THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT,

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN AN

INTERNET COMPANY IN BEIJING, CHINA.

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ZHANG YU

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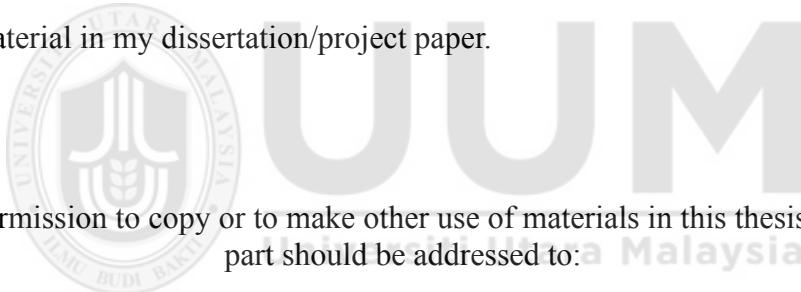
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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP) among employees in an internet company in Beijing, China. In the unique high-pressure environment of China's internet industry, the "big-small week" schedule—where employees work five days one week and six days the next, with the cycle repeating and no overtime pay—significantly contributes to work-family conflict (WFC), which may influence employee performance. Leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, is also recognized as a key factor in shaping employee outcomes. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted using stratified random sampling, yielding 171 valid responses from 300 employees. Established measurement scales were adopted to assess WFC, TL, and JP (including task performance and contextual performance). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, including reliability testing, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed that both WFC and TL show significant positive relationships with job performance. Interestingly, in this high-pressure internet work context, a higher level of WFC was associated with stronger job performance, indicating a unique dynamic in such environments. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the unexpected positive link between WFC and JP, while reaffirming the importance of transformational leadership. Practical implications suggest that organizations should balance workload demands with leadership practices that inspire and motivate employees to perform effectively.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict,Transformational Leadership, Job Performance
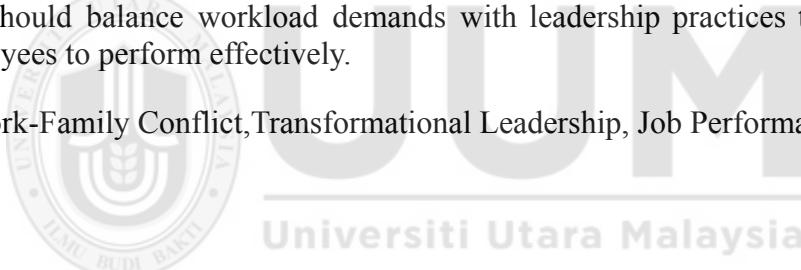
Abstrak

Kajian ini meneroka hubungan antara konflik kerja-keluarga (WFC), kepimpinan transformasi (TL), dan prestasi kerja (JP) dalam kalangan pekerja di sebuah syarikat internet di Beijing, China. Dalam persekitaran tekanan tinggi yang unik dalam industri internet China, jadual "minggu besar-kecil"—di mana pekerja bekerja lima hari seminggu dan enam hari seterusnya, dengan kitaran berulang dan tiada gaji lebih masa—menyumbang dengan ketara kepada konflik kerja-keluarga (WFC), yang mungkin mempengaruhi prestasi pekerja. Gaya kepimpinan, terutamanya kepimpinan transformasi, juga diiktiraf sebagai faktor utama dalam membentuk hasil pekerja. Tinjauan keratan rentas kuantitatif telah dijalankan menggunakan pensampelan rawak berstrata, menghasilkan 171 respons sah daripada 300 pekerja. Skala pengukuran yang ditetapkan telah diterima pakai untuk menilai WFC, TL dan JP (termasuk prestasi tugas dan prestasi kontekstual). Analisis data dijalankan menggunakan SPSS, termasuk ujian kebolehpercayaan, korelasi, dan analisis regresi berganda. Penemuan mendedahkan bahawa kedua-dua WFC dan TL menunjukkan hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan prestasi kerja. Menariknya, dalam konteks kerja internet bertekanan tinggi ini, tahap WFC yang lebih tinggi dikaitkan dengan prestasi kerja yang lebih kukuh, yang menunjukkan dinamik unik dalam persekitaran sedemikian. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur dengan menonjolkan hubungan positif yang tidak dijangka antara WFC dan JP, sambil menegaskan semula kepentingan kepimpinan transformasi. Implikasi praktikal mencadangkan bahawa organisasi harus mengimbangi tuntutan beban kerja dengan amalan kepimpinan yang memberi inspirasi dan motivasi kepada pekerja untuk melaksanakan tugas dengan berkesan.

Kata kunci: Konflik Kerja-Keluarga, Kepimpinan Transformasi, Prestasi Kerja

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In China's rapidly growing Internet industry, employee performance plays a critical role in ensuring organizational success. High-performing employees are essential for driving innovation, staying competitive, and maintaining overall business growth in this fast-paced environment (Le et al., 2020). If organizations fail to effectively manage employee performance, they risk increased turnover, which can negatively impact business operations and economic performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Companies surveyed in this study reported that their employee turnover rate reached 19% in 2024, which is higher than the 2023 national average turnover rate of 17.7% for China's high-tech industry, indicating a significant challenge in talent retention under demanding work conditions. This problem is particularly prominent in Beijing, where leading Internet companies generally face high employee turnover and immense talent pressure due to fierce market competition. Furthermore, high-performing employees exhibit key attributes such as motivation, adaptability, and technical expertise, all of which contribute to achieving corporate objectives. However, in high-intensity work environments like China's Internet industry, success depends not only on employees' ability to fulfill task-related responsibilities but also on their discretionary behaviors that support organizational effectiveness—referred to as contextual performance (CP) (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

Work-life balance plays a crucial role in shaping employee well-being and performance. However, China's Internet industry is characterized by demanding work conditions, including the 996 work schedule, blurred boundaries between work and personal life, and increased work-family conflict (WFC) (Le et al., 2020). WFC occurs when job demands interfere with

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family responsibilities, leading to heightened stress, decreased job satisfaction, and ultimately lower employee performance (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Employees facing high WFC are more likely to experience burnout, reduced organizational commitment, and higher turnover rates (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

In China's Internet industry, prolonged working hours and the expectation of constant availability further exacerbate WFC. Although WFC may not directly affect task performance, it significantly reduces employees' discretionary workplace behaviors, including helping colleagues, taking initiative, and fostering a positive work environment (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). This is particularly concerning for Internet companies, where rapid technological advancements and intense competition demand high levels of collaboration, adaptability, and proactive engagement beyond formal job roles. Employees burdened by high WFC are less likely to exhibit contextual performance behaviors, which can, in turn, hinder innovation, teamwork, and overall organizational efficiency (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Although research has confirmed the negative impact of WFC on employee performance, most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts. However, China's Internet industry operates within a unique cultural and structural framework, characterized by hierarchical leadership and high job expectations. The extent to which WFC affects employee performance—particularly contextual performance—remains underexplored in this setting (Le et al., 2020). This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between WFC and contextual performance within the high-intensity work environment of China's Internet industry.

Leadership style is a critical factor influencing job performance, especially in high-pressure environments like China's Internet industry. The company examined in this study adopts a hybrid leadership model that combines elements of both transformational leadership (TL) and authoritarian leadership (AL). While certain managers demonstrate TL attributes—such as

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encouraging collaboration and providing motivational support—the organization is still predominantly shaped by authoritarian practices, including centralized decision-making, rigid control, and insufficient support for employee development (Iqbal et al., 2015). These authoritarian tendencies limit employee empowerment and innovation, discouraging initiative-taking and suppressing both task and contextual performance. In contrast, TL has been widely recognized for its ability to enhance overall job performance by fostering a supportive work environment, promoting knowledge-sharing, and motivating employees to engage in proactive, extra-role behaviors (Wang & Howell, 2010; Avolio & Bass, 1995). Therefore, strengthening the presence of transformational leadership within such organizations may be key to addressing performance challenges rooted in excessive control and lack of employee autonomy.

Existing research suggests that TL positively influences employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance by fostering enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Moreover, the Internet industry is characterized by rapid change, technological advancement, and intense competition, requiring companies to be agile and adaptable. TL facilitates this adaptability by encouraging innovation and empowering employees, making it particularly well-suited for this dynamic environment (Birasnav, 2014). Studies have shown that TL enhances contextual performance by strengthening employees' discretionary behaviors, such as cooperation, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), and proactive problem-solving, all of which contribute to team cohesion and long-term organizational success (Wang & Howell, 2010).

Although the impact of TL on general employee performance has been widely studied, its specific role in contextual performance remains underexplored, especially in the hierarchical and stressful Chinese Internet industry. This study aims to explore how TL can improve contextual performance.

