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NAVIGATING WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT IN TOURISM: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORK ALIENATION ON INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the impact of work-family conflict on individual job performance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of work alienation. The research was conducted among employees in the tourism sector in Turkey and utilized a correlational screening model. Data were collected using validated scales, and analyses were performed with SPSS, AMOS and the PROCESS Macro. The findings indicate that work-family conflict has a direct negative effect on individual performance and significantly increases work alienation. Additionally, work alienation itself negatively and significantly impacts individual performance. The analyses demonstrate that work alienation serves as a significant mediator in this relationship. Within the framework of conservation of resources theory, the study elucidates how resource losses stemming from the demands of both work and family roles affect performance. This study makes a theoretical contribution to the organizational behavior literature by examining the interrelations among work-family conflict, work alienation and individual performance. It also provides practical recommendations for human resources managers in high-stress sectors like tourism, particularly regarding work-life balance, flexible work arrangements and psychological support strategies. The results suggest a pressing need for intervention programs aimed at enhancing employee well-being and improving organizational efficiency.

KEYWORDS

work-family conflict, work alienation, individual performance

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, individuals encounter numerous challenges in balancing the demands of their professional lives with their personal responsibilities.

Recent social changes, such as the rise in labor force participation, the prevalence of dual-income families, and an increasing number of single parents, have compelled employees to juggle multiple responsibilities simultaneously (Berkman et al., 2015). This situation



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has intensified the effort to reconcile work and family roles, rendering work-family conflict a persistent and multidimensional challenge (Gürlek & Kılıç, 2021). Recent estimates indicate that nearly 70% of employees globally face difficulties in achieving work-family balance (Ugwu et al., 2024), which frequently leads to emotional strain and performance disruptions (Bian & Mohd Sukor, 2024).

Work-family conflict is a significant issue as it impacts various dynamics, including individuals, family members and the workplace itself (Eby et al., 2005). Studies on work-family conflict have shown that it is linked to several organizational behavior-related variables, such as organizational support (Keoboualapheth et al., 2018), burnout (Montgomery et al., 2003) and job stress (Smith et al., 2018). Moreover, work-family conflict has been shown to negatively influence individual job performance, partly by undermining employees' psychological resources (Aydemir & Akdoğan, 2018). Emerging literature also highlights a positive link between work-family conflict and work alienation, emphasizing the psychological disengagement that may follow prolonged stress (Chen & Ye, 2023). Furthermore, it can negatively affect employees' individual performance, leading to decreased organizational efficiency (Aydemir & Akdoğan, 2018). Recent research has also uncovered a positive relationship between work-family conflict and work alienation (Chen & Ye, 2023). These findings highlight the importance for employers to develop policies aimed at reducing work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999).

The challenges that employees face in their work life can lead to issues such as work-family conflict and work alienation. Work alienation is generally defined as an employee's lack of interest in their job (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000) which can result in decreased motivation, lower performance and an increased likelihood of employees wanting to leave their jobs over time (Clark et al., 2010). In particular, the feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness associated with alienation can adversely impact both individual and organizational performance by diminishing employees' commitment and efforts at work (García-Contreras, 2022; Kartal, 2018). Thus, addressing alienation is not only a matter of employee well-being but also a strategic imperative for performance enhancement.

In this study, the conservation of resources (COR) theory serves as a basis for explaining the relationship between work-family conflict, work alienation and individual performance. Conservation of resources theory suggests that employee behaviors stem from the motivation to protect resources (Hobfoll, 2011) and also provides an essential framework for understanding the coping mechanisms of employees with problems such as work-family conflict and work alienation (Abbas et al., 2014).

