

Grateful Yet Overloaded: Gratitude and Work-Family-School Conflict Among Indonesian Female Students

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Abstract : Female university students who simultaneously manage academic, occupational, and family responsibilities are vulnerable to work-family and school conflict (WFSC), yet the role of gratitude in this three-domain conflict remains insufficiently examined. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between gratitude and WFSC among female students at University X who were employed and fulfilled family roles as wives, mothers, or single mothers. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was used. Data were collected through structured self-report questionnaires from 96 participants selected using purposive sampling and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, assumption testing, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings showed that most participants reported moderate levels of gratitude and WFSC. Gratitude was negatively but very weakly associated with WFSC, and the relationship was not statistically significant ($r = -.119$, $p = .124$, one-tailed). These results indicate that gratitude was not significantly related to lower three-domain role conflict in the present sample, although it may remain relevant as a psychological and spiritual coping resource that supports emotional regulation, positive appraisal, and meaning-making. Practically, interventions for female students with multiple roles should combine gratitude-based psychological and spiritual support with academic flexibility, family cooperation, workplace support, and stress-management strategies. The originality of this study lies in examining gratitude in relation to WFSC among Indonesian female students who simultaneously occupy work, family, and academic roles, thereby distinguishing the adaptive function of gratitude from the structural conditions that generate role conflict.

Keywords : *female students; gratitude; multiple roles; psychological-spiritual coping; work-family and school conflict.*

Abstrak : Mahasiswa yang secara bersamaan menjalankan tanggung jawab akademik, pekerjaan, dan keluarga rentan mengalami *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC), tetapi peran rasa syukur dalam konflik tiga ranah tersebut masih belum banyak dikaji. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hubungan antara rasa syukur dan WFSC



pada mahasiswi Universitas X yang bekerja serta menjalankan peran keluarga sebagai istri, ibu, atau *single mother*. Penelitian menggunakan desain kuantitatif korelasional dengan pendekatan potong lintang. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner *self-report* terstruktur dari 96 partisipan yang dipilih menggunakan *purposive sampling*, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji reliabilitas, uji asumsi, dan korelasi Pearson *product-moment*. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar partisipan memiliki tingkat rasa syukur dan WFSC pada kategori sedang. Rasa syukur memiliki arah hubungan negatif yang sangat lemah dengan WFSC dan hubungan tersebut tidak signifikan secara statistik ($r = -.119$, $p = .124$ satu arah). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa rasa syukur tidak berhubungan secara signifikan dengan rendahnya konflik peran tiga ranah pada sampel penelitian, meskipun tetap berpotensi berfungsi sebagai sumber daya koping psikologis dan spiritual yang mendukung regulasi emosi, penilaian positif, serta pemaknaan pengalaman. Secara praktis, intervensi bagi mahasiswi dengan berbagai peran perlu menggabungkan penguatan rasa syukur dengan fleksibilitas akademik, dukungan keluarga dan tempat kerja, serta strategi pengelolaan stres. Orisinalitas penelitian ini terletak pada pengujian hubungan rasa syukur dan WFSC pada mahasiswi Indonesia yang secara bersamaan menjalankan peran pekerjaan, keluarga, dan akademik, sekaligus membedakan fungsi adaptif rasa syukur dari kondisi struktural yang memunculkan konflik peran.

Kata kunci : *Konflik kerja-keluarga-pendidikan; koping psikologis-spiritual; mahasiswi; peran ganda; rasa syukur.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The expansion of women's participation in higher education and paid employment has transformed the social organization of family, work, and academic life in Indonesia. National data show that women constituted 44.2% of Indonesia's employed population in 2024, while women aged 19–23 also recorded a higher school participation rate than men in the same age group. These developments indicate that women are increasingly present in both productive and educational domains, but participation in these domains does not necessarily eliminate domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Consequently, many women must simultaneously manage the roles of student, employee, wife, mother, or single parent, creating overlapping demands on their time, energy, and emotional resources. Recent Indonesian studies have documented that women with multiple roles experience role overload, time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, fatigue, and difficulty coordinating occupational, academic, and family responsibilities (Kremer et al., 2024; Kusumaningtyas et al., 2025).

These overlapping obligations are important because conflict across work, family, and educational domains can extend beyond practical scheduling difficulties and become a psychological and spiritual concern. Research on working students indicates that work

family school conflict is associated with higher stress and burnout, while work–family conflict among working women is also related to psychological strain and reduced well-being (Bian & Mohd Sukor, 2024; Kremer, 2016; Kremer et al., 2024). In the Indonesian context, limited instrumental, supervisory, and family support may intensify such conflict because women are often expected to sustain employment and education without a proportional reduction in household and caregiving duties (Miftakhul Jannah et al., 2022; Nyimas Fathia Dayatri & Martina Dwi Mustika, 2021). The phenomenon is therefore relevant to Sufi psychotherapy and Islamic counseling because prolonged role conflict can affect emotional stability, meaning-making, patience, acceptance, and the individual's relationship with spiritual resources. Examining psychological-spiritual factors that may help women respond adaptively to these pressures is consequently important, while avoiding the assumption that spiritual strength alone can resolve structurally generated demands.

