



Examining Role Conflict as a Mediator in the Effect of Workload on Burnout among Part-Time Working Students in Padang

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ABSTRACT

Recent socioeconomic developments in Indonesia have transformed students' lifestyles, including how they meet their financial needs. Rising education costs have strained students' financial resources, prompting some of them to seek additional income through part-time work. However, these part-time jobs present challenges such as the need to manage workloads alongside academic responsibilities. If left unaddressed without adequate recovery, this situation can lead to chronic stress, a condition known as burnout. Therefore, this study examines the influence of workload on burnout, mediated by role conflict. This study utilized 91 respondents who were part-time working students in the city of Padang, and the data was analyzed using the SmartPLS software. The findings indicate that: 1) workload has a positive and significant effect on burnout, 2) workload has a positive and significant effect on role conflict, 3) role conflict has a positive and significant effect on burnout, 4) and role conflict positively and significantly mediates the effect of workload on burnout.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic developments in Indonesia over the past decade have transformed students' lifestyles, including in terms of meeting their financial needs while pursuing higher education. Rising education costs are placing a strain on students' financial capacity. Data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS, 2025) indicates that higher education had the highest average tuition costs for the 2023/2024 academic year, amounting to Rp19.01 million per student per year.

This situation indicates a growing economic burden on students, prompting some of them to seek additional income through part-time work. The Central Statistics Agency defines part-time workers as those who work fewer than the standard work hours (less than 35 hours per week) but are not seeking employment or are unwilling to accept other jobs.

In line with the findings of studies conducted by Goewey (2015) and Dawar (2025), 67% of students in developing countries work due to financial needs, 32% to support their families, and only 18% for professional development. These findings indicate that economic needs are the primary motivation for students to take on part-time jobs. Baert et al. (2018) state that students who manage role conflicts between work and study simultaneously are at risk of burnout, characterized by increased mental strain, which leads to stress and a decline in academic performance.

According to Edú-Valsania et al. (2022), burnout is understood as a condition of emotional exhaustion, a sense of detachment or cynicism toward one's role, and a diminished sense of self-efficacy resulting from prolonged exposure to chronic stress. It is generally agreed that the primary key to burnout is exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout develops as a result of emotional and interpersonal stress experienced continuously in the work environment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

According to Xanthopoulou et al. (2007), workload is defined as the quantity, intensity, and complexity of tasks that must be completed within a specific time frame. This factor includes the volume of work, time pressure, and the responsibilities that must be fulfilled.

In addition to workload, part-time working students are also prone to role conflict resulting from academic and work demands. Recent research also indicates that role conflict is a psychological burden that significantly impacts the mental health of individuals with dual roles (Allen et al., 2020; Haar et al., 2021). For working students, this conflict can manifest as clashing class schedules with work schedules, piling academic assignments, or work pressures that drain energy and disrupt academic concentration.

Conflict between academic and work demands has been shown to be a significant factor influencing students' psychological well-being. The greater the conflict between university life and the working world, the lower students' satisfaction with university life (Lingard, 2007). The findings of this study indicate

that role conflict not only contributes to burnout but also reduces students' interest in the university environment.

This study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the emergence of burnout among part-time working students in Padang City. This study will analyze how workload affects burnout, with role conflict serving as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism of the relationship between the two variables.

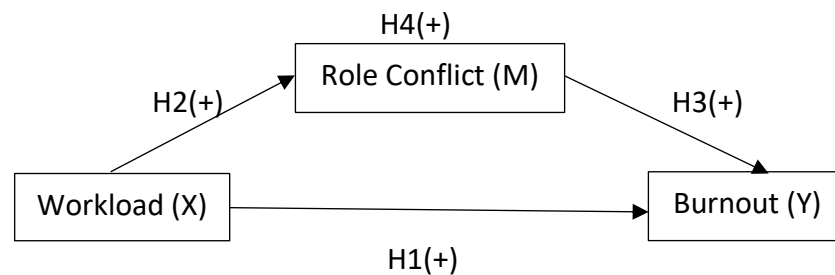


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Burnout can be influenced by workload and role conflict. Individuals with a high workload are at increased risk of burnout. Additionally, role conflict can also increase burnout, particularly among students who work part-time. However, role conflict also strengthens the link between workload and burnout in these individuals.

