

Parenting support from grandparents and work-family conflict among working mothers: The mediating role of parenting stress

Ni Putu Adelia Kesumaningsari¹, Faith Joanna Hartoyo², Yuan Yovita Setiawan³

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Psychology University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

¹kesumaningsari@staff.ubaya.ac.id, ²faithjoannah16@gmail.com, ³yuanyovita@staff.ubaya.ac.id

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Abstract

The growing participation of mothers in the workforce in Indonesia is increasing the demand for external support in managing both family and occupational responsibilities. Grandparental participation in childcare represents a potential form of support even though the positive effects can be mediated rather than direct. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of parenting stress as a mediator in the relationship between grandparental support and work-family conflict (WFC) among working mothers. The adoption of the quantitative method led to the collection of data specifically using online questionnaires. The samples consisted of 174 working mothers aged 21–50 years across Indonesia who had children aged 0–12 years and received a minimum of 12 hours of childcare support per week from grandparents selected through a purposive sampling method. The questionnaires were filled out through the modified Parenting Support Scale, the WFC Scale, and the Parental Stress Scale. The data were analyzed using PROCESS Macro v4.3 by Hayes and the results showed that the parenting support from grandparents significantly reduced parenting stress and subsequently lowered WFC. Parenting stress also fully mediated the relationship between the support from grandparents and WFC. These results emphasized the importance of extended family support particularly from grandparents in mitigating psychological burdens and facilitating work-life integration among working mothers in Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author:

Ni Putu Adelia Kesumaningsari
University of Surabaya

Email :

kesumaningsari@staff.ubaya.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of working mothers is increasingly common and coincides with the development of the industrial era and the process of social modernisation. The rate of women who joined the workforce from 2019 to 2024 increased by 4.61% while the value for men was by only 1.41% (BPS, 2025). The trend showed a shift in how society perceived the roles of men and women from traditional to more modern or egalitarian. Generally, men are perceived as leaders, heads of families, and breadwinners or providers while women are believed to be mothers who play multiple roles in the domestic sphere (Anggraeni & Wahyuni, 2019). The division of roles within the family is influenced by several factors including education, government policies, traditional values, culture, particularly the patriarchal aspect, mass media, and the environment (D. P. K. Putri & Lestari, 2015). These changes impact the social structure and require individuals, especially women, to assume both working and household roles. Some of the reasons associated with the decision of wives to work include meeting the economic needs of the family and fulfilling self-actualisation (Ginanjar et al., 2020).

Married women who continue to work are expected to take on additional roles in maintaining responsibilities at home by managing family and caring for children (Akbar & Kartika, 2016; Apriani & Mariyanti, 2021; Ginanjar et al., 2020). Hidayat & Tohari (2023) reported that mothers were required by community standards to spend time at home caring for the children. This shows that mothers working outside the home are burdened with greater role demands than those who do not (Anggraeni & Wahyuni, 2019). The expectations for mothers to fulfill both work and family roles can lead to stress and health problems which subsequent effect on the performance in both areas (Fajriyati et al., 2023). Working mothers also tend to experience stress because of guilt for not being present, fatigue from lack of sleep, and anxiety about missing the crucial developmental periods of the children. The stress is increased through factors such as the number and ages of children and any existing health problems. The situation can also be further complicated by the work environment, previous family relationships, and social stigma (Asri & Hendriani, 2024). The pressures experienced lead to greater work-family conflict (WFC) for working mothers particularly in balancing family and work demands compared to men (Adams, 2024).

WFC is a conflict between the demands of work and family life (Greenhaus et al., 2003). The concept consists of three components including (1) time-based conflict where individuals cannot divide time between work and family roles, (2) strain-based conflict associated with the pressure or stress from work and family, and (3) behavior-based conflict due to the behavioral incompatibility between family and work roles. WFC can occur in two directions which include work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). WIF is when work life interferes with family life while FIW is related to the interference of family affairs in the work domain (Carlson & Frone, 2003). The inability of individuals to fulfil tasks in either role can have negative consequences. Some of these impacts include having to sacrifice or not perform a role, feeling depressed due to incomplete discharge of responsibility, and becoming more easily emotional because of exhaustion (Hidayat & Tohari, 2023).

Previous studies have reported the support from surrounding individuals as an antecedent of WFC (Seiger & Wiese, 2009). The trend shows the possibility of minimizing role conflict by managing demands through assistance from the family. The preference for family is because the domain can be managed by working mothers (Jannah et al., 2022) and the support provided is capable of influencing the dynamics of conflict between work and family. This intervention assists mothers in reducing conflict in the work domain (Frone et al., 1992). Family support has been a focus of studies and has been found to reduce WFC with the role of spouse or general family identified to be most significant (French et al., 2018; Michel et al., 2011; Seiger & Wiese, 2009). For example, social support is capable of assisting working mothers in home care and childcare (Putrihapsari & Fauziah, 2020). The existence of broad family membership in Asian countries allows more specific support beyond the husband to include extended members.

Several families in Indonesia include third parties as an additional source of social support. For example, biological mothers often participate in childcare (Antawati, 2020) and the process leads to the

significant dependence of several families on grandparents. The phenomenon is supported by the unique collectivist culture of the country where the gateway for most families in meeting the needs of both work and family life is often provided through grandparents and domestic helpers (Artiawati, 2017). The trend was also strengthened by the report of the study conducted on 273 Indonesian parents that 71% received support from additional caregivers such as grandparents (Sumargi et al., 2015). The request for family members such as grandparents to care for children is identified as a more viable option when access to formal childcare services is limited. The report from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment showed that only 12% of families in Indonesia used formal daycare services. The family members often serve as the third layer of parenting support after the father (International Labour Organization, 2021). Moreover, co-residence of parents and children is a prevalent arrangement in the Indonesian family structure. The concept is referred to as an extended or multigenerational family where three or more generations live together in a single unit comprising the nuclear family and other members (Pratiwi & Yustisia, 2024).

