Dual Role Conflict, Work Stress, and Performance: Social Supports as a Moderating Variable

Lieli Suharti
(lieli.suharti@staff.uksw.edu)
Hetsina Athalia Karatem
(karatemthalia@yahoo.co.id)

Faculty of Economics and Business, Satya Wacana Christian University,
Central Java, Indonesia

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate whether there is a significant effect of dual role conflict to work stress and its impact to performance with social support as the moderating variable. Using purposive sampling, the questionnaires were administered to 94 female nurses in Ambon, Indonesia. The analysis technique used in this study was simple regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The result of this study are: a) dual role conflict has a positive and significant effect to work stress; b) work stress has a positive and significant effect to nurses' performance; c) supervisor support moderates the effect of dual role conflict to work stress; d) coworkers support doesn't moderate the effect of dual role conflict to work stress; e) family support moderates the effect of dual role conflict to work stress.

Key words: *Dual role conflict, Work stress, Performance, Social support*

Introduction

Women who were in the past only had roles as wives who took care of their households and children, but nowadays many of them have second roles as career women. Despite being career women, there are many women who struggle to balance their roles in households and their roles in the organization (Moffett, 1998; Chen & Zou, 2000; Chew, 2002; Gregorio, 2007). In this era, there are career women who experience fear of success (Suharti & Pujiningrum, 2010).

The fear of success experienced by career woman can be caused by the dual role conflict between their work and housework. According to Khan (2000), the dual role conflict occurs when the work roles and family roles are not mutually compatible one to another. The demand of work is associated with the pressure that comes from excessive workload (Katz & Rosemzweigh, 2001). The demand of family is related to the time required to deal with household chores and to take care of children (Chen & Zou, 2000; Chew, 2002).

Dual role conflict can lead to depression and anxiety which later can lead to stress on the career woman (Kalsum, 2003; Toni, 2005; Cinamon, 2001; Suharti & Pujiningrum, 2010). Duxbury (2000), in his study on employees in Canada, found that one of three female employees experienced high level of work-family conflict, which gave impacts on the high level of job stress, increased work absenteeism, and reduced the level of employee satisfaction . Even Rozikin (2006) showed a dual role conflict which significantly affected the employee performance in negative ways.

Furthermore, some researches showed that job stress negatively affects the employee performance (Ahmad, 2011; Shah & Faiz, 2011; Tunjungsari, 20 11). To reduce the

impact of dual role conflict towards work stress which have negative consequences on the performance of a career woman, social support from various parties is necessary (Sarros& James, 2000; Innovijanti, 2002). Social support is defined as the availability of social relationship in the form of actions that can be obtained from social solidarity or because of the presence of people who support, in which it is emotionally useful to the people who receive social supports (Sarifino, 2007).

Social support can come from the family / spouse, employers/superiors, or other colleagues.Social support can reduce the load or the problems faced by a person so that it can be said that social support can reduce the load received by an individual.According to Sarros & James (2000), someone who has a good social support can muffle conflicts so it can suppress the stress which occurs in his/her work.

This study is aimed to examine how dual role conflict affects job stress and its impacts towards the employee performance with social support as a moderating variable. The study was conducted on female nurses in a hospital in Indonesia. The profession as nurses was taken as the sample because the duty of nurses has task aspects which potentially cause stress.

Based on the explanation above, the problems raised in this study are: 1) Is there any effects of dual role conflict towards work stress which influence the performance?; 2) Does the social support have a role in moderating the influence of dual role conflict towards job stress?.

Review of Theory and the Development of Hypotheses

Dual Role Conflict and Job Stress

According to Greenhaus and Beutell (2001), dual role conflict is defined as a form of role conflict in a person that arises because of the pressure of the role from work which contradicts the pressure of the role in the family. Individuals must play two roles at the same time, at work and in the family (Schieman & McBrier, 2004). A dual role conflict is *inter-role conflict* that arises because someone plays many roles at once, and those roles have conflicting expectations and different responsibilities (Tsuei, Lai-I, 2002).

According to Zanden (2003), women experienceddual role conflict more because it is difficult to adjust the role as a member of the organization who should be responsible to the bureaucracy of organization and the role as a housewife who has to be responsible to her family. Greenhaus and Beutell (2001) stated that a person who has a dual role conflict will feel the tension at work. This dual role conflict is psychological, which symptoms seen in individuals who experience the role conflict are frustration, guilt, anxiety, fatigue. Consequently, dual role conflict can cause stress (Judge, 2003).