Edú Valsania et al. (2022) note that excessive work schedules and demands carry a high risk of emotional exhaustion; this situation is further exacerbated by a lack of recovery from work, ultimately increasing the risk of burnout.

Creed (2023) reports that difficulty in setting boundaries between work and academics, coupled with high demands from both work and studies, leads to low levels of optimism regarding work performance. Therefore, the greater the perceived workload, the higher the role conflict experienced by the individual. When role conflict is experienced continuously, individuals tend to experience a decline in energy, motivation, and the ability to manage work demands, thereby increasing the risk of burnout. Research by Maslach and Leiter (2016) confirms that prolonged role pressure is one of the main factors contributing to the onset of burnout. Thus, this study concludes that:

- 1) H1: Workload has a positive and significant effect on burnout.
- 2) H2: Workload has a positive and significant effect on role conflict.
- 3) H3: Role conflict has a positive and significant effect on burnout.
- 4) H4: Role conflict mediates the effect of workload on burnout among part-time working students.

2. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research design with a causal approach. The study aims to examine the causal relationship between perceived workload as the independent variable and burnout as the dependent variable, with role conflict as the mediating variable. The study was conducted among college students working part-time in Padang City, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The study was carried out from December 2025 to April 2026.

This study used a Likert scale (1–5) with a questionnaire completed by respondents to measure perceptions of burnout (Y), workload (X), and role conflict (M). The questionnaire included 14 items on burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Helkavaara et al., 2011), 6 items on workload (Hernandez et al., 2022), and 10 items on role conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Helen Lingard, 2007).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Results

a. Validity Test

Convergent validity is assessed by examining factor loadings or outer loadings. According to Chin (1998), convergent validity is considered to be met if the outer loadings are greater than 0.6. The outer model shown in Figure 2 is as follows:

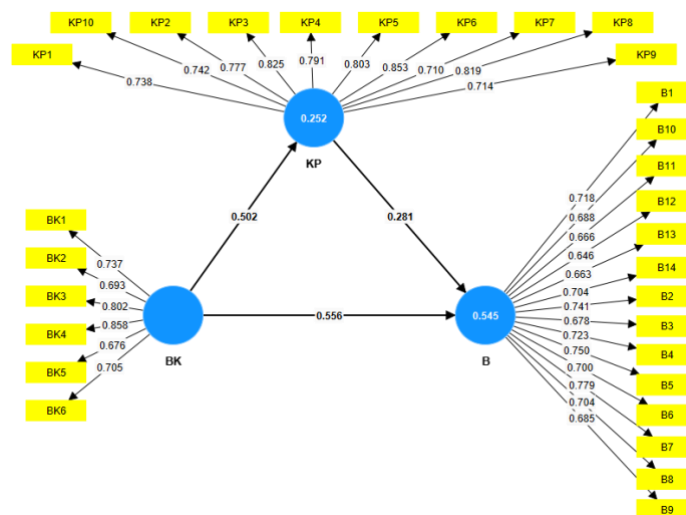


Figure 2. Outer Model

Based on the figure 2 above, it can be seen that all items for each variable in this study have outer loadings greater than 0.6. Therefore, the convergent validity of all indicators is considered valid. Table 1 below shows the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values:

Table 1. AVE Value

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Role Conflict	0,496
Workload	0,559
Burnout	0,606

Based on the table 1 above, it can be concluded that most constructs have a validity score above 0.5. Although there is one variable with a score slightly below 0.5, its value is very close to the minimum threshold, so it can be rounded up to 0.5.

b. Reliability Test

The reliability test is used to measure the consistency of respondents in answering question items in the questionnaire. Reliability shows the accuracy and accuracy of a measuring instrument. The following are the composite reliability results from the SmartPLS output, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Reliability Test

	Composite reliability (rho a)	Cronbach's alpha
Role Conflict	0.923	0.921
Workload	0.842	0.840
Burnout	0.929	0.927

Table 2 shows that the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are above 0.7; therefore, it can be concluded that the variables have good reliability or are capable of measuring their respective constructs.

c. Inner Model Test

This structural equation modeling analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between variables, the significance levels, and the R-Square values of the research model. The structural model can be evaluated using the R-Square value for the endogenous construct, the t-test, and the significance of the structural path parameters. This can be seen in the R-Square estimation results obtained using the SmartPLS software, in table 3 below:

Table 3. Inner Model Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Burnout (Y)	0.545	0.535
Role Conflict (M)	0.252	0.243