The trend shows that parents living together become a source of support in terms of childcare at a minimum. The participation of extended family can provide emotional support and contribute to the psychosocial health and development of the children (Longo et al., 2024). The support is expected to make working mothers calmer in discharging work responsibilities and more effective in caring for the children to achieve optimal development (Putrihapsari & Fauziah, 2020). Several previous studies showed the support of grandparents as extended family members in parenting (Ekawati et al., 2024; Hilaliiyah & Desiningrum, 2022; N. L. T. Pratiwi & Tirtayani, 2020; Purwaningtyas et al., 2020; Riyadi & Samosir, 2018; Wahab et al., 2021). Grandparents, especially those who co-reside could serve as a significant source of social support mitigating the negative impact of the crossover of parental work on family conflict (Mustillo et al., 2021). The phenomenon reflects the important role of grandparents in functioning as a valuable resource to families by offering financial, practical, and emotional support to younger generations. The participation enhances work-life balance and promotes well-being in contemporary society (Wellard, 2012). The support provided by grandparents was also reported to reduce parental burnout (Fu et al., 2025) and stress (Wang & Cheng, 2025).

The trend is associated with the fact that parental burnout particularly for working mothers often originates from prolonged stress caused by the need to balance childcare responsibilities and occupational demands. The phenomenon is commonly referred to as *parenting stress* and defined as a state of discomfort experienced by parents due to the demands of parental role (Fang et al., 2024). It is a form of psychological distress that occurs when caregiving demands are higher than the available coping resources and can compromise parental well-being, disrupt effective parenting, and hinder child development (Hong & Liu, 2020).

Several factors contributing to parenting stress have been identified in a systematic review conducted by Fang et al. (2024). These include parental factors in the form of personality characteristics and mental health conditions as well as situational factors where social support was found to be the most significant. Previous

studies have reported the substantial influence of social support on parenting stress and the trend is further strengthened by the position of Balance of Risks and Resources (BR²) theory that sustained pressure is due to a chronic imbalance between risks and available resources (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018). Parenting stress is more prevalent among women due to comparatively greater participation in childcare (Qian et al., 2021). According to Nelson-Coffey et al. (2019), fathers reported higher levels of happiness than mothers regarding parenting stress. Other studies also showed that working mothers experienced higher levels of parenting stress (Muslih et al., 2024; Rajgariah et al., 2021). The condition could negatively affect child development as observed in the report of several studies that parenting stress was positively associated with problematic behaviors in children (Louie et al., 2017; Maat et al., 2021) and negatively related to the well-being of the children (Ward & Lee, 2020).

Working mothers who received parenting support from extended family members particularly grandmothers reported lower levels of WFC (Fu et al., 2025; Mustillo et al., 2021). This was because grandparental support mitigated the conflict arising from excessive work demands by increasing available resources. The trend is associated with the Conservation of Resources (COR) model where individuals seek to preserve valued resources and maintain resource security (Hobfoll et al., 1990; Holmgreen et al., 2017). The intensification of conflict in one domain such as workplace stress leads to the depletion of individual resources in the form of time and energy which further reduces the capacity to fulfil family responsibilities (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

The loss of resources is stressful and requires the determination of alternatives with the aim of protecting other assets (Hobfoll et al., 1990). Therefore, social support provides a reservoir of resources beyond those possessed by mothers (Hobfoll et al., 1990; Holmgreen et al., 2017) to ensure sustenance of the level needed. Selvarajan et al. (2013) explained that high family social support could reduce FIW and WIF in line with the position of the COR theory. The trend shows the importance of grandparental childcare support in assisting working mothers to navigate work and family demands.

The presence of grandparents in the household can provide substantial support by assisting with child-rearing, motivating mothers to take a leading role in parenting (Liang et al., 2021), and supervising the children during working hours. The participation has the potential to alleviate maternal parenting stress because mothers focus more fully on professional responsibilities while experiencing greater peace of mind by entrusting childcare to grandparents (Sun & Mulvaney, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Kanji (2017) emphasized that the inclusion of grandparents in childcare was significant in facilitating the participation of women in the labor market. Furthermore, the arrangement can reduce the level of WFC experienced by mothers (Robertson & Eby, 2021).

Some other studies have discussed the negative impact of including grandparents in parenting. The trend was related to the differences in parenting styles which led to conflicts and worsened domestic life (Antawati, 2020; Pratiwi & Yustisia, 2024). According to Antawati (2020), grandparents believed that mothers

did not play a significant role in parenting, paid little attention to children, and disciplined very harshly. Mothers also often perceive grandparents as lacking self-confidence and as less competent in caring for children. This shows that the inclusion of grandparents can trigger conflict due to tensions in co-parenting dynamics and lead to poor child development. The drawback is that grandparents are capable of serving as a source of tension to elevate parenting stress and subsequently increase WFC.

The significance of social support in mitigating WFC is well-documented but a clear study gap exists regarding the specific role of grandparents particularly in Indonesia where the individuals are often integral to childcare within multigenerational households. The extended family system in the country places grandparents in an important supportive role specifically in childcare and domestic responsibilities (Riany et al., 2017). This suggested a culturally salient but understudied source of support for working mothers because most existing studies related to social support on WFC focused broadly on colleagues or family members at large but overlooked the unique contributions of grandparents especially for dual-earner couples (Ferri et al., 2018; Pluut et al., 2018; Ramadani et al., 2022). Some scholars have requested future efforts to analyze the participation of grandparents as co-parenting partners (Adams, 2024) and the potential to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of WFC (Mustillo et al., 2021) but empirical studies remain scarce. Tasyikan & Demiral (2022) emphasized that supportive interventions for working mothers to promote work-life balance were needed and identified the importance of support as a potential resource within the families. However, no study has systematically investigated the direct effects and underlying mechanisms of grandparental support in the Indonesian context despite the ability to reduce WFC especially by alleviating specific strains such as parenting stress (French et al., 2018; Sun & Mulvaney, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). The efforts to address the gap are very important for understanding how culturally integrated family dynamics can influence the work-family interface and developing more effective support strategies for working mothers.