Previous research relevant to this study can be organized into three main categories. The first category examines conflict across work, family, and educational roles. These studies consistently show that overlapping role demands are associated with stress, burnout, reduced psychological well-being, and intention to discontinue education, while social support can lessen some of these adverse consequences (Kremer, 2016; Labrague et al., 2025; Rumijati & Arifiani, 2024; Xu & Song, 2013, 2016). The second category focuses on gratitude as a psychological resource among university students. Research has linked gratitude with lower stress, better emotion regulation, stronger psychological health, and improved academic adjustment; however, its protective effects appear to vary according to the type of stressor and the mechanisms involved (Demichelis et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2022). The third category examines gratitude within occupational, relational, and Islamic psychological contexts. Studies indicate that gratitude may strengthen life satisfaction, happiness, self-compassion, spiritual meaning, and adaptive coping, while Islamic scholarship conceptualizes gratitude as a multidimensional construct involving cognition, emotion, recognition of divine blessings, and responsible action (Ali et al., 2020; El Keshky & Sarour, 2024; Reza et al., 2024; Rusdi et al., 2021; Sholichatun et al., 2023).

Despite these developments, several limitations remain in the literature. Studies of multiple-role conflict have generally emphasized its consequences or structural predictors without examining gratitude as a direct correlate, whereas gratitude studies have predominantly focused on stress, well-being, academic adjustment, or the psychological consequences of work–family conflict rather than conflict involving work, family, and education simultaneously. Moreover, prior WFSC research has largely involved nurses, general working students, or non-Indonesian populations, while Islamic gratitude research has concentrated more on conceptualization, measurement, or general psychological outcomes. Consequently, limited empirical evidence is available regarding whether gratitude is associated with WFSC among Indonesian female students who concurrently perform occupational, academic, and family roles. This gap is important because gratitude may function as an adaptive psychological-spiritual resource without necessarily reducing the objective incompatibility among the three domains, a distinction that has not been sufficiently tested in previous research.

Building on the identified gap, this study aims to examine the relationship between gratitude and *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC) among Indonesian female university students who simultaneously perform academic, occupational, and family roles. More specifically, the study seeks to determine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the association between the two constructs. By focusing on a

population that remains underrepresented in previous research, this study is expected to contribute empirical evidence on whether gratitude functions as a psychological-spiritual resource that is directly associated with lower three-domain role conflict.

The study is grounded in the argument that gratitude may help individuals appraise demanding situations more positively, regulate negative emotions, preserve meaning, and maintain psychological stability when facing multiple responsibilities. On this basis, female students with higher gratitude are expected to experience lower WFSC because gratitude may reduce the subjective strain generated by competing work, family, and academic demands. Accordingly, the research hypothesis states that there is a significant negative relationship between gratitude and WFSC among female university students who simultaneously work and fulfil family responsibilities. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant negative relationship between the two variables.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational design to examine the relationship between gratitude and *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC). The unit of analysis consisted of female university students at University X who simultaneously performed academic, occupational, and family roles. Participants were active students aged 18–40 years, currently employed, and fulfilling family responsibilities as wives, mothers, or single mothers. Purposive sampling was used, and 96 participants who met the inclusion criteria were included in the final analysis.

Data were collected through an online self-report questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of informed consent, sociodemographic information, and measures of gratitude and WFSC. Gratitude was assessed using a 24-item scale based on al-Ghazali's conceptualization of gratitude, while WFSC was measured using a 36-item scale covering conflict across work, family, and academic domains. Sociodemographic data included age, marital status, employment sector, educational level, and university location.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics and the distribution of gratitude and WFSC scores. Measurement quality was assessed using corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha. Normality was examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, while linearity was assessed through the *deviation from linearity* test. Pearson's product-moment correlation was then used to examine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between gratitude and WFSC. A one-tailed test was applied in accordance with the directional hypothesis, with statistical significance set at $p < .05$. Because the study was cross-sectional and correlational, the findings were interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from 96 female students who met the predetermined inclusion criteria and completed the research instruments. The results are organized according to the analytical stages used to address the research objective. First, descriptive findings are presented to provide an overview of the participants' levels of gratitude and *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC). Second, the psychometric quality of the instruments and the statistical assumptions underlying the correlational analysis are reported. Finally, the relationship between gratitude and WFSC is examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis. The findings are presented objectively in tables and accompanying descriptions, while their theoretical

interpretation and comparison with previous studies are discussed separately in the Discussion section.