The tourism sector is a significant branch of service businesses and is known for causing intense stress among employees. Factors such as shift work schedules, seasonal fluctuations in demand, and a focus on customer satisfaction contribute to additional pressure on workers. Under these challenging conditions, tourism employees face a variety of issues, including low wages, imbalances between work and personal life, job alienation and reduced performance (Görmez & Gürlek, 2022; İpar, 2021; Kırıcı & Özkoç, 2017; Medina-Garrido et al., 2023; Peng et al., 2020; Rabiul et al., 2023; Sarwar et al., 2022; Tekeli & Buyruk, 2018). As a result, the tourism sector is critical when considering both employee well-being and employer efficiency (Cheng & Tung, 2021). Understanding the challenges faced by tourism sector employees such as work-family conflict and job alienation is essential for managers to develop more effective policies (Johnson & Park, 2020).

This study makes several contributions to the existing literature. While previous research has explored work alienation and work-family conflict among service sector employees using various variables, there are limited studies that examine these two concepts together. Additionally, there is a lack of research analyzing how work alienation mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and individual performance. This study aims to provide significant theoretical and practical insights by analyzing the interplay between these variables through the lens of COR theory.

In this context, the primary aim of the study is to explore the relationship between work-family conflict, work alienation and individual performance among employees in the tourism sector. This will be done within a theoretical framework and through the analysis of empirical data. The findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges employees face in their professional lives, as well as assist managers in developing more effective human resources policies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

The roles that individuals assume over time can vary significantly. As people age, they encounter different environments that provide various living situations, each coming with unique responsibilities and roles. Marriage and career are two prominent examples of this phenomenon. When individuals marry, they begin to share their lives with someone else. Couples living together in the same household with shared responsibilities often taking on the role of parents in addition to their roles as spouses. Furthermore,

individuals who work also adopt the role of employees as dictated by their jobs. In today's fast-paced world, many people find themselves caught between the demands of work and home life, leading to conflicts between these two critical areas of their lives. This imbalance can result in unprecedented stress (Liao et al., 2019). The rise of dual-income couples and single-parent families has contributed to employees channelling less energy into their work, which can result in complications at the workplace (French, 2018). The recognition of this conflict and its emergence as a concept dates back to the 1970s when early definitions typically referenced role theory (Kahn et al., 1964). Kahn et al. (1964) were among the first to study work-family conflict, defining it as a type of role conflict where pressures from both sides are incompatible. Building upon this, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) characterized work-family conflict as a situation that arises when the two roles clash, causing one to be neglected. Frone et al. (1992) further described work-family conflict as a two-way process, suggesting that just as work can impact family life, issues within family life can also adversely affect work life.

Work-family conflict is a psychological phenomenon that arises from an imbalance between an individual's work and family responsibilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). This conflict often occurs due to stress factors such as burnout (Smith et al., 2018) and excessive workload (Ganster & Perrewé, 2011). Factors contributing to include the pressure to succeed in one's career, the desire to be an ideal spouse and parent, and the effort to adapt effectively to various environments (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). The consequences can be quite negative as it is known to adversely affect an individual's psychological well-being, leading to increased levels of depression, stress and burnout (Allen et al., 2000), as well as decreased life satisfaction (Higgins et al., 1992). Furthermore, it impacts not only the individual but also the family unit being observed to decrease relationship satisfaction and increase angry parenting behaviors (Cooklin et al., 2015). Additionally, this conflict creates a chronic inter-role stress factor, especially in situations where work takes precedence over time spent with family, which can lead to psychological distress or physical symptoms (Badawy & Schieman, 2021).

To examine the effects of work-family conflict in this work, the law of conservation of resources was considered. According to the law of conservation of resources, resources serve as a tool for individuals to cope with the stress and difficult situations they experience (Hobfoll, 2011). Individuals may need to protect and regain their resources when they are unable to fulfill the requirements of their work and family roles, and fear losing their jobs or family due to a lack of them (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Individuals trying to cope with this situation may also experience work-family conflict over time. In particular, working

individuals who cannot meet the demands of both family and work may experience emotional and behavioral resource losses (Kwan et al., 2012; Liao et al., 2019).

