

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity as Predictors of Job Stress Among Women Entrepreneurs: The Mediating Role of Work-Family Conflict

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Abstract: Women entrepreneurs often face overlapping demands from business and family domains, making them particularly vulnerable to role-related stress. This study investigates the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on job stress among women entrepreneurs in Makassar, Indonesia, with work-family conflict examined as a mediating mechanism. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, using data collected from 250 women entrepreneurs through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. The findings show that role conflict has a significant positive effect on job stress, whereas role ambiguity does not have a direct significant effect. However, both role conflict and role ambiguity significantly increase work-family conflict, which in turn exerts a significant positive effect on job stress. These results indicate that job stress among women entrepreneurs is shaped not only by work-related role pressures, but also by the spillover of incompatible demands across work and family domains. The study contributes to the women's entrepreneurship literature by integrating role stress and work-family interface perspectives into a unified explanatory framework. Practically, the findings suggest that improving role clarity, minimizing incompatible role expectations, and strengthening boundary management strategies are essential for reducing job stress and sustaining women's entrepreneurial engagement.

Keywords: role conflict; role ambiguity; work-family conflict; job stress; women entrepreneurs

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INTRODUCTION

Job stress has emerged as a critical issue within organizational behavior and occupational health research due to its implications for individual well-being and performance effectiveness (Annisa et al., 2024). Conceptually, job stress refers to psychological strain that arises when individuals perceive an imbalance between job demands and their available capabilities and resources to cope with those demands (Ndero et al., 2024; Paredes-Aguirre et al., 2025). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that excessive work demands relative to adaptive capacity

contribute to emotional exhaustion, decreased well-being, and performance deterioration (G. Li et al., 2025; Obrenovic et al., 2020). Accordingly, within occupational health psychology, job stress is frequently viewed as a response to persistent role-related pressures embedded in the work environment (Alotaibi et al., 2024; Finucane et al., 2020).

The antecedents of job stress are commonly categorized into organizational and managerial stressors (Liu et al., 2024; Tian, 2025). Organizational stressors encompass elements such as job design, reward systems, structural arrangements, and supervisory practices, whereas managerial stressors include role ambiguity, role conflict, workload pressure, and performance accountability (Liu et al., 2024). Among these determinants, role ambiguity and role conflict have been consistently identified as prominent predictors of job stress, in line with Role Theory and empirical findings indicating their positive association with psychological strain (Abdullah et al., 2021; Prakasa & Yulianti, 2020; Purnomo et al., 2021).

Role conflict occurs when individuals experience incompatible expectations derived from multiple responsibilities, resulting in cognitive dissonance and tension (Soltani et al., 2013; Soomro et al., 2018). In contrast, role ambiguity reflects uncertainty regarding duties, responsibilities, goals, and performance criteria, which may undermine confidence and increase anxiety (Abdullah et al., 2021; Soltani et al., 2013). While the direct relationships between these role stressors and job stress are well documented, contemporary research highlights the importance of examining intervening mechanisms that shape stress processes, including contextual mediators such as organizational or social support (Ekowati et al., 2022). However, the exploration of mediating mechanisms beyond support constructs remains comparatively limited.

Parallel to role-based stressors, the work-family interface has received growing scholarly attention as an additional source of occupational strain. Work-family conflict (WFC) represents a form of inter-role conflict in which pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Ariana & Riana, 2016; Munawi et al., 2023). Extensive empirical evidence indicates that WFC contributes to adverse outcomes including increased job stress, burnout, and reduced well-being (Chuang et al., 2024; Tian, 2025; Yi, 2013). Moreover, recent systematic reviews suggest that transformations in work arrangements, the prevalence of dual-career households, and technological connectivity have intensified work-family boundary permeability, thereby amplifying WFC experiences (Yi, 2013).

Despite the growing body of literature, existing studies predominantly focus on employees within formal organizational contexts such as corporate settings, public institutions, and healthcare organizations. Comparatively little attention has been directed toward entrepreneurial environments, particularly those involving women entrepreneurs who frequently navigate overlapping professional and domestic responsibilities. Women entrepreneurs often operate within informal or resource-constrained business structures while simultaneously fulfilling culturally embedded family roles, creating a context conducive to heightened role stress and work-family conflict. Empirical findings further indicate that women tend to experience higher levels of work-family conflict and psychological burden than men, which can influence both individual well-being and organizational outcomes (Kwia, 2023; Marina et al., 2024; Robbins, S. P., & Judge, 2017). Additionally, research on female workers highlights that dual role responsibilities across work and family domains are associated with unfavorable health and psychosocial outcomes (Ndero et al., 2024; Obrenovic et al., 2020). These findings suggest that gendered role expectations may intensify stress processes among women entrepreneurs, yet empirical examinations of these dynamics remain limited.

Theoretically, integrating Role Theory and Work-Family Interface Theory provides a coherent framework for understanding how role-based stressors extend beyond the work domain and contribute to cross-domain conflict. Complementing this perspective, Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory posits that sustained role demands without adequate resources lead to resource depletion and psychological stress, which may subsequently spill over across life domains and intensify work-family conflict (Abdullah et al., 2021; S