Descriptive Findings of Gratitude and WFSC

Data were obtained from 96 female university students who simultaneously assumed academic, occupational, and family responsibilities. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 37 years. The largest age groups were 22-, 23-, and 24-year-old participants, with each group comprising 15 participants (15.6%). Most participants were married ($n = 79$, 82.3%), whereas 17 participants (17.7%) were single parents. In terms of employment, 67 participants (69.8%) worked in the formal sector and 29 (30.2%) in the informal sector. Most participants were enrolled in undergraduate programs ($n = 69$, 71.9%), while 27 (28.1%) were pursuing master's degrees. Participants were distributed across three university locations: Cipayung ($n = 59$, 61.5%), Cikarang ($n = 25$, 26.0%), and Kuningan ($n = 12$, 12.5%). These characteristics indicate that the sample represented female students managing simultaneous demands across academic, occupational, and family domains.

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the central tendency and variability of gratitude and WFSC scores. As shown in Table 1, the gratitude scores ranged from 51 to 72, with a mean of 61.21 ($SD = 4.43$). WFSC scores ranged from 53 to 104, with a mean of 88.34 ($SD = 7.37$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Gratitude and Work-Family and School Conflict

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gratitude	96	51	72	61.21	4.427
WFSC	96	53	104	88.34	7.370

As shown in Table 1, the empirical gratitude scores ranged from 51 to 72. The participants obtained a mean gratitude score of 61.21, with a standard deviation of 4.427. These results indicate that the gratitude scores were relatively concentrated around the mean, although individual differences remained evident across the observed score range.

The empirical WFSC scores ranged from 53 to 104, with a mean score of 88.34 and a standard deviation of 7.370. Compared with gratitude, WFSC demonstrated greater score dispersion, as reflected in its higher standard deviation and wider empirical range. This finding indicates that participants differed more substantially in the degree of conflict experienced across their occupational, family, and academic responsibilities.

To provide a more accessible description of the participants' scores, both variables were also classified into low, moderate, and high categories. The categorical distribution of gratitude is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants by Gratitude Level

Gratitude Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	12	12.5
Moderate	65	67.7
High	19	19.8
Total	96	100.0

Table 2 shows that 65 participants, representing 67.7% of the sample, were classified as having a moderate level of gratitude. Nineteen participants (19.8%) were classified in the high-gratitude category, while 12 participants (12.5%) were included in the low-gratitude category. Thus, the distribution was predominantly concentrated in the

moderate category, with approximately one-fifth of the participants demonstrating high gratitude.

Table 3. Distribution of Participants by Work-Family and School Conflict Level

WFSC Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	8	8.3
Moderate	78	81.3
High	10	10.4
Total	96	100.0

As presented in Table 3, 78 participants, or 81.3% of the sample, experienced a moderate level of WFSC. Ten participants (10.4%) were classified as experiencing high WFSC, whereas eight participants (8.3%) were classified in the low-WFSC category. The distribution therefore shows a strong concentration in the moderate category, with relatively small proportions of participants located at the lower and upper ends of the classification.

Overall, the descriptive data demonstrate that both gratitude and WFSC were predominantly situated at moderate levels. However, the concentration was more pronounced for WFSC, where more than four-fifths of the participants were included in the moderate category. Gratitude showed a comparatively broader categorical distribution, particularly because the proportion of participants with high gratitude was greater than the proportion experiencing high WFSC. These descriptive patterns provide the initial empirical basis for examining whether variation in gratitude is statistically associated with variation in WFSC.

Several tendencies can be identified from these findings. First, both variables were dominated by the moderate category, indicating that the participants' psychological and role-related experiences were concentrated around the middle range. Second, WFSC showed a stronger concentration in the moderate category than gratitude, suggesting that role conflict was experienced relatively consistently across the sample. Third, the proportion of participants with high gratitude (19.8%) was almost twice the proportion of those with high WFSC (10.4%), indicating that a considerable number of participants maintained a relatively strong sense of gratitude despite managing multiple responsibilities. Fourth, WFSC scores demonstrated greater empirical variation than gratitude scores, as reflected in the wider score range and higher standard deviation. This suggests that participants differed more substantially in the intensity of conflict experienced across work, family, and academic domains than in their levels of gratitude.