1.2 Problem Statement

In China's high-pressure Internet industry, employees often manage to complete their core job duties despite work-life imbalance. However, under the strain of long working hours, blurred work-life boundaries, and constant availability expectations, they are less inclined to engage in extra-role behaviors such as collaboration, innovation, and proactive problem-solving. These behaviors reflect contextual performance (CP), a key dimension of overall job performance, and are particularly vulnerable in high-stress environments. Recent studies indicate that as work-family conflict (WFC) intensifies, employees experience greater psychological strain and emotional exhaustion, which lead to reduced voluntary organizational contributions and even withdrawal behaviors (Hou et al., 2023; Song et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2023).

The company investigated in this study is a Beijing-based Internet firm with 253 employees, currently operating under a "big week, small week" work schedule. This system requires staff to work an additional day every other week without clear overtime compensation, further blurring the line between professional and personal life. Employees are also expected to be on call beyond regular hours, especially in teams with overseas clients. These practices increase workload, reduce rest time, and elevate work-family tension—factors that can weaken both task focus and discretionary behaviors essential for team effectiveness and innovation.

Although previous research has explored the negative impact of WFC on job performance, many studies have focused exclusively on task performance, neglecting the contextual dimension. Furthermore, most findings are based on Western contexts, offering limited insight into cultures like China's, where long working hours and hierarchical leadership are

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prevalent (Le et al., 2020). This gap calls for further investigation in the Chinese Internet sector, where both organizational pressures and cultural expectations are distinct.

From a leadership perspective, the company adopts a hybrid leadership style that blends elements of transformational leadership (TL) and authoritarian leadership (AL). While some managers display TL characteristics, such as employee motivation and vision-sharing, the overall leadership climate remains dominated by control-oriented and short-term-focused practices. Frequent changes in strategic direction, lack of long-term planning, and inconsistent managerial communication have discouraged employees from taking initiative or investing extra effort. Prior research suggests that such authoritarian environments suppress both task efficiency and contextual contributions (Iqbal et al., 2015; Bolino & Turnley, 2005).

In contrast, transformational leadership is known to foster a more empowering and collaborative climate by encouraging innovation, providing individualized support, and promoting shared goals. TL has been linked to improvements in both task and contextual performance, especially in fast-changing and knowledge-intensive industries (Wang & Howell, 2010; Salanova et al., 2011). However, its potential to offset the negative effects of rigid, top-down leadership in China's Internet companies remains underexplored.

Despite growing interest in WFC and leadership styles, there remains a significant research gap regarding how WFC and TL independently influence job performance in China's high-intensity Internet industry. Existing studies tend to examine these variables in isolation or focus on limited aspects of performance. By examining both WFC and TL as separate predictors of job performance—encompassing task and contextual components—this study seeks to provide deeper insight into how organizational demands and leadership practices shape employee outcomes in a uniquely demanding cultural and industrial context.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to explore the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** How does work-family conflict (WFC) affect job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry?
- **RQ2:** How does transformational leadership (TL) influence job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry?

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the relationships between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry. The specific research objectives are as follows:

- RO1: To examine the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry.
- RO2: To determine the relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding by examining how work-family conflict (WFC) and transformational leadership (TL) independently influence job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry. While prior research has explored the general links between leadership and employee outcomes, few studies have specifically addressed how TL and WFC affect both core job responsibilities (task performance) and

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extra-role contributions (contextual performance) within high-pressure, fast-paced work environments (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Wang & Howell, 2010).

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the literature by integrating two critical variables—WFC and TL—into a unified model of job performance. Most existing studies examine these factors in isolation, often within Western cultural contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how they function in China's Internet sector, where long working hours and hierarchical leadership are common.

Practically, the findings provide valuable insights into how companies can improve employee performance by addressing both organizational demands and leadership practices. In particular, the study highlights how adopting a more transformational leadership approach may enhance not only employee motivation and engagement, but also their willingness to go beyond prescribed roles. At the same time, mitigating work-family conflict can prevent burnout and disengagement, thereby supporting both performance and retention.

On a broader level, this research contributes to the discourse on workforce sustainability in China's digital economy. By offering empirical evidence on the relationships among leadership, work-life balance, and performance, the study supports the development of adaptive management strategies that align performance expectations with employee well-being—essential for maintaining long-term competitiveness in an evolving industrial landscape.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study investigates the relationships between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP) within China's Internet industry. The dependent variable (DV) in this research is job performance, which encompasses both

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task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). The independent variables (IVs) are work-family conflict (WFC) and transformational leadership (TL), which are examined as separate predictors of employee performance outcomes.

A quantitative research approach is adopted, employing a structured survey to collect data from employees of a Beijing-based Internet company. To ensure representativeness, the study uses stratified random sampling, whereby employees are categorized based on relevant characteristics such as department or job role before selection. The total population of the company comprises 253 employees, from which a sample will be drawn to enhance the reliability and generalizability of the results.

The target population includes employees whose job performance may be influenced by long working hours, blurred boundaries between work and personal life, and variations in leadership style. While the findings may not be fully generalizable to all Internet firms in China, they provide meaningful insights into performance-related challenges faced by employees in a high-pressure, innovation-driven sector.

By focusing on China's Internet sector, particularly in Beijing, this study offers context-specific implications for both academic research and managerial practice. The findings aim to deepen understanding of how leadership and work-life balance factors affect employee performance, thereby informing more sustainable and human-centered management strategies in the digital economy.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Job Performance (JP)

Job performance refers to how effectively employees fulfill work-related responsibilities. It includes both task performance (completion of formal job duties) and contextual performance

(voluntary behaviors that support the organizational environment) (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

1.7.2 Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Work-family conflict (WFC) is a form of inter-role conflict where the demands of work interfere with family responsibilities, leading to stress, job dissatisfaction, and decreased performance. It often results from long working hours, lack of work-life boundaries, and excessive job demands (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

1.7.3 Transformational Leadership (TL)

Transformational leadership (TL) is a leadership style that inspires and motivates employees by fostering a shared vision, promoting innovation, and providing individualized support. It is characterized by four key behaviors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985).

1.8 The Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides a concise overview of the study, including the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope, and significance. The dependent variable (job performance) and independent variables (work-family conflict and transformational leadership) are also introduced and defined in this chapter. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature and prior research findings related to the study's variables. It explores theoretical frameworks and identifies gaps in existing knowledge, establishing the foundation for this research. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and statistical tools used for analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings derived from the data analysis, interpreting the results in relation to the research objectives and questions.

Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the study's key findings, discusses theoretical and managerial implications, and provides recommendations for future research while addressing the study's limitations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to the two key independent variables—Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Transformational Leadership (TL)—and their influence on the dependent variable, Job Performance (JP), within the context of China's internet industry. Job performance is conceptualized as comprising both Task Performance (TP) and Contextual Performance (CP). Drawing on recent academic research and empirical studies, this chapter identifies theoretical gaps, establishes a solid foundation for the study, and formulates relevant hypotheses. A conceptual framework is also developed to illustrate how WFC and TL influence job performance, particularly in high-intensity work environments characterized by long working hours and blurred boundaries between work and personal life.

2.2 Job Performance (JP)

Job performance refers to the behaviors that individuals engage in at work which are relevant to the goals of the organization and are within the individual's control (Campbell, 1990). It is widely conceptualized as comprising two major dimensions: task performance, which involves fulfilling the core job responsibilities that directly contribute to the production of goods or services, and contextual performance, which includes extra-role behaviors that support the social and organizational environment, such as helping colleagues, showing persistence, and endorsing organizational objectives (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Organ, 1988). Unlike task performance, contextual performance is not formally required but

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facilitates overall team effectiveness and long-term organizational functioning (Motowidlo et al., 1997). The multidimensional nature of job performance highlights that effective employees not only perform assigned tasks but also contribute positively to the broader organizational context.

Job performance is commonly evaluated using both objective and subjective indicators. Objective measures may include sales volume, production rates, or service delivery time, which provide quantifiable data for performance comparisons. Subjective evaluations, such as supervisor ratings or self-assessments, are also widely used, especially in roles where output is less tangible (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). To capture a more holistic view, many organizations employ competency-based appraisal systems that assess behaviors and attitudes in addition to outcomes, thereby reflecting both task and contextual performance.

In theoretical terms, Campbell's (1990) performance model identifies performance as a function of three determinants: declarative knowledge (what an individual knows), procedural knowledge (how to do it), and motivation (willingness to apply effort). This model emphasizes that job performance is not only behaviorally observable but also influenced by underlying cognitive and motivational processes. Furthermore, Motowidlo et al. (1997) proposed that contextual performance arises more from personality and interpersonal characteristics, whereas task performance is more reliant on job-specific skills.