This study aims to examine the dynamics of the relationship between grandparental parenting support and WFC among working mothers in Indonesia while incorporating parenting stress as a mediating variable in response to the considerations. The focus is to clarify how specific types of family support other than the commonly examined spousal support can influence work-family outcomes. The novel contribution is by showing that the greatest form of support available to working mothers comes from grandparents who assist with child-rearing in a context where dual-earner families are increasing but formal childcare options remain limited. This is necessary because the majority of childcare in Indonesia is arranged informally with caregiving responsibilities shared between mothers, domestic workers, and other family members (International Labor Organization, 2021). The trend shows that grandparents are a significant source in extended families often overlooked but have a substantial impact on labor support for mothers (Ekawati et al., 2024; Rahmatullah et al., 2023; Riyadi & Samosir, 2018). This study shows the collectivist orientation of Indonesian society which naturally motivates the participation of extended family members particularly grandparents in child-rearing practices alongside parents. The identification of parenting stress as a key psychological mechanism allows

the advancement of understanding in relation to intergenerational support and WFC. Practically, this study offers insights into how culturally relevant grandparental support can assist working mothers to balance work and family demands. The hypotheses developed based on the background information are presented as follows:

H1. Parenting support from grandparents is associated with WFC among working mothers.

H2. Parenting stress mediates the relationship between parenting support from grandparents and WFC among working mothers.

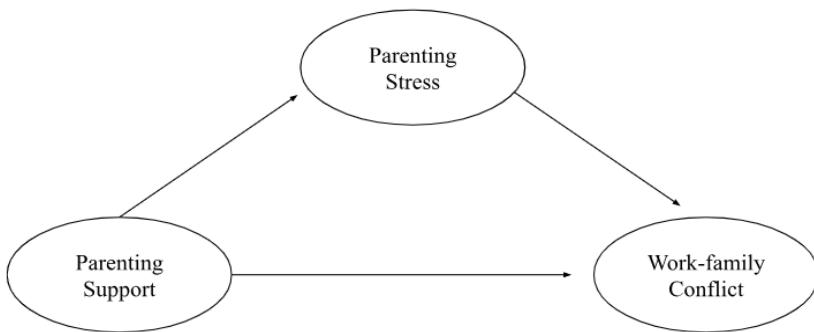


Figure 1. Theoretical three variable-linkage

METHOD

The design of this study was quantitative and three scales were used for data collection. The intended population was working mothers in Indonesia who were 1) working full-time, 2) had children aged 0-12 years, and 3) allowed grandparents in childcare with a minimum duration of 12 hours in one week. This showed that the samples were selected through a purposive sampling method and data were collected by distributing questionnaires online. A total of 212 respondents participated and the number exceeded the minimum size of 150 to 200 required based on G*Power statistical analysis to achieve 80% statistical power at $\alpha = .05$ for detecting small and medium effects (Faul et al., 2007). The adoption of G*Power in determining sample size was due to the consideration of available time, cost, and resources (Kang, 2021). However, data from 38 respondents believed not to have satisfied the required criteria were excluded as presented in Table 1. The data removed were due to incomplete questionnaires, two respondents providing similar answers to almost all questions or statements, inconsistencies in demographic information such as the age of children not matching the number, and logically inconsistent responses.

Table 1. Subject Discrimination Process

Respondent Selection Stage	Number of Participants
Total initial respondents	212
Respondents who did not meet the subject criteria (e.g., caregiving duration, age of child, child no longer cared for by grandparent, caregiver is not the subject's parent or in-law, or subject not working)	34
Respondents who answered the same for almost all questions or statements	2
Inconsistencies in respondents' demographic information	2
Respondents analyzed (final data used in the study)	174

The data depuration process led to the inclusion of 174 respondents in the analysis. The descriptive data showed the majority were early adults aged 31-35 (44.8%) and spread across different cities in Indonesia with the highest in Java (71.4%) and Bali (23%). The respondents tended to have higher levels of education than their grandparents with most having a bachelor's degree (65.5%) while the grandparents had a senior high school degree (41.4%). In terms of average monthly family income, 33.3% had an income above the highest provincial minimum wage in Indonesia in 2025 (Rp5,396,761.00 for DKI Jakarta province) (Hubungan Industrial dan Jamsostek, 2025). The grandparents who participated actively were mostly the biological mother (96%) followed by the mother-in-law (49%) with an average co-parenting period of 0-36 months (55.2%) and 77-72 hours per week (64.4%). These demographic characteristics are summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of The Sample

Categorical		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<i>Age of working mothers</i>	21 - 25 years	7	4
	26 - 30 years	53	30,5
	31 - 35 years	78	44,8
	36 - 40 years	24	13,8
	41 - 45 years	11	6,3
	46 - 50 years	1	0,6
<i>Domicile of a working mother</i>	East Java	73	42
	Bali	40	23
	DKI Jakarta	25	14,4
	West Java	15	8,6
	Banten	9	5,2
	East Kalimantan	2	1,1
	South Sulawesi	2	1,1
	Highland Papua (Papua Pegunungan)	2	1,1
	D.I. Yogyakarta	1	0,6
	Central Java	1	0,6
	South Sumatra	1	0,6
	North Sumatra	1	0,6
	South Kalimantan	1	0,6
	Central Sulawesi	1	0,6
<i>Education level of working mothers</i>	Senior high school	14	8
	Diploma	21	12,1
	Bachelor	114	65,5
	Master	22	12,6
	Doctorate	3	1,7
<i>Occupation of working mothers</i>	Private employee	94	54
	State civil apparatus	27	15,5
	Teacher/Lecture	21	12,1
	Entrepreneur	11	6,3
	Others	9	5,2
	Doctor/nurse/other paramedic	7	4
	State-owned (BUMN) employee	5	2,9
<i>Position or job title of working mother</i>	Staff	86	49,4
	Senior staff/Officer	25	14,4
	Supervisor/Coordinator	16	9,2
	Manager/Section head	11	6,3
	Teacher	10	5,7
	Owner/Founder	8	4,6
	Senior manager/Division head	5	2,9

