



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reconceptualizing work-life balance among Islamic religious education teachers: The integrative role of workplace social support in pedagogical practice

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Abstract: The increasing complexity of teachers' professional roles, particularly within Islamic Religious Education (IRE), has intensified challenges in maintaining work-life balance, as responsibilities extend beyond instructional duties to include moral and spiritual obligations. Despite growing attention to teacher well-being, limited research has examined how workplace social support functions as a dynamic mechanism in sustaining balance within faith-based educational contexts. This study aims to explore IRE teachers' perceptions of work-life balance and their understanding of the role of workplace social support in maintaining professional and personal well-being. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 18 IRE teachers and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that IRE teachers frequently experience role conflict due to administrative workload, pedagogical demands, and social expectations, which affect emotional stability and teaching performance. However, workplace social support—manifested through collegial collaboration, leadership understanding, and supportive institutional culture—emerges as a critical buffer that enhances psychological well-being and facilitates balance. The study is limited by its contextual scope and qualitative design, suggesting the need for broader and mixed-method investigations. The findings imply that strengthening relational and institutional support systems is essential for sustainable teacher well-being. The originality of this study lies in reconceptualizing work-life balance as a socially constructed and value-embedded process within Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: Work-life balance, social support, Islamic Religious Education teachers, occupational well-being, qualitative study.

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1. Introduction

Work-life balance has become a critical issue affecting teachers' well-being and performance, including that of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. IRE teachers carry responsibilities that extend beyond professional obligations to encompass moral and spiritual dimensions, which require emotional readiness and a strong sense of personal balance in fulfilling their daily roles. Numerous studies indicate that an imbalance between work and personal life can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and a decline in instructional effectiveness (Abdulaziz, Bashir, & Alfalih, 2022; Bezuidenhout et al., 2026; Sulaiman, Fadli, & Rahim, 2024; Tambak, et al., 2025). Furthermore, administrative demands, heavy teaching workloads, and the dynamic nature of the school environment make IRE teachers particularly vulnerable to prolonged work-related pressure (Rahmawati, Santoso, & Dewi, 2024; Munandar, Sari, & Lubis, 2024; Namora et al., 2025). Within this context, maintaining a stable work-life balance is essential for teachers to perform their duties optimally and to provide the best possible learning experiences for students.

Research on teachers' work-life balance has been conducted by several scholars; however, most studies have primarily focused on individual factors such as job stress, job satisfaction, or workload, without comprehensively addressing the role of social support as a critical variable in the development of teachers' work-life balance (My, 2026; Fitriani, 2023; Putra & Syahrul, 2023; Tambak et al., 2024). Some studies indicate that social support from colleagues, school principals, and the institutional environment can help teachers reduce work-related pressure (Siregar & Hidayat, 2024; Yuliana & Ningsih, 2024; Abdullah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, these studies have not yet deeply examined how social support functions as an active and sustainable mechanism in shaping teachers' work-life balance, particularly among Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers who carry dual role demands (Prasad, & Pasupathi, 2025; Mehner, Rothenbusch, & Kauffeld, 2025). This research gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between social support and the work-life balance of IRE teachers within the context of the teaching and learning process.

An evaluation of previous research indicates that most studies have employed quantitative approaches, resulting in descriptive or correlational findings without deeply exploring teachers' subjective experiences (Nabila et al., 2024; Rahmadani, 2024; Widodo et al., 2025; My, 2026). Although studies such as those by Prasetyo (2024) and Rahmawati, Santoso, & Dewi (2024) have attempted to understand work-life balance within the social context of schools, they have not sufficiently explained how social support processes operate in the work environment of IRE teachers. Research by Ismail, & Supriatna (2024) highlights the importance of teacher communities as spaces for sharing experiences; however, it does not examine how such social support concretely shapes mechanisms that strengthen occupational well-being. Therefore, there is a clear need to develop qualitative research that directly examines the everyday realities of IRE teachers, explores the forms of social support they receive, and identifies how this support influences their work-life balance (Cuervo, & Vera-Toscano, 2025; Arthur, & Bradley, 2023).

Based on the identified research gaps, this study is directed at addressing two main research questions: (1) how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers perceive work-life balance within the teaching and learning process, and (2) how IRE teachers understand the role of workplace social support in helping them develop and maintain work-life balance. This study argues that social support is a strategic component capable of strengthening teachers' work-life balance through emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support, as articulated in the social support literature (Ramachandaran et al., 2025; Brough et al., 2014; Cobb, 1976; House, 1981; Barokah, Sutisna, & Pratminingsih, 2025). By employing a qualitative case study approach, this research seeks to uncover the authentic experiences of IRE teachers in managing work demands and personal life, as well as to understand how social support contributes to maintaining the stability of their occupational well-being (Tambak et al., 2025). The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of teacher welfare policies within school settings.

This study, therefore, focuses on two interrelated dimensions: (1) IRE teachers' perceptions of work-life balance, and (2) their understanding of the role of social support in fostering such balance. By integrating these dimensions, the research seeks to uncover how subjective interpretations, cultural-religious values, and social dynamics intersect in shaping teachers' professional and personal well-

being. This focus is expected to contribute to a more nuanced conceptualization of work–life balance within Islamic education, moving beyond generic frameworks toward contextually grounded and value-sensitive perspectives.