The descriptive findings indicate that gratitude and WFSC can occur simultaneously among female students who manage academic, occupational, and family responsibilities. Most participants demonstrated moderate gratitude while also experiencing moderate WFSC, suggesting that gratitude does not automatically remove the practical pressures arising from multiple roles. The wider variation in WFSC scores further indicates that role conflict may be more strongly shaped by differences in work demands, academic workload, family responsibilities, and available support than by gratitude alone. Thus, the findings contribute to the understanding that gratitude may function as a psychological resource for interpreting and coping with demanding circumstances, but its relationship with the actual intensity of WFSC must be confirmed through inferential analysis.

Measurement Quality and Assumption Testing

The quality of the measurement instruments was examined through corrected item-total correlations and internal consistency analysis. The gratitude scale consisted of 24 items, with corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranging from 0.225 to 0.650 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.836. The WFSC scale consisted of 36 items, with corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranging from 0.306 to 0.631 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.919. The results of the measurement quality assessment are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Measurement Quality of the Gratitude and WFSC Scales

Measure	Number of Items	Corrected Correlation	Item-Total Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha
Gratitude	24	.225-.650		.836
WFSC	36	.306-.631		.919

Statistical assumptions were subsequently examined before conducting the correlational analysis. Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the gratitude scores did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution, $D = .076$, $p = .200$. The WFSC scores also produced a nonsignificant Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic, $D = .079$, $p = .163$. These results indicate that, under the Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion reported in the analysis, both variables met the distributional assumption used for the subsequent analysis.

Linearity between gratitude and WFSC was examined using analysis of variance for linearity. The deviation-from-linearity component was not statistically significant, $F(18, 76) = 1.166$, $p = .311$. This result indicates no statistically detectable departure from linearity between the two variables. Therefore, the relationship between gratitude and WFSC can be treated as approximately linear for the subsequent correlational analysis.

Table 5. Results of Normality and Linearity Testing

Statistical Assumption	Statistic	df	p	Interpretation
Gratitude: Kolmogorov-Smirnov	.076	96	.200	No significant departure from normality
Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test	.079	.079	.163	No significant departure from normality
Deviation from linearity	F = 1.166	18, 76	.311	No significant departure from linearity

These data show that both instruments produced internally consistent scores and that the distributions of gratitude and WFSC met the normality criterion based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The nonsignificant *deviation from linearity* also indicates that the relationship between gratitude and WFSC did not significantly depart from a linear pattern. Therefore, the measurement quality and statistical assumptions provided an adequate empirical basis for proceeding with Pearson's product moment correlation analysis.

The measurement results indicate that the gratitude and WFSC scales were sufficiently reliable to represent the constructs examined in this study, reducing the likelihood that the subsequent findings were primarily caused by inconsistent item responses. The stronger internal consistency of the WFSC scale suggests that its items captured role conflict across work, family, and academic domains in a relatively coherent

manner, while the gratitude scale also demonstrated adequate consistency in measuring participants' appreciative orientation. In addition, the fulfillment of the normality and linearity assumptions supports the appropriateness of Pearson's product-moment correlation for testing the relationship between the two variables. Consequently, any significant or nonsignificant association identified in the next stage can be interpreted with greater confidence as reflecting the observed relationship between gratitude and WFSC rather than a violation of the principal statistical assumptions.

Correlation Between Gratitude and WFSC

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between gratitude and *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC). The analysis included 96 participants and used a one-tailed significance test in accordance with the directional hypothesis proposing a negative relationship between the two variables. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Between Gratitude and Work-Family and School Conflict

Variables	N	Pearson's rrr	ppp-value	Direction	Strength
Gratitude and WFSC	96	-.119	.124	Negative	Very weak

The analysis produced a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = -.119$ with a one-tailed significance value of $p = .124$. The negative coefficient indicates that higher gratitude scores tended to be accompanied by lower WFSC scores. However, the magnitude of the coefficient shows that this tendency was very weak. Moreover, because the significance value exceeded the predetermined threshold of .05, the relationship was not statistically significant. Accordingly, the data did not provide sufficient empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that gratitude was negatively associated with WFSC among the participants.

The observed correlation should therefore be understood as a weak tendency within the sample rather than evidence of a systematic relationship in the population. Although the direction of the coefficient was consistent with the proposed hypothesis, variation in gratitude scores was not accompanied by a sufficiently consistent reduction in WFSC scores. Consequently, the research hypothesis was not supported, while the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

The nonsignificant correlation indicates that gratitude, although psychologically valuable, was not sufficient to explain differences in WFSC among the participants. This finding suggests that conflict across work, family, and academic roles may be more directly shaped by situational demands, such as workload, time pressure, family responsibilities, role expectations, and access to social support. Gratitude may still help individuals maintain a more positive outlook or cope with emotional strain, but the present data do not support its role as a direct determinant of lower WFSC. Thus, the finding adds to the understanding that internal psychological resources and external role pressures should be distinguished when explaining the experiences of female students who manage multiple responsibilities.

