

# Job Stress, Role Expectation Conflict, Co-Worker Support, and Work-Life Balance among Muslimah Scholars: A Study in the Indonesian Historical Women Political Movement Members


 Siti Mahmudah\*<sup>1</sup>,  Sadari Sadari<sup>2</sup>,  Ummah Karimah<sup>3</sup>  
 Habib Shulton Asnawi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Institut Pembina Rohani Islam Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Institut Agama Islam Ma'arif NU (IAIMNU) Metro Lampung, Indonesia

 [sitimahmudah@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:sitimahmudah@radenintan.ac.id)\*

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## Abstract

Women ulama or Muslimah scholars are ordinary people who experience role conflicts, problems with co-worker support, and work-life imbalances which would cause stress in the workplace. Some pieces of literature have examined these issues; however, a study in a specific community like Muslimah scholars who are Indonesian Women's Ulama Conference members (KUPI) is still limited. This study examines the effect of role conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance on work stress among Indonesian female Ulama. The authors use a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design. After filling out a consent form, data was collected from Muslimah scholars and members of KUPI. Participants then filled out the questionnaire by self-report. The results showed that most participants had moderate role expectation conflict, co-worker support, work-life balance, and job stress. The variables of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance influence work stress simultaneously. The indirect effect analysis showed only role expectation conflict on job stress through work-life balance, which has a significant effect. This finding indicates that although these women scholars have strategic careers and positions in their workplace, colleagues and family are two crucial things for them.

## INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI) is a forum for Indonesian women scholars to assert their existence and expand their roles and work in the public sphere. This activity combines intellectual, cultural, social, and spiritual movements. Apart from that, it is also a place to voice the interests and missions of Muslimah scholars who are built with three main perspectives, namely humanity, nationality, and Islam. As a historic political movement for the Indonesian nation, the authors need to examine the psychological dynamics experienced by Women ulama members of the KUPI, especially those related to job stress.

Everyone experiences what is called a stressful condition in life. Including stress in workplace which it is considered harmful (Daniel, 2019; Kim & Cho, 2020). However, stress

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at a certain level can trigger better performance (Qu et al., 2017; Sami & Naveeda, 2021). This statement supported by (Suleman et al., 2018) stress can trigger individuals to create innovative ideas to solve problems with a constructive state (Suleman et al., 2018). Stress arises as a result of pressures from both superiors and competitor in the work environment which still included in motivate their juniors or colleagues would eventually improve one's performance.

A person may experience excessive levels of stress, which will ultimately have an impact on decreasing job satisfaction (Fasbender et al., 2019). Conditions like the one above often trigger conflicts, especially in work, such as conflicts with leaders or co-workers. If it does not handled properly, immediately and seriously, it will maintain poor performance and low productivity (Daniel, 2019; Ramos-Galarza & Acosta-Rodas, 2019). Another impact caused by conflict that is not handled wisely and adequately makes individuals go awry, causing problems that manifest in work stress (Dong et al., 2022).

Conditions like this require support from colleagues so that the conditions experienced can be controlled properly (Anderson et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). Support from friends or leaders is one of the factors that can help overcome individual work conflicts (Tafvelin et al., 2019). Furthermore, research results show that workplace or organizational support can help people deal with the stress they experience (Dartey-Baah et al., 2020; Foy et al., 2019). This finding is also supported by Bright (2021) that support from organizations has a positive impact on reducing stress and role conflict experienced by a person.

Work-life balance is essential to the attention of individuals so that all aspects of their lives, both personal and work, can run effectively. Beauregard & Henry (2009) showed a significant positive relationship between work balance and valuable daily life. This relationship indicates no difference with the female Ulama in Indonesia. This context makes researchers interested in raising the issue of work stress experienced by participants in the KUPI.

Role expectation conflict is a term that refers to conditions when there is a request for someone to do something outside of the task they are supposed to do so that it can make that person experience stress (Duong et al., 2020; Posig & Kickul, 2004). For example, when a peer co-worker asks for a job, the superior asks to do another task simultaneously. In situations like this, a person is faced with circumstances that require him to do two jobs at once. It might be fine for someone who is used to doing several things at once, but for someone who is not ready with expectations like this, it can lead to work stress. This situation follows the opinion of Schmidt (2014) that role expectation conflict usually arises because the duties and responsibilities of a person in an organization or institution are not clearly described, and even work overlap occurs. The omission of this ambiguity can reproduce stress in a person and can make a person unable to meet the work expectations (Shukla & Srivastava, 2016).