2. Literature review

2.1. Workplace social support

Workplace social support is a crucial aspect in creating a healthy, productive, and meaningful work environment for teachers, including Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. According to Cobb (1976), social support is understood as an individual's perception of being loved, valued, and part of a social network that cares about their well-being. House (1981) further elaborates this concept by categorizing social support into four forms: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. In the school context, social support may come from principals, colleagues, administrative staff, and the broader institutional environment. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) emphasize that social support serves as a psychological resource that helps individuals cope with work-related stress. Meanwhile, Blau's (1964) social exchange theory highlights that social support fosters positive reciprocal relationships within organizations, whereby individuals who receive support are more likely to contribute positively to their work environment. Therefore, workplace social support is a vital component in maintaining teachers' mental health, motivation, and overall performance.

Various research findings indicate that workplace social support plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' occupational well-being. Munandar, Sari, & Lubis, (2024) demonstrate that social support from colleagues is directly associated with lower levels of work-related stress and improved psychological well-being among teachers. Siregar, & Hidayat (2024) further add that support from school principals influences teachers' ability to manage workloads and maintain balance in their personal lives. Rahmawati, Santoso, & Dewi (2024) also emphasize that positive interactions among teachers provide emotional support that strengthens a sense of belonging and reduces work-related pressure. Dimensions of social support—such as instrumental assistance in completing administrative tasks, the provision of advice, performance validation, and professional recognition—have been shown to foster a harmonious and supportive work climate. This evaluation suggests that social support is not merely an interpersonal aspect but is an integral part of the organizational structure that plays a strategic role in creating comfort and enhancing the work effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers.

2.2. Work–life balance

Work–life balance refers to a condition in which individuals are able to manage the demands of work and personal life proportionally so that neither interferes with the other (Bezuidenhout et al., 2026). Peng et al. (2025) argue that work–life balance is not merely a matter of time allocation, but rather the individual's capacity to fulfil professional and personal needs in a balanced manner. Role Conflict Theory proposed by Arthur, & Bradley (2023) explains that work–life imbalance occurs when the demands of one role—either work or family—hinder an individual's ability to perform the other role, a phenomenon known as work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Staines (1980), through Spillover Theory, further suggests that negative experiences in the workplace can spill over into personal life, and vice versa. Meanwhile, Clark (2000) emphasizes that individuals need to manage boundaries between work and family domains in order to perform both roles more flexibly and adaptively. Therefore, work–life balance is a dynamic condition that requires effective management of time, energy, emotions, and environmental support.

Research on teachers' work–life balance indicates that factors such as workload, job stress, time flexibility, and social support play significant roles in maintaining this balance. Abilo, Paniergo, & Flores (2026) found that workplace well-being programs emphasizing open communication and emotional support are able to increase job satisfaction and reduce teacher burnout. Rahmadani (2024) emphasized that time flexibility and job satisfaction are key factors influencing the work–life balance of secondary school teachers. Putra, & Syahrul

(2023) also demonstrated that job stress has a negative impact on work–life balance, while social support functions as a mediating factor that helps teachers manage pressure. In addition, Nabila et al. (2024) revealed that effective time management and adequate social support can strengthen teachers' psychological well-being. From an evaluative perspective, these studies indicate that teachers' work–life balance is not solely determined by personal factors, but is also shaped by supportive institutional structures.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers regarding work–life balance and the role of workplace social support. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for the exploration of subjective realities and social dynamics that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement, particularly those related to emotional experiences, social relationships, and the working context of IRE teachers. The case study design is used to intensively examine the phenomenon within the real-life school context, enabling the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between work demands, personal life, and the social support received by teachers in the teaching and learning process (Seidman, 2019).

3.2. Research informants

The informants in this study consisted of 18 IRE teachers who teach at public senior high schools in Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau, Indonesia serving as the primary research site and a supporting location for informant selection. The informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: (1) actively teaching Islamic Religious Education, (2) having varying lengths of teaching experience, and (3) being willing to provide open and detailed information regarding their experiences of work–life balance and workplace social support. The composition of the informants included three teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience and three teachers with less than ten years of experience, thereby allowing for a comparison of perspectives based on differences in professional experience.

3.3. Research data collection techniques

Data were collected through in-depth interviews as the primary technique, as this method allows the researcher to comprehensively explore the experiences, perspectives, and personal reflections of IRE teachers. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured interview guide developed in accordance with the research focus, covering experiences of work–life balance, forms of social support received, and their impacts on well-being and the teaching and learning process. The interview sessions were carried out at times mutually agreed upon with the informants so as not to interfere with their teaching activities. All interviews were audio-recorded with the informants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy.