	Others	4	2,3
	Lecturer	3	1,7
	Board of directors/C-level (CEO, CFO, etc.)	2	1,1
	Expert/specialist	2	1,1
	General manager/Unit director	1	0,6
	Psychologist	1	0,6
<i>Average work duration per week of working mothers</i>	<40 hours	28	16,1
	40 hours	94	54
	50 hours	28	16,1
	>50 hours	24	13,8
<i>Marital status of working mothers</i>	Married	165	94,8
	Divorced alive	8	4,6
	Divorced dead	1	0,6
<i>Average family income per month</i>	<Rp4.000.000,00	22	12,6
	Rp4.000.000,00 - Rp5.999.999,00	32	18,4
	Rp6.000.000,00 - Rp 7.999.999,00	30	17,2
	Rp8.000.000,00 - Rp10.000.000,00	32	18,4
	>Rp10.000.000,00	58	33,3
<i>Family needs meet</i>	Enough to afford all necessary needs	86	49,4
	Enough to afford most necessary needs	59	33,9
	Enough to afford some necessary needs	22	12,6
	Not enough to afford the necessary needs	7	4
<i>Sources of domestic and childcare support</i>	Grandparent(s)	166	48,1
	Spouse	96	27,8
	Household assistant or nanny	40	11,6
	Relatives	38	11
	Neighbors	4	1,2
	Aunt	1	0,3
<i>Active grandparents participating in co-parenting</i>	Biological mother	96	55,2
	Mother-in-law	49	28,2
	Father-in-law	10	5,7
	Biological father	7	4
	Father-in-law and mother-in-law	5	2,9
	Biological father and biological mother	3	1,7
	Biological parents and parents-in-law	3	1,7
<i>Age of the grandparent</i>	Mixed with other parties	1	0,6
	46 - 50 years	16	9,2
	51 - 55 years	27	15,5
	56 - 60 years	45	25,9
	61 - 65 years	53	30,5
	66 - 70 years	17	9,8
	71 - 75 years	12	6,9
<i>Education level of the grandparent</i>	75 - 80 years	4	2,3
	Elementary school	16	9,2
	Junior high school	8	4,6
	Senior high school	72	41,4
	Diploma	22	12,6
	Bachelor	45	25,9
	Master	10	5,7
<i>Length of co-parenting</i>	Doctorate	1	0,6
	0 - 36 months	96	55,2
	37 - 72 months	50	28,7
	73 - 108 months	19	10,9
	109 - 144 months	7	4
	>144 months	2	1,1
<i>Time/duration of co-parenting per week</i>	12 - 36 hours	66	37,9
	77 - 72 hours	98	56,63

	73 - 108 hours	4	2,3
	109 - 144 hours	0	0
	145 - 168 hours	6	3,4
<i>Living status grandparent</i>	Living together with parents	112	64,4
	Not living together with parents	62	35,6
<i>Number of children</i>	1 child	110	63,2
	2 children	45	25,9
	3 children	16	9,2
	4 children	2	1,1
	5 children	1	0,6
<i>Number of children co-parented by the grandparent</i>	1 child	123	70,7
	2 children	36	20,7
	3 children	14	8
	4 children	1	0,6
<i>Age of the younger child</i>	0 - 1,5 years	59	17,2
	1,5 - 2 years	30	17,2
	3 - 6 years	71	40,8
	7 - 12 years	14	8
<i>Forms of childcare by grandparents</i>	Looking after the child	168	96,6
	Playing with the child	144	82,8
	Feeding the child	127	73,0
	Bathing the child	117	67,2
	Preparing food for the child	103	59,2
	Disciplining the child	78	44,8
	Accompanying to school	37	21,3
	Helping the child with homework	13	7,5
	Teaching spirituality things	1	0,6

Measurement

Demographic data, open-ended questionnaires, the Indonesian version of the Work-Family Scale, and translated versions of the Parenting Support Scale and Parental Stress Scale (PSS) were used as study instruments. The Parenting Support and PSS were originally developed in English and translated into Bahasa Indonesia. The translation process adhered to the ITC Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (2017) which emphasized the importance of flexibility, transparency, and the importance of expert judgment in test adaptation. The scales were forward-translated into Indonesian followed by a review through three panelists comprising two study team members and an expert in relevant languages, cultures, test content, and testing principles to ensure conceptual clarity, cultural relevance, and linguistic accuracy. Each instrument was subjected to validity and reliability assessments before implementation. The content validity was established through face validity and was evaluated by the panelists to confirm the appropriateness of all scales.

The WFC scale used was developed by Carlson et al. (2000) and translated into Indonesian by Artiawati in K. S. Putri et al. (2021). The adaptation used only the time-based and strain-based conflict dimensions due to limitations in measuring behavior-based conflict. This was emphasized by Carlson et al. (2000) who underscored conceptual ambiguity in behavior-based WFC and current debates on the measurement validity particularly the challenge of distinguishing the dimensions. The Indonesian version of the work-family scale consists of 12 favorable items and four subscales including WIF-Time (work interferes with family due to time conflict), WIF-Strain (work interferes with family due to strain conflict), FIW-Time

(family interferes with work due to time conflict), and FIW-Strain (family interferes with work due to strain conflict). The example of the items included “*My work keeps me from my family activities/Pekerjaan saya menjauhkan saya dari aktivitas keluarga*” and “*Because of pressures at home, I often think about family matters while at work/Karena tekanan di rumah, saya sering memikirkan urusan keluarga di tempat kerja*.” The respondents answered using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 which corresponded to strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. The scoring was determined by summing up the responses to all answers with a higher score reflecting a greater level of WFC experienced and vice versa. In this study, the WFC scale had a reliability coefficient of 0.909 and CITCs of 0.450 to 0.731.