There is a lot of evidence which suggests that the pressure between family and work roles can lead to physical and psychological decline on the employees themselves (Thomas & Ganster, 2000). Some of the relevant theories support the prediction that states that the role conflict at work and familymay lead to job stress. For example,the role theory explained that the individual role conflict occurs when expectations in terms of one role's performance creates difficulties for the other role (Kahn, 2000; Judge et al, 2003).

According to Rozikin (2006), role conflict at work and family may result in work stress because the pressure of work and family roles overlap. Tsuei (2002) observed 165 female workers in a high-tech enterprise in China and found that dual role conflict positively

influences the occurrence of work stress. Likewise, a number of other studies, such as that conducted by Ahmad (2011) in Malaysia; Ahmad & Zeeshan, (2011) in Punjab; Shah & Faiz (2011) in Pakistan ; Suharti & Pujiningrum (2010) in Indonesia, show that the role conflict and role ambiguity positively influences employees' work stress.

Based on the explanation above, this following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Dual role conflict significantly affects female nurses' work stress.

Work Stress and Employee Performance

Stress is defined as an unpleasant circumstance as a result of someone facing the uncertainty of whether he/she can overcome the challenges or problems he/she faces (Mc. Grant, 2005: 70). Work stress, according to Rivai (2008), is caused by the imbalance between the employee's personality characteristics andthe characteristics of work aspects and can occur in all working conditions.

Work stress is believed to have an influence towards the employee performance. Performance is the result of the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out his/her duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to him/her (Dessler, 2008).

According to Robbins (2003: 64), the level of stress which is able to be controlled can encourage employees do their duties better, but excessive level of stress can reduce the employee performance. Therefore, stress can have positive or negative impacts. The positive impact of stress at low levels until moderate levels are functional, it means that it serves as the booster of employee performance improvement, while the negative impact of stress usually occurs at high levels of stress that can reduce the employee performance drastically.

Another study described by Liliana Djohan (2002) in her article entitled *Women, Work, Stress and Health.* The results obtained indicate that the stress of work is associated with high levels of work-family conflict experienced by employees, in which the level of work-family conflict has a positive impact in the work stress. The higher levels of work-family conflict, the higher the level of job stress.

This second hypothesis is formulated in this study:

H2: Work stress significantly affects the performance of female nurses

Social Support as a Moderator of the Influence of dual role conflict towards Stress

In working environment, employee's work needs the social support from other parties to be able to finish existing tasks (Apollo 2007; Gregorio, 2007). Social support is an interpersonal transaction which involves emotional attention, instrumental assistance, information, and assessment (House & Wells, 2000).According to Guitian (2002), social support is one of the functions of social ties that include emotional support that encourages the expression of feelings, giving suggestions and advice, information, and giving material and moral assistance.

The concept of social support can be distinguished based on the source of such support (House, 2003), which can be divided into three sources, namely; a) support from spouse/husband/wife; b) support from colleagues; and c) support from superiors. Social support from both the family and the company plays an important role in tackling the risk of

work stress (Isnoviyanti, 2002). Support from superiors, for example, ranked highest in reducing employee stress levels which is caused by the existence of work-family conflict (Gregorio, 2007). Maslach (1999) in Sutjipto (2004) stated that the lack of social support from superiors can be source of emotional stresswhich potentially causes employee work stress. Instead, the employer who is responsive will be able to empower employees, i.e. subordinates will feel that all his efforts at work are not in vain.

Thomas & Ganster (2000) explained that the support of a spouse in taking care of the children with a flexible work schedule, understanding each other, will be able to reduce the level of stress, and improve employee's productivity. From the exposure above, it shows that social support from spouse , superiors and co-workers can reduce the impacts on employee's stress due to the dual role conflict between work and family. Therefore, the research hypotheses are:

H.3.1: Social support from spouse and family can moderate the impacts of dual role conflict towards work stress

H.3.2: Social support derived from superiors can moderate the impacts of dual role conflict towards work stress

H3.3: Social support derived from co-workers can moderate the impact of work-family conflict towards work stress

The model of the research is illustrated as follows:

