

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG WORKING MOMS

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ABSTRACT

In this dynamic and demanding era, companies need employees who are actively engaged and passionate about their work. High enthusiasm for work and strong dedication to the organization are some characteristics that every employees must have, known as work engagement. By having high work engagement, employees can improve themselves and their sense of loyalty, thus creating a conducive and effective work environment. Increasing economic needs, education, and gender awareness have led many women to choose to become working moms, where they will continue working after marriage and having children. The increase in the percentage of working women raises questions related to work engagement in working moms. Besides that, several studies that have been conducted previously show diverse work engagement values. Therefore, this study aims to determine the overview of work engagement among working moms. This study was conducted using quantitative methods to 88 participants who were distributed online, using purposive sampling techniques with the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) measuring instrument consisting of nine items using seven Likert scales. The results showed that the overall mean and mean of each dimension were high (overall = 4.51, vigor = 4.34, dedication = 4.88, and absorption = 4.31). For companies, the results of the study are able to provide suggestions regarding how to improve or maintain work engagement in working moms.

Keywords: Work engagement, working moms

1. PREFACE

The world of work is one of the stages that an individual will go through in their life development. According to the Kumparan website (2024), through working, individuals can earn an income. For an individual, especially those who have entered the productive age of working and having a family, this income is very important to support themselves and their families. The demand to be able to produce an income is a challenge for some individuals, especially for housewives. It is also possible that a housewife must fulfill her role at home while working in order to fulfill the needs of her household. This is certainly contradicting the culture in Indonesia.

Generally, Indonesian society assumes that the role of parenting falls in the hands of a mother (Merida et al., 2023). A mother is the one who has the most physical contact and communication with the child (Papalia & Feldman, 2014), so the role of the mother becomes very important in the family. As a mother, not only responsible for childcare, but also acts as a wife who is able to strengthen and support her partner. So many expectations from the society regarding the

behavior of a mother who must undergo various roles. Working moms have unique psychological complexities compared to other employees in an organization. On the one hand, they have a full responsibility to the family, on the other hand they also have the same work demands as other colleagues. This dynamic raises various challenges and different psychological needs for working moms (Rahmi et al., 2021).

Reporting from Career Contessa, Doolen (2021) states that working moms have various phenomena, including; (a) working moms have a strong motivation to work, even though they have to sacrifice the time with their children, they still find happiness and satisfaction in their careers; (b) there is a perception that working moms are less committed to their work; and (c) the unpredictable needs of childcare or family emergencies can cause distractions or interruptions during working hours, which will affect their focus.

Based on the explanation of the phenomenon mentioned before, it can be seen that this is the phenomenon of work engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) define work engagement as a positive and active relationship between an individual and their job as indicated by three main components, namely *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*. Furthermore, Bakker (2011) explained that work engagement is a positive concept in the field of psychology that refers to a condition in which employees feel enthusiastic and enjoy their work. In describing work engagement in individuals, there are three dimensions needed, include: (a) *vigor*, refers to the resilient nature of employees in their duties, which is marked by enthusiasm, motivation, high energy, and consistency in overcoming challenges that occur during work; (b) *dedication*, refers to the personality of employees who are very engaged with their work, feel happy, important, enthusiastic, can be a source of inspiration, proud of their work, and enjoy the challenges that arise in the workplace; and (c) *absorption*, which is the personality of employees who focus thoroughly on their work, feel happy when fully involved, and find it difficult to distract from the task at hand, so that time seems to pass quickly (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Based on the phenomenon mentioned before, research indicates that work engagement positively correlates with job performance, task performance, and contextual performance (Corbeanu et al., 2023). Studying work engagement among working moms is important as it provides an insight into how they balance various roles and responsibilities. Work engagement within a company can be beneficial in improving productivity and performance, increasing employee satisfaction, and minimizing any errors among employees (Hadi & Hanif, 2022). Work engagement is able to make someone enthusiastic about what they do in carrying out their work (Putri, 2023). The work engagement variables that were studied are important in providing ways to increase or maintain work engagement in working moms. By providing flexible work schedules, open communication between employees and companies, and support regarding employee wellbeing, can provide benefits from work engagement to working moms.