2.2. WORK ALIENATION

Alienation refers to the weakening or disruption of the relationship between the individual and their self or society (Kaya, 2021). At its core, it denotes a condition in which individuals experience estrangement from their own values and from the social structures that surround them. Although alienation has long been embedded in human experience, its systematic philosophical articulation can be traced to Hegel (1910), who conceptualized alienation as a process in which individuals become detached from their own essence and internalize external forces, resulting in both cognitive and spiritual fragmentation.

Marx reinterpreted alienation within a socio-economic framework grounded in labor and capital relations (Petrović, 1963). He argued that alienation emerges when workers become estranged from the products of their labor and from their own human potential under exploitative production systems (Fromm, 1961). Unlike Hegel, Marx emphasized that alienation is historically produced rather than inevitable, and therefore capable of transformation through conscious human action (Osmanoğlu, 2016). Drawing on Weber's theory of bureaucracy, Durukan (2024) argued that rigid organizational structures and constrained autonomy intensify employees' feelings of alienation and detachment. Together, these classical perspectives situate alienation within philosophical and structural conditions.

Contemporary organizational research, however, conceptualizes work alienation primarily as a psychological phenomenon. In modern workplaces, alienation reflects employees' subjective experiences of emotional strain, diminished meaning and perceived resource depletion. From the perspective of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2011), work alienation can be interpreted as a defensive reaction to sustained resource loss. When work-family conflict generates continuous psychological and emotional demands that exceed available resources, employees may withdraw cognitively and emotionally to protect their remaining capacities. Similarly, affective events theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) explains how recurring negative emotional experiences in the work domain accumulate over time, shaping attitudes and behaviors that ultimately influence performance outcomes. In this theoretical framework, work alienation operates as a psychological mechanism linking resource loss and negative emotional experiences to reduced job performance.

The concept of work alienation refers to an individual's disconnection from the world, other people and ideas (Horowitz, 1966). A phenomenon characterized by the unhappiness and sense of estrangement that an employee feels in a job (Mottaz, 1981). Essentially, work alienation represents the gap between a person and their job, along with the emotional distress associated with that job (Nair & Vohra, 2009). Research indicates that work alienation can arise as a response to poor working conditions that clash with an employee's ideals, dreams or desires (Kanungo, 1979). Seeman (1959) suggested that alienation occurs when individuals feel powerless and frustrated due to their need for autonomy while additionally, characteristics of the job and a lack of variety in tasks are factors that can contribute to such feelings (Banai & Reisel, 2007).

Work alienation is inherently a negative emotional state that leads to a range of adverse consequences at both personal and organizational levels. At the individual level, it can result in alcohol addiction (Greenberg & Grunberg, 1995), mental health issues, selfish behavior (Aşık, 2018), emotional exhaustion and reduced overall well-being (Shantz et al., 2014). On a work-related level, work alienation can manifest as a decreased interest in job responsibilities (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000) and increased apathy (Patrick, 1984).

2.3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Individual job performance specifically task performance referring to employees' effectiveness in fulfilling their core job responsibilities occupies a central position within the broader organizational behavior literature. In this study, performance is conceptualized at the individual level rather than at the contextual or organizational level, focusing on employees' task-related effectiveness. Prior research has demonstrated that variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological well-being, burnout, emotional exhaustion and perceived organizational support are significantly associated with individual performance outcomes (Chiaburu et al., 2014; Obrenovic et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Within this framework, performance is not merely an isolated behavioral outcome but rather a reflection of employees' psychological states and resource conditions.

Work-family conflict significantly reduces employees' psychological security and overall well-being adversely impacting individual productivity, leading to lower performance levels (Johnson et al., 2005). A study by Obrenovic et al. (2020) confirmed that work-family conflict negatively affects psychological well-being and contributes to decreased performance while additionally, prolonged work-family conflict can result in emotional exhaustion among employees, further diminishing their performance (Wang et al., 2021).