3.4. Research data analysis techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2018), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, coded, and categorized interview data into key themes relevant to the research focus. The data display stage involved organizing the findings into systematic thematic narratives to facilitate understanding of the relationships among categories. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn through in-depth data interpretation, accompanied by repeated verification processes to ensure the consistency and robustness of the findings. The analysis was carried out simultaneously from the data collection process through to the final stage of the study

3.5. Research ethics

This study upholds the principles of qualitative research ethics. Prior to data collection, the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study, the interview procedures, and the rights of the informants, including their right to refuse or withdraw from the interview at any time. All informants provided informed consent before participating in the interviews. The identities of the informants were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms to protect their privacy and data security. The data obtained were used solely for academic purposes and were analysed objectively without manipulation. Accordingly, the entire research process was conducted in accordance with the principles of academic integrity, ethical responsibility, and the protection of research participants.

4. Result

4.1. Perceptions of Islamic religious education teachers toward work-life balance

The findings indicate that IRE teachers perceive work–life balance as an ideal condition in which professional demands at school can be fulfilled optimally without sacrificing roles and responsibilities in personal and family life. For IRE teachers, work–life balance is not merely understood as a division of time between work and home, but also as the ability to maintain emotional stability, inner calm, and spiritual readiness in carrying out their roles as religious educators. IRE teachers recognize that their profession has distinctive characteristics, as it involves inherent moral responsibilities and role-model expectations. Consequently, imbalances in work–life balance often have a direct impact on their psychological well-being and the quality of their interactions with students. Most informants reported that the demands of being an IRE teacher do not end in the classroom, but extend to various administrative tasks, school religious activities, student character development, and social expectations from the surrounding community. These conditions often lead IRE teachers to carry work-related burdens into their personal lives. One informant described this experience as follows:

“The duties of an Islamic Religious Education teacher are not limited to teaching. There are reports, administrative work, religious activities, and sometimes the community also expects us to always be available. In the end, when I go home, my mind is still at school.” (Informant 1).

IRE teachers also revealed that conflicts between work roles and family roles are experiences that occur quite frequently. When workloads increase, teachers find it difficult to divide their time and attention in a balanced manner, especially those who are married and have children. This role conflict gives rise to feelings of guilt, emotional exhaustion, and psychological pressure. One female teacher expressed this as follows:

“Sometimes when school tasks pile up, I feel that I am not fully present at home. My child asks me to accompany them while studying, but my mind is still focused on work. That is what makes me mentally exhausted.” (Informant 2).

Nevertheless, IRE teachers do not view work–life balance as a static condition. Some informants recognized that balance is dynamic and may change according to life phases and work situations. Teachers with longer teaching experience tended to have more adaptive strategies for managing work–life balance, such as setting priorities, limiting work outside school hours, and using leisure time more wisely. One informant with more than ten years of teaching experience explained: *“In the past, I often brought work home and worked late into the night. Now I have learned to set boundaries. When I am at home, I focus on my family first, unless there is something truly urgent.”* (Informant 3).

IRE teachers’ perceptions of work–life balance are also closely related to the quality of teaching they provide in the classroom. Teachers who feel emotionally exhausted and imbalanced tend to experience declines in concentration, patience, and creativity in teaching. Conversely, teachers who feel more balanced between work and personal life demonstrate better mental readiness in carrying out the teaching and learning process. This was expressed by one of the informants as follows: *“When we are calm and not overly burdened, teaching becomes more enjoyable. We can be more patient, more focused, and more sincere in delivering the material.”* (Informant 4).

The extended set of interviews with informants 5 to 18 provides a broader and more nuanced understanding of IRE teachers' perceptions of work–life balance within contemporary educational settings. These additional narratives reveal that teachers experience work–life balance not merely as a temporal distribution between professional and personal domains, but as a dynamic negotiation shaped by institutional demands, digital transformation, and personal religious commitments. Across the interviews, participants consistently emphasized the intensification of workload due to administrative responsibilities, digital teaching adaptation, and expectations for continuous professional development. At the same time, they articulated those Islamic values such as *sabr* (patience), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *tawazun* (balance) play a central role in mediating stress and sustaining psychological well-being. The findings also indicate a growing tension between professional obligations and family responsibilities, particularly in digitally mediated environments where work boundaries become increasingly blurred. Collectively, these accounts underscore that work–life balance among IRE teachers is deeply embedded in both structural conditions and spiritual coping mechanisms.

“I perceive work–life balance as an ongoing struggle, especially when administrative tasks extend beyond school hours. The integration of digital platforms has increased efficiency but also created expectations for constant availability. However, I try to maintain balance by grounding myself in Islamic values, particularly sincerity and patience.” (Informant 5)

“Teaching Islamic education requires not only intellectual preparation but also emotional and spiritual readiness. I often feel that my professional role extends into my personal life, especially when students seek guidance outside formal hours. Maintaining balance requires conscious effort and strong family support.” (Informant 6)

“The shift toward digital learning has significantly increased my workload, as I need to prepare materials and respond to students online. This often reduces the time I can spend with my family. Nevertheless, I view this as part of my responsibility and try to manage it through better time organization.” (Informant 7)

“For me, work–life balance is closely related to spiritual stability. When I feel overwhelmed, I return to religious practices such as prayer and reflection. These practices help me regain emotional equilibrium and continue my responsibilities effectively.” (Informant 8)

