MHP.1, MHP.2, MHP.3, MHP.4, MHP.5, MHP.6, MHP.8 in the first round were

eliminated because they had an outer loading below 0.5. Then in the second round, the outer loading values of indicators OS.3, WFC.5 and MHP.10 were rejected with the aim of increasing the consistency of the variable construct. Meanwhile, indicators with outer loading values above 0.6 are retained because they still meet the validity criteria in PLS analysis (Hair et al. 2021).

Table 4.
Construct Reliability and Validity

	Composite Realibility	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Mental Health Problem (Y)	0,885	0,562
Occupational Stress (X)	0,832	0,557
Social Support (Z1)	0,876	0,587
Work Familiy Conflict (Z2)	0,904	0,702

Source: SmartPLS Algorithm Process Result, 2025

Based on the Construct Reliability and Validity values of the Occupational Stress, Social Support, and Work Family Conflict variables on Mental Health Problems, it was recorded as being above 0.7. The Average

Variance (AVE) value also indicates that the overall construct value is above 0.5. Thus, all variables can be declared reliable (Hair et al. 2021).

**Table 5
Model Fit**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,078	0,086
d_ ULS	1,159	1,406
d_ G	0,366	0,378
Chi-Square	472,489	486,364
NFI	0,780	0,774

Source: SmartPLS Algorithm Process Result, 2025

The results of the model fit test show that the SRMR value is 0.078, which is less than the threshold of 0.08 recommended by Hair et al. (2021). Thus, it can be said that the model fit is good. The d_ ULS and d_ G values of 1.159 and 1.406, respectively, are also within the

acceptable range, indicating no significant discrepancy between the observed and predicted matrices. Meanwhile, the NFI value of 0.780 has met the model feasibility criteria because it is above 0.70. Thus, overall the model can be stated to have an adequate level of fit and is suitable for use in further analysis.

**Table 6
Discriminant Validity**

	Mental Health Problem	Occupational Stress	Social Support	Work Family- Conflict
Mental Health Problem (Y)	0,750			
Occupational Stress (X)	0,693	0,746		
Social Support (Z1)	-0,286	-0,301	0,766	
Work Family- Conflict (Z2)	0,716	0,728	-0,092	0,838

Source: SmartPLS Algorithm Process Result, 2025

The results of the discriminant validity test show that each construct has a higher AVE square root value than the correlation between other variables. These findings indicate that each of the variables Occupational Stress, Social Support, Work Family Conflict, and Mental Health Problems is able to explain itself more strongly than the cross-relationships between constructs. Thus, each variable is stated to have no overlapping meaning between constructs. Methodologically, these results meet the Fornell-Larcker criteria, so it can be concluded that the research instrument has good discriminant validity and is suitable for use in structural model analysis.

The Adjusted R square value for the Mental Health Problem variable is 0.591. This value shows that Occupational Stress, Social Support, and Work Family Conflict are able to

explain the variation in Mental Health Problems by 59.1%. Therefore, the R-Square value can be considered quite strong. The Social Support variable has an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.086. This value indicates that 8.6% of the variation in social support can be explained by the variables in the model. Thus, the R-square value is classified as weak, which means that most of the factors influencing social support come from other variables outside the research model. The Work Family Conflict variable has an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.528. This value shows that 52.8% of work family conflict can be explained by Occupational Stress and Social Support. Therefore, the R-square value can be considered quite strong, so the model can describe the influence of these factors on Work Family Conflict well.

Table 7
Path Coefisients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STIDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Result
H1: Occupational Stress -> Mental Health Problem	0,288	0,291	0,082	3,500	0,001	Accepted
H2: Occupational Stress -> Social Support	-0,301	-0,308	0,067	4,495	0,000	Accepted
H3: Support Social -> Mental Health Problem	-0,154	-0,155	0,069	2,238	0,026	Accepted
H4: Occupational Stress -> Work Family Conflict	0,728	0,730	0,033	21,776	0,000	Accepted
H5: Work Family Conflict -> Mental Health Problem	0,492	0,488	0,076	6,503	0,000	Accepted
H6: Occupational Stress -> Social Support -> Mental Health Problem	0,046	0,047	0,023	2,060	0,040	Accepted

H7: Occupational Stres -> Work Family Conflict -> Mental Health Problem	0,358	0,356	0,056	6,400	0,000	Accepted
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Source: SmartPLS Bootstrapping Process Result, 2025