Research by Isa and Indrayati (2023) also demonstrated that work-family conflict has significant negative effects on work-life balance and performance. A study conducted by Witt and Carlson (2006) focused on private sector employees and concluded that work-family conflict is closely linked to low performance levels. Furthermore, it has been suggested that additional organizational factors should be explored to fully understand the impact of work-family conflict on performance. This work addresses that need. From the perspective of the law of conservation of resources, work-family conflict is a crucial source of stress for employees who must exert extra energy to maintain balance between their work and family lives, yet they often experience a loss of resources in both areas. This situation can lead to decreased performance both at work and at home (Liao et al., 2019). While researchers in organizational behavior and human resource management have pointed out that work-family conflict can negatively affect individual performance, further investigation into the relationship between these two variables is necessary (Allen et al., 2000). In line with this, the following hypothesis was formulated to examine the effect of work-family conflict on performance:

H₁: Work-family conflict has a significant negative impact on individual performance.

The difficulties an individual faces in balancing the demands of work and family are referred to as work-family conflict. This conflict can negatively impact the positive feelings an individual has towards their job, leading to work being perceived more as an obligation. This shift in perception can result in feelings of alienation from work (Chen & Ye, 2023; Shahryari & Nabavi, 2014). Additionally, work-family conflict can increase feelings of guilt, causing dissatisfaction both at home and at work (Judge et al., 2006). Research conducted by Toygar et al. (2023) found that work-family conflict significantly and positively affects work alienation. Since this study focused on seafarers, it suggests the need for research involving different sample groups to better understand the relationships between these variables. This work aims to address that need:

H₂: Work-family conflict has a significant positive impact work alienation.

According to Marx, alienation leads to negative emotions because work no longer becomes an enjoyable activity for the employee. Instead, it becomes a situation in which they feel physically and mentally unwell and humiliated (Marx, 2022). From this perspective, the negative emotions that arise from alienation create a positive relationship with burnout and a negative relationship with overall well-being (Shantz et al., 2014). Given these arguments, it is anticipated that alienation can negatively impact job performance which can be explained by emotional events theory. According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), negative emotions can

result in poor performance outcomes. Clark et al. (2010), in their study examining the effects of work alienation among temporary workers, found a negative relationship between work alienation and job performance. Similarly, Shantz et al. (2015), in a study conducted with employees of a service company in the United Kingdom, concluded that alienation negatively affects employee performance as evaluated by their managers. Furthermore, Kartal (2018) conducted a study on employees in the service sector and identified significant negative relationships between work alienation and performance. Tekingündüz et al. (2016) reached comparable findings, highlighting a significant negative correlation between work alienation and performance. Based on the emotional events theory, and these established relationships between alienation and performance, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H₃: Work alienation has a significant and negative impact on individual performance.

From a theoretical standpoint, the mediating role of work alienation can be explained through both COR theory and AET. According to COR theory, work family conflict represents a significant source of resource depletion, as employees must allocate limited emotional, cognitive and temporal resources to competing role demands (Hobfoll, 2011). When these resources are persistently threatened or lost, individuals attempt to conserve what remains by psychologically withdrawing from their work. This withdrawal process manifests as work alienation, characterized by diminished meaning and detachment. Such psychological withdrawal subsequently reduces effort investment and performance.

Similarly, AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggests that repeated negative emotional experiences triggered by work-family conflict accumulate over time and shape employees' work attitudes. Sustained frustration and emotional strain foster detachment, which then translates into lower performance outcomes. Accordingly, work alienation operates as a psychological mechanism through which work-family conflict indirectly influences individual performance.

However, COR theory also implies that resource depletion may directly impair performance by limiting employees' available cognitive and emotional capacity. Therefore, while work alienation is expected to transmit part of the effect of work-family conflict on performance, a direct negative relationship may also persist. This reasoning suggests a partial mediation structure.