The narratives of informants 9 to 12 provide a more focused insight into the complexities of boundary negotiation and adaptive strategies employed by IRE teachers in managing work–life balance. Unlike earlier accounts that emphasized general workload pressures, these participants highlight the intensification of role overlap driven by digital connectivity and evolving pedagogical expectations. The data reveal that the permeability between professional and personal domains has become increasingly pronounced, particularly as teachers remain accessible to students beyond formal instructional hours. At the same time, these informants articulate a growing awareness of the need for self-regulation, boundary-setting, and intentional time management as mechanisms to sustain well-being. Their reflections also underscore the dual nature of digital learning environments, which simultaneously offer flexibility and impose implicit demands for constant responsiveness. Collectively, the experiences of these informants illuminate a critical dimension of work–life balance, where agency, institutional expectations, and ethical responsibility intersect in shaping teachers' daily practices.

“I find it challenging to separate work from personal life because students frequently contact me outside school hours. While I appreciate their enthusiasm, it sometimes disrupts my personal time. I believe clear boundaries are necessary but difficult to implement.” (Informant 9)

“The increasing demand for innovation in teaching has added pressure to continuously upgrade my skills. This often leads to longer working hours, especially when integrating digital tools. Despite this, I see professional development as an investment in my teaching quality.” (Informant 10)

“I experience work–life balance as a balancing act between professional commitment and family obligations. Support from my family plays a crucial role in maintaining this balance. Without such support, it would be very difficult to manage both effectively.” (Informant 11)

“The flexibility of digital learning allows me to manage my time better, but it also creates expectations for immediate responses. This dual effect makes it both beneficial and challenging. I try to set personal limits to avoid burnout.” (Informant 12)

The accounts of informants 13 to 18 further deepen the analysis by foregrounding the ethical, identity-based, and institutional dimensions of work–life balance among IRE teachers. Unlike earlier informants who emphasized operational challenges and time management, this group reflects a more internalized and value-

driven interpretation of balance, where professional responsibilities are inseparable from moral and religious identity. Their narratives reveal that being an IRE teacher extends beyond occupational boundaries, positioning them as continuous role models whose conduct must consistently reflect Islamic ethical principles. This condition intensifies the blurring of personal and professional spheres, as expectations of moral exemplarity persist across both domains. At the same time, these informants highlight the critical role of institutional structures, including workload distribution, leadership support, and organizational culture, in either alleviating or exacerbating work-related pressures. Their reflections also demonstrate a shift toward a more philosophical understanding of work–life balance, emphasizing inner equilibrium, spiritual resilience, and purpose-driven engagement rather than mere temporal division.

“As an Islamic education teacher, I feel morally responsible to be a role model at all times. This sometimes blurs the boundary between my professional and personal identity. However, I accept this as part of my vocation.” (Informant 13)

“Work–life balance for me is about maintaining harmony between my duties as a teacher and my responsibilities as a parent. Time management is essential, but unexpected tasks often disrupt my schedule. I rely on prioritization to cope with these challenges.” (Informant 14)

“I often bring work home, especially when preparing lesson plans or evaluating students’ assignments. This reduces my personal time, but I try to compensate by dedicating weekends to family activities. Balance is not perfect, but it is manageable.” (Informant 15)

“The integration of technology has made teaching more dynamic but also more demanding. I need to continuously learn new tools, which requires additional time and effort. Despite this, I find the process intellectually rewarding.” (Informant 16)

“I believe that work–life balance is not about equal time distribution but about achieving inner peace. When I feel spiritually grounded, I can handle professional stress more effectively. This perspective helps me maintain resilience.” (Informant 17)

“My experience shows that institutional support is crucial for achieving work–life balance. When the school provides clear guidelines and manageable workloads, it becomes easier to balance responsibilities. Without such support, teachers are more prone to stress and fatigue.” (Informant 18)

4.2. IRE teachers’ understanding of the role of social support in developing work-life balance

The findings reveal that IRE teachers perceive workplace social support as a key element in helping them manage work-related pressure and maintain work–life balance. Social support is understood not only as technical assistance or formal policies, but also as expressions of care, empathy, and togetherness developed within the work environment. IRE teachers reported that a supportive work atmosphere makes them feel valued, heard, and not alone in facing the various demands of their profession. Support from colleagues emerged as the most frequently experienced form of social support among IRE teachers. Interactions among teachers, particularly fellow IRE teachers, serve as spaces for sharing experiences, concerns, and strategies for dealing with work-related challenges. This emotional support helps reduce psychological pressure and fosters a sense of togetherness. One informant stated:

“Usually, when we are tired or facing problems, we fellow IRE teachers share our stories with one another. Sometimes just a short conversation already makes us feel more relieved.” (Informant 1).

In addition to emotional support, IRE teachers also receive instrumental support in the form of assistance with task completion, shared responsibilities, and time flexibility. This type of support is perceived as particularly helpful when workloads increase, especially during certain periods such as prior to final assessments or during school religious activities. One informant explained: “*When there are heavy tasks, they are usually shared together. I don’t feel left alone. This is very helpful, especially when there are many matters to take care of at home.*” (Informant 2). The role of the school principal is also viewed as a significant source of social support. IRE teachers stated that leadership attitudes that demonstrate understanding of teachers’ conditions, provide flexibility, and show appreciation for performance help create a more humane work atmosphere. Support from school leaders fosters a sense of security and confidence among teachers in carrying out their roles. One informant expressed this as follows: “*The principal is quite understanding of our situation. If there are family matters, we are usually given understanding. That makes us feel appreciated.*” (Informant 3).