Work engagement serves as a foundation for working moms seeking to achieve a harmonious balance between professional success and personal fulfillment. When engaged at work, working moms experience heightened focus and purpose, leading to increased efficiency and reduced burnout (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). This positive work environment fosters a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie, spilling over into their personal lives with reduced stress and improved overall well-being. Furthermore, work engagement empowers strategic prioritization and efficient task management, allowing working moms to dedicate more time to personal priorities after work. The state of "flow" facilitated by work engagement further enhances their productivity, freeing up mental space for personal pursuits. The sense of accomplishment and

fulfillment gained at work contributes to a positive outlook that permeates their personal lives, fostering a greater sense of accomplishment across all domains. Reduced feelings of guilt associated with work and the confidence gained from work competence empower working moms to manage personal responsibilities effectively, ultimately contributing to improved emotional well-being. Organizations can play a crucial role in promoting work engagement for working moms by implementing flexible work arrangements, creating a supportive work environment that acknowledges their unique challenges, and offering opportunities for professional development. By fostering work engagement, organizations can empower working moms to thrive in both their professional and personal lives, leading to a more satisfied, productive, and fulfilled workforce.

Based on the benefits of work engagement, there is no doubt that work engagement has been widely studied from time to time. Looking at the research conducted by Adachi and Inaba (2022) on 395 nurses in hospitals in Japan, the results show that their level of work engagement is low (Empirical Mean = 2.31 < Hypothetical Mean of 4). Then in the following years, there is a similar study researched by Liu et al. (2023) on 254 nurses working in ten nursing units in two hospitals in China. The results showed that the level of work engagement of nurses was moderate (Empirical Mean = 3.86 < Hypothetical Mean of 4). In the same year, Nykolaiszyn (2023) explained that the empirical mean of work engagement of 1,330 academic librarians in the United States who participated was 4.65. This result is higher than the hypothetical mean of 4, which concludes that their level of work engagement is high.

Based on the three previous studies, the researcher concludes that the results of these studies are inconsistent, which is demonstrated by the varying mean of work engagement. In addition, research related to work engagement in working moms is still limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the overview of work engagement in working moms. Personality this study is conceptualized as a demand and its impact on work engagement. In addition, personal characteristics are considered as personal resources and are expected to support the work-family relationship and work engagement.

The main purpose of this research is to examine the descriptive study of work engagement among working moms. This research aims to determine which dimensions of work engagement are low and high among working moms. The previously mentioned research studies are presented as a reference that work engagement towards working moms has different results. Therefore, researchers conducted this study in order to compare the number of unbalanced means from previous research studies.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study, that focuses on the working moms population, uses a quantitative research method, which is a research method that utilizes numbers or statistics in collecting and processing data to identify a measured variable. This research is considered non-experimental research, where the author aims to find out the picture of work engagement in working moms and does not examine the influence between variables. This study consists of one variable, namely work engagement which measures the level of dedication and involvement of individuals in their work. The questionnaire was distributed online using the Google form feature.

Sampling technique and participants criteria

The sampling technique that was used is purposive sampling, where the research was conducted based on a purpose, namely knowing the description of work engagement in working moms and

not based on the strata or regions of the participants. The criteria for the participants of this study are a mother who works in the same position or company for at least 1 year, has at least 1 child, and has a minimum education of high school / vocational school. After the survey was distributed, the researchers managed to get 89 participants with 1 participant who was eliminated because the participant was not suitable with the predetermined research criteria, so the total participants who processed the data became 88 participants.

The sample population is predominantly composed of young to middle-aged adults, with the largest representation in the 31-36 age group (33%), followed by the 24-30 age group (27.3%). The 37-42 age group constitutes 13.6% of the population, while those aged 43-48 and 49-54 represent 10.2% and 9.1%, respectively. The oldest cohort, aged 55-60, accounts for 6.8% of the sample. The educational attainment within the group is notably high, with 58% holding a bachelor's degree, 12% having completed a diploma, 10% possessing a master's degree, and 8% completing their education at the junior college level. The majority of respondents are married (81%), with smaller proportions being divorced (4%) or widowed (3%), and no single individuals represented. Family size is relatively small, with 44% of the sample having one child, 33% having two children, and smaller percentages having three (9%) or four (2%) children.