According to the study conducted by Aydemir and Akdoğan (2018), work-family conflict significantly impacts psychological performance. The concepts of work alienation and positive psychological capital serve as mediating factors in its relationship with psychological performance. Additionally, when examining various studies, it becomes evident that

work alienation can influence other variables both directly and indirectly. Although work alienation is often treated as a mediating or moderating variable, it is frequently regarded as a dependent variable in academic literature. For instance, a study conducted in India found that work alienation fully mediates the effect of organizational support on turnover intention (Srutismara et al., 2018). Similarly, research on hotel employees in Pakistan revealed that work alienation plays a mediating role in the relationship between leadership style and employee well-being (Sarwar et al., 2022).

Empirical research also provides support for the mediating role of work alienation in different organizational contexts. Aydemir and Akdoğan (2018) found that work alienation functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between work-family conflict and psychological performance. Similarly, studies conducted in various sectors have demonstrated that work alienation mediates the effects of organizational support on turnover intention (Srutismara et al., 2018) and leadership style on employee well-being (Sarwar et al., 2022). These findings suggest that work alienation frequently operates as a transmission mechanism linking workplace stressors to behavioral and performance-related outcomes:

H₄: Work alienation mediates the impact of work-family conflict on individual performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

In this study, data were collected from hotel employees, making them the focus of the research sample. A total of five hotels was selected for the survey, 4- and 5-star establishments, personally known to the researchers, who also had established friendships with their managers. Prior to the data collection process, the HR managers informed the employees about the study and researchers distributed the survey questions directly to the employees with the assistance of HR managers in the hotels. Participation required employees to be both willing and employed full-time. The rationale for including only full-time employees was to accurately assess the impact of work-family conflict on participants. This approach aligns with recent studies conducted in the hotel industry (Xu et al., 2020).

To minimize bias in responses, surveys were distributed to volunteer participants in sealed envelopes, without supervision from their managers. The completed surveys were also collected in sealed envelopes. No identifying information was requested from participants at any point during the survey

process. Over the course of eight days, a total of 308 surveys were collected. Upon review, the researchers found that 282 surveys were valid after excluding those with no responses or significant missing data.

A total of 155 participants were female, and 127 were male. Among these participants, 152 were married while 130 were single. In terms of work experience, 107 participants had one year or less, 151 had between 2 and 10 years, and 24 had 11 years or more. Regarding age, 186 participants were under 30 years old, 57 were between 30 and 40, and 39 were 41 or older. Additionally, in the samples collected from hotels, no statistically significant differences were found in the mean standard deviation values of the variables and demographic factors included in the study.

3.2. MEASUREMENT TOOLS

To ensure linguistic and cultural equivalence for the Turkish context, a double-translation (back-translation) method was applied (Brislin, 1970). The scales were first translated into Turkish by two independent language experts and then back-translated into English to verify consistency with the original meanings. Furthermore, before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of hotel employees to ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of the items.

3.2.1. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

A 5-item scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) was used to determine the level of work-family conflict among participants. Sample statements on the scale, which ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), are: "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life" and "My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties".

3.2.2. WORK ALIENATION

A 10-item scale developed by Hirschfeld and Feild (2000) was used to determine the work alienation levels of the participants. Sample statements on the scale, which ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), are: "I wonder what the point of working is" and "I don't enjoy my work, I just see it as a reward for giving".

3.2.3. INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

A 4-item scale developed by Sigler and Pearson (2000) was used to assess the participants' perceptions of their individual performance. Sample statements on the scale, which ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), are: "I am more than confident that I meet the standards in the quality of service I provide" and "I complete my tasks on time".

3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, both AMOS 22 and SPSS 27 were used for data analysis. SPSS 27 was used to perform descriptive statistical procedures, validity and reliability tests, while AMOS 22 was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Hypothesis tests were performed with Process Macro, which was developed as an add-on to SPSS.