Parenting support was measured using the scale for the extended family developed by Bonds et al. (2002). The items were modified to include a targeted conceptual adaptation by replacing the term “family members” with “grandparents” based on the ITC and TARES guidelines for test adaptation to ensure proper connection to the conceptual focus. This modification was theoretically justified because the study aimed to measure support specifically provided by grandparents who were a distinct and culturally salient subgroup within extended families. The forward translation of the scale into the Indonesian language was followed by the independent evaluation of the items by three experts in developmental psychology and psychometrics to ensure content validity, conceptual equivalence, and linguistic clarity. Revisions were made based on the feedback to ensure semantic and conceptual fidelity to the original construct. This expert review process ensured the adapted items remained theoretically connected to the original scale while being culturally and contextually relevant for assessing grandparental support. The parenting support scale used also proved to be reliable with Cronbach's alpha (α) values ranging from 0.365 to 0.854 and a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.941. The scale consists of 19 items across four subscales including practical, informational, esteem, and venting support with 18 considered favorable and 1 was unfavorable. The examples of the favorable items were “*My family members would babysit for my child if I needed them to/Orang tua saya bersedia menjaga anak saya jika saya membutuhkannya*” and the unfavorable item was “*My family members often criticize my parenting practices/Orang tua saya sering mengkritik cara saya mengasuh anak*.” A Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree) was used and a higher score reflected greater support received from grandparents for parenting.

Parenting stress was measured using an 18-item PSS instrument that evaluated perceptions of parents about their parenting role. The scale examined the feelings of the parents about their roles through the exploration of the pleasure and strain aspects of parenthood (Berry & Jones, 1995). The pleasure aspect comprises parental satisfaction and parental rewards while the strain part focuses on stress and loss of control. The items used to measure parenting stress have been adapted into Indonesian such as “*I am happy in my role as a parent/Saya senang dengan peran saya sebagai orang tua*” and “*Having child(ren) has been a financial burden/Memiliki anak menjadikan beban keuangan*.” The responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scores were calculated by summing all responses but unfavorable items had to be reversed first such as 1 to 4, 2 to 3, 3 to 2, and 4 to 1. Parents with low levels

of satisfaction, do not feel positive in conducting parental roles, and experience greater pressure have a greater tendency to experience parenting stress. Meanwhile, a high level of satisfaction reflects several positive aspects of parenting and faces less pressure which leads to a lower possibility of experiencing parenting stress. The reliability score of the PSS was found to be 0,844.

The data collected were analyzed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 25.0 for Windows. The hypotheses formulated were tested through the PROCESS Macro version 4.3 developed by Hayes (2013). This method enables direct regression analysis and is widely used for testing mediation and moderation effects. The simplicity and versatility allow the conduct of complex statistical modelling through a streamlined and single-step procedure. In addition to testing the mediating role of parenting stress, this study also examined the relationship between grandparental support and several dimensions of WFC using the Spearman correlation test with the aim of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics associated.

RESULTS

A normality test was conducted to assess the distribution of the variables through the application of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. A p-value greater than or equal to 0.05 represents a normal distribution any value less than 0.05 shows a non-normal distribution. The parenting support variable produced a p-value of 0.200 ($p \geq 0.05$) which reflected a normal distribution. Meanwhile, the parenting stress ($p = 0.001$) and the WFC variables ($p = 0.000$) did not meet the normality criterion. A linearity test was also conducted to evaluate the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results showed the existence of linear relationships between parenting support and WFC ($F = 17.321$; $p = 0.000$), parenting support and parenting stress ($F = 39.159$; $p = 0.000$), as well as parenting stress and WFC ($F = 48.689$; $p = 0.000$) because the p-values were less than 0.05.

Table 3. Result of Correlation Test between Parenting Support and WFC

Spearman Correlation	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parenting Support - WFC	-0,273**	0,000
Practical Support - WFC	-0,106	0,165
Informational Support - WFC	-0,240**	0,001
Esteem Support - WFC	-0,337**	0,000
Venting Support - WFC	-0,230**	0,002

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 presents the results of the test for hypothesis 1 which examines the relationship between parenting support from grandparents and WFC among working mothers. The analysis identified a statistically significant negative relationship ($p < 0.05$) between parenting support and WFC to support hypothesis 1. This result showed that increased parenting support from grandparents was associated with reduced WFC. The analysis of the relationship between the four dimensions of parenting support from grandparents showed that three had a significant negative correlation with WFC including the dimensions of informational ($r = -0.240$;

$p = 0.001$), esteem ($r = -0.337$; $p = 0.000$), and venting ($r = 0.230$; $p = 0.002$). This negative correlation reflected that more practical, esteem, and venting support received by the respondents reduced the WFC experienced. Meanwhile, practical support was not significantly related to WFC ($r = -0.106$).

Table 4. Result of Correlation Test between Parenting Support from Grandparents, Parenting Stress, and WFC

Models	B	SE	t-value	p
Parenting Support - Parenting Stress (a)	-0.2649	0.0431	-6.2577	0.001
Parenting Stress - WFC (b)	0.7179	0.1278	5.6157	0.001
Parenting Support - WFC (c')	-0.1326	0.0800	-1.6577	0.092
Parenting Support - WFC (c)	-0.3260	0.0783	-4.1619	0.001

Table 4 presents the significant relationships between parenting support from grandparent, parenting stress, and WFC. It was observed that parenting support significantly and negatively predicted parenting stress ($B = -0.2649$, $p = 0.001$). The trend showed that increased support from grandparents was associated with lower parental stress. Moreover, parenting stress significantly and positively predicted WFC ($B = 0.7179$, $p < 0.001$). This reflected that higher stress was associated with greater conflict between work and family roles. The inclusion of parenting stress as a mediator showed that the direct effect of parenting support on WFC (path c') was not significant ($B = -0.1326$, $p = 0.092$) while the total effect (path c) remained significant ($B = -0.3260$, $p = 0.001$). These results suggested that parenting stress fully mediated the relationship between grandparental support and WFC. Therefore, grandparental support reduced WFC indirectly by lowering parenting stress.