Furthermore, the majority of husbands in the sample population are employed (75%), with a small percentage currently not working (6%) and 7% of respondents indicating that this category did not apply to them. Nearly equal proportions of respondents either have or do not have a domestic helper or babysitter, with 46% having such assistance and 42% not. Employment status among respondents is predominantly permanent, with 75% holding permanent positions, while 13% are employed on a contract basis. Staff positions make up the majority (62%) of the roles within the sample, while leadership roles, including manager, supervisor, department head, team leader, vice president, president, director, and CEO, collectively account for 26.5%. Secretarial and assistant roles comprise 11.4% of the sample. In terms of work experience, 35.2% of respondents have been employed for 1-5 years, followed by 29.5% with 6-10 years of experience, and 23.9% with 11-16 years. Smaller proportions have worked for 17-21 years (4.52%), 22-26 years (2.3%), 27-31 years (3.4%), and 32-36 years (1.1%).

Items required

In this study, there are several things that are required for the participant to fill out the research questionnaire, including: (a) electronic device (gadget/device); (b) Google form link; and (c) internet. The Google form feature link was distributed by sending it to participants who met the research criteria through social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Line, Twitter, and several others. On the first page of the questionnaire, participants will see an explanation of the research and the required participant criteria. There is also an informed consent which explains that participants are willing to be involved in the research by answering all questions with honesty, the confidentiality of the data from the participants is guaranteed, and the researchers will only use their data for the needs of the research being conducted. Then on page two, there are items that must be answered by participants. There are nine items, and all items in the questionnaire are positive.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) has three dimensions and each dimension contains three items. The items on vigor dimension are: (1) *Di tempat kerja, saya merasa sangat berenergi* (X1.1); (2) *Dalam pekerjaan saya, saya merasa kuat dan bersemangat* (X1.2); and (3) *Ketika saya bangun di pagi hari, saya merasa ingin pergi bekerja* (X1.3). Items from dedication dimension are: (1) *Saya antusias dengan pekerjaan saya* (X2.1); (2) *Pekerjaan saya*

menginspirasi saya (X2.2); and (3) Saya merasa bangga dengan pekerjaan yang saya lakukan (X2.3). The absorption dimension also has three items, which consist of: (1) *Saya merasa senang ketika saya bekerja secara intens (X3.1); (2) Saya sangat menikmati pekerjaan saya (X3.2); and (3) Saya menjadi lupa waktu saat bekerja (X3.3).*

Measuring instrument

The work engagement variable scale was measured using a measuring instrument proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2006), called Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). The UWES-9 measuring instrument has 9 items, where all items are rated based on a 7 Likert Scale consisting of: (0) never, meaning not experienced at all; (1) almost never, which is a few times a year or less; (2) very rarely, referring to once or less a month; (3) sometimes, where only a few times a month; (4) often, occurring as much as once a week; (5) very often, which is several times a week; and (6) always, which occurs every day. All items were translated from English language to Indonesian languages by researchers who have a strong language competency in both languages. Researchers did a reliability test on each dimension, and the result consist of: (a) vigor= .81; (b) dedication= .91; and (c) absorption= .55.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted by using normality testing on the work engagement variable, using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality testing is 0.362 so it can be stated that the data is normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). Researchers conducted a difference test research using ANOVA and Independent T-test, but the results of the difference test did not show any significant results.

Mean scores

Table 1

Mean Scores (Overall Mean, Dimension Mean, and Items Mean)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vigor	4.34	2.79
<i>Di tempat kerja, saya merasa sangat berenergi.</i> (At my work, I feel bursting with energy)	4.45	0.92
<i>Dalam pekerjaan saya, saya merasa kuat dan bersemangat</i> (At my job, I feel strong and vigorous)	4.56	1.05
<i>Ketika saya bangun di pagi hari, saya merasa ingin pergi bekerja.</i> (When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work)	4.01	1.27
Dedication	4.88	3.07
<i>Saya antusias dengan pekerjaan saya.</i> (I am enthusiastic about my job)	4.81	1.13
<i>Pekerjaan saya menginspirasi saya.</i> (My job inspires me)	4.68	1.20
<i>Saya merasa bangga dengan pekerjaan yang saya lakukan.</i> (I am proud of the work that I do)	5.15	1.00