4. DISCUSSION

Interpreting the Nonsignificant Relationship Between Gratitude and WFSC

This study examined whether gratitude was associated with lower *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC) among female university students who simultaneously managed

academic, occupational, and family responsibilities. The analysis revealed a negative but very weak correlation between gratitude and WFSC ($r = -.119$), and the relationship did not reach statistical significance ($p = .124$). Thus, although higher gratitude scores tended to coincide with slightly lower levels of WFSC, the pattern was not sufficiently strong or consistent to support the proposed hypothesis. The study did not find sufficient statistical evidence of an association between gratitude and WFSC.

One plausible explanation for the nonsignificant relationship is that gratitude and WFSC operate at different levels: gratitude is an internal psychological resource that supports positive appraisal and emotion regulation, whereas WFSC emerges from concrete incompatibilities among work schedules, academic demands, family responsibilities, fatigue, and limited time. Accordingly, participants may remain grateful while still experiencing substantial role interference. Recent studies similarly suggest that gratitude is more likely to influence how individuals manage the emotional consequences of stress than to eliminate the stressors themselves; emotion regulation has been identified as an important mechanism linking gratitude with student stress, while gratitude has also been shown to moderate the effects of work–family conflict on well-being rather than directly determine the level of conflict experienced (Demichelis et al., 2024; El Keshky & Sarour, 2024). Moreover, gratitude does not appear to function uniformly across all stressors, as its buffering effect may be evident for some interpersonal pressures but not necessarily for academic stress (Huang et al., 2020). Thus, the weak association found in this study may reflect the stronger role of unmeasured situational demands and the indirect, context-dependent function of gratitude.

The present finding differs from studies reporting that gratitude is associated with lower stress and better psychological adjustment among university students. Demichelis et al. (2024), for example, found that gratitude was linked to student stress through emotion-regulation processes, while gratitude interventions have also been shown to improve well-being and reduce negative affect, stress, and anxiety in college populations. However, the current result is consistent with evidence that gratitude does not buffer every form of pressure uniformly. Huang et al. (2020) found that gratitude did not significantly moderate the relationship between academic stress and psychological health, whereas El Keshky and Sarour (2024) positioned gratitude as a moderator of the consequences of work–family conflict for happiness and life satisfaction rather than as a direct predictor of the conflict itself. The novelty of this study therefore lies in demonstrating, within Indonesian female students simultaneously occupying work, family, and academic roles, that gratitude may not be directly associated with the intensity of three-domain role conflict, even when it remains potentially relevant to psychological adaptation.

This finding broadens the understanding of gratitude by distinguishing its adaptive function from the structural experience of role conflict. Socially, it suggests that women's ability to remain grateful should not be interpreted as evidence that they experience fewer competing demands or require less institutional and familial support. Gratitude may help individuals construct meaning, regulate emotional responses, and preserve well-being, but it cannot by itself remove inflexible working hours, academic deadlines, domestic responsibilities, or unequal role expectations. Accordingly, the result challenges an overly individualistic interpretation that places responsibility for managing multiple roles solely on women's psychological or spiritual strength. Instead, it supports a more integrated perspective in which internal resources such as gratitude operate alongside

social support, family cooperation, workplace flexibility, and responsive academic policies.

The finding has both constructive and cautionary implications. Positively, it prevents gratitude from being overstated as a universal solution to role conflict and supports a more realistic understanding of its function as a resource for emotional regulation, meaning-making, and psychological endurance. It also indicates that female students may remain spiritually and psychologically appreciative even when they continue to face substantial work, family, and academic pressures. However, the result also carries a potential negative consequence if it is interpreted simplistically as evidence that gratitude is unimportant. Such an interpretation would ignore the possibility that gratitude contributes to well-being through indirect pathways that were not examined in this study. The more appropriate reflection is that gratitude may help individuals cope with conflict, but it should not be used to normalize excessive burdens or shift responsibility for structural problems onto women's personal resilience.

Based on this finding, interventions should combine psychological-spiritual support with structural assistance. Universities should consider flexible academic arrangements, responsive counseling services, adjusted deadlines in justified circumstances, and support programs for students who simultaneously work and manage family responsibilities. Workplaces can contribute through flexible scheduling, family-supportive supervision, and more predictable workloads, while families should encourage a more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities. In Islamic counseling and Sufi psychotherapy, gratitude-based practices may still be incorporated to strengthen emotional regulation, acceptance, and meaning-making, but they should be accompanied by time-management training, problem-solving strategies, stress management, and efforts to improve social support. Therefore, the practical response to WFSC should not rely on gratitude alone, but on an integrated model that addresses both internal coping resources and external role demands.

