Religiosity as a Mediator of Social Support for the Employee Engagement of Female Lecturers in Long-Distance Marriages

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Abstract. *Long-distance marriage has several risks, but some couples decide to undergo this condition for various reasons, one of which is their work career. This research aims to look at employee engagement among female lecturers in long-distance marriages by using social support as a predictor and religiosity as a mediator. This research uses a quantitative approach with a simple mediation analysis. The population in this study were female lecturers who were in long-distance marriages for at least one-year. There were 54 participants in this study using total sampling who had undergone a long-distance marriage. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale containing four answer choices. The instruments in this study used adaptations of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Centrality of Religious Scale (CRS) and Employee Engagement Scale (EES). Data were analyzed using regression analysis. Meanwhile, the research results show a direct effect of social support on employee engagement and the influence of religiosity on employee engagement. These results show that religiosity is a partial mediator of employee engagement. This study suggests that female lecturer who undergoes a long-distance marriage can reach their best career when they get support from any circle she has and upgrade their religiosity. This study also showed if religiosity could have an effect on increasing employee engagement as a responsibility for the job.*

Keywords: Employee engagement; female lecturer; long-distance marriage; religiosity; social support.

INTRODUCTION

The number of women working in Indonesia in 2023 will be 54.6 million or around 36.97%. This data shows that many women have careers in Indonesia, both from the formal and informal sectors. This condition gives women multiple roles, both as wives, mothers, and workers. As a result, women experience conflict because the many roles carried out by women result from overlapping duties (Rahmayati, 2020).

This becomes more complex with several married couples who decide to have a long-distance marriage relationship. Scott (2002) defines long-distance marriage as a pattern of long-distance relationships, which is indicated by the frequency of rare meetings between husband and wife, who both live in different cities for certain reasons. There is no data yet on the number of married couples in long-distance relationships in Indonesia (Nugraheni & Pratiwi, 2020). However, research shows that being in a long-distance relationship has a greater potential for separation. The majority of respondents who met questioned the frequency of meetings which was rarely the cause of the failure of their relationships (Aulia, 2022).

Long-distance marriage is challenging for young families, especially couples wanting to pursue a career. On the one hand, they want to be successful at work, but on the other hand, they also want to have a family. Taufiiqoh and Krisnatuti (2024) show that marital satisfaction among women in long-distance relationship is at 67.3% or in the medium range. This indicates that having a long-distance marriage poses a risk to family integrity.

Research conducted by Prameswara and Sakti (2016) shows that women in long-distance marriages feel bored with the daily life of taking care of their own families (who already have children). However, they are also grateful because they can learn from the long-distance marriages they have experienced. Handayani (2016) also found that women in long-distance marriages were able to increase their commitment, which impacted the marital satisfaction they experienced. Islam itself sees long-distance marriage as something that can be done as long as it does not violate Islamic law (Tanjung & Ariyadi, 2021).

Having a long-distance marriage has various meanings for the perpetrators. Rachman (2018) found long-distance marriage for women to be a challenge, both bad and good, which indirectly had an impact on the independence of women who were in long-distance marriages. This is similar to Supatmi and Masykur's research (2020) which explains that women who are in long-distance marriages tend to experience loneliness and feelings of sadness, thus they understand the conditions they have to go through, including being able to handle childcare problems, communication, and the roles that must be shared as husband and wife and as parents.

The studies above show how a woman who is a housewife experiences a long-distance marriage. The average marriage process experiences difficulties at the beginning but can understand the consequences of having to undergo a long-distance marriage. For women who also work, long-distance marriage contributes to the stress they face (Purwanto et al., 2019). Tantri findings (2021) also indicates that long-distance marriages must have their own strategy to manage family harmony, which is exemplified by improving romantic relationships so that the marriage continues even though it is carried out long distance.

Women who work and are also in long-distance marriages have problems related to the dual roles they play. The ability to overcome family and work conflicts is something one must have because it will have an impact on job satisfaction and also one's marriage (Rossalia et al., 2020). Apart from that, there are many things that couples in a long-distance marriage need to do, including social support. Zimet et al. (1988) defines social support as help provided by people around you, whether from partners, friends, or other people. The findings of Salsabila et al. (2023), Nirmayunita et al. (2022), and Saefullah et al. (2019) explains that social support has an effect on the relationships of couples in long-distance marriages. This means that social support, such as scheduled meetings, communication models and other types of family support, has a clear role so that couples in long-distance marriages can remain committed to their marriage (Taufiiqoh & Krisnatuti, 2024).

Apart from social support, other things also have an influence on the long-distance marriage journey. Indonesia is known as a religious nation, thus its citizens place religion as one of the foundations for various things in their lives. A survey conducted by Statista shows Indonesia as the most religious country, with indicators showing that it is the country that believes most in God (Kirana, 2024). The value of religiosity should be one of the things that can predict long-distance marriage relationships. Religiosity, in the views of Huber (2007), Huber and Huber (2012), is an individual's way of viewing the world based on their thoughts and beliefs, which have an impact on their daily behavior and experiences. Amelia et al. (2018), Chrys and Soetjiningsih (2022), and Wibiren (2020) explain that religiosity has an impact on marriage for couples who are in long-

distance marriages.