Table 5. Effects from Hayes Process Macro Model 4 on The Mediating Effect of Parenting Stress in the Relationship between Parenting Support from Grandparents and WFC

Models	Effect/ Coefficient	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
<i>Indirect Effects</i>				
Parenting Support – Parenting Stress – WFC	-0.1934	0.0485	-0.2950	-0.1063
<i>Completely Standardized Indirect Effects</i>				
Parenting Support – Parenting Stress – WFC	-0.1795	0.445	-0.2730	0.0997

The mediation was further validated through the determination of the indirect effect using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) in Table 5. The indirect effect was observed to be significant (Effect = -0.1934, BootSE = 0.0485, 95% BootCI [-0.2950, -0.1063]) because the confidence interval did not include zero. The results showed that parenting stress significantly mediated the relationship between parenting support from grandparents and WFC. The completely standardized indirect effect was also statistically significant (Effect = -0.1795, 95% CI [-0.2730, -0.0997]) which further supported the mediating role of parenting stress. The mediation effect was moderate in magnitude with an effect size of 0.1795 and reflected the ability of

grandparental support to reduce WFC by decreasing parenting stress. This suggested that the indirect influence of grandparental support on WFC mediated by parenting stress was psychologically meaningful but not substantial. However, the effect was practically relevant to explain the model. Grandparental support also had a limited role in mitigating WFC but remained a valuable resource and had a relatively modest influence compared to other forms of family support.

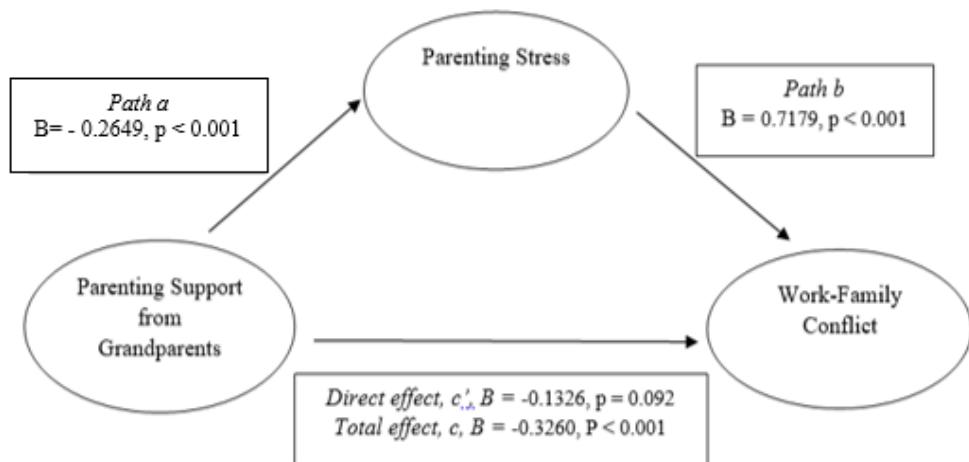


Figure 2. Parenting Stress as a Mediator in the Relationship between Parenting Support from Grandparents and WFC

Figure 2 shows the results for hypothesis 2 which examines the mediating effect of parenting stress on the negative association between parenting support and WFC. The results showed that parenting support reduced WFC and the effect was more pronounced at low parenting stress.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the extent to which the parenting support from grandparents reduced WFC with parenting stress serving as a mediating factor. The results showed that the support could be a critical resource for working mothers managing both career and family responsibilities. The active participation of grandparents in parenting enabled mothers to address competing demands effectively particularly domestic tasks related to parenting which was useful in alleviating parenting stress and reducing WFC. This grandparental support included a variety of practical forms of day-to-day childcare such as meeting daily needs and managing discipline. Supportive grandparents facilitated a more effective and less stressful condition of parenting duties for working mothers.

The results were consistent with the meta-analytic study by Kelley et al. (2021) on perceived family support and the work-family interface that reported a negative correlation between family support and WFC. This was because the support mitigated family domain responsibilities that spilled over into the work domain. The analysis of the characteristics showed that most respondents were early adults aged 31-35 years (44.8%).

This early adulthood is a period typically considered highly productive but often characterized by high inter-role conflict and low facilitation due to more demands and limited resources in the family and work domains (Demerouti et al., 2012). Furthermore, more than half of the respondents were private employees (54%) at the staff level (49.4%) which reflected high job demands and limited flexibility with subsequent contribution to substantial WFC (Francis et al., 2013; Higgins et al., 2014). The support received from family could reduce WFC by alleviating domestic stressors such as childcare and household chores (Hill, 2005).

This study showed that grandparents provided substantial parenting support in the form of child supervision (96.6%), accompanying children during playtime (82.8%), and assistance with daily routines such as feeding (73.0%) and bathing (67.2%). Additional contributions include food preparation (59.2%), disciplining the grandchild (44.8%), educational support through school drop-offs (21.3%), homework assistance (7.5%), and spiritual guidance (0.6%). This support covers a broad range of parenting duties which enable working mothers to conserve energy and be assisted through the responsibilities handled by grandparents while at work. The presence of grandparents in the household serves as a protective factor to mitigate the negative impact of WFC on parents by minimizing the effects on the well-being of children and preventing the transfer of workplace stress into the home environment (Mustillo et al., 2021). A previous study by Bonds et al. (2002) reported that increased family support for parenting positively impacted the lives of mothers. According to the COR model (Hobfoll, 2011), this type of support assists mothers to conserve emotional and physical resources, fulfil parenting duties, and benefit from guidance provided by grandparents. The model shows that grandparents buffer the impact of stress in the parenting domain and prevent the depletion of individual resources such as energy and emotional reserves. The assistance can also facilitate resource gain by enabling mothers to manage WFC more effectively and offset potential losses.

The support from grandparents reduced WFC primarily by alleviating parenting stress and this was in line with the previous report of Allen et al. (2019). Breevaart & Bakker (2011) also identified social support even from family as a critical buffer against the adverse effects of parenting stress. Previous studies further showed that increased social support was associated with lower parental stress and improved problem-solving in challenging situations (Zhao et al., 2021). Allen et al. (2019) acknowledged that factors beyond parenting tasks such as child behavior, socioeconomic context, and family relationships also influenced parenting stress and its impact on WFC. However, this study showed that grandparental support could interrupt the escalation of conflict by reducing parenting stress before becoming unmanageable. Zhao et al. (2021) also reported that social support enhanced problem-solving abilities and reduced physical and mental distress among parents in stressful contexts. The sharing of child-rearing responsibilities and enhancement of parental emotional well-being allow grandparents to contribute to a more supportive home environment.