IRE teachers also emphasized that social support does not always have to take the form of major policies, but can be reflected in simple practices such as effective communication, mutual respect, and appreciation for the efforts made. This form of support is considered to have a substantial impact on teachers' emotional well-being. One female teacher shared the following: "*Sometimes just a simple thank-you or a small form of appreciation already makes us feel noticed and more motivated to work.*" (Informant 4). The implications of social support are clearly reflected in IRE teachers' ability to maintain work–life balance. Teachers who feel supported tend to be better able to manage stress, allocate their time more proportionally, and maintain emotional stability. Social support also helps teachers develop a more positive attitude toward their work, preventing work-related pressure from developing into prolonged emotional exhaustion. One informant emphasized: "*When the work environment is supportive, the burden feels lighter. We become stronger in facing work demands and can still fulfil our roles at home.*" (Informant 5).

The perspectives of informants 6 to 12 highlight the foundational role of social support as a mediating factor in managing work–life balance among Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. Their narratives reveal that support systems—particularly from family, colleagues, and school leadership—function not only as emotional buffers but also as practical enablers in navigating increasing professional demands. In digitally mediated learning environments, where boundaries between work and personal life are increasingly blurred, social support emerges as a critical mechanism for sustaining psychological well-being and professional effectiveness. These informants also emphasize that social support is not merely external assistance but is deeply intertwined with Islamic values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual help), and *rahmah* (compassion). Consequently, their experiences illustrate that work–life balance is collectively constructed through relational networks rather than individually maintained.

"Social support from my family is essential in helping me manage my responsibilities as a teacher. When I feel overwhelmed, their understanding allows me to stay focused and emotionally stable. Without such support, balancing professional and personal roles would be significantly more difficult." (Informant 6)

"I rely heavily on my colleagues for support, especially when dealing with digital teaching challenges. We often share resources and strategies, which reduces individual workload. This sense of teamwork reflects Islamic values of mutual assistance." (Informant 7)

"For me, emotional support from close family members is a source of strength in maintaining balance. When I experience stress, their encouragement helps me regain motivation. This support is closely linked to spiritual values that emphasize compassion and care." (Informant 8)

"Support from school leadership plays a crucial role in my work–life balance. When leaders understand teachers' challenges, they tend to provide more flexible policies. This creates a more supportive and less stressful working environment." (Informant 9)

"I find that peer support among teachers significantly reduces work pressure. We often collaborate in preparing digital materials, which makes the workload more manageable. This collaborative culture helps maintain both productivity and well-being." (Informant 10)

"My family's support is fundamental, especially in managing time between teaching and household responsibilities. They help create a stable environment that allows me to focus on my professional duties. This balance would not be possible without their involvement." (Informant 11)

"Social support also comes from professional networks, such as teacher communities. Through these platforms, I gain new insights and emotional encouragement. This support system enhances both my teaching quality and personal well-being." (Informant 12)

The narratives of informants 13 to 18 extend the discussion by emphasizing the deeper ethical and institutional dimensions of social support in shaping work–life balance. These informants interpret social support not only as interpersonal assistance but also as a reflection of organizational culture and moral responsibility within Islamic educational settings. Their accounts reveal that supportive environments are characterized by trust, shared values, and collective commitment to professional and spiritual development. Additionally, they highlight that social support contributes to the formation of resilience, enabling teachers to navigate complex demands without compromising their ethical and religious principles. This group also underscores that the absence of structured support systems can intensify stress and disrupt balance. Thus, social support is framed as both a relational and systemic construct essential for sustainable teacher well-being.

"I see social support as part of our collective responsibility as educators. When colleagues support each other, it creates a positive working atmosphere. This environment helps me maintain both professional commitment and personal well-being." (Informant 13)

"Support from my institution, especially in terms of workload management, is very important. When tasks are distributed fairly, I can better manage my time. Institutional support directly influences my ability to balance work and family life." (Informant 14)

"My colleagues are a major source of support in dealing with teaching challenges. We often discuss problems and find solutions together. This collaboration reduces stress and strengthens our professional relationships." (Informant 15)

"I believe that social support also includes moral encouragement from leaders. When leaders appreciate our efforts, it increases motivation and reduces burnout. This kind of support is very meaningful for maintaining balance." (Informant 16)

"For me, social support is closely related to spiritual solidarity. When we remind each other of Islamic values, it strengthens our resilience. This shared understanding helps us cope with professional pressures." (Informant 17)

"In my experience, strong institutional support systems make a significant difference in achieving work–life balance. Clear communication, fair policies, and supportive leadership reduce unnecessary stress. Without these, maintaining balance becomes very challenging." (Informant 18)

5. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the work–life balance of IRE teachers is influenced by the dynamics of their work and family roles, as well as the social support available in the school environment (Ramachandaran et al., 2025; Murphy, & Bedford, 2025). The main findings show that IRE teachers often face role conflicts, especially when administrative and teaching demands increase, which affects their emotional state and work focus. However, social support from colleagues, school principals, and teacher communities serves as a crucial buffer that helps teachers manage these pressures (Siem, Nguyen, & Luc, 2025; Oberhauser, Dixon, & Mossa, 2025). The forms of social support received by teachers include emotional support, instrumental assistance with tasks, and recognition of performance. Positive interactions make teachers feel valued, accompanied, and cared for, which enhances their psychological calmness and comfort in teaching. Thus, social support acts as a protective mechanism that balances the work and personal life of IRE teachers.