The findings above explain that social support and religiosity are related to long-distance marriage, also for working women. Workers certainly want a good career path, both men and women. Alisa (2022) stated that employee engagement in women is influenced by family conflict, namely the function of women in the household. Employee engagement also impacts the psychological well-being of female teachers (Ariyanto, 2022). The family also has an impact on employee engagement among female lecturers, which also has an impact on work performance (Azzahra & Winarsih, 2023). Kahn (1990) explains employee engagement as a form of empowerment related to work roles and physical, cognitive, and emotional attachment to the company in performance.

Theoretically, social support has a relationship (Setiabudhi et al., 2021) and influence (Uddin et al., 2023) on employee engagement. Likewise, religiosity influences employee engagement (Bakar et al., 2018; Brien et al., 2021; Nwachukwu et al., 2021, 2022). The results of this study indicate that social support and religiosity have a relationship and influence on employee engagement. In this study, the researcher wants to see how the religiosity variable functions as a mediator variable on the employee engagement variable, as the aim is to see the existence of a mediator variable between the independent and dependent variables (Urbayatun & Widhiarso, 2012).

The relationship between social support, religiosity, and employee engagement has been proven by previous research, especially in women. Research by Chrys and Soetjiningsih (2022) shows that religiosity influences long-distance marriage couples. Also, social support influences the research, according to Taufiiqoh and Krisnatuti's finding (2024). Based on previous studies research finding before, this research aims to examine the influence of social support on employee engagement by using religiosity as a mediator variable. Researchers hypothesize that social support influences employee engagement by using religiosity as a mediator variable.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with a type of regression using mediating variables. This method is used to see the indirect influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable by using a mediating variable or what is known as a causal step (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The independent variables in this research are social support, the dependent variable is employee engagement and the mediating variable is religiosity. Participants in this research were female lecturers who were in a long-distance marriage for at least one year. The population of this study is unknown, because there is no written data on the exact number of female lecturers in long-distance marriages. The sample included 54 participants. The sampling technique used was total sampling, which included all incoming samples.

Data collection in this study used a questionnaire using three instruments/measuring tools. First, the social support scale uses the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), which has been adapted with 12 items which are divided into family support, friend support and support from other people (Zimet et al., 1988). The original reliability value was 0.88; after being tested, the reliability value obtained was 0.83. Second, the employee engagement scale uses the Employee Engagement Scale (EES), which has been adapted with 14 items divided into cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement (Shuck et al., 2017). The original reliability value was 0.78. After post-adaptation testing, the reliability value was 0.81. Third, the religiosity scale using The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) consists of 15 items and has been adapted to consist of intellectuality, ideology, public worship, private worship,

and religious experience (Huber & Huber, 2012). The original reliability value was 0.92, and the post-trial reliability value after adaptation was 0.86. The measuring instrument is prepared using a Likert scale with four answer choices. Data analysis in this research consists of two parts: the classic assumption test, which consists of the normality test, the multicollinearity test, and the heteroscedasticity test. The hypothesis test uses a simple mediation regression test. The data analysis process uses Jamovi software version 2.3.28 (Harsono, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires containing demographic data to describe the conditions of the participants in this study. This was intended to see the conditions of the participants based on age, age of marriage, duration of long-distance marriage, location of their husband's work, children they have, and the frequency of meetings they have during their long-distance marriage. Demographic data can be seen as follows.

Table 1.
Participant Demographic Data

Range	Amount	Percentage (%)
Age		
27-36	38	70.37
37-46	14	25.92
47-56	2	3.71
Marriage age		
1-10	36	66.66
11-20	14	25.92
21-30	3	7.42
Long time undergoing long-distance marriage		
1-10	46	85.18
11-20	7	12.96
21-30	1	1.86
Husband's work location		
Outside the city of one province	26	48.14
Outside the island of one province	17	31.48
Outside the province	9	16.66
Overseas	2	3.72
Child		
0	7	12.96
1-3	45	83.33
4-6	2	3.71
Frequency of meetings		

Weekly	32	59.25
Monthly	17	31.48
Annual	3	5.55
Incidental	2	3.72

The data above shows that young couples are more likely to have long-distance marriages with a marriage age range of 1-10 years. The majority have 1-3 children meeting intending to meet almost weekly. Interestingly, some couples are over 40 years old and are still in long-distance marriages with a marriage age of 21-30 years. There are even 3 people who meet once a year.

The results of data categorization for each variable are as follows:

Table 2.