Figure 2.1
Research Model
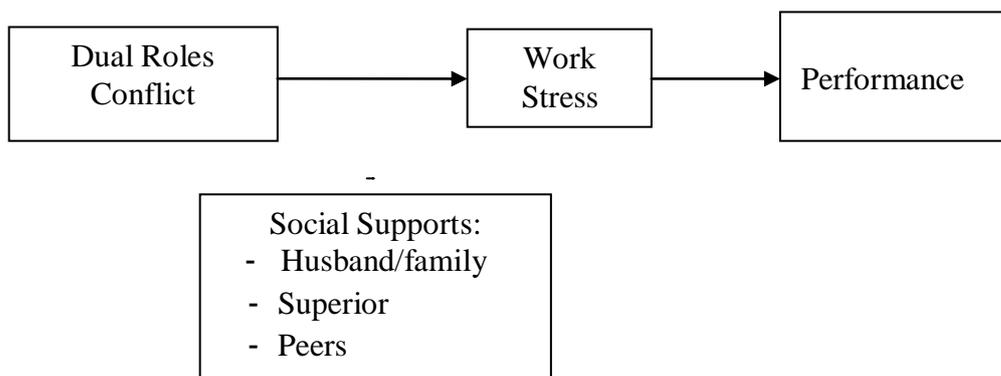
Research Methods

This research is an *explanatory research,* which aims to explain the causal relationships among the study variables and to test hypotheses about how much influence of the dual role conflict (work-family) towards work stress and its impacts on the performance of female nurses with social support as a moderating variable.

The population in this study was women who worked as nurses who were married or had ever been married in a hospital in Indonesia which amounted to 332 people. The questionnaire was distributed to 157 nurses with *purposive sampling*technique. However,the questionnaires which were filled completely were only 94 questionnaires, which were then further analyzed. Based on the collected data, the general characteristics of the respondents showed a majority of respondents (60%) were under 40 years old, had high levels of formal education in D3/Diploma (67%), had working period > 10 years (89%).

Data collection technique was doneby using structured questionnaire and distributed directly by the researcher. Each item in the statement of the questionnaire was measured by using a 5-point Likert *scale,* in which the respondents were asked to answer with the option of numbers between 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree). Dual role conflict variable was measured with 13 items of questions (Goode & Kaltsum, 2006); work stress variable was measured with 12 items of questions (Zamralita, 2007);each of performance and social support variables were measured with 17 items of questions (Sarafino, 2000**).**

The analysis technique which was used in this study to test the hypotheses used simple regression. Before stepping into the regression test, the validity of the data was tested, so it can be further tested through validity and reliability tests. The result of reliability test showed that all the variables were reliable with the value of *Cronbach alpha* > 0.6, in which the *Cronbach alpha* for the Dual Role Conflict variable (0762), Work Stress (0.669), Performance (0.786), and Social Support (0.752). Furthermore, the validity test of the data showed 15 items of questions of total 59 questionswhich were invalid (r<0 .30) and therefore it was excluded from further data analysis.

The Results and Discussion

Hypothesis Testing

Once the basic assumptions were met, the hypothesis testing was done by using simple regression analysis technique by using SPSS software *(Statistical Product and Service Solutions)* version 11.00.

Table 4. 1
The Result of Hypothesis 1: The Effect of Dual Role Conflict towards Work Stress

Independent Variable	Hypothesis	Beta	t value	Sig
Dual Role Conflict	HI	.705	4.756	0.000
R^2 Adj.R square F Sig. F	0.497 0.491 90.731 0.000			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dual Role Conflict
b. Dependent Variable: Work Stress

The results of the statistical test of the hypothesis 1 showed that hypothesis I was accepted in this study with t = 4.756 and P value of 0.000. The value of regression coefficient was 0.705, which means that the effect of dual role conflict towards work stress was considered as strong and positive. It means that the greater the dual role conflict, the higher work stress among the respondents (female nurses). The value of *Adjusted R*

Square obtained was 0.497, it means that 49.7% of work stress variables could be explained by dual role conflict variable, and the remaining 50.3% was explained by other variables that were not included in the research model. The result of F-test was 90.731 with a significant level = 0.000, showed that regression model could be used to predict the work stress.

Table 4. 2
The Results of Hypothesis 2: The Influence of Work Stress towards Employee Performance

Independent Variable	Hypothesis	Beta	t value	Sig
Work Stress	H2	-.620	7.577	0.000
R^2 Adj.R square F value Sig. F	0.384 0.378 57.405 0.000			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance
b. Dependent Variable: work stress

Based on the analysis of the data, the second hypothesis was proved to be supported in this study. Work stress was found to have negative influence on the performance of female nurses, in other words, the greater the work stress, it will reduce the performance of female nurses. The value of the *adjusted R Square* is 0.384, the result of F test was 57.405 with a significant level = 0.000 which means regression model could be used to predict the performance of nurses.