3.4. COMMON METHOD BIAS

Collecting data using a survey method at a single point in time raises concerns about common method bias (CMB) (Sürücü et al., 2023). Consequently, as recommended in the literature, we assessed the presence of CMB before conducting hypothesis testing. To address this issue, we implemented several procedural solutions proposed by Podsakoff et al. (2003). First, we conducted a pre-test with 10 participants to evaluate the readability of the scale items. Each participant was asked to explain their understanding of the survey items. After confirming that the statements were clear, we proceeded with the data collection process. Second, during the survey design, we randomly assigned all items to minimize the likelihood that participants would mentally connect the relationships between the scale variables. Additional measures taken to prevent common method bias included ensuring participation was voluntary, not requesting participants' identities, allowing participants to complete the surveys away from supervisors or managers, and having them submit their responses in sealed envelopes directly to the researchers.

Statistically, Harman's first single-factor analysis was performed. In the factor analysis conducted by fixing the eigenvalue to 1, it was determined that the highest factor explained only 31.77% of the total variance. Finally, in line with the recommendations of Simmering et al. (2014), both age and gender were treated as indicator variables, and the correlation between these variables and our structures was examined. The findings showed that there was no unreasonable correlation between the indicator variables and our structures. All these findings indicated that CMB was not a source of concern for this study.

4. RESULTS

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), presented in Table 1, indicated that the model demonstrated an acceptable fit, with the following metrics: chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio $\chi^2/df = 2.79$, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.952, comparative fit

index (CFI) = 0.953, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.962, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06. The factor loadings for the items associated with the constructs were all 0.5 or higher, indicating that these items are effective in representing their respective constructs (Sürücü et al., 2024). Additionally, as shown in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha (α) values for all constructs ranged from 0.820 to 0.910, while the composite reliability (CR) values varied between 0.821 and 0.909. Those values which exceed 0.7 demonstrate acceptable reliability for the scales used (Bekmezci & Sürücü, 2025).

Table 1. Validity and reliability results

Construct	Indicator	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Work-family conflict	WFC1	0.504	0.874	0.874	0.589
	WFC2	0.862			
	WFC3	0.854			
	WFC4	0.869			
	WFC5	0.681			
Work alienation	WA1	0.598	0.910	0.909	0.504
	WA2	0.566			
	WA3	0.754			
	WA4	0.689			
	WA5	0.862			
	WA6	0.777			
	WA7	0.603			
	WA8	0.708			
	WA9	0.783			
	WA10	0.705			
Individual performance	IP1	0.737	0.820	0.821	0.536
	IP2	0.682			
	IP3	0.729			
	IP4	0.777			

Note: CR – composite reliability; AVE – average variance extracted.

Source: authors.

As presented in Table 1, the AVE values of the structure are 0.589, 0.504 and 0.536, respectively. In addition to the AVE values being greater than 0.5, the CR values being greater than the AVE values also confirms the convergent validity (Sürücü et al., 2023). Finally, the square roots of the AVEs being higher than their correlations with other structures indicate that all provide discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). When all the findings were evaluated together, all three structures included in the scope of the research were valid and reliable.

The relationship between the variables is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation analysis results

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
1. Work family conflicts	2.94	0.84	1	–	–	0.767
2. Work alienation	2.88	0.79	0.208**	1	–	0.710
3. Individual performance	3.21	0.95	–0.293**	–0.377	1	0.732

Note: M – mean; SD – standard deviation; $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ – square root of the average variance extracted; ** $p < 0.05$.

Source: authors.

The correlation results in Table 2 indicate that work-family conflict exhibits a positive correlation with work alienation ($r = 0.208$, $p < 0.05$) and a negative correlation with individual performance ($r = -0.293$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, a negative relationship exists between work alienation and individual performance ($r = -0.377$, $p < 0.05$).