Gratitude as a Psychological and Spiritual Coping Resource

Although gratitude was not significantly associated with lower WFSC, the descriptive findings showed that most participants maintained moderate levels of gratitude while simultaneously experiencing moderate conflict across work, family, and academic roles. This pattern suggests that gratitude remained present even when participants faced competing responsibilities, but it did not directly correspond to a substantial reduction in role conflict. Accordingly, the finding positions gratitude less as a determinant of whether WFSC occurs and more as a potential resource through which individuals psychologically and spiritually respond to the pressures generated by multiple roles.

Gratitude may support coping by encouraging positive appraisal, emotional regulation, perceived social support, and the construction of meaning during demanding circumstances. Longitudinal evidence among college students shows that the relationship between gratitude and lower psychological distress can operate through perceived social support and supportive behavior, indicating that gratitude may strengthen adaptive interpersonal resources rather than directly remove stressors (Zhang & Tsai, 2023). Consistent with this perspective, studies involving university students have also linked gratitude with psychological well-being, resilience, religious faith, and more adaptive emotional functioning, suggesting that gratitude may serve as an internal resource that helps individuals maintain psychological stability when facing persistent demands (Fatmala & Sari, 2022; Hayuningtyas & Jenuri, 2024; Sohail & Asad Khan, 2024; Umriana et al., 2025). Experimental and quasi-experimental studies

have likewise found that gratitude practices can improve well-being and reduce negative affect, stress, and anxiety among university students, reinforcing their value as low-cost psychological interventions (Geier & Morris, 2022; Tolcher et al., 2024). In the context of work–family conflict, gratitude has also been shown to operate within a moderated pathway involving self-compassion and well-being, suggesting that its principal contribution lies in softening the psychological consequences of conflict rather than determining the amount of conflict experienced (El Keshky & Sarour, 2024). Evidence from gratitude-based activities among university students further suggests that structured gratitude practices may contribute to psychological well-being and provide an accessible strategy for strengthening positive psychological functioning (Akhnaf et al., 2024). From an Islamic psychological perspective, gratitude is broader than momentary positive affect because it integrates recognition of divine blessings, emotional appreciation, and responsible action; the development of the Islamic Gratitude Scale similarly reflects gratitude as a multidimensional religious-psychological construct (Rusdi et al., 2021). Consequently, gratitude may enable female students to preserve hope, emotional stability, social connectedness, and spiritual meaning while facing multiple responsibilities, even when it cannot independently resolve workload, scheduling incompatibility, or domestic and academic demands.

The present finding is partly consistent with previous research showing that gratitude contributes more consistently to psychological well-being, resilience, religiously grounded coping, and emotional adaptation than to the direct reduction of external stressors (Fatmala & Sari, 2022; Hayuningtyas & Jenuri, 2024; Sohail & Asad Khan, 2024; Umriana et al., 2025). Gratitude interventions have also been found to improve well-being and reduce negative affect, stress, and anxiety among university students, while longitudinal evidence indicates that gratitude may reduce psychological distress through perceived social support and supportive behavior (Geier & Morris, 2022; Tolcher et al., 2024; Zhang & Tsai, 2023). Similarly, El Keshky and Sarour (2024) found that gratitude moderated the psychological consequences of work–family conflict for happiness and life satisfaction, rather than functioning as a direct determinant of the conflict itself. However, the present study differs from research reporting beneficial associations between gratitude, academic stress, and student well-being, suggesting that gratitude may not operate uniformly across all forms of pressure (Huang et al., 2020).

The finding broadens the meaning of gratitude by distinguishing psychological and spiritual adaptation from the objective reduction of conflicting role demands. Socially, it indicates that women’s capacity to remain grateful should not be interpreted as evidence that they experience fewer burdens or require less institutional and familial support. Spiritually, gratitude may help participants recognize divine blessings, maintain hope, regulate emotional responses, and construct meaning from difficult circumstances; nevertheless, it should not be equated with passive acceptance of excessive workloads or unequal domestic expectations. The multidimensional understanding of Islamic gratitude similarly emphasizes cognition, emotion, and responsible action rather than gratitude as a merely pleasant feeling (Rusdi et al., 2021). Thus, this study contributes to a more integrated perspective in which gratitude strengthens inner endurance and meaning-making, while the reduction of WFSC still requires changes in social support, workload, family cooperation, and institutional flexibility.

The finding has an important constructive implication because it prevents gratitude from being treated as a universal remedy for multiple-role conflict. Gratitude may strengthen emotional stability, hope, meaning-making, and spiritual endurance, but it does not automatically remove the concrete pressures created by incompatible

schedules, academic deadlines, occupational demands, and domestic responsibilities. This distinction is valuable because it protects gratitude from being reduced to a form of passive acceptance and avoids placing the full burden of adjustment on women's personal or spiritual resilience. At the same time, the finding may be misunderstood negatively if the nonsignificant correlation is taken to mean that gratitude has no psychological value. A more appropriate interpretation is that gratitude may function through indirect pathways, such as emotion regulation, self-compassion, perceived social support, and well-being, even when it does not directly reduce WFSC.