Hellriegel & Slocum (1980) categorize role expectation conflict into four groups, namely; person-role conflict, inter-sender conflict, inter-role conflict, and intra-sender conflict. The person-role conflict appears after the job done potentially violates values held by someone. Inter-sender conflict occurs when messages and pressures from one role sender oppose messages and pressures from one or more other senders. When role pressures associated with membership in one group conflict with pressures from membership in other groups, inter-role conflict occurs. Intrasender conflict results when different messages and pressures from a single member of the role set may be incompatible.

Several studies have shown that role expectation conflict is a good predictor of work stress (Duong et al., 2020; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Posig & Kickul, 2004; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). Although some of these studies focused on investigating female participants, the results showed that, for both female and male participants, role expectation conflict remained a significant predictor for predicting work stress (Duong et al., 2020; Hundera et al., 2019; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Posig & Kickul, 2004). Research also positions work stress as a mediator variable and shows consistent results that it is a good mediator (Soelton et al., 2020). The

findings of these study have been confirmed and show fairly good consistency between research results (Islam et al., 2022).

Furthermore, co-worker support is encouragement from juniors, colleagues, or superiors to someone to do something and develop in their career (Kokoroko & Sanda, 2019). Both socially and psychologically, positive peer support can improve efficiency and performance (Sodeify & Habibpour, 2021; Van Bogaert et al., 2013). In the workplace, the support provided by co-workers effectively reduces stress (Loi et al., 2014; Piko, 2006). For example, someone who has a good perception of the support of colleagues and superiors can survive longer, resilient, and experiences minimal stress in their workplace (Hayhurst et al., 2005).

Research has shown the importance of demographic factors, especially gender, in peer support studies (Liebler & Sandefur, 2002; Sinclair, 2021; Sloan, 2017; Wallace, 2014). In particular, women tend to have better perceptions of work support than men (McGuire, 2012; Sloan et al., 2013). This perception is attributed to the higher social connectedness experienced by women (Turner & Turner, 2013). In addition, general assumptions about gender, which believe that women are more sensitive than men, also influence this perception (Turner & Turner, 2013). These factors make women believe that women have more positive work support than men.

Work-life balance is a term to explain the relationship between work and non-work in one's life (Kelliher et al., 2019). An indicator of achieving work-life balance is when there is no more time to do work than to do non-work or vice versa. Work-life balance in recent decades has shown a negative relationship with stress, where a high work-life balance makes stress low (Jamal, 2007). Several studies on work-life balance have also focused on women, given the increasing interest of women to work outside the home (Roberts, 2007). Meanwhile, these women still have to carry out their household duties, such as caring for children and cleaning the house, so these two tasks make them need balance (Gatrell et al., 2013).

### **The rationale of the Current Study**

Although studies on job stress, role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance are not something new, studies in this field conducted on KUPI participants are still rarely carried out (Chung & van der Lippe, 2020; Duong et al., 2020; Hasna et al., 2020; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Soelton et al., 2020). KUPI is a historical women's political movement in Indonesia. So, it is crucial to study the psychological dynamics experienced by its members, considering that these women have jobs outside the home and still have to work inside the house, such as taking care of the household. This argument prompted the authors to raise this issue by involving KUPI participants.

### **Objectives**

There are two research objectives to be achieved in this research. First, to know the level of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, work-life balance, and job stress among KUPI women members. Second, to determine whether there is a direct and indirect effect of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance on job stress.

## **METHODS**

### **Design**

The authors use a non-experimental design, namely by survey or cross-sectional. Data was collected from the participants by self-report. In other words, participants are asked to assess themselves based on the statement items prepared by the authors.