The practical significance of job performance extends beyond individual outcomes to influence team effectiveness and organizational success. High-performing employees are often more adaptable, cooperative, and aligned with organizational values, contributing to better work climate and overall productivity (Viswesvaran, Schmidt, & Ones, 2002). In fast-paced industries such as China's Internet sector, job performance has become an even more critical benchmark, where employees are expected to deliver both speed and innovation

under high work intensity. As such, understanding and accurately measuring job performance remains a central concern in both research and human resource practice, especially in dynamic and competitive organizational environments.

2.3 Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the demands of work and family roles are mutually incompatible, making participation in one domain more difficult because of participation in the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). It is a well-established construct in work-life research and reflects the struggle many employees face in balancing occupational and domestic responsibilities. WFC is bidirectional in nature, consisting of two distinct yet related forms: work-to-family conflict (W→F), where job demands negatively impact family life, and family-to-work conflict (F→W), where family obligations hinder performance at work (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992).

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) further categorized WFC into three types based on the source of conflict: time-based conflict, which occurs when time devoted to one role limits time for the other; strain-based conflict, where stress in one domain reduces effectiveness in the other; and behavior-based conflict, where behavioral expectations from one role are incompatible with those in another. These distinctions have been widely adopted in both academic and applied settings to better understand the multifaceted nature of WFC.

WFC is commonly measured using psychometrically validated scales. One of the most widely used instruments is the Work-Family Conflict Scale developed by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996), which includes items specifically designed to capture both the direction and type of conflict. The scale demonstrates high reliability and construct validity,

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and is frequently applied in organizational research to assess employees' perceptions of role interference across domains.

As a central topic in organizational behavior and occupational health, WFC has been linked to a wide range of negative outcomes, including emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and decreased psychological well-being (Allen et al., 2000). In fast-paced work environments, where long hours and high demands are common, understanding and mitigating WFC is essential for preserving employee health and maintaining sustainable work engagement. In particular, China's Internet industry has been criticized for intense work cultures such as "996" and "on-call availability," which blur the boundaries between work and personal life. As a result, WFC has become an increasingly salient concern in organizational research and practice within this sector.

2.4 Transformational Leadership (TL)

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders motivate and inspire followers to transcend their self-interest and strive toward shared organizational goals by articulating a compelling vision and fostering personal development (Bass, 1985). This leadership style is fundamentally future-oriented and change-driven, making it particularly relevant in dynamic organizational environments. Unlike transactional leadership, which relies on contingent rewards and corrective actions, transformational leadership emphasizes intrinsic motivation, values alignment, and long-term commitment (Burns, 1978).

According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership comprises four interrelated dimensions that together create a positive and developmental leadership environment. The first is idealized influence, whereby leaders act as ethical role models and gain the trust and admiration of their followers. Second, inspirational motivation involves the articulation of a compelling and meaningful vision that inspires commitment and enthusiasm. The third

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component, intellectual stimulation, reflects the leader's ability to challenge assumptions, encourage creativity, and support innovation. Finally, individualized consideration refers to the personalized support leaders provide, addressing each follower's unique needs and fostering their professional development. These elements collectively promote a culture of trust, engagement, and continuous growth within the organization.

The most widely used tool to assess transformational leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). The MLQ has been validated across numerous organizational settings and demonstrates high levels of reliability and construct validity (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). It is frequently used in both academic and professional contexts to evaluate leadership behaviors and their impact on organizational functioning.

As organizations increasingly face complexity and rapid change, transformational leadership has gained recognition as a critical driver of adaptability, innovation, and employee engagement (Podsakoff et al., 1996). In the context of China's Internet industry, leadership practices are often shaped by high performance pressure, long working hours, and fast-paced decision-making. Many companies continue to rely on top-down or authoritarian management styles, where employee development and individual needs are sometimes overlooked. In such environments, the application of transformational leadership is particularly vital, as it helps foster employee commitment, psychological safety, and team cohesion—qualities essential for sustainable growth in a highly competitive sector.

2.5 The Relationship between Job Performance and Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Job performance, comprising both task performance and contextual performance, is a key determinant of organizational effectiveness, particularly in industries characterized by high

workloads and demanding work conditions, such as China's internet sector (Campbell, 1990; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). While task performance refers to the completion of core job responsibilities, contextual performance involves discretionary behaviors that contribute to the social and psychological environment of the organization. Work-family conflict (WFC)—defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which work and family demands are incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)—has been identified as a major factor undermining employees' ability to maintain high levels of performance in both domains.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that employees experiencing high levels of WFC tend to exhibit lower job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and emotional exhaustion, which in turn negatively affect both task execution and engagement in extra-role behaviors (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) emphasized that prolonged work-family imbalance leads to resource depletion, weakening employees' capacity to meet formal work demands and reducing their willingness to go beyond those expectations. In the specific context of China's internet industry—where long hours, constant connectivity, and blurred work-life boundaries are prevalent—WFC has been shown to diminish motivation and disrupt sustained performance (Le et al., 2020; Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) offers a theoretical foundation to explain this dynamic. According to SET, when employees perceive a lack of support for managing work-family responsibilities, they may feel that the social exchange between themselves and the organization is imbalanced. This perception can lead to disengagement, with employees limiting their efforts to merely fulfilling job requirements and withdrawing from voluntary contributions that enhance organizational effectiveness (Erdogan, Bauer, & Taylor, 2018; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In high-pressure environments like China's internet sector, such

withdrawal poses a substantial risk to team performance and organizational cohesion (Netemeyer et al., 1996).

Despite the growing body of research on WFC, organizations often overlook its indirect yet significant effects on overall job performance. While task outputs may appear unaffected in the short term, the decline in employees' psychological availability and willingness to invest additional effort often signals a deeper performance issue (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Le et al. (2020) further note that employees working under persistent WFC are less inclined to maintain active collaboration or contribute to a positive organizational climate, particularly when leadership fails to address work-life balance concerns. Given the intensive and high-demand nature of China's internet work culture, it is vital to examine how WFC disrupts employees' ability to consistently perform across both formal and informal job domains.

Extensive empirical evidence supports the view that work-family conflict has a significant negative effect on job performance. Employees facing high WFC often conserve their remaining energy for task completion while disengaging from team collaboration, problem-solving, and other discretionary behaviors essential for organizational success. As highlighted by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), when individuals are unable to maintain a sustainable balance between work and family life, both their task performance and their contributions to the wider organizational environment are likely to suffer.

H1: There is a significant relationship between work-family conflict and job performance.

2.6 The Relationship between Transformational Leadership (TL) and Job Performance

Job performance (JP), which encompasses both task performance and contextual performance, is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, particularly in dynamic

and high-pressure environments such as China's internet industry (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell, 1990). While task performance refers to the execution of core job duties, contextual performance includes discretionary behaviors that support the broader organizational environment. Transformational leadership (TL), characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985), has been widely identified as a powerful leadership style that positively influences multiple facets of employee performance (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019).

Extensive research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is positively associated with enhanced job performance across both task and contextual dimensions. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities foster a motivating and empowering work environment that encourages employees not only to meet their formal job expectations but also to exceed them through voluntary contributions (Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008). Employees under transformational leaders tend to feel supported, valued, and aligned with organizational goals, which leads to stronger engagement, higher-quality task execution, and a greater willingness to support their teams through extra-role behaviors (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). In the context of China's internet industry, where employees frequently encounter rapid change and heavy workloads, such leadership plays an essential role in maintaining high performance and organizational agility (Le et al., 2020).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) provides a useful lens through which to understand the mechanisms by which TL enhances job performance. According to SET, when employees perceive their leaders as fair, empowering, and development-oriented, they are more likely to reciprocate with high levels of performance. This includes both meeting task expectations and engaging in supportive, discretionary behaviors that promote team and organizational functioning (Buil et al., 2019). Transformational leaders cultivate

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psychological empowerment by showing individualized consideration and fostering intellectual stimulation, thereby increasing employees' intrinsic motivation and commitment to performing beyond minimum standards (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martínez, 2011).

Given the competitive and demanding nature of China's internet sector, transformational leadership is especially critical in sustaining both task-related effectiveness and proactive, collaborative employee behavior. Employees who are led by transformational figures often show greater organizational identification, increased job satisfaction, and stronger resilience—all of which contribute to improved overall job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Moreover, by creating an environment of trust and shared vision, transformational leaders enable employees to navigate complexity and innovation with confidence, thus enhancing both productivity and team cohesion (Buil et al., 2019).