The hypothesis acceptance test is carried out by looking at the significance value, where $p < 0.05$ indicates that the hypothesis can be accepted and is declared significant (Hair et al. 2021). The first hypothesis (H1) shows that Occupational Stress has a positive and significant effect on Mental Health Problems, as indicated by a P value = $0.001 < 0.05$. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. The second hypothesis (H2) shows that Occupational Stress has a negative and significant influence on Social Support, because the P value = $0.000 < 0.05$. This result confirms that the second hypothesis is accepted. The third hypothesis (H3) states that Social Support has a negative and significant effect on Mental Health Problems. The P value = $0.026 < 0.05$ supports the results, so the third hypothesis is accepted. The fourth hypothesis (H4) shows that occupational stress has a positive and significant effect on work family conflict. This is evidenced by a P value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. The fifth hypothesis (H5) tests the effect of Work Family Conflict on Mental Health Problems, the results show a P value = $0.000 < 0.05$, so the relationship is significant and the fifth hypothesis is accepted. The sixth hypothesis (H6) states that Occupational Stress influences Mental Health Problems through Social Support. The P value = $0.040 < 0.05$ indicates that the mediation effect is significant, so the sixth hypothesis is accepted. The seventh hypothesis (H7) shows that Work Family Conflict mediates the relationship between Occupational Stress and Mental Health Problems. The P value = $0.000 < 0.05$ confirms that the mediation effect is significant, so the seventh hypothesis is accepted.

Occupational Stress on Mental Health Problem

Occupational stress has a positive and significant effect on mental health problems. This means that the higher the occupational stress experienced by employees, the greater the likelihood of developing symptoms of mental health disorders such as anxiety, emotional exhaustion, sleep disorders, and depression. This finding is in line with the main reference study by He et al. (2023), which stated that occupational stress is a major predictor of the emergence of mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and insomnia in public sector employees in China during the pandemic normalization period. This result is also consistent with the research of Costin et al. (2023) and Wang & Zhang (2025) which show that occupational stress can trigger emotional tension and worsen the mental health of educational employees. Theoretically, these findings support the idea that high job demands, moral pressure, and administrative burdens in Islamic educational institutions can disrupt employee psychological stability. The most dominant aspects of occupational stress are reflected in emotional distress and workload, while the weakest element is related to leave habits, indicating that core psychological stress is a stronger driver of the emergence of mental health symptoms, in line with Stress-Buffering Theory, which asserts that unmanaged primary stressors will directly weaken an individual's psychological state. Thus, the research results reaffirm that occupational stress is an important risk factor for mental health in educational organizations.

Occupational Stress on Social Support

Occupational stress has a negative and significant effect on social support. This means that the higher the occupational stress,

the lower the social support perceived by employees. These results are in accordance with the Stress-Buffering theory which states that high stress can weaken an individual's ability to receive or interpret social support positively (Cohen and Wills 1985). With increasing work pressure, employees become more easily isolated, interact less, and tend to withdraw from the social environment so that perceptions of social support decrease. This finding is supported by He et al. (2023) who showed that occupational stress reduces perceptions of social support and contributes to increased mental health problems among public sector employees. Thus, the research results show that stressful conditions experienced by educational institution employees can weaken interpersonal relationships and collegial support.

The highest component of occupational stress reflects the intensity of workload and tension, while the weakest component relates to administrative aspects, indicating that emotional pressure makes individuals less able to receive support from their environment. This aligns with the Stress-Buffering Theory, which explains that high stress impairs a person's capacity to perceive and utilize social support.

Social Support on Mental Health Problem

Social support has a significant negative effect on mental health problems. The higher the social support, the lower the level of employee mental health problems. This finding supports the Stress-Buffering Theory, which explains that social support is a psychological protective mechanism capable of reducing the negative impact of occupational stress on mental health (Cohen and Wills 1985). Support from coworkers, superiors, and family can help employees reduce anxiety, manage emotions, and improve their ability to adapt to work pressures. These results align with the findings of He et al. (2023), who confirmed that social support functions as an important mediator that weakens the negative

relationship between occupational stress and mental health disorders in public sector employees. Social support based on the values of brotherhood and empathy becomes a spiritual strength that increasingly strengthens the psychological resilience of employees in Islamic educational institutions.

Occupational Stress on Work Family Conflict

Occupational stress has a positive and significant effect on work family conflict. This means that increased occupational stress makes it increasingly difficult for employees to balance the demands of work and family. This finding is consistent with the research of Abdou et al. (2024) and Antino et al. (2022), which states that high job demands can reduce an individual's time and energy to fulfill family roles, thereby increasing work family conflict. From the perspective of Stress-Buffering Theory, increased stress will reduce an individual's adaptive capacity and weaken the utilization of family social support, thereby increasing role tension. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, employees are often faced with a dilemma between professional responsibilities, spiritual obligations, and family commitments so that work pressure can exacerbate the role conflicts they experience.