Work–life imbalance among IRE teachers arises from several interrelated causes. High administrative workloads, constantly changing academic demands, and moral expectations from the community create pressures that are not only professional but also emotional and spiritual. Many teachers reported difficulties in allocating time between teaching responsibilities, student character development, and family obligations at home. In this context, limited time flexibility and high work volume are major triggers for role conflict (Quinn, & Hartland-Grant, 2025; Tambak et al., 2025). Additionally, the distinctive role of IRE teachers as moral exemplars increases their social responsibilities compared to other subject teachers. This reflection indicates that work–life balance is not merely a personal issue, but also relates to organizational structures and school work culture that do not fully support teachers' psychological well-being.

Work–life imbalance has significant consequences on teaching performance, social relationships, and the emotional well-being of IRE teachers. Teachers under prolonged work pressure tend to experience emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and reduced ability to provide inspiring learning experiences. Conversely, when social support is consistently present, teachers feel valued and cared for, which fosters intrinsic motivation to work more productively and positively. Social support also helps reduce role conflicts, as teachers have spaces to share burdens, seek assistance, and receive emotional reinforcement. Positive outcomes of social support are evident in increased teaching focus, emotional stability, and the ability to fulfil moral and spiritual roles more effectively. This Interpretation suggests that social support is a transformational element capable of sustainably improving IRE teachers' work–life balance.

These findings align with previous studies in your file, which similarly emphasize the importance of social support in maintaining teacher well-being. Rahmawati, Santoso, & Dewi (2024) and My, S. T. (2026), Sari, & Lubis, (2024) show that peer social support reduces work stress and strengthens a sense of togetherness. Siregar, & Hidayat (2024) demonstrate that support from school principals helps teachers manage workload and

reduce role conflicts. Furthermore, Nabila et al. (2024) and Rahmadani (2024) reveal that effective time management and a supportive work environment are key factors in enhancing teachers' work-life balance. The consistency of these findings reinforces that teachers' work-life balance is influenced not only by personal factors but also depends on the social structures and organizational culture of schools. What differentiates this study is its contribution of an in-depth portrayal of the subjective experiences of IRE teachers, which has not been extensively explored in previous quantitative research (Abdulaziz, Bashir, & Alfalih, 2022; Turner, & Garvis, 2023). Based on the findings, several recommendations can be applied in policy, conceptual, and institutional practices.