A growing body of empirical research supports the positive relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. Employees who perceive their leaders as visionary, supportive, and intellectually engaging are more likely to commit effort and energy to both core tasks and voluntary contributions. As noted by Salanova et al. (2011), transformational leadership fosters psychological states conducive to high engagement, innovation, and cooperation.

H2: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance.

2.7 Underpinning Theory

2.7.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a foundational framework in organizational behavior that explains how workplace relationships are built upon reciprocal exchanges of resources, trust,

and obligations. The theory was first conceptualized by Blau (1964), who emphasized that social exchanges differ from purely economic transactions, as they involve mutual but often unspecified obligations that develop over time. Emerson (1976) further refined SET by highlighting the role of dependence and power in shaping exchange relationships, making it one of the most influential perspectives for understanding workplace interactions. In applied organizational contexts, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) reviewed SET's role in leadership, work-family dynamics, and employee performance. According to SET, when employees perceive that their organization or leaders provide them with fair treatment, support, and valuable resources, they feel obligated to reciprocate with increased effort and engagement. However, when employees perceive an imbalance—such as excessive work demands without adequate organizational support—they may withdraw from both core tasks and discretionary behaviors, leading to lower overall job performance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

Job performance encompasses both task performance—completing job-specific duties—and contextual performance, which includes extra-role behaviors such as helping others and showing initiative (Campbell, 1990; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Employees who struggle to balance work and personal life may feel that their organization prioritizes productivity over personal well-being, resulting in perceptions of inequity in the social exchange relationship (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). This perceived imbalance undermines the norm of reciprocity, decreasing employee motivation to invest effort beyond minimal job requirements (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research shows that persistent work-family conflict leads to emotional exhaustion and negative reciprocity expectations, further reducing employees' willingness to sustain performance across both task-related and discretionary domains (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Consequently, employees may respond by fulfilling

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only essential duties while disengaging from broader organizational contributions, leading to declines in job performance.

Conversely, transformational leadership fosters high-quality exchange relationships that strengthen job performance. Transformational leaders, through behaviors such as individualized support, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994), signal to employees that their contributions and well-being are valued. Employees under transformational leadership perceive a fair and empowering work environment, leading to stronger reciprocal motivation and higher levels of engagement in both formal and informal work domains (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Empirical studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership enhances job performance by cultivating trust, intrinsic motivation, and organizational commitment (Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008). Employees who view their leaders as role models are more likely to exert discretionary effort and maintain high task standards, contributing to individual and team effectiveness (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martínez, 2011).

From a social exchange perspective, employees who experience transformational leadership develop a strong sense of positive reciprocity, which enhances their willingness to go beyond minimum role requirements and deliver high job performance (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2019). In contrast, employees experiencing high work-family conflict may perceive a lack of organizational support, leading to withdrawal and reduced performance. By integrating SET into this study, we gain a valuable framework to understand how perceived fairness and exchange quality shape employee performance outcomes. Specifically, SET helps explain why employees experiencing high WFC may disengage from performance efforts due to imbalance and stress, while those under transformational leadership are more likely to invest in their work roles with enthusiasm, responsibility, and resilience. In China's internet

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industry—marked by long hours and high demands—SET provides critical insights into how organizations can foster sustained job performance by reducing work-family conflict and cultivating transformational leadership.

2.8 Summary of the Chapter

To summarize, this chapter reviewed previous studies on the relationships between Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Transformational Leadership (TL), and Job Performance (JP), providing the theoretical foundation for the current study. Drawing upon Social Exchange Theory (SET), the chapter established a conceptual framework that explains how WFC may undermine job performance by disrupting perceived fairness and reciprocity, while TL enhances job performance by fostering supportive leader-employee relationships. The proposed hypotheses reflect these theoretical assumptions. The following chapter, Chapter 3, outlines the research methodology employed to test these hypotheses, including the research design, sampling strategy, and data collection procedures.
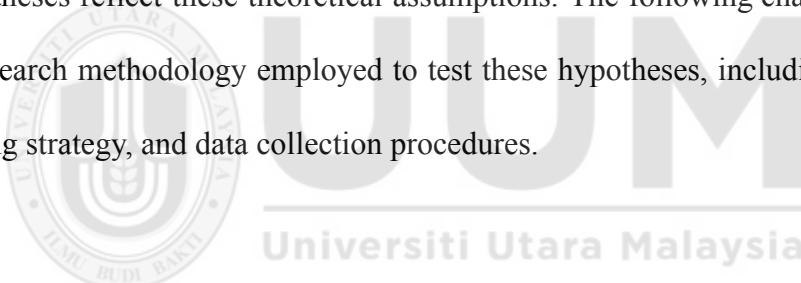
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research methods employed in this study. It covers the study design, conceptual framework, population, sampling technique, unit of analysis, research instrument, data collection strategy, and data analysis technique.

3.2 Research Design

This study investigated the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP) using a quantitative approach based on a correlational study design. Correlational studies are conducted to determine the significant factors associated with the variables of interest (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Two research objectives were established and evaluated. Research Objective 1 aimed to examine the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance, while Research Objective 2 focused on determining the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance.

This study employed a cross-sectional design, in which data were collected from participants at a single point in time through a structured survey. The questionnaire was self-administered, allowing respondents to complete it independently. The data collection period lasted for one month, ensuring sufficient response time while maintaining uniformity in survey conditions to minimize external influences that could affect the reliability of the findings.

To ensure relevance to the study objectives, only employees whose job roles are likely to be affected by work-family conflict and leadership styles—namely mid-level professionals and frontline staff—were included. Senior executives and entry-level support staff were excluded due to their limited exposure to operational leadership or direct performance metrics.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, providing a structured direction for the research. Developed based on the literature review, this framework supports the study's objectives by examining the impact of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Transformational Leadership (TL) on Job Performance (JP). In this study, WFC and TL are the independent variables (IVs). WFC reflects the extent to which work-related demands interfere with employees' personal lives, potentially diminishing their ability to maintain effective performance in both core tasks and discretionary workplace behaviors. In contrast, TL captures leadership behaviors that inspire, motivate, and support employees, fostering a sense of reciprocity and enhancing overall job performance, including task execution and engagement in extra-role behaviors.

The dependent variable, Job Performance (JP), includes both task performance—fulfilling formal job responsibilities—and contextual performance—discretionary actions that contribute to the broader organizational environment. Employees experiencing high levels of WFC may perceive an imbalance in their exchange relationship with the organization, leading to reduced motivation and lower job performance. Conversely, employees who perceive strong transformational leadership are more likely to feel valued and supported, resulting in higher levels of performance across both task and contextual domains.

Figure 3.1 presents the conceptual framework developed for this study, demonstrating the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables (WFC and TL) and the dependent variable (JP). This framework is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which explains how perceived fairness, support, and reciprocity in workplace relationships influence employees' motivation and performance. Through this theoretical lens, the study

examines how WFC negatively impacts employees' job performance by depleting emotional and cognitive resources, while TL enhances performance by fostering a supportive and empowering organizational climate.
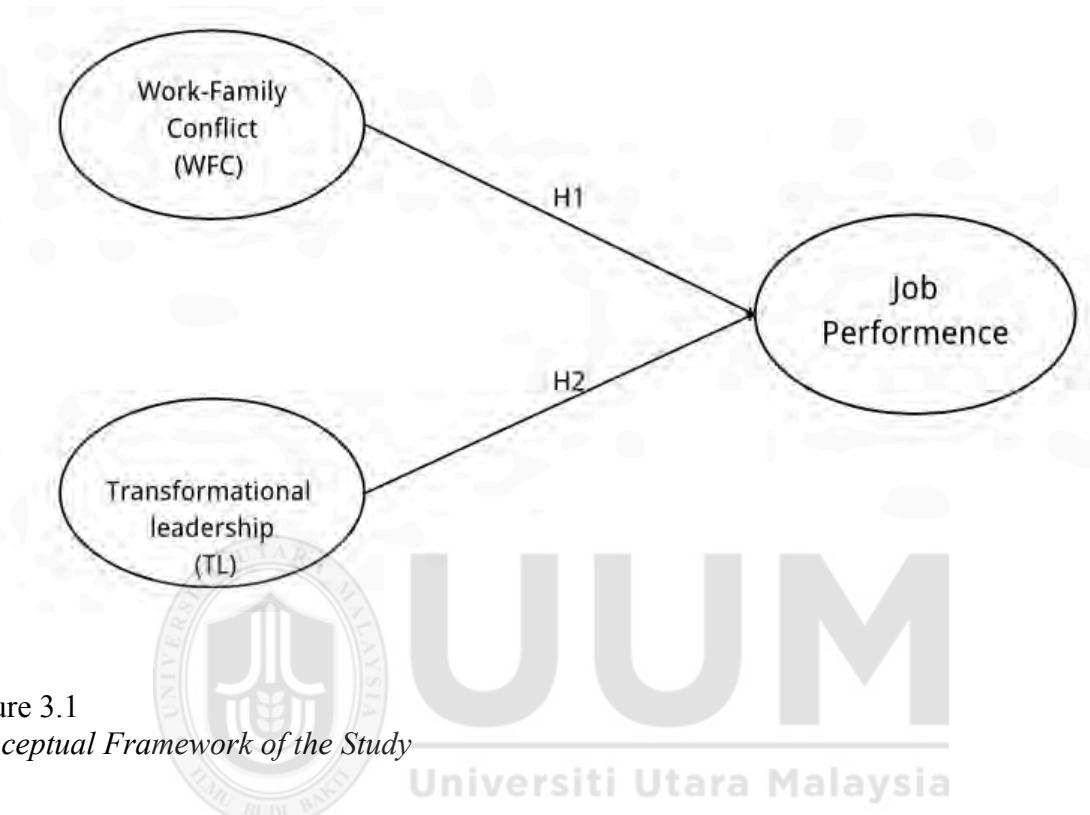
Figure 3.1
Conceptual Framework of the Study