**Table 1.** Participant demographic information (N=350)

Category	N
Age	(Mean Age = 37; SD = 18.82)
< 20 years	11
21 – 30 years	107
31 – 40 years	76
41 – 50 years	94
>51 years	62
Years of service	(Mean Years of Service = 11.8; SD = 6.21)
<5 years	111
5 – 10 years	59
11 – 15 years	48
>16 years	132
Education	
Primary school	1
Secondary school	19
Bachelor	161
Master	104
Doctor	45
Income	
High	20
Moderate	279
Low	51
Marital status	
Single	104
Marry	223
Divorced	8
Death divorce	15

### Participants

The participants in this study were women who had attended the Indonesian Women's Ulema Conference. A total of 350 people agreed and filled out the distributed instruments. Participant demographic information can be seen in table 1.

### Instruments

In addition to demographic questions, the four instruments used in this study are the works of Shukla & Srivastava (2016). This English-language instrument was later adapted to Indonesian. In general, the authors adapted the instrument in the following stages (Hernández et al., 2020); 1) transliteration to Bahasa Indonesia, 2) Bahasa Indonesia equivalent, 3) back transliteration to English, 5) evaluation of the accuracy of the transliteration, and 4) test the validity.

### Job Stress

In order to find out information about job stress, the authors administrated 9 items. Following are three examples of statement used: "I have a lot of work and fear that very little time to do it.", "I feel so burdened that even a day without work seems bad," and "I feel that I never take a leave." Based on the validity and reliability tests results, all items were declared valid because the item correlation score was above .30, and the instrument was declared reliable with  $\alpha = .81$ .

**Table 2.** Results of internal norm calculations for the categorization of participant scores

Category	REC	CWS	WLB	JS
Low	<9.05	<14.02	<12,16	<17,12
Moderate	9.05 - 17.91	14.02-22.18	12.16-16.66	17.12-31.3
High	>17.91	>22,18	>16,66	>31.3

### **Role Expectation Conflict**

Information about the variables was obtained after the participants reported their perceptions by responding to the 5 items regarding role expectation conflict. The following are examples of the statement items used; 1) I'm not able to satisfy the different demands of various people above me, 2) I'm not able to satisfy the conflicting demands of my colleagues and juniors, and 3) I'm unable to satisfy the demands of clients and others because they are opposite to each other. Based on the validity and reliability tests results, all items were declared valid because the item correlation score was above .30, and the instrument was declared reliable with  $\alpha = .79$ .

### **Co-worker Support**

To find out the co-worker support experienced by the participants, the authors asked four questions. The four questions are; 1) Have the people working with me ever given any information or advice to me? 2) Have the people working with me understood me and given advice? 3) Has anyone given me a clear and helpful feedback about my work? and 4) Has anyone given me assistance in my work? After testing the validity and reliability, the item correlation results were above .30 and  $\alpha = .86$ .

### **Work-Life Balance**

This instrument consists of 4 statement items, namely; 1) I am able to balance between time at work and time at other activities, 2) I have difficulty balancing my work and other activities, 3) I feel that the job and other activities are currently balanced, and 4) Overall, I believe that my work and other activities are balanced. The work-life balance instrument is valid and reliable, with item correlation scores above .30 and  $\alpha = .86$ .

### **Procedures**

This study used a quantitative method through a survey because the data was obtained from a questionnaire filled in directly by the participants. The sampling technique was carried out using a random technique where the sample was selected based on their willingness and included in specific criteria, namely Muslimah scholars in the KUPI network in Indonesia. Participants were asked to fill out a google form distributed through the KUPI network.

First, the authors prepared the instruments and then administered them into the Google form. Second, the authors and the research assistant shared the google form URL with potential participants. Before the potential participants filled it out, they were explained the purpose of data collection and a statement of confidentiality and asked for their willingness to fill it out voluntarily. The authors prepared door prizes for selected participants. Third, the authors began to analyze the data after the participant data was considered sufficient.

### **Data analysis**

In order to achieve the two research objectives, several series of analyzes were carried out. First is a descriptive analysis to determine the level of role expectation conflict, co-worker

support, work-life balance, and job stress among female KUPI members. The authors have arranged a categorization of participant scores to make it easier to determine categories. The category scores for each variable can be seen in table 2. The authors used guidance from Azwar (2015) to calculate the categorization score.

Furthermore, path analysis is carried out to achieve the second research objective. Path analysis is used to see the direct effect, indirect effect, and influence of three variables on job stress simultaneously. The prerequisite test used is the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the multicollinearity test. Day et al. (1994) provided overall fit criteria if the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value was more than .90 and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value was more than .80. If the chi-squared value, RMR, and standardized RMR are equal to 0, then the path analysis model is included in the perfect fit criteria.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test's results to determine the data's normality showed all data were normally distributed because the probability values of all variables were above .5. See table 3 to find out the results of the data normality test.