Data Categorization

Social Support			
Category	**Formula**	**Total**	**Percentage**
High	$32 \leq X$	49	90.74
Medium	$32 \leq X < 16$	5	9.26
Low	$X < 16$	-	0
Employee Engagement			
Category	**Formula**	**Total**	**Percentage**
High	$36 \leq X$	45	83.33
Medium	$36 \leq X < 18$	9	16.67
Low	$X < 18$	-	0
Religiosity			
Category	**Formula**	**Total**	**Percentage**
High	$40 \leq X$	50	92.59
Medium	$40 \leq X < 20$	4	7.41
Low	$X < 20$	-	0

The data above shows that most of the data is in the high category, and none is of low value. This shows that social support, religiosity and employee engagement are in the good category.

The results of the data analysis test are as follows:

Table 3.

Classic Assumption Test Results

Test type	**Results**
Normality	0.127
Multicollinearity	VIF 4.776 and Tolerance 0.354
Heteroscedasticity	0.225

The results of the classic assumption test above can be understood sequentially that the data is normally distributed, looking at the normality test results of $0.127 > 0.05$, while the multicollinearity test results based on the VIF value are $4.776 < 10.00$ and the Tolerance value is $0.354 > 0.10$ which indicates that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity, on the research data.

The results of the heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser table were 0.225 > 0.05, indicating no symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

Hypothesis test results are as follows:

Table 4.

Hypothesis Test Results

Mediation Effect	Estimate	S.E	Z	p
Indirect	0.274	0.0878	3.75	< 0.002
Direct	0.331	0.0997	3.07	0.003
Total	0.605	0.1143	6.21	< 0.001

Based on the data above, the direct value is *p*-value 0.003 < 0.005, which indicates a significant direct effect of social support on employee engagement. In the indirect value, the *p*-value is 0.002 < 0.005, which means there is a significant indirect effect, which means religiosity can mediate social support on employee engagement. Based on the significant direct value, perfect mediation did not occur. Only partial mediation occurred.

Table 5.

Mediation Test Results

Path Estimates	Estimate	S.E	Z	p
Social Support – Religiosity	0.632	0.1125	4.07	< 0.001
Social Support – Employee Engagement	0.435	0.0874	4.12	< 0.001
Religiosity – Employee Engagement	0.441	0.1151	3.01	0.004

Based on the results above, it can be understood that social support influences religiosity with a significant *p*-value of 0.001 < 0.005. Likewise, social support influences employee engagement and religiosity, with significance values of 0.001 and 0.004 < 0.005, respectively.

The research results show that the religiosity variable is only a partial mediation because social support directly influences employee engagement. Several studies state that there is a correlation and influence of social support on employee engagement (Faizal et al., 2022; Iswanto & Agustina, 2016; Mahardina & Setyawan, 2020; Putri, 2021; Rezkinda, 2019; Septiani & Nurtjahjanti, 2018; Wicaksono, 2021). This shows that social support plays a role in increasing employee engagement.

Likewise, religiosity has a correlation and influence on employee engagement, both theoretically proven by Nwachukwu et al.'s research (2016) as well as practically (Brien et al., 2021; Nwachukwu et al., 2021, 2022; Sana et al., 2023; Vu, 2020). These findings indicate that social support and religiosity have a relationship and influence on employee engagement. Religiosity becomes a partial mediation based on the findings above, namely the direct influence of social support on employee engagement.

Religiosity has a positive impact on employee performance. This aligns with Maisaroh and Darmawan's research (2023) which found that religiosity increased work motivation in the form of creativity, innovation, and the ability to look for good opportunities. This finding is an applicable form of employee engagement both cognitively and behaviorally. Furthermore, Aeni and Dwiyanti's finding (2021) sees the Islamic work ethic and organizational support as things that can increase work engagement.

One of the effects of good employee engagement is performance. Good performance arises

from maximum employee involvement and a sense of company ownership. The findings of Setiawan and Budiman (2021) explains that religiosity can predict employee performance. This means that religiosity can indirectly impact employee engagement to improve employee performance.

Likewise, social support can trigger increased employee engagement. Mahardina & Setyawan's finding (2020), for example, state that social support from a partner can improve cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects to give the best when working. Social support also impacts the quality of performance, so it can improve employee engagement (Nurendra & Purnamasari, 2017).

Employee engagement among career women can also be predicted by balancing work with daily life. Hastuti (2018) explains that a balance between work and daily life can be achieved, and one of the ways is with support from the family. This means that the role of social support, in this case, the family, can help women in their work and daily life to increase employee engagement. Apart from that, religious values in the workplace also have an impact on employee engagement (Shohib & Hadi, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This research shows that social support has a direct impact on employee engagement. Religiosity is a partial mediation of employee engagement because of the direct effect of social support on employee engagement. This is supported by previous research, which explains the relationship between these three variables. Theoretically, this study shows that the role of the mediator does not have a practical impact because the indirect role is smaller than the direct role, although statistically, both directly and indirectly are proven to be significant. It is essential to conduct further research on mediator variables that can play an effective role between the independent and dependent variables. The limitations of this research are that the number of participants is not optimal, and there is no official data on couples in long-distance marriages. Future researchers can discuss the context of long-distance marriage by using other variables not examined in this study.

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