The results of the analyses conducted to test the research hypotheses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis test results

Path	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
WFC $\rightarrow$ WA	0.290	0.045	0.207	0.379
WFC $\rightarrow$ IP	–0.168	0.042	–0.251	–0.085
WA $\rightarrow$ IP	–0.217	0.038	–0.313	–0.189
Indirect effect				
WFC $\rightarrow$ WA $\rightarrow$ IP	–0.048	0.015	–0.082	–0.021

Note: β – standardized regression coefficient; SE – standard error; LLCI – lower limit of the confidence interval; ULCI – upper limit of the confidence interval; WFC – work-family conflict; WA – work alienation; IP – individual performance.

Source: authors.

The analysis results in Table 3 show that work-family conflict has a positive effect on work alienation ($\beta = 0.290$, $p < 0.05$) and a negative effect on individual performance ($\beta = -0.168$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the effect of work alienation on individual performance is adverse ($\beta = -0.217$, $p < 0.05$). The final section of the study examines the mediating role of work alienation in the relationship between work-family conflict and performance. For this purpose, the indirect effect of work-family conflict on performance (via work alienation) was examined. The analysis results show that the effect is significant. Accordingly, all the hypotheses of the study were supported.

5. DISCUSSION

This research examined the impact of work-family conflict on individual job performance among employees in the tourism sector, focusing on the mediating role of work alienation in this relationship. The analysis revealed that work-family conflict has a direct and significant negative effect on job performance. This finding aligns with previous studies (Isa & Indrayati, 2023; Moreira et al., 2023; Obrenovic et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). However, a study by Asbari et al. (2020) suggested that the direct effect of work-family conflict on performance was limited, possibly due to its sample which included only female employees in Indonesia.

The research findings indicate that work-family conflict significantly and positively influences work alienation, undermining individuals' commitment to their work, leading to feelings of alienation, which can adversely affect job performance and organizational commitment. These results highlight the importance of effectively managing work-family conflict and utilizing organizational resources efficiently. Similar conclusions have been found in the literature (Akca, 2020; Shahryari & Nabavi, 2014; Toygar et al., 2023) for instance a study conducted in the construction sector in China by Cao et al. (2020) found that work-family conflict did not affect performance.

Work alienation is a psychological state characterized by an employees' loss of interest and motivation in their work. Employees who perceive their work as losing meaning may feel ineffective and unproductive, leading to decreased performance. Research shows that work alienation significantly and negatively affects individual job performance. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Amarat et al., 2019; Chiaburu, 2014; García-Contreras et al., 2022; Karabulut & Palaz, 2023; Kartal, 2018; Shantz et al., 2015).

When the mediating effect of work alienation, which is the main focus of the study, is analyzed, it is confirmed that alienation is a significant transmission mechanism in the effect of work-family conflict on performance. This finding is an integrated explanation of COR and AET theories. Within the framework of COR theory, an employee whose resources are depleted due to work-family conflict develops a psychological defence mechanism to protect their remaining resources, beginning to distance themselves from their work. This psychological withdrawal process hinders the employee's focus and productivity, thus reducing performance. Furthermore, when evaluated from the AET perspective, the emotional tension created by work-family conflict is transformed into concrete performance loss through work alienation. Therefore, work-family conflict weakens performance not only directly but also indirectly by triggering feelings of meaninglessness and powerlessness that the employee

feels towards work. These results prove that the decline in performance is not just a momentary depletion of resources but also a deep psychological detachment process. The research indicates that work alienation serves as a mediating variable that amplifies this indirect effect. Similar relationships have been observed in the literature (Amarat et al., 2019; Aydemir & Akdoğan, 2018).

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the direct and indirect effects of work-family conflict on performance by positioning work alienation as a mediating mechanism within the frameworks of COR and AET. The findings demonstrate that work-family conflict reduces performance both directly and indirectly through increased work alienation. These results indicate that performance decline is not merely the outcome of immediate resource depletion, but also the consequence of a deeper psychological disengagement process emerging from sustained role conflict.