Working mothers who lack or have no childcare support are more vulnerable to resource loss. This is because low childcare support forces mothers to shoulder the burden which can deplete the resources possessed and increase WFC. The trend is related to increased conflict in one domain such as family and the limited

resources of mothers to fulfil other domains in the form of work (Selvarajan et al., 2013). This condition leads to a decrease in available resources due to the usage in the family domain which subsequently reduces performance in the work domain. The loss of resources can also negatively impact individuals through psychological distress (Holmgreen et al., 2017). Parkes et al. (2015) found that the unavailability of support from grandparents explained the high levels of parenting stress in maternal groups based on educational level, migrant status, and single parenthood. The result showed the possibility of high parenting stress due to a lack of contact with grandparents, smaller and less effective support networks, and a lack of access to informal support.

The extensive participation of grandparents in primary caregiving in Indonesia is different from the situation in Western countries where the role is believed to be typically secondary (Bordone et al., 2017). This pattern reflects the distinctive features of Indonesian parenting which emphasizes interdependence among family members and is reinforced by strong familism. The elders such as grandparents often hold authority within families and are expected to participate in decision-making and childcare responsibilities. This is reflected through the provision of moral, emotional, financial, and social support as members of the extended family network. In addition to assisting with childcare and domestic tasks, older parents frequently serve as economic pillars within multigenerational households (Riany et al., 2017). Indonesian grandparents often serve as a primary support for working parents with the grandmothers frequently acting as "*double mothers*" by caring for both their children and grandchildren (Ekawati et al., 2024). This arrangement reinforces labor force participation and parenting roles of working mothers while also contributing to the positive mental health of children (Oktarima & Almaghfiro, 2025; Rahmatullah et al., 2023; Riyadi & Samosir, 2018).

This study showed that grandparental support reduced WFC but the effect size was modest. The complexity of antecedents to WFC suggested that no single source of family support could have a substantial impact and the trend was consistent with previous literature reporting small to medium effects (Kelley et al., 2021). Several factors contribute to the modest effect, but the meta-analyses conducted to investigate the role of social support in WFC already suggested that further broader support networks particularly in organizations generally had a stronger impact on the reduction of WFC than any individual family-based source (French et al., 2018). This shows that family domain support cannot fully address the WFC problem but remains a valuable resource because the concept is more manageable than job domain demands.

WFC is due to a complex interplay of factors which include caregiving responsibilities, the number and age of children, family structure, household chores, employment status of the partner, psychological strains, and financial resources (Reimann et al., 2022). The demographic analysis clarified this result by showing that the average duration of support provided by grandparents was generally limited with most offering only two hours per day to a quarter day per week (56.3%). The trend reflects that grandparents are not the primary caregivers and the inclusion is insufficient to address the full range of parenting demands. Moreover, the largest proportion of grandparents was in the late adulthood age group of 61-65 years (30.5%)

possibly associated with physical limitations, reducing the ability to provide comprehensive support. The data also showed that several working mothers depended on a broader network of caregivers including spouses (27.8%), household assistants or nannies (11.6%), relatives (11%), neighbors (1.2%), and aunts (0.3%). This reflected that grandparental support was only one component within a larger caregiving system, and the trend explained the modest impact identified on WFC.

The theoretical analysis conducted based on the COR model suggested that support was often beneficial because the action could drain resources, provide no benefit, or even be detrimental when not in line with the actual needs (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 1990; Holmgreen et al., 2017). In this context, the support working mothers receive from grandparents was probably insufficient to reduce the parenting burden either because of low intensity or a mismatch with the needs of working mothers. The results showed that grandparental support was not equally effective at reducing WFC and the situation contributed to the modest effects observed. Esteem support was particularly valuable due to the direct influence on the perception of mothers about their abilities. The motivation and affirmation offered by grandparents assisted working mothers in building confidence in parenting skills and fostered a sense of respect and competence. Enhanced self-esteem served as a buffer against the stress of balancing work and family roles which subsequently reduced conflict and tension. Previous studies reported the importance of esteem support by showing the positive effects on motivation, well-being, and overall satisfaction of mothers (Bonds et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 1985; Rahmadhani et al., 2025).

Venting support was another aspect considered useful because grandparents provided a sympathetic ear for parents to discuss parenting issues and challenges. The existence of a family member who listens to frustrations can foster effective parenting practices and support the psychological well-being of parents (Belsky, 1984). The safe outlet offered by grandparents for parents to release emotions reduced the stress of managing dual roles (Bonds et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 1985; Cohen & Wills, 1985). Therefore, venting support from grandparents provided a space for mothers to express feelings and also served as a form of emotional support. The informational support provided by grandparents was also beneficial because the advice on responding to children was useful in addition to daily parenting assistance. The results were consistent with the report of Rahmadhani et al. (2025) that constructive information assisted working mothers in making informed daily decisions. The trend showed mothers were better equipped to manage role demands especially within the family domain.

A contrasting trend was observed for practical support which was defined as direct and tangible assistance such as material aid. The variable was found not to have a significant relationship with WFC. This was because grandparents often provided substantial practical support in childcare, but the participation did not necessarily alleviate WFC. The condition was probably because the instrumental support had a more complex relationship with WFC by providing necessary resources but did not often lead to improved work-family balance or satisfaction (Abendroth & Dulk, 2011). Instrumental support could also be perceived as a threat to role accomplishment and self-esteem in some situations by potentially conveying the impression that

parents were not fulfilling the required family roles. Furthermore, there is a possibility of individuals feeling uneasy when receiving assistance from loved ones or those with similar or less experience and the process is capable of provoking a sense of inferiority (Leung et al., 2020). In such cases, assistance from grandparents cannot resolve parenting challenges and is able to introduce additional strain.