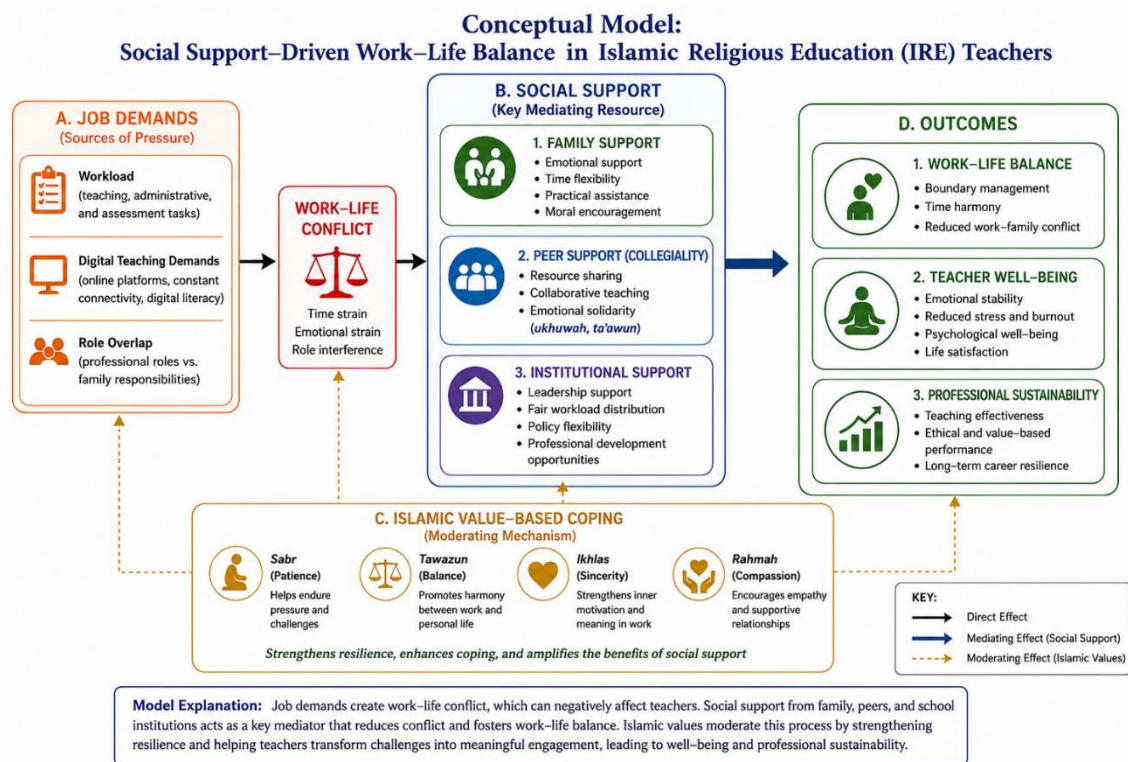


Figure 1: Conceptual model

IRE teachers have unique job characteristics because, in addition to carrying out their professional responsibilities as educators, they also bear moral and spiritual responsibilities that often involve high emotional demands. Therefore, social support plays a crucial role in maintaining the work-life balance of IRE teachers. Ismail, & Supriatna (2024) explain that teacher communities function as spaces for sharing experiences, enabling teachers to obtain emotional and informational support in facing work-related challenges. Research by Yuliana, & Ningsih (2024) shows that a collaborative school culture can enhance teachers' emotional and professional balance, particularly in religious school environments. In the context of IRE teachers, social support from principals, colleagues, and professional communities is essential in fostering a sense of being valued, secure, and motivated. This aligns with social support theory, which positions interpersonal relationships as a key driving factor of psychological well-being

Previous research findings indicate that social support functions as a reinforcing mechanism for the work-life balance of IRE teachers through various forms, such as emotional support, instrumental assistance, informational support, and performance recognition. Sulaiman, Fadli, & Rahim (2024) demonstrate that social support from school leaders and colleagues contributes significantly to increased teacher motivation and teaching effectiveness, which in turn positively affects the stability of work-life balance. Yuliana, & Ningsih (2024) also emphasize that social support and school culture play important roles in fostering teachers' professionalism and emotional balance. Furthermore, Rahmawati, Santoso, & Dewi (2024) found that positive interactions among teachers strengthen a sense of togetherness and reduce work-related pressure. An evaluation of these findings suggests that social support is a determining factor in reducing role conflict, alleviating emotional

exhaustion, and enhancing the ability of IRE teachers to manage their work–life balance in a sustainable manner (Nwoko et al., 2023).

The proposed conceptual model (Figure 1) positions social support as a central mediating mechanism in mitigating the adverse effects of job demands on work–life balance among IRE teachers, thereby extending the explanatory scope of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework within faith-based educational contexts. Contemporary research has consistently demonstrated that high job demands—such as workload intensification, emotional labor, and digital teaching pressures—are significant predictors of work–life conflict and psychological strain among educators (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Tambak et al., 2024). In digitally mediated environments, these demands are further amplified by expectations of constant availability and technological adaptation, which blur the boundaries between professional and personal domains (Nwoko et al., 2023; Muhajir et al., 2025; Tambak & Sukenti, 2024). The present model substantiates these findings by demonstrating how job demands initiate work–life conflict, particularly through time strain and role interference. Importantly, within the madrasah context, such pressures are not merely operational but are intertwined with moral and pedagogical expectations. This reinforces the need for mediating resources that can restore equilibrium. Thus, the model aligns with and empirically extends JD-R theory into Islamic education.

A key contribution of this model lies in its conceptualization of social support as a multidimensional mediating resource encompassing family, peer, and institutional domains. Empirical studies in educational psychology confirm that social support significantly buffers the negative impact of job demands and enhances teachers' well-being and job satisfaction (Collie, 2021; Granziera et al., 2021, Tambak et al., 2022; Abdullah et al., 2025). Family support provides emotional stability and facilitates role negotiation, while collegial support promotes collaborative coping and reduces professional isolation. Institutional support, particularly leadership responsiveness and workload management, has been identified as a critical determinant of teacher resilience and retention (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020, Firdaus et al., 2025; Sukenti, & Tambak, 2025; Muhajir et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, these forms of support are further reinforced by values such as *ukhuwah* (solidarity) and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), which embed social support within a moral and communal framework. The model therefore advances a culturally grounded understanding of social support, positioning it not merely as a functional resource but as an ethically infused relational system. This represents a significant departure from purely secular interpretations of support mechanisms. Consequently, the mediating role of social support becomes both structurally and spiritually anchored.

Another distinctive feature of the model is the incorporation of Islamic value-based coping as a moderating mechanism, which enhances the transformative capacity of social support. Recent studies on teacher coping mechanisms highlight that meaning-oriented and value-based coping strategies significantly improve resilience and reduce burnout (Herman et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Rasyidi et al., 2025; Sukenti, & Fauzan, 2024). In this regard, constructs such as *sabr* (patience), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *tawazun* (balance) function as internal psychological and spiritual resources that reshape individuals' responses to stress. These values enable teachers to reinterpret professional challenges as meaningful acts of service (*ibadah*), thereby transforming stress into purposeful engagement. From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with emerging research on spiritually grounded coping, which emphasizes the role of belief systems in enhancing psychological resilience (Park et al., 2020; Tambak, Sukenti, & Firdaus, 2024; Cuervo, & Vera-Toscano, 2025). By integrating these values into the JD-R framework, the model introduces a novel moderating dimension that bridges psychological theory and Islamic epistemology. This integration is particularly relevant in madrasah settings, where professional identity is inseparable from religious commitment. Therefore, Islamic value-based coping not only moderates stress but also redefines the meaning of work–life balance itself.