In table 3 above, the R-squared value for the burnout variable is 0.545, meaning that 54.5% of the variance in the burnout variable is explained by the workload variable, while the remaining 45.5% is explained by other variables not included in this study. Furthermore, the r-square value for the role conflict variable is 0.252, meaning that this value indicates that the role conflict variable can be explained by the workload variable by 25.2%, and the remaining 74.8% is explained by other variables not included in this study.

d. Hypotesist Test

Hypothesis testing is done by comparing the T-table value with the T-statistics value generated from the bootstrapping test results in Smart-PLS. The following are the results of the bootstrapping test in Table 4:

Table 4. Hypotesist Test

	Original sample (O)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Beban Kerja -> <i>Burnout</i>	0.556	7.657	0.000
Beban Kerja -> Konflik Peran	0.502	6.623	0.000
Konflik Peran -> <i>Burnout</i>	0.281	3.238	0.001
Beban Kerja -> Konflik Peran -> <i>Burnout</i>	0.141	3.088	0.002

A research hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96. As shown in the table 4 above, the t-statistic values for all hypotheses are greater than 1.96, so these results indicate that all hypotheses are accepted.

2. Discussions

1) The Effect of Workload on Burnout

The research findings indicate that workload has a significant and positive effect on burnout. The findings of this study are consistent with the research by Xanthopoulou et al. (2019), which found that individuals with high workloads tend to experience greater fatigue and are at higher risk of burnout. In addition, Edú Valsania et al. (2022) note that excessive work schedules and demands carry a high risk of emotional exhaustion this situation is further exacerbated by a lack of recovery time from work, ultimately increasing the risk of burnout. It can therefore be

concluded that the high workload of part-time working students in Padang has an impact on their risk of burnout.

2) The effect of workload on role conflict

The results of the study show that workload has a significant and positive effect on role conflict. These findings align with Creed (2023) research, which reports that difficulty in setting boundaries between work and academics, as well as high demands from both work and studies, lead to low levels of optimism regarding work performance. Therefore, the greater the perceived workload, the higher the role conflict experienced by the individual. Mutiarni (2023) study supports this hypothesis by showing that working students with excessive workloads and high role conflict tend to experience burnout. Thus, this study concludes that the workload of part-time working students in Padang is quite high, which can lead to role conflict.

3) The effect of role conflict on burnout

The results of the study show that role conflict has a significant and positive effect on burnout. The findings of this study are consistent with the research by Maslach and Leiter (2016), which confirms that prolonged role stress is one of the main factors contributing to the onset of burnout. When role conflict persists without adequate adjustment or support, individuals are at risk of experiencing emotional exhaustion and burnout (Kahn et al., 1964; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Mutiarni (2025) found that academic stress combined with work demands significantly contributes to burnout levels among students. Thus, it can be concluded that high levels of role conflict among part-time working students in Padang City will have an impact on burnout.

4) Role conflict mediates the effect of workload on burnout

The results of the study show that role conflict mediates the relationship between workload and burnout among part-time working students in Padang. The findings of this study are consistent with Lingard's (2007) research, which shows that high workloads and long working hours significantly increase role conflict, which in turn contributes to an increased risk of burnout among students who work part-time. Mutiarni's (2025) study also indicates that high workloads have a positive and significant effect on burnout, and that role conflict also has a positive and significant effect on burnout.

The relationship between workload, role conflict, and burnout can be explained through the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which states that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect the resources they possess, such as energy, time, and

emotional capacity. When high workloads deplete these resources, individuals struggle to meet the demands of various roles simultaneously, ultimately triggering role conflict (Hobfoll, 2001). The depletion of resources without adequate recovery leads to chronic stress and ultimately to burnout (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Thus, role conflict acts as a psychological mechanism that mediates the influence of workload on burnout.

4. CONCLUSION

Our research findings conclude that excessive workloads among students juggling multiple roles demands—as students and as workers—can lead to stress, which ultimately results in burnout. These results demonstrate that workload is a causal factor in burnout, mediated by role conflict. However, the study has limitations regarding the relatively small population and sample size, as the scope of the respondents was limited to part-time working students in Padang City; therefore, the researcher suggests that future studies expand their population beyond Padang City. Additionally, this study did not categorize the respondents' job types; therefore, future researchers are encouraged to classify job types more specifically to obtain deeper and more accurate analytical results.

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