The practical response should therefore combine gratitude-based psychological and spiritual interventions with structural support. Previous studies indicate that structured gratitude practices may contribute to psychological adjustment and stress reduction. For example, gratitude-based writing has been found to reduce stress among students in Islamic educational settings, while gratitude and self-awareness have also been associated with greater happiness among students (Khaer et al., 2021; Primaheni et al., 2021). These findings suggest that gratitude can be incorporated as an accessible psychological-spiritual intervention, particularly when combined with reflective exercises, emotional awareness, and adaptive coping strategies. Universities should provide more responsive counseling, flexible academic arrangements in justified cases, and support services for students who simultaneously work and care for families. Workplaces should promote predictable workloads, flexible scheduling, and family-supportive supervision, while families should encourage a fairer distribution of domestic and caregiving responsibilities. In Islamic counseling and Sufi psychotherapy, gratitude practices may be used to strengthen acceptance, emotional regulation, positive meaning-making, and spiritual awareness, but they should be integrated with time-management training, problem-solving, stress management, and social-support enhancement. Accordingly, gratitude should be positioned as one component of a broader intervention model rather than as a substitute for institutional, workplace, and family-level changes.

The Role of External Demands and Participant Characteristics

The weak and nonsignificant association between gratitude and WFSC should be interpreted alongside the participants' multiple-role context. Most participants were married, employed in the formal sector, and enrolled in undergraduate programs, while more than four-fifths reported a moderate level of WFSC. This profile suggests that many participants may have encountered relatively structured occupational obligations, recurring academic requirements, and continuing family responsibilities. Therefore, the observed WFSC may have reflected the cumulative demands attached to these roles more strongly than individual differences in gratitude.

External demands are likely to be more proximal to WFSC because they directly consume the time, energy, and psychological resources required to fulfil competing responsibilities. Research on working students shows that conflict among school, work, and family roles is associated with greater subjective stress and burnout, particularly when the demands of the three domains overlap (Kremer, 2016). Similarly, conflict between academic and family or personal roles has been associated with poorer psychological well-being among university students, including higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, social dysfunction, and loss of confidence (Zainal Badri & Wan Mohd Yunus, 2022). Daily workload can also increase work-family conflict through emotional exhaustion, whereas support from supervisors and spouses may buffer this process (Ilies et al., 2007; Pluut et al., 2018). Recent Indonesian evidence further indicates that social and organizational support are important contextual resources in the relationship

between work–family conflict and work stress, reinforcing the view that environmental support may help individuals manage competing demands across life domains (Rumijati & Arifiani, 2024). Meta-analytic evidence likewise demonstrates that work- and family-specific social support is consistently associated with lower work–family conflict (French et al., 2018; Kossek et al., 2011). These findings suggest that environmental demands and resources may be more proximal to role conflict than gratitude alone.

The present findings are consistent with earlier studies indicating that work–family–school conflict is more closely associated with concrete role demands and available support than with a single internal psychological resource. Research involving working students found that conflict across school, work, and family domains was positively related to subjective stress and burnout, confirming that simultaneous role obligations create cumulative strain. Evidence from university students also demonstrates that interference between academic and family or personal roles is associated with multiple indicators of poorer psychological well-being, indicating that conflict across life domains has consequences extending beyond scheduling difficulties (Zainal Badri & Wan Mohd Yunus, 2022). Studies of nurses pursuing advanced degrees similarly showed that work–family–school role conflict and role-related social support were significant predictors of psychological well-being (Xu & Song, 2016), while Indonesian evidence emphasizes the importance of social and organizational support in the work–family conflict process (Rumijati & Arifiani, 2024). These findings strengthen the interpretation that external role demands and contextual resources may be more directly related to WFSC than gratitude itself.

Socially, these findings indicate that WFSC should not be understood merely as an individual difficulty in maintaining positive thoughts or managing emotions, but as an experience embedded in the organization of work, education, and family life. The predominance of married participants and formal-sector employees suggests that many respondents may have faced relatively fixed work schedules alongside academic deadlines and continuing domestic obligations. Although these characteristics were not tested as causal predictors, they provide a contextual basis for understanding why gratitude alone was insufficiently associated with lower WFSC. The finding also contributes to a gender-sensitive interpretation: women’s multiple-role conflict may reflect persistent expectations that paid employment and higher education be undertaken without a proportional reduction in domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Research has similarly shown that work–family conflict among women is linked to gendered vulnerability, family-care demands, and unequal role expectations. Accordingly, the study broadens understanding of WFSC by locating it at the intersection of personal resources and structural pressures, rather than treating it solely as a problem of individual psychological adjustment.