3.4 Population, Sample, Sampling Technique, and Unit of Analysis

3.4.1 Population

Thacker (2019) defined a population as the entire group of individuals sharing specific attributes. Researchers often evaluate the characteristics of a population within a particular research setting. The population for this study consisted of employees working in a private Internet company located in Beijing. The study targeted employees from various departments, including technology R&D, risk control and compliance, marketing, customer service, finance, product management, HR & administration, and top management. The total population of the company was 300 employees.

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3.4.2 Sample Size

A sample is a subset of a population that reflects its characteristics (Thacker, 2019). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), an appropriate sample size should adequately represent the population to ensure the generalizability of the findings. This study determined the sample size using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table, which provides recommended sample sizes for different population sizes. Based on the table, a population of 300 individuals requires a sample size of 169.

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361

Figure 3.2
Sample Size Table
Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

3.4.3 Sampling Technique

Selecting an appropriate sampling technique is essential to ensure that the sample adequately represents the target population and supports the generalizability of the research findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This study employed stratified random sampling, a probability-based method in which the population is divided into distinct subgroups (strata) based on relevant characteristics, followed by random selection within each stratum (Cochran, 1977).

In alignment with the study's objectives, a snowball sampling approach was adopted to identify participants. Initial respondents were selected from employees within the organization who met the study criteria, primarily frontline and mid-level staff who are most likely to experience work-family conflict (WFC) and the influence of transformational leadership (TL). These initial participants were then asked to refer colleagues with similar job characteristics, enabling the sample to grow organically through peer recommendations. Senior management and entry-level administrative personnel were intentionally excluded, as their work structures and exposure to transformational leadership practices differ substantially from the primary population of interest.

Following stratification, a random number generator was utilized to select participants from the eligible subgroups. This approach ensured both methodological rigor and contextual relevance by combining randomization with targeted inclusion criteria, thereby enhancing the internal validity and representativeness of the study sample.

3.4.4 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis defines the primary entity being studied and determines the level at which data is collected and analyzed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study, the unit of analysis is individual employees working in a private Internet company in Beijing. Since the research focuses on examining the relationships between work-family conflict (WFC), transformational leadership (TL), and job performance (JP), data was collected at the individual level from employees across different departments.

This approach is appropriate because the study aims to understand employees' perceptions and experiences regarding their work environment and leadership style, as well as how these factors influence their job performance. Analyzing data at the individual level ensures that the findings reflect employees' direct responses, thereby enhancing the accuracy and relevance of the study outcomes.

3.5 Measurement of Variables/Instrumentation

This study conducted a survey to gather information since it is a cost-effective and efficient method for obtaining and assessing data. This study referred to survey instruments developed by Carlson et al. (2000), Carless et al. (2000), and Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) to develop the instruments for this study. Generally, the survey for this study was segmented into five sections: Section A, B, C, D, which comprised close-ended items. The scale used for the items in Section B until D was a five-point Likert scale. According to Hameed et al. (2018), academicians strongly advised using a five-point Likert scale in surveys since it can reduce respondents' irritation while enhancing both the amount of replies and response validity.

Table 3.1
Five-Point Likert scale

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3.5.1 Part A: Demographic

This section was designed to collect demographic information from the participants, including their gender, age group, marital status, department, and current work schedule arrangement.
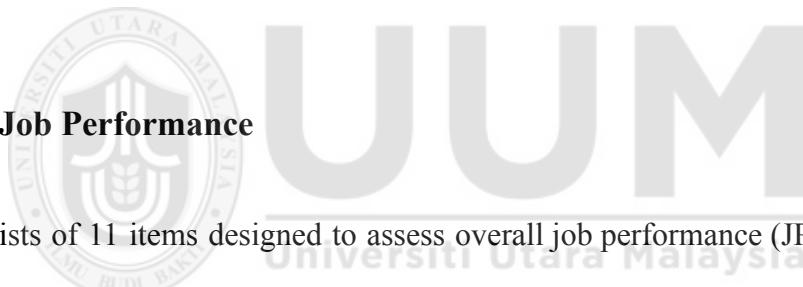
3.5.2 Part B: Job Performance

Section B consists of 11 items designed to assess overall job performance (JP). The first five items measure task performance, focusing on core job responsibilities such as efficiency and skill application, while the remaining six items assess contextual performance, reflecting extra-role behaviors like helping others and contributing to a positive work environment. All items were adapted from Çalışkan and Köroğlu (2022) to ensure measurement validity and reliability.

Table 3.2
Job Performance Scale Items Adapted all from Çalışkan and Köroğlu (2022)

NO.	Items
1.	I have the competencies that my job requires.
2.	I work effectively/efficiently.
3.	I understand and carry out work-related procedures.
4.	I work in a planned and organized manner to conclude the task defined to me in full and on time.
5.	I am eager to acquire new skills related to my job.
6.	I take extra care and take extra responsibilities while doing my duty.
7.	I contribute to the creation of a positive working environment in my institution.
8.	If I encounter a situation that prevents the task from being done, I try to fix it.
9.	I help and encourage my friends to complete their work.
10.	Even if there are criticisms inside or outside the institution, defend my institution.
11.	I am proud to be a part of this institution.

3.5.3 Part C: Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Section C consists of five items designed to assess work-family conflict (WFC), specifically focusing on how work-related responsibilities interfere with employees' family life. These items capture experiences such as lack of time for family, emotional exhaustion from work, and role conflict between professional and personal domains. All items in Section C were adapted from Erdamar and Demirel (2014) to ensure the validity and reliability of the WFC measurement.

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NO.	Items
1.	I have the competencies that my job requires.
2.	I work effectively/efficiently.
3.	I understand and carry out work-related procedures.
4.	I work in a planned and organized manner to conclude the task defined to me in full and on time.
5.	I am eager to acquire new skills related to my job.
6.	I take extra care and take extra responsibilities while doing my duty.
7.	I contribute to the creation of a positive working environment in my institution.
8.	If I encounter a situation that prevents the task from being done, I try to fix it.
9.	I help and encourage my friends to complete their work.
10.	Even if there are criticisms inside or outside the institution, defend my institution.
11.	I am proud to be a part of this institution.

Table 3.3
Work-Family Conflict Scale Items Adapted all from Erdamar and Demirel (2014)

3.5.4 Part D: Transformational Leadership (TL)

Section D consists of five items designed to assess transformational leadership (TL) by evaluating key aspects such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These items measure employees' perceptions of their leaders' ability to inspire, challenge, and support them in their professional roles. Accordingly, the items in Section C were adapted from Bass and Avolio (1995) to ensure the validity and reliability of the leadership assessment.

Table 3.4
Transformational Leadership Scale Items all Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1995)

NO.	Items
1.	My leader has a clear understanding of where we are going.
2.	My leader paints an interesting picture of the future for our group.
3.	My leader is always seeking new opportunities for the organization.
4.	My leader inspires others with his/her plans for the future.
5.	My leader is able to get others committed to his/her dream.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. As highlighted by Borgobello et al. (2019), many researchers prefer online platforms for survey administration due to its advantages, such as more efficient data collection, reduced need for in-person interaction, and the ability to incorporate multimedia elements to facilitate understanding, all while being relatively inexpensive. In addition, the online survey format does not require direct researcher involvement, which helps minimize unintentional influence or pressure on respondents. This format can enhance participants' sense of anonymity and confidentiality, encouraging them to provide more honest, less socially constrained, and potentially even more critical answers (Borgobello et al., 2019).