The outcome dimension of the model further reinforces its multidimensional contribution by linking work–life balance to teacher well-being and professional sustainability. Recent literature indicates that balanced work–life conditions significantly predict reduced burnout, improved emotional regulation, and enhanced teaching effectiveness (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Pressley, 2021; Yasin et al., 2025; Chapakiya et al., 2025; Tambak et al., 2025). In addition, sustainable professional engagement is increasingly recognized as a function of both organizational support and individual coping capacity (Greenier et al., 2021; Silva, & Fischer, 2020; Gusrianto et al., 2025). The present model extends this understanding by demonstrating that work–life balance in Islamic

education is not solely a psychological outcome but also an ethical and spiritual achievement. Teachers who achieve balance are more likely to embody Islamic values in their pedagogical practices, thereby enhancing the moral quality of education. This aligns with the broader objective of Islamic education, which emphasizes the development of holistic individuals (*insan kamil*). Consequently, the model situates work–life balance within a broader framework of ethical professionalism and spiritual well-being. This represents a significant theoretical enrichment of existing models.

Despite its contributions, the model also invites critical reflection regarding its contextual limitations and future research directions. First, the integration of Islamic values as a moderating construct requires further empirical validation across diverse cultural and institutional contexts. Second, the model currently relies on qualitative insights, which, while rich in depth, limit its generalizability and predictive precision. Future research should therefore employ quantitative approaches, such as structural equation modelling (SEM), to test the strength and directionality of the proposed relationships. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to examine how social support and coping mechanisms evolve over time in response to changing educational demands. Finally, comparative studies between Islamic and non-Islamic educational settings could provide deeper insights into the universality and specificity of the model. Addressing these limitations will strengthen the robustness and applicability of the framework. Thus, while the model offers a strong conceptual foundation, it remains open to further refinement and empirical testing.

6. Conclusion

This study advances the understanding of work–life balance among Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers by demonstrating that balance is not merely an individual capacity to manage time and roles, but a socially constructed and value-embedded process shaped by workplace interactions and institutional culture. The findings reveal that persistent role conflict—driven by administrative demands, pedagogical responsibilities, and moral expectations—poses significant challenges to teachers' emotional stability and professional effectiveness. However, the study highlights that workplace social support, encompassing collegial collaboration, leadership responsiveness, and a supportive organizational climate, functions as a critical buffering mechanism that mitigates stress and sustains teachers' well-being. A key advantage of this research lies in its integrative perspective, which combines social support theory with the ethical and spiritual dimensions inherent in Islamic education, thereby offering a more holistic conceptualization of work–life balance. Despite these contributions, the study is constrained by its qualitative case study design and limited geographical scope, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings across broader educational contexts. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce subjective bias, suggesting the need for methodological triangulation in future research. The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Conceptually, it extends existing work–life balance frameworks by positioning social support as a dynamic and relational construct within faith-based educational settings. Practically, it underscores the importance for schools and policymakers to institutionalize supportive environments through collaborative cultures, equitable workload distribution, and empathetic leadership practices. Future research should consider mixed-method and longitudinal approaches to further validate and expand the proposed model across diverse cultural and institutional settings. Research should therefore employ quantitative approaches, such as structural equation modelling (SEM), to test the strength and directionality of the proposed relationships.

Author Contribution Statement

All authors contributed significantly to the preparation of this article. The first author (Muallimin) and second author (Firhan Arya Juanda) was responsible for formulating the research topic, drafting the background, designing the research focus, and developing the theoretical framework, data collection process through in-depth interviews with IRE teachers and ensured the completeness of field data. The third author (Noufal Hadianda) contributed to the development of the research methodology, including the design of informant selection techniques, preparation of the interview guide, and assistance in the

data analysis process, conducted data verification, field checks, and validation of findings through triangulation. The fourth author (Malik Ibrahim) and sixth author (Alwan Luthfi Ghani) was responsible for data analysis, development of thematic categories, and systematic presentation of the research results, writing the discussion section, interpreting findings, and refining the manuscript's content. All authors participated in academic discussions, substantive revisions, finalization of the article, and approved the final manuscript for publication.

Disclosure of Interests

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest in the conduct of this research or the preparation of this article. All stages of the study—from problem formulation, data collection through interviews with Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, data analysis, to the preparation of the final manuscript—were carried out independently, without any intervention, funding support, or involvement from parties that could influence the objectivity of the research results. The authors uphold scientific integrity, qualitative research ethics, and the confidentiality of informants' information throughout the research process. Therefore, this article represents an entirely objective, transparent, and conflict-free scholarly work.

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