Absorption	4.31	2.79
<i>Saya merasa senang ketika saya bekerja secara intens.</i> (I feel happy when I am working intensely)	4.34	1.12
<i>Saya sangat menikmati pekerjaan saya.</i> (I am immersed in my work)	4.92	1.16
<i>Saya menjadi lupa waktu saat bekerja.</i> (I get carried away when i'm working)	3.68	1.52
Work Engagement	4.51	0.88

Based on the research that has been done, the overall mean value of work engagement in working moms is high. This illustrates that the majority of working moms in this study have a high level of engagement with their work. The high level of work engagement occurs because the work they do is able to provide opportunities for personal growth, career advancement, and a sense of achievement. Opportunities for professional development and career advancement can potentially contribute to increasing the level of engagement (Strike et al., 2017). Not only that, the work environment includes all aspects surrounding the physical workplace that can directly influence how employees perform their assigned tasks. A well designed work environment encourages employee performance by promoting calmness, focus, and high productivity (Haeruddin et al., 2022). Balancing work and family life pushes working moms to complete multiple tasks effectively and efficiently, adapt to changing situations quickly, prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, maintain order, and find innovative solutions to challenges (Leberman & LaVoi, 2011). This may indicate higher work engagement. In addition, work can provide working moms with opportunities to find meaning and contribution beyond their role as mothers, increase self-confidence and independence, and improve overall quality of life and family well-being. This can be a source of satisfaction and motivation for working moms who are predisposed to achieving success in their careers. Finally, job security is an important source that can increase the motivation and energy of working moms. When these working moms are confident that their future in the company is relatively secure, they will have more energy and focus to fully engage and perform well in the company and at home. This can increase job satisfaction and engagement with the organization (Carlson et al., 2011).

The result shows that the mean of dedication is high. This is because aspirations to improve the financial well-being of their families and provide significant involvement in household income. This can be a very important factor for working moms who have financial dependents. They pursue career success while balancing family responsibilities for the well-being of their family. This motivation drives them to perform exceptionally at work. Not only that, the strong work ethic of working moms is driven by their commitment to achieving top performance and the desire to make a significant contribution to their organization. Then, the existence of a strong support system, both from spouses, coworkers, and family members, can significantly reduce the level of stress experienced by working moms in everyday life. Thus, the value of dedication in themselves and performance at work increases (Hochschild, 1989).

The data indicates that the mean of vigor is high. This can be explained because working moms often cultivate a unique set of strengths that contribute to their work engagement and vigor. The need to balance professional and caregiving roles can foster a strong sense of purpose and

motivation. Effective time management skills become essential, allowing them to stay focused and energized throughout the workday. Furthermore, juggling these demands can build resilience, making them adept at handling challenges. Finally, a supportive environment from family, colleagues, and employers that acknowledges their dual roles can significantly enhance their work experience and overall vigor (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Vigorous employees consistently deliver high performance due to their proactive nature and focus. This translates to higher job satisfaction, as they find enjoyment and fulfillment in their efforts. Furthermore, vigor fosters a positive work environment. Motivated and supportive employees create a culture of success, tackling challenges with enthusiasm. Consequently, organizations with high vigor experience lower turnover rates, reducing recruitment and training costs. Additionally, vigorous employees are more likely to be innovative and creative, contributing to the organization's growth and development. All the factors mentioned above, can increase the vigor of an employee.