Work Family Conflict on Mental Health Problem

Work family conflict has a significant positive effect on mental health problems. This means that the higher the work family conflict, the greater the risk of mental health disorders. These results support the research of He et al. (2023) which found that work family conflict has a direct impact on increasing anxiety, depression, and insomnia in public sector employees. Role conflict causes emotional exhaustion, guilt, and an inability to meet family demands, which ultimately reduces psychological well-being. This finding is also supported by research by (Bilodeau et al. 2020) and Antino et al. (2022), which shows

that role imbalance is the most significant psychosocial factor in triggering mental health disorders in workers in the education sector.

The strongest aspect of work family conflict is related to fatigue which prevents individuals from enjoying family time, while obstacles in social relations are the weakest aspect. These findings indicate that core role strain has a direct impact on individuals' emotional states and psychological well-being. According to Stress-Buffering Theory, when individuals are unable to use social support to balance role demands, the risk of psychological distress increases (Cohen and Wills 1985). Research by Antino et al. (2022) also showed that role conflict is a significant predictor of anxiety and depression symptoms.

Mediation Social Support between Occupational Stress and Mental Health Problem

Social support mediates the relationship between occupational stress and mental health problems, as shown in Hypothesis 6. This means that the higher the level of occupational stress experienced by employees, the lower their perception of social support, and ultimately this condition increases the risk of mental health problems. This finding is consistent with the main study of He et al. (2023), who found that social support is an important mediator in reducing the negative impact of occupational stress on the mental health conditions of public sector employees. The study confirms that social support acts as a psychological protection mechanism that can reduce the perception of threat from occupational stress and increase employee mental resilience.

Social support mediates the effect of occupational stress on mental health because the strongest aspect of support comes from positive interactions with colleagues and superiors, while emotional factors are the weakest, indicating that stable interpersonal relationships help reduce the impact of

occupational stress on mental health, consistent with Stress-Buffering Theory which emphasizes the protective role of social support.

Mediation Work Family Conflict between Occupational Stress and Mental Health Problem

Work family conflict mediated the relationship between occupational stress and mental health problems, as stated in Hypothesis 7. This suggests that increased occupational stress leads to role conflict between work and family, ultimately worsening employee mental health. These results are in line with the main reference study of He et al. (2023), which confirmed that work family conflict is a significant mediator in strengthening the impact of occupational stress on mental health disorders in public sector employees. Role conflict arises when high job demands consume employees' energy, time, and emotional capacity so that they are unable to fulfill their family roles optimally. This role imbalance then triggers psychological stress, negative emotions, guilt, and even symptoms of depression or anxiety. Work family conflict is dominated by work demands that interfere with family time, while barriers to social interaction are the lowest aspect, indicating that role imbalance is the main pathway that channels the impact of occupational stress on mental health. Based on Stress-Buffering Theory, when work pressure reduces an individual's ability to access social support from family, role conflict becomes more intense and ultimately worsens psychological conditions (Cohen and Wills 1985). This is consistent with the findings of He et al. (2023) that work family conflict is an important mediator in strengthening the influence of occupational stress on mental health disorders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study show that occupational stress has a positive and significant effect on the emergence of mental health problems, so

that the higher the work pressure, the greater the possibility of employees experiencing psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. In addition, research shows that social support acts as a mediator that weakens the negative impact of occupational stress. Employees who receive support from coworkers, superiors, and family tend to have better psychological resilience. On the other hand, work family conflict has also been shown to mediate the relationship between occupational stress and mental health. High work pressure increases role tension in the family, which then worsens the psychological condition of employees. Overall, the findings of this study confirm the relevance of the Stress-Buffering Model, where social support and work family role balance are important factors in maintaining employee mental health. Therefore, relevant institutions are advised to strengthen social support in the workplace through mentoring, open communication, and positive interactions between employees and superiors. In addition, policies that support work family balance, starting from proportional workload management, time flexibility, and task clarity, need to be optimized to reduce role tension.

Further Research

This study provides references related to factors that influence mental health in the education sector, this is supported by the object used, namely one of the Islamic Educational Institutions in Cilacap Regency. However, this study is not without limitations, so further research addressing mental health issues is needed. Future research can be conducted in different sectors, such as health, education, population, or other public service agencies with different work characteristics. Furthermore, other independent variables can be added as well as other mediating variables so that references can be expanded from both theoretical and implementation perspectives.

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