The third hypothesis tested the role of social support as a moderating variable in the influence of dual role conflict on work stress. In this case, social support was divided into three groups: 1) support from spouse / family; 2) support from employers/superiors; and 3) the support from colleagues.

Table 4. 3
The Results of Hypothesis 3: The role of Social Support as a Moderating variable in the Influence of Work Stress towards Employee Performance

Independent Variable	Hypothesis	Beta	t value	Sig
X1 X1X4 (partner/family)	H3.1	-. 328 1.132	-2.380 8.204	.019 **.000**
X1 X1X2 (superior)	H3.2	.414 .336	2.880 2.332	.005 **.022**
X1 X1X3 (peer)	H3.3	.712 -.009	5.296 -.069	.000 **.945**

a. Dependent Variable: Work Stress

Based on the results of statistical tests in Table 4.3 above, it can be seen that the effects of dual role conflict towards work stress was moderated by social support from the spouse / family (H.3.1) and social support from the supervisor (H3.2) were accepted. Instead, the results of statistical tests showed hypothesis that stated the effects of dual role conflict on work stress was moderated by social support from colleagues were rejected (T = -.069 and P value of 0.945).

Discussion

The result of research showed that there was a significant and positive influence of dual role conflict towards female nurses' work stress. A woman who works as a nurse has the burden and responsibility that are quite heavy, because she serves various types of patients with different characteristics and attitudes. In addition, they are also required to balance their time between work and family, which consequently can cause stress. Their workload is quite heavy, doubled with the burden of work in the family itself can be a pressure which eventually may not correspond to their physical, psychological and emotional.

It is understandable, since in dedicating her duties every day, a nurse is not only related to the patients, but also with their families and relatives, also the roles in the work place. The result strengthens the previous research done by Rozikin (2006), Yang (2000), and Heather (2001), who concluded that dual role conflict significantly and positively affected the work stress.

For the second hypothesis, that is the influence of work stress towards the female nurses' performance, the result of hypothesis test showed that the hypothesis was accepted. A profession as a nurse is a profession that is prone in causing stress if it cannot be controlled well. The work stress faced by female nurses in a hospital actually gave negative impacts towards their performance. It is in line with Robbins (2003) who said that the high level of stress can negatively affect the employee performance.

The third hypothesis is testing the effect of the dual role conflict towards work stress moderated by good social supports which come from spouse/family, superior, and colleagues. The result showed that the influence of dual role conflict towards work stress was moderated by social support which came from spouse and superior is accepted. This result is in line with Thomas (2003) who stated that the support from spouse/family and superior can help to reduce work stress which is caused by dual role conflict. The social support from spouse/family can be in the form of a caring attitude shown in various forms of positive cooperation, sharing in completing the work and family affairs. Therefore, when a nurse gets good social support either from the spouses / families and employers/superiors, it will be easier for them to manage conflict and work stress they face. As a result, social support from spouse / family and a good employer/superior can reduce the stress of their work. These results are in line with Sarros & James' findings (2000).

Closing

Based on the results of research and discussion as described in the previous chapter, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Dual role conflict positively and significantly affects female work stress. In other words, the higher the dual role conflict, the higher the stress of the female nurse.
2. Work stress negatively affects the female nurse performance. It means that work stress can decrease the performance of female nurses.
3. Social supports from spouse / family and superiors can moderate the influence of dual role conflict towards stress. It means that the support from spouse / family and superiors can weaken the influence of dual role conflict towards female nurses' stress. Social support derived from co-workers/colleagues was not proved to moderate the influence of dual role conflict on work stress.

Some suggestions that can be given based on the results of the study are:

1. The management of the hospital should pay attention in dealing with the dual role conflict experienced by female nurses. This is because these problems can lead to work stress.
2. For the women who work as nurses, they should maintain the balance of their dual roles, that is between work and family / household, that can be done well in theircareers as well. Besides that they are still be able to control the stress in the workplace so that they can provide good nursing care to every patient.
3. For the husband and family, and also the boss/superior, should always be the ones who provide moral and emotional support so that it can reduce the burden of female nurses so as to suppress the emergence of a dual role conflict.
4. For similar studies in the future, next researchers can re-test this research model by adding other variables that affect the nurses' performance who have notbeen included in this research model.

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