In this study, the researcher directly contacted the Human Resource (HR) representative of a private Internet company in Beijing to seek assistance in distributing the survey. The purpose of the study and the assurance of anonymity for all participants were clearly explained at the outset. The HR representative shared the Google Form link with employees through the company's internal communication channels to ensure wide distribution. Throughout the data

collection period, the researcher maintained communication with the HR representative and sent polite reminders to monitor progress. Data collection took place over a period of more than five weeks, from May 9 to June 15, during which a total of 171 valid responses were successfully obtained.

3.6 Pilot Test

Before the actual data collection began, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the reliability and clarity of the questionnaire items. This step is essential to identify any potential issues in the survey design, such as ambiguous wording or technical difficulties, that may affect the quality of the main data collection. As noted by Ong (2016), a pilot study involving 15 to 30 respondents is generally sufficient for preliminary testing. In this study, a total of 30 employees from an Internet company in Beijing were selected to participate in the pilot test. These participants were not included in the actual survey to avoid data duplication and bias.

The questionnaire was distributed through a Google Form link sent to participants via the company's internal communication channel. After the pilot test period, feedback was gathered informally to confirm that the questions were clear and the response process was smooth. No major issues were reported, and the instrument was deemed suitable for full-scale data collection. Adjustments, if any, were minor and related only to formatting and sequencing.

For the actual survey, the link was later disseminated to the target group of 300 employees, and a total of 171 valid responses were collected. The data retrieved from the completed Google Forms were then used for subsequent analysis.

3.7 Data Dcreening

3.7.1 Reliability Test

Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument consistently produces stable and similar results under repeated conditions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Conducting a reliability test is essential to minimize potential errors and ensure that the instrument yields dependable outcomes. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used as the main indicator to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items (Cronbach, 1951).

This statistical measure is particularly suitable for multi-item scales, as it evaluates how well the items within each construct are correlated with one another. As a general guideline, an alpha coefficient below 0.60 is considered inadequate, values between 0.70 and 0.80 are regarded as acceptable, those between 0.80 and 0.90 indicate good reliability, and coefficients above 0.90 are considered excellent. These benchmarks help determine whether the scale used is appropriate for further analysis.
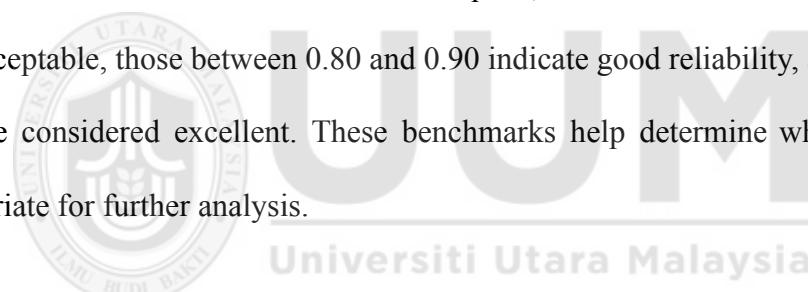
Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Figure 3.3
Cronbach's Alpha Score
Source: Sekaran and Bougie (2016)

3.7.2 Descriptive Analysis

According to Ong (2016), descriptive statistics are frequently used to identify missing values, detect data irregularities, and summarize essential features of the dataset. They also help generate key indicators such as means and frequencies, which can support further statistical procedures like correlation or regression analysis. In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted primarily using mean scores and frequency distributions, providing a clear overview of participant responses and variable characteristics.

3.7.3 Pearson Correlation

In this study, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables. This statistical method is widely used to examine how closely two continuous variables are associated (Sweet & Martin, 2012). The correlation coefficient, denoted as r, ranges from −1 to +1, where values close to 0 indicate little or no linear relationship. A positive value suggests a direct relationship, while a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. The results are presented in Figure 3.4, which illustrates the degree of association among the variables examined in this research.

R	Strength of relationship
<0.20	Almost negligible relationship
0.20 to 0.40	Low correlation; definite but small relationship
0.40 to 0.70	Moderate correlation; substantial relationship
0.70 to 0.90	High correlation; marked relationship
>0.90	Very high correlation; very dependable relationship

Figure 3.4
Correlation Strength Based on Guilford's Law
Source: Sundram et al. (2016)

3.7.4 Multiple Regression

Multiple regression analysis was employed in this study as there were two independent variables involved. This technique is useful for examining how multiple predictors simultaneously influence a single dependent variable by estimating the coefficients of a linear equation (Faraway, 2002). In determining the significance of each independent variable, the p-value is a critical indicator; a value less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) is typically considered statistically significant.

In addition to p-values, the beta coefficient (β) is used to interpret the relative influence of each independent variable. The beta value indicates the expected change in the dependent variable for every one-unit increase in the predictor, assuming other variables are held constant. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) provides insight into how well the model explains the variance in the dependent variable. A higher R^2 value suggests a stronger explanatory power.

R2	Relationship between dependent and independent variables
0	No relationship
0.1 to 0.5	Weak
0.6 to 0.99	Strong
1	Perfectly perfect
0.6 to 0.99	Zero

Figure 3.5
Coefficient of Regression Indicator
Source: Hair, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel, & Page (2015)

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3.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined the research methodology adopted for this study, including the research design, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and the instruments used to measure each variable. It also explained the statistical methods selected for data analysis, such as reliability testing, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The data collected through the questionnaire will be analyzed using SPSS software, and the results of the analysis will be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the research. The collected questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS, employing statistical methods including frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

A frequency analysis was conducted to examine the demographic characteristics of all 171 respondents. The analysis includes six key aspects: gender, age group, marital status, number of children, department, and current work schedule.

4.2.1 Gender

Among the participants, females accounted for a larger proportion, representing 67.3% (n = 115), while males made up 32.7% (n = 56). This suggests a female-dominant respondent pool. The distribution may reflect either the overall gender structure in the company or a greater survey engagement among female employees.

4.2.2 Age Group

The age group with the highest representation was 26–30 years, comprising 59.6% (n = 102) of the sample. This was followed by the 31–35 group at 28.1% (n = 48), while smaller proportions were observed in the 36–40 group (7.0%, n = 12) and 18–25 group (5.3%, n = 9). Overall, the sample reflects a predominantly young workforce concentrated in their late twenties and early thirties.

4.2.3 Marital Status

In terms of marital status, 60.8% (n = 104) of respondents reported being married, whereas 35.7% (n = 61) were single. A small portion, 3.5% (n = 6), indicated that they were divorced. This suggests that the majority of employees are living with a partner or family responsibilities, which may be relevant to work-life balance considerations.

4.2.4 Children

Most respondents had one child, accounting for 59.1% (n = 101), while 38.6% (n = 66) reported having no children. Only 2.3% (n = 4) had two or more children. These results indicate that a large portion of employees are either in the early stages of family formation or balancing work with a small household size.

4.2.5 Department

The highest number of respondents came from the marketing department, contributing 32.2% (n = 55) to the total sample. This was followed by customer service (21.6%, n = 37), technology (18.7%, n = 32), finance (11.7%, n = 20), HR & Admin (9.9%, n = 17), and product (5.8%, n = 10). The spread across departments reflects a diverse range of job functions within the organization.

4.2.6 Current Work Schedule

An overwhelming majority of respondents (98.2%, n = 168) reported working under a "big week/small week" rotation system. Only 1.8% (n = 3) worked a standard five-day schedule. The prevalence of this alternating schedule may have implications for work intensity and employee well-being.

Table 4.1
Respondents Demographic Profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Male	56	32.7%
Female	115	67.3%
Age		
18-25 years old	9	5.3%
26-30 years old	102	59.6%
31-35 years old	48	28.1%
36-40 years old	12	7.0%
Marital status		
Single	61	35.7%
Married	104	60.8%
Divorce	6	3.5%
Children		
0	66	38.6%
1	101	59.1%
2 and above	4	2.3%
Department		
Product	10	5.8%
Technology	32	18.7%
Marketing	55	32.2%
Customer Service (CS)	37	21.6%
Finance	20	11.7%
HR & Admin	17	9.9%
Current Work Schedule		
5 days a week	3	1.8%
Big week/Small week	168	98.2%

4.3 Data screening

Data screening is a vital step in the research process as it helps ensure the accuracy and suitability of the data for analysis. In this study, the researcher conducted several preliminary tests, including reliability, linearity, and normality checks. Following the data screening, correlation and regression analyses were carried out to examine the relationships among the variables.