Based on the multicollinearity test, the standard error value is .067, .077, and .137, where the value is less than one. Furthermore, the value of the coefficient B is .945; -.189 and -.484 are also less than one. So, the standard error value is low, and multicollinearity is not detected. Based on the calculation results obtained, the value of the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .983 (GFI > .90) and the value of Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = .942 (AGFI > .80), it can be concluded that the path analysis model in this study This is included in the overall fit criteria.

**Table 3.** Data normality test results

Variable (N=350)	Statistics	p
REC	.078	.200
CWS	.116	.200
WLB	.131	.134
JS	.072	.200

Note: REC=Role Expectation Conflict; CWS=Co-Worker Support; WLB=Work Life Balance; JS=Job Stress

**Table 4.** Pearson correlation and participant score categories

Variables	REC	CWS	WLB	JS	M	SD	Categories (%)		
							High	Moderate	Low
REC	-	.596	-.136	-.238	13.48	4.43	18,00	61,43	20,57
CWS		-	.27	-.090	18.10	4.08	14,86	67,14	18,00
WLB			-	.290	14.41	2.25	12,57	65,71	21,71
JS				-	24.21	7.09	16,00	65,14	18,86

Note: REC=Role Expectation Conflict; CWS=Co-Worker Support; WLB=Work Life Balance; JS=Job Stress; M=Means; SD=Standard Deviation



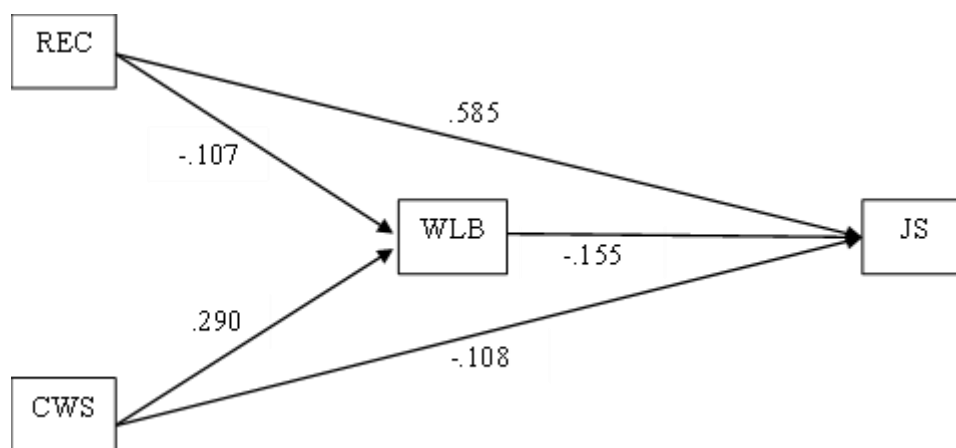


Figure 1. The results of path analysis

Table 5. Interpretation of the path diagram results

No	causal relationship	Path coefficient	Suggestion
1	REC → JS	.585	Significant
2	CWS → JS	-.108	Not significant
3	WLB → JS	-.155	Not significant
4	REC → CWS	.058	Significant
5	REC → WLB	-.107	Not significant
6	CWS → WLB	.290	Significant
7	REC → CWS → JS	-.009	Not significant
8	REC → WLB → JS	.017	Significant
9	CWS → WLB → JS	-.045	Not significant

Note: REC=Role Expectation Conflict; CWS=Co-Worker Support; WLB=Work Life Balance; JS=Job Stress

The simultaneous effect of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance variables on work stress obtained a value ( $F = 77.306$ ;  $p < .05$ ), which means that it influences simultaneously. The correlation coefficient value is the R Square score of .40, which means that role conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance affect work stress by 40%. In comparison, the remaining 60% is influenced by other variables. In addition, of the 9 (nine) models tested, only four relationships were declared significant.

## Discussion

The objectives to be achieved in this study are to determine the level of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, work-life balance, and job stress and then to determine the direct and indirect effects of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance against job stress. After observing the research results, both of these objectives have been achieved. First, most participants, who are KUPI members, have moderate levels of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, work-life balance, and job stress. Second, role conflict,

co-worker support, and work-life balance influence work stress simultaneously. Based on the value of the correlation coefficient, there is an effect of 40%. In addition, four models show a significant effect on the work stress of KUPI members, namely role expectation conflict on job stress, role expectation conflict on co-worker support, co-worker support on work-life balance, and the effect of expectation conflict on job stress through work-life balance as a mediating variable. Meanwhile, other models were declared insignificant when compared with the parameters set.

The authors have suspected that these three variables simultaneously are good predictors of job stress. This conjecture is supported by several works of literature which have shown how these variables are related (Duong et al., 2020; Hayhurst et al., 2005; Kokoroko & Sanda, 2019; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Posig & Kickul, 2004; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Wallace, 2014; Tampombebu & Wijono, 2022). Even though, in reality, some of the KUPI members are women who already married and have children, their consistency in running the organization and profession can still be done well.

This study found a significant influence of role expectation conflict variables on job stress, role expectation conflict on co-worker support, and co-worker support on work-life balance. These results signify that conflict of role expectations that occur in the workplace is a predictor of work stress among KUPI members. Based on previous research with the same findings, this relationship can explain that in the workplace, women scholars and colleagues have overcome gender bias and have good perceptions of gender equality (Duong et al., 2020). This finding is quite the opposite of what Indonesian culture expects that women should be prone to the family life rather than career (Ariyanto, 2018; Awalya et al., 2020; Saraswati, 2020). Although it is possible that demographically, the majority of these KUPI female ulama have occupied strategic positions in their workplaces, it will be easier to maintain gender equality.

In addition, this study confirms that there is a significant effect of expectation conflict on job stress through work-life balance as a mediator variable. These results are sufficient to confirm the findings of previous studies, which show that these two variables can predict job stress (Chung & van der Lippe, 2020; Duong et al., 2020; Kim & Cho, 2020; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Novita & Huwae, 2022). Stress that occurs in KUPI members can happen when role expectation conflict arises, increases the portion of their time outside the home, and decreases the time for activities with family. It can cause work stress for Muslimah scholars in Indonesia, especially KUPI members. These circumstances indicate that even though these female scholars have promising careers with strategic positions, colleagues and family are two critical things for them.

The author see that the model offered in this study is reasonably good when viewed from the simultaneous effect of variables on job stress. However, several things were found that were beyond the authors's expectations when testing with path analysis. Previously, the authors thought there would be a significant direct relationship. First, there is a direct relationship between work-life balance and job stress. Second, co-workers' support with job stress—finally, the co-working support mediator variable in the role-expectation conflict relationship.

## Implications

Research results have shown that work stress on KUPI members can be influenced by co-worker support, role expectation conflict, and work-life balance. These results also make it clear that KUPI members consider the role of colleagues and family as essential factors that can keep them from working stress. These findings should be considered by stakeholders and all parties, so that position and gender equality are not an excuse for reducing the portion of Muslimah scholars to spend time with their families so that work stress can still be avoided.



### Limitations and suggestions

The authors must admit that the chosen instruments are more appropriate to the context of the work. The variables work-life balance, job stress, co-worker support, and role-expectation conflict represent what KUPI members experience in their professional world. Thus, the authors must admit that the results of this study cannot be generalized about the role of women who are members of the KUPI in their families and daily social life.

The authors suggest that further research needs to pay attention to other variables that are more relevant to life within the family and the social community of KUPI members. These variables can provide insight into how the lives of the women members of the KUPI outside their profession, given that general knowledge about the role of women in the family is still very gender biased. The authors believe that further research involving these variables will be very beneficial for science, especially in studying Muslimah scholars who are members of the KUPI.

### CONCLUSION

Most participants had moderate levels of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, work-life balance, and job stress. The variables of role expectation conflict, co-worker support, and work-life balance influence work stress simultaneously. However, four models show a significant effect on the work stress of KUPI members. As a consideration for future researchers, this study only uses variables whose context is more appropriate to the work environment. Thus, it cannot be generalized with stress in a family and social context. Future researchers can involve these variables so that the results can show how stressed KUPI members are at home or in their surroundings.

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### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors played a role in the research and writing of this article. All authors agree with the final version of this article.

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