Our analysis revealed that the mean of absorption is high. This is caused by working moms frequently exhibit high levels of absorption, a state of intense work focus, due to a confluence of factors. Firstly, they manage a multitude of responsibilities, balancing work with childcare, household duties, personal needs and eventually lead them to hyper-focus on work tasks during designated work hours to maximize efficiency and minimize potential conflicts with their personal lives. Secondly, time pressures due to family commitments can create a sense of urgency, pushing them towards absorption to accomplish as much as possible within a compressed time frame. Lastly, the challenges of managing work and family life may motivate working moms to seek a sense of control and achievement within their professional area. Absorption in work tasks allows them to experience a deep sense of flow and satisfaction from completing tasks efficiently. Their personal resources – resilience, self-efficacy, and coping strategies – honed through juggling work and family demands, further enable them to effectively manage job demands and maintain high levels of absorption. This interplay between job resources, personal strength, and work-family enrichment contributes to a richer and more fulfilling work experience for working moms (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The impact of having a high work engagement is a multitude of benefits for working moms. It fosters increased job satisfaction by providing a sense of fulfillment and meaning in their roles. Engaged working moms demonstrate higher productivity due to their focus, motivation, and commitment to achieving goals. Interestingly, high work engagement can even facilitate a better work-life balance. Engaged employees are often adept at time management, prioritizing tasks, and establishing boundaries between work and personal life. Furthermore, work engagement fuels career growth for working moms as they actively seek out learning opportunities, embrace challenges, and progress in their careers. Vigor, absorption, and dedication are powerful tools for working moms, which leads to increased productivity, a strong sense of achievement, and potential career advancement opportunities. However, these same traits, when experienced at high levels without proper balance, can have a double-edged effect. Working moms fueled by high vigor, absorption, and dedication may achieve remarkable results but risk work-life imbalance and burnout. Strained relationships, neglected personal needs, and feelings of guilt can become negative consequences of prioritizing work over personal well-being. The key for working moms lies in harnessing the positive aspects of these traits while actively managing them to achieve a sustainable work-life balance. Through self-care practices, clear boundaries, seeking support, and self-compassion, working moms can leverage their strengths while ensuring their well-being and fostering fulfilling personal lives.

This research shows differences with studies that have been conducted before. The result of this study indicates high work engagement, in contrast to the previous research conducted by Adachi and Inaba (2022) and Liu et al. (2023) which showed low and moderate work engagement results. All the differences mentioned, can be influenced by several factors, such as participants who have jobs with different fields and differences in the regions where the research was taken. The difference in background can be a very influential factor where each job and each field has different demands regarding time, specifications, and the weight of work. In addition, research conducted by Muchtadin (2023), proves that an individual's satisfaction with his environment can affect the motivation of the individual and indirectly, can affect his work engagement.

Despite all the methods used, this study also still has some limitations, one of which is data collection which has the possibility of participants filling out questionnaires dishonestly. Future researchers are expected to study and improve this limitation. This can be done by using more diverse data collection methods.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that even though a working mom has various roles and responsibilities at work and at home, they are still able to have high work engagement. This is evidenced by the overall mean score of the work engagement, which is 4.51, with a vigor dimension score of 4.34, dedication dimension of 4.88, and absorption dimension of 4.31.

Future research on work engagement could focus on working dad as participants to compare the aspects and factors that influence the level of work engagement in these participants. By deeply understanding all these factors, research can provide valuable insights to design more effective strategies and policies to support working dads to achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives.

In addition to supporting and empowering working moms, companies also play an important role in increasing the value of their work engagement. This can be achieved through various efforts, such as providing support, praise, and appreciation for the various contributions made and the achievements they have made while working. Giving recognition and appreciation can be a motivation for working moms to improve their performance and feel valued for the contributions they make to work. Not only that, building a positive work culture can also significantly increase the value of work engagement in working moms. This can be achieved by promoting a collaborative and supportive work environment, where they feel valued and respected by their coworkers and superiors. Furthermore, if the company gives working moms freedom and responsibilities that match their skills and interests, the level of work engagement experienced by working moms will be high. When working moms feel they have control over their tasks and are given opportunities to make meaningful contributions, of course they will be more active to engage in their work.

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be seen that the dedication dimension is the highest among the other two dimensions. In maintaining dedication in working moms, they can organize a work schedule that suits their personal and family needs to achieve an optimal balance between work and life. Meanwhile, to increase the absorption value which is classified as low, working moms are able to determine the main activities or obligations and pay special attention to these things. In this case, working moms can develop a detailed schedule to complete work and household obligations in a timely manner.

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