The limited effect of practical support on WFC can reflect the specific support needs of working mothers, particularly those with young children. The sampled grandparents frequently co-parent grandchildren and supervise those aged 0 to 6 years (75.2%) using different instrumental parenting support. A previous study associated the presence of children who were five years old or younger in the household with increased WFC (T. D. Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). Mothers were also reported to experience greater WFC when caring for infants or toddlers compared to when the children were in third or fifth grade (Nomaguchi & Fetro, 2019). The increased WFC among working mothers of young children was worsened by parenting-related challenges such as feelings of reduced parental competence, significant difficulties in balancing work and parenting responsibilities, and a lack of reliable relevant information. Immediate assistance from partners and extended family including occasional childcare and emotional support eases the parental burden, enables mothers to manage other responsibilities, and fosters mutual support which is essential for maternal well-being (Thomas, 2025). The process of parenting children under five years old can be challenging which leads to more effectiveness of esteem, venting, and informational support than the practical aspect. This was because emotional and informational support from grandparents provided a sense of security and reassurance about parental responsibilities that practical support alone was unable to offer. The primary responsibility for parenting remains with the parents while grandparents serve a supplementary role and the trend reflects the inability of the inclusion to fully alleviate the demands. Therefore, the results suggested that emotional support from grandparents was more beneficial for working mothers in line with the reports of previous studies (Abendroth & Dulk, 2011; Leung et al., 2020).

Grandparental support was not the strongest predictor of reduced WFC but represented a meaningful and culturally grounded resource for working families in Indonesia. This study showed the important role of grandparents in Indonesian caregiving practices and in facilitating women juggling family duties to balance work and family. The trend was achieved due to the identification of the unique contribution made by grandparents often overlooked in previous studies that aggregated all family support. The insights reaffirm that understanding work–family dynamics requires attention to formal organizational support as well as the culturally integrated forms of intergenerational assistance shaping everyday family life. The key result was the differentiation between the role of grandparents from other family support such as those provided by husbands or relatives which previous studies often combined into a single category. It also emphasized the cultural significance of grandparental participation, particularly in societies where the extended family was central to social life.

Several limitations were acknowledged despite the insights provided by this study. Grandparental support was analyzed as a single predictor, but the results showed that the effects on WFC were domain-

specific rather than global. Partial correlations showed that esteem, venting, and informational support from grandparents were associated with lower WFC while practical support observed to constitute most of the assistance provided was not significantly associated. Future studies need to focus more on the precise differentiation of support types to identify which forms of grandparental support are most effective for working mothers in alleviating WFC. The trend suggests that targeted promotion of specific types of grandparental support can assist working mothers in balancing parenting responsibilities with work demands.

Allen et al. (2019) acknowledged that factors beyond parenting tasks such as child behavior and characteristics, socioeconomic context, and family relationships influence parenting stress and subsequently affect WFC. This study showed that the support grandparents provided to mitigate WFC depended on the type required and the age of children. The trend was associated with the fact that most children under five years old were cared for by the grandparents. Moreover, the employment situation of the husband can intensify or alleviate WFC for working mothers (Cheung & Wong, 2013; Halbesleben et al., 2012). The existence of multiple caregivers including the husband showed that grandparents often did not serve as the primary support for working mothers. The result emphasized the importance of accounting or controlling for other influential factors related to parenting stress such as the working conditions of the parents and partners and child characteristics to more accurately assess how grandparental support mitigated WFC. Furthermore, the majority of children cared for by grandparents in this study were under five years old and the results reflected a specific caregiving context that could not be generalizable to families with older children. The limitation suggests that the results are most relevant to WFC scenarios associated with grandparental support in parenting for families with young children.

Another limitation was that the "working mothers" category was broad without differentiating between the employment types, job levels, and work conditions. Meanwhile, Koura et al. (2017) emphasized that job characteristics such as high job demand, long working hours, and shift work were fundamental factors shaping differences in WFC across occupations and genders. The control of these work-related factors can substantially reduce the disparities in WFC between occupational groups and for men and women. Moreover, high job demands with limited job control increase stress levels and deplete individual resources which elevate vulnerability to WFC and subsequent mental health risks (Carvalho et al., 2018). This shows the need for future studies to investigate how the impact of grandparental support varies across specific groups of jobs for working mothers considering the differences in the effect of the demands on the work-family interface.

This study did not examine the directionality of WFC which was the distinction between WIF and FIW. The other dimensions such as time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflict identified by Kelley et al. (2021) to be differentially influenced by family support were also not analyzed. Therefore, future studies need to investigate the multidimensional WFC separately including time-based and strain-based conflict in both directions of WIF and FIW to determine the type that is more effectively mitigated by grandparental support. The understanding of the dynamics can assist in designing more targeted and effective intergenerational support strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study showed that grandparental support was a significant source of childcare assistance within Indonesian families with a unique contribution to the work-family conflict (WFC) experienced by working mothers. Specifically, informational, esteem, and venting support from grandparents were closely related to reduced WFC. The lack of a significant association between practical support and WFC showed the greater importance of emotional and informational resources in assisting mothers to manage parenting tasks. The mediation analysis further reflected parenting stress as a key pathway through which grandparental support reduced WFC. The trend showed that the reduction in WFC was not direct but rather occurred by alleviating parenting stress.

The inference was that the fostering of strong partnerships between grandparents and working mothers could promote a more balanced management of work and family roles. Future studies should explore innovative strategies for cultivating sustainable intergenerational support systems and show optimization mechanisms and conditions to facilitate work-family integration among working mothers. These could include collaborative parenting processes to substantially alleviate the challenges faced in balancing family roles. The understanding of the dynamics was capable of assisting in designing more targeted and effective intergenerational support strategies.

This study contributed to the development of psychology by showing the nuanced and multidimensional nature of social support. Previous efforts focused on general social support from family and the impact on the work-family interface, but this study examined social support in a cultural context where grandparents had a significant role and was specifically related to parenting tasks. Collectively, the results provided new empirical evidence for the importance of intergenerational support in contemporary Indonesian families to enrich existing understanding of how specific types of support contributed to maternal resilience in balancing roles.

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