4.3.1 Reliability

Based on the guideline by Sekaran and Bougie (2016) and Qiu et al. (2021), a Cronbach's alpha above 0.50 is considered acceptable, while values below 0.35 indicate poor reliability. In this study, all variables met the acceptable threshold. Job performance showed an alpha of 0.820, work-family conflict was 0.866, and transformational leadership recorded 0.688. Although the reliability of transformational leadership was relatively lower, it still falls within an acceptable range. Given that this construct included only five items, further improvement through item reduction was not feasible. Overall, all constructs demonstrated sufficient internal consistency for further analysis.

Table 4.2
Reliability Measurement

Dimension	No of items	N	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
JP	11	171	0.820	Good:acceptable
WFC	5	171	0.866	Good:acceptable
TL	5	171	0.688	Acceptable

4.3.2 Linearity Test

The linearity test was conducted to examine whether the relationships between independent variables and job performance follow a linear pattern. Visual inspection of the scatterplots suggests a linear relationship for both work-family conflict (WFC) and transformational leadership (TL) with job performance. Thus, the assumption of linearity is considered met for subsequent analysis.

Figure 4.1
*Linearity Test Between Work-Family Conflict and Job Performance*
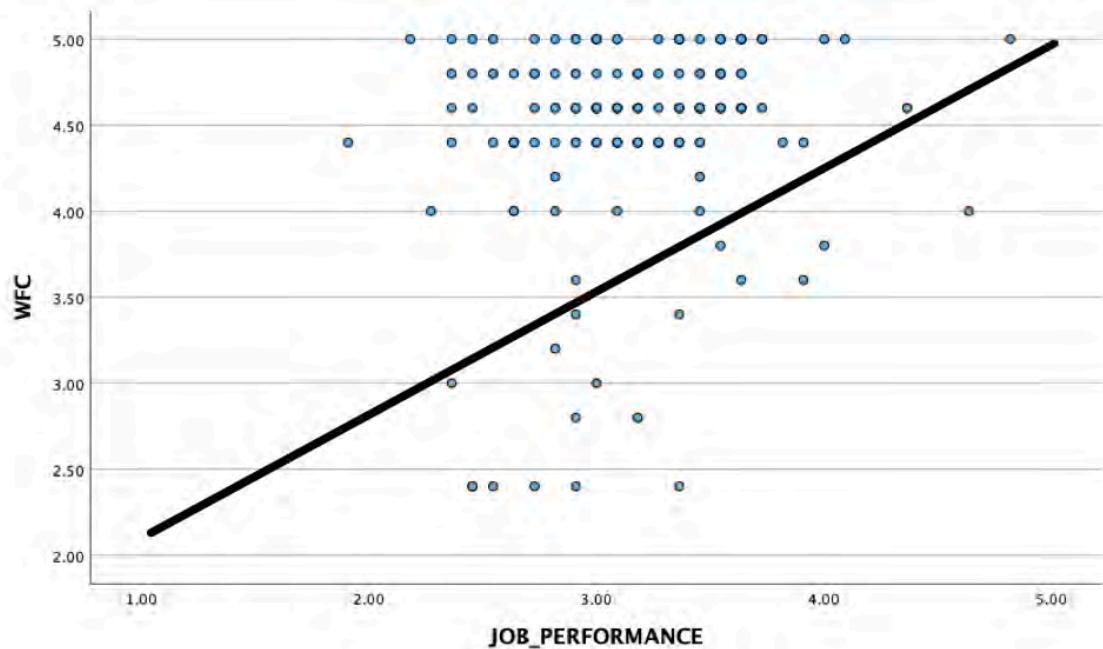
Figure 4.2
Linearity Test Between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance
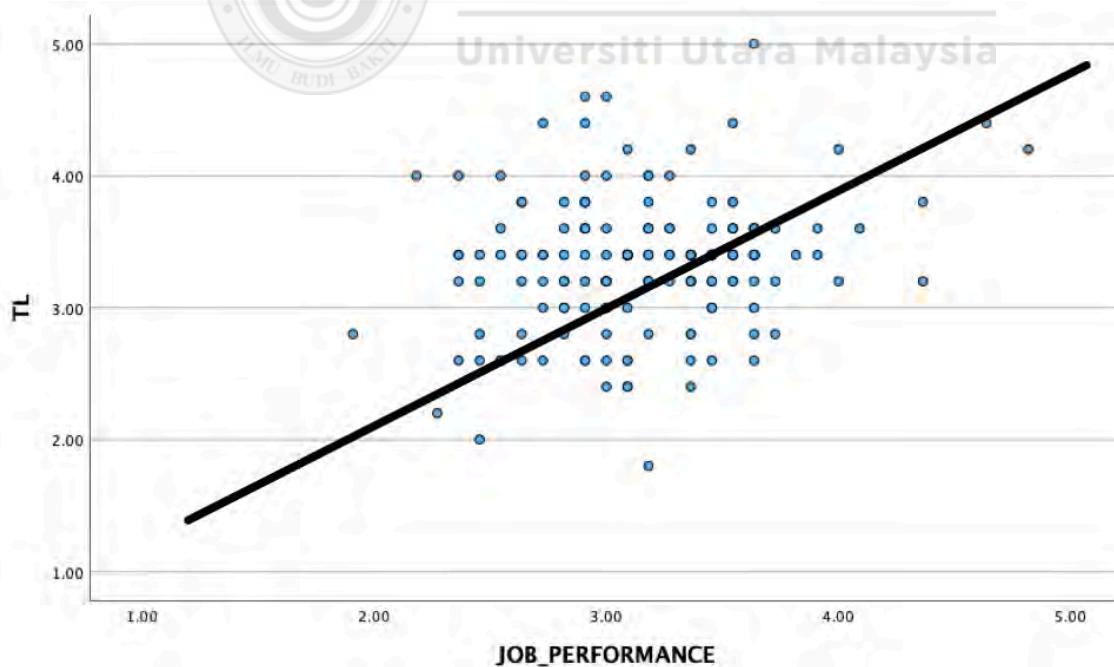
4.3.3 Normality Test

The normality of data was assessed using descriptive statistics. As shown in the table, skewness and kurtosis values for job performance and transformational leadership fall within the acceptable range (±2), indicating approximate normality. However, the skewness value for work-family conflict (−2.090) slightly exceeds the threshold, suggesting non-normal distribution. Despite this, as noted by Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), normality tests can be overly sensitive with larger samples (n > 100), and mild deviations are acceptable in parametric analysis. Thus, the data are considered suitable for further testing.

Table 4.3
Normality Test

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
JP	171	1.91	4.82	3.1722	0.45913	0.321	0,936
WFC	171	2.4	5.0	4.469	0.59777	171	2.4
TL	171	1.8	5.0	3.3427	0.49917	0.04	0.958

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was employed in this study to determine the strength of the relationship between variables. As presented in the table, job performance was found to have significant relationships with work-family conflict (r = .192*) and transformational leadership (r = .223**), while the correlation between work-family conflict and transformational leadership was not significant (r = .124).

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Table 4.4
Correlation Analysis

Variables	Job Performance	Work-family Conflict	Transformational Leadership
Job Performance	1		
Work-Family Conflict	R=0.192*	1	
Transformational Leadership	R=0.223**	R=0.124	1

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.5 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables, work-family conflict (WFC) and transformational leadership (TL), and the dependent variable, job performance (JP). The results revealed that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 168) = 7.037$, p =0.001, indicating that the model reliably predicts job performance. The R^2 value was 0.077, which means that approximately 7.7% of the variance in job performance can be explained by work-family conflict and transformational leadership, while the remaining 92.3% may be attributed to other factors not included in this model.

According to the coefficients table, both WFC and TL had a significant positive impact on job performance. WFC showed a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.167$ (t = 2.232, p = 0.027), indicating that a one-unit increase in WFC corresponds to a 0.128-unit increase in job performance (unstandardized B). Similarly, TL yielded a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.203$ (t = 2.716, p = 0.007), suggesting that each one-unit increase in TL leads to a

0.187-unit increase in job performance. These results confirm that both variables play a meaningful role in influencing employee performance.

Table 4.5
Regression Analysis

Variable	Beta	*t*	Significant *(p)*
Constant		6.098	<0.001
Work-Family Conflict	0.167	2.232	0.027
Transformational Leadership	0.203	2.716	0.007
R Square			0.278^2
Adjusted R Square			0.066
F Change			7.037

**p < 0.05
Dependent variable: Job Performance

4.6 Overall Hypotheses Results

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that both hypotheses proposed in this study were supported. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posited a significant relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP), was accepted. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 (H2), which proposed a significant relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and job performance (JP), was also accepted. These results indicate that both WFC and TL play a significant role in influencing employee performance in the studied context.