Although prior research has widely investigated the consequences of work-family conflict and the antecedents of work alienation separately, the integration of these constructs within a unified mediation framework remains limited. In much of the literature, work alienation has been conceptualized primarily as an outcome variable rather than as a psychological transmission mechanism linking role conflict to performance outcomes. Furthermore, empirical studies that simultaneously ground work-family conflict and alienation within both resource-based and affective theoretical perspectives are relatively scarce, particularly in high-demand service sectors such as tourism. By integrating COR and AET within a mediation model, this study advances a more mechanism-oriented explanation of how external role pressures evolve into internal psychological withdrawal and ultimately manifest in diminished performance.

At the same time, the broader literature reveals conceptual and methodological constraints that shape theoretical development in this domain. Many existing studies rely on cross-sectional designs and single-sector samples, limiting the capacity to fully capture the dynamic and contextual nature of the work-family conflict-alienation-performance relationship. In addition, the predominance of resource-based explanations in prior research has often underemphasized affective processes that contribute to performance deterioration. By incorporating both resource depletion and emotional mechanisms, the present study offers a more integrative theoretical

account; however, further longitudinal and cross-contextual investigations are necessary to refine and extend this framework.

Future research may expand this integrative perspective by examining additional theoretical boundary conditions and alternative psychological pathways that may shape the relationship between work-family conflict and performance.

The findings offer several evidence-based implications for organizational practice, particularly within high-demand service industries such as tourism. Since work-family conflict was found to reduce performance both directly and indirectly through work alienation, managerial interventions should focus not only on workload reduction but also on preventing psychological disengagement.

First, organizations should implement resource-supportive human resource policies aimed at reducing role conflict. Flexible scheduling systems, predictable shift rotations and workload planning mechanisms can minimize temporal and emotional strain. From a COR perspective, such practices help prevent excessive resource depletion, thereby sustaining employees' capacity to perform core job duties effectively. Second, early detection of work alienation is critical. Because alienation functions as a psychological transmission mechanism between role conflict and performance decline, organizations should monitor indicators of detachment, reduced engagement and perceived meaninglessness. Regular employee climate assessments, anonymous feedback systems and structured performance conversations may help identify emerging withdrawal tendencies before they translate into reduced task effectiveness. Third, leadership strategies play a pivotal buffering role. Supervisors trained in supportive leadership behaviors such as empathy, role clarification and emotional validation can mitigate the affective consequences of work-family conflict. In line with AET, leaders who actively address employees' negative emotional experiences may prevent the accumulation of affective strain that fosters alienation. Fourth, targeted interventions aimed at reinforcing work meaningfulness can reduce the likelihood that resource depletion evolves into psychological disengagement. Job redesign initiatives that enhance autonomy, feedback and task significance may strengthen employees' psychological connection to their roles. Such practices counteract alienation by restoring perceived purpose and competence. Finally, organizations should consider implementing structured psychological support mechanisms, including employee assistance programs and resilience training. These interventions may increase employees' coping capacity and reduce the intensity of resource loss spirals described by COR theory. Collectively, these recommendations suggest that managing work-family

conflict requires a multidimensional strategy. Reducing workload alone may not be sufficient; preventing the psychological consequences of sustained role conflict is equally essential for maintaining performance in demanding service environments.

7. LIMITATIONS

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the selection of hotels was based on convenience sampling through personal professional relationships with hotel managers. This non-random selection process introduces potential selection bias and limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader tourism sector.

Second, although surveys were collected in sealed envelopes to ensure anonymity, the active role of HR managers in the distribution and collection process may have triggered social desirability bias. This could lead participants to under-report work alienation or overstate their individual performance to avoid potential negative perceptions. Third, the sample is heavily skewed toward younger employees (under 30) with relatively low tenure. Since work-family conflict dynamics can change significantly across different life stages, the results may not fully represent the experiences of older or more senior employees. Finally, the study utilized a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish definitive causal relationships within the mediation model. While CMB was tested and found not to be a major concern, future research should employ longitudinal designs to provide more robust evidence for the mediating role of work alienation between work-family conflict and performance.

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