The emphasis on external demands has both constructive and cautionary implications. It helps prevent WFSC from being reduced to an individual failure of coping, but it may also understate personal agency if structural explanations are treated as entirely deterministic. Therefore, external support and individual coping capacities should be understood as complementary rather than competing explanations.

The findings indicate that efforts to reduce WFSC should focus not only on strengthening individual coping resources but also on modifying the external conditions that generate competing role demands. Universities should establish flexible academic policies for working students with family responsibilities, including reasonable deadline adjustments, hybrid learning options, accessible academic advising, and counseling services that specifically address multiple-role conflict. Employers should promote

predictable workloads, flexible scheduling, family-supportive supervision, and leave arrangements that allow employees to meet urgent academic and caregiving obligations, as organizational and family-specific support have been consistently associated with lower work–family conflict (French et al., 2018; Kossek et al., 2011). At the family level, a more equitable distribution of domestic and caregiving responsibilities should be encouraged so that women are not required to manage paid work, study, and household duties without sufficient assistance. Universities and workplaces should also coordinate support programs that combine time-management training, stress management, peer-support groups, and referral pathways to psychological or spiritual counseling. Accordingly, policy responses should adopt a multilevel approach in which individual coping interventions are reinforced by academic flexibility, supportive employment practices, and greater family cooperation.

To consolidate the discussion and clarify the broader meaning of the findings, Table 7 summarizes the main empirical results, their interpretation, and the corresponding practical and research implications. The table highlights the distinction between gratitude as a psychological and spiritual coping resource and the external demands that may more directly shape WFSC among female students with multiple roles.

Table 7. Summary of Key Findings and Implications

Key Finding	Interpretation	Implication
Gratitude was negatively but not significantly associated with WFSC (($r = -.119$, $p = .124$)).	Gratitude may support adaptation, but it does not directly reduce role conflict.	Future studies should test gratitude as a mediator or moderator.
Most participants reported moderate gratitude and moderate WFSC.	Gratitude and role conflict can coexist within the same individuals.	Counseling should combine gratitude-based coping with stress and time-management strategies.
External role demands may be more relevant to WFSC than gratitude alone.	Workload, academic demands, family responsibilities, and social support may shape role conflict more directly.	Universities, workplaces, and families should provide flexible and supportive arrangements.
Gratitude may function as a psychological and spiritual coping resource.	Its main role may lie in emotional regulation, meaning-making, and spiritual endurance.	Sufi psychotherapy may use gratitude practices alongside practical problem-solving interventions.

Overall, these findings indicate that gratitude should be understood primarily as a psychological and spiritual resource that supports emotional regulation, positive appraisal, and meaning-making rather than as a direct mechanism for reducing WFSC. The intensity of role conflict appears to be more closely connected to the interaction of occupational, academic, and family demands. Therefore, efforts to address WFSC should integrate gratitude-based coping with practical support, including academic flexibility, supportive workplace arrangements, equitable family cooperation, and accessible psychological or spiritual counseling.

5. CONCLUSION

The principal finding of this study is that gratitude was negatively but not significantly associated with *work-family and school conflict* (WFSC) among female university students who simultaneously managed occupational, academic, and family responsibilities. The correlation was very weak ($r = -.119$), indicating that higher

gratitude did not consistently correspond to lower role conflict within the sample. This finding suggests that gratitude may remain psychologically and spiritually meaningful, particularly in supporting emotional regulation, positive appraisal, and meaning-making, but it is not sufficient on its own to reduce the practical incompatibilities arising from multiple roles.

Scientifically, this study contributes to the literature by distinguishing the adaptive function of gratitude from the structural origins of WFSC. The findings extend research on gratitude, Islamic psychology, and multiple-role conflict by showing that gratitude may be more relevant to coping with the consequences of role pressure than to determining the intensity of the conflict itself. The study also provides empirical evidence from Indonesian female students who simultaneously occupy work, family, and academic roles, a population that remains relatively underexamined in gratitude and WFSC research. This distinction offers a basis for future models that integrate psychological-spiritual resources with external demands, social support, workload, family responsibilities, and academic conditions.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The correlational and cross-sectional design does not permit causal conclusions, while purposive sampling and the use of participants from a single university limit the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-report measures may also introduce response bias, and several factors that may more directly influence WFSC such as working hours, workload, number of children, domestic-task distribution, academic burden, and social support were not included in the analysis. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal or intervention designs, and multivariate analyses to examine gratitude as a mediator or moderator while simultaneously assessing structural, interpersonal, and psychological predictors of WFSC.

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