Table 4.6
Overall Hypotheses Results

Variables	Hypotheses constructed	Result
Work-Family Conflict	H1: There is a significant relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and job performance (JP).	Accepted
Transformational Leadership	H2: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and job performance (JP).	Accepted

4.7 **Summary of the Chapter**

In summary, Chapter 4 has presented the findings from frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Based on these results, further discussions, conclusions, and recommendations are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of the findings from Chapter 4, aligned with the research objectives. In response to the results, appropriate recommendations were suggested. The chapter concludes with a summary of the overall conclusions drawn from the study.

5.2 Discussion

The aim of this study was to enhance the understanding of how work-family conflict (WFC) and transformational leadership (TL) influence job performance (JP) among employees in China's Internet industry. Guided by this purpose, the study was designed to achieve the following research objectives:

● To examine how work-family conflict (WFC) affects job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry.

● To explore how transformational leadership (TL) influences job performance (JP) in China's Internet industry.

5.2.1 Impact of Work-Family Conflict on Job Performance

The findings of this study revealed that work-family conflict (WFC) has a significant positive relationship with job performance (β = 0.167, t = 2.232, p = .027). This suggests that, in the context of this study, employees who experience higher levels of WFC may still demonstrate higher job performance. While this result may seem counterintuitive, it reflects the specific working culture of the Internet industry in China.

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In the studied company, many employees are willing to sacrifice family time in exchange for work-related benefits such as overtime pay, promotion opportunities, and performance incentives. For instance, some employees may voluntarily work overtime to meet strict performance targets (KPIs) or to signal commitment to their supervisors. As a result, even when work interferes with family responsibilities, employees may maintain or even enhance their job performance to pursue career advancement or financial rewards.

This finding aligns with Lu et al. (2010), who suggested that in certain high-pressure work environments, employees may engage in compensatory behaviors—working harder to offset feelings of guilt from family neglect. However, it differs from the conclusion drawn by Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006), who argued that WFC typically leads to emotional exhaustion and diminished performance. The contrast may be due to cultural and industry-specific norms, especially in fast-paced sectors like China's Internet industry, where long working hours and high performance expectations are widely accepted.

Although WFC appears to correlate positively with job performance in the short term, this does not negate the potential long-term risks such as burnout, disengagement, or declining well-being, which organizations should be cautious about.

5.2.2 Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance

The findings of this study revealed that transformational leadership (TL) has a significant and positive influence on job performance ($\beta = 0.203$, $t = 2.716$, $p = .007$). This indicates that employees who perceive their supervisors as transformational are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of performance. In the context of the studied Internet company in China, employees often face long working hours, intense competition, and high performance expectations. Under such conditions, leaders who offer clear guidance, show appreciation for individual efforts, and encourage professional growth can effectively enhance employee

motivation and productivity. Many employees respond positively to this type of leadership, as it helps them stay focused on meeting their KPIs, achieving promotion opportunities, and maintaining a sense of purpose in their work.

This result is supported by previous studies. Breevaart et al. (2014) found that transformational leadership improves job performance by increasing employee engagement and psychological empowerment. Similarly, Bass and Avolio (1994) emphasized that transformational leaders foster trust and commitment, which are crucial for sustained high performance. Within fast-paced and demanding environments such as China's Internet industry, the presence of transformational leadership can provide both emotional and practical support. Therefore, strengthening leadership capacity in this direction could be a valuable strategy for enhancing overall employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

5.3 Implication of study

This study offers implications for three key stakeholders: employees, organizations, and the research community.

5.3.1 Employees

This study helps employees become more aware of how work-family conflict can influence their performance. In the Internet industry, many employees willingly extend their working hours to meet deadlines, achieve performance targets, or pursue promotion opportunities. While this may lead to short-term gains, the findings encourage employees to reflect on how much personal time they are giving up and whether this trade-off is sustainable in the long run.

The positive effect of transformational leadership also offers practical insight for employees. Working with leaders who provide support, encouragement, and clear direction can improve

motivation and performance. By recognizing the value of good leadership, employees may become more proactive in seeking feedback, communicating with their supervisors, and creating a work environment that supports both productivity and personal growth.

5.3.2 Organization

For organizations, especially those in China's Internet industry, this study highlights the importance of understanding how employees are affected by their work environment. While some employees may choose to give up personal or family time to meet targets or pursue promotion, this kind of effort should not be seen as unlimited. Over time, heavy workloads and long hours can reduce motivation and affect overall well-being. Companies should be more mindful of these risks and consider how to create a healthier and more sustainable working culture.

The findings also show that leadership plays a key role in shaping employee performance. Employees tend to perform better when they feel supported, encouraged, and fairly treated. This means organizations need to invest in leadership development, especially in helping managers build trust, communicate clearly, and give meaningful feedback. In high-pressure work environments, strong and positive leadership can improve not only performance, but also employee morale and long-term retention.

5.3.3 Research Community

This study contributes to the growing body of research on employee performance by focusing on the context of China's Internet industry, a sector that is often overlooked in leadership and work-life studies. By examining work-family conflict and transformational leadership together, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of how personal and organizational

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factors interact to influence employee outcomes. These findings can encourage future researchers to explore similar themes in other high-intensity industries or cultural settings.

In addition, this study may help refine existing theories related to leadership and work-life dynamics. For example, while work-family conflict is usually seen as a barrier to performance, the results suggest that its impact may vary depending on the industry culture and individual motivations. Researchers may consider looking deeper into these conditions, possibly exploring moderating variables such as employee resilience, intrinsic motivation, or organizational support. This study can serve as a useful reference point for those seeking to understand how different factors influence employee performance in complex, fast-paced environments.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

5.4.1 Limited Access to Respondents

This study was conducted within a private Internet company where access to internal information and employee participation was limited. Some employees expressed concerns about privacy or company policy, leading to a lower response rate than initially expected. As a result, the researchers faced difficulty in obtaining a broader range of responses, which may have restricted the depth of analysis.

5.4.2 Sample Size

The final sample size was relatively small due to time constraints and limited access. Although the study met the minimum requirement for quantitative analysis, a larger sample would have provided a more comprehensive view of the relationship between variables. Future research is encouraged to expand the sample size and include participants from different companies or regions to improve the generalizability of the findings.

5.5 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are based on the findings from Chapter 4, particularly the results related to job performance and its relationship with work-family conflict and transformational leadership.

5.5.1 For Organizations

Organizations should consider promoting a healthier and more supportive work environment. One practical step is to create a more comfortable and focused office space, such as ensuring sufficient natural light, functional layout, and quiet areas that help employees concentrate and recharge. In addition, leaders at all levels should aim to foster a more open and respectful communication culture. Managers can encourage feedback, listen to employees' needs, and provide constructive comments based on specific observations rather than general criticism. Such efforts can make employees feel more supported and valued, which in turn enhances performance and engagement.

Furthermore, as flexible or hybrid work models become more common, organizations should ensure that communication and collaboration are not disrupted by technical or coordination challenges. Investing in better communication tools and setting clear expectations can help teams stay connected, regardless of their working arrangements.

5.5.2 For Employees

From the employee perspective, awareness of how work-family conflict and leadership styles impact performance is essential. Employees are encouraged to set clearer boundaries between work and personal life where possible, and to actively seek feedback and support from leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviors. Positive work environments are not only created by management, but also shaped by the daily actions of team members.

Employees can contribute by communicating respectfully, understanding team roles, and making the effort to adapt their communication style when working with others. These small adjustments can lead to better collaboration and a more supportive workplace.

5.5.3 Future Research

Future studies are encouraged to include additional variables such as employee engagement, psychological well-being, or organizational support, in order to enhance the explanatory power of the research model. Exploring these elements may offer a more complete understanding of the factors that contribute to employee performance, especially in demanding industries like the Internet sector in China.

Moreover, it is recommended that future researchers adopt a longitudinal approach to better capture how work-family conflict and leadership styles influence employee performance over time. Expanding the sample to include participants from different companies or regions could also improve the generalizability of the findings. This would allow future studies to reflect a wider range of experiences and produce more robust and representative results.

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, this study has successfully addressed the research objectives outlined at the beginning. The first objective was to examine the impact of work-family conflict on job performance, and the second objective focused on the influence of transformational leadership. Both relationships were found to be statistically significant and positive, suggesting that leadership behaviors and work-life challenges play an important role in shaping employee outcomes in the Internet industry context.

Although the study had some limitations in terms of sample size and data access, it still provides valuable insights for both practitioners and future researchers. Practical suggestions

were offered for organizations and employees to improve performance outcomes, particularly through better leadership and attention to work-life dynamics. Recommendations were also made to guide future research towards broader and more in-depth investigations. Overall, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how internal and external work factors affect employee performance in China's fast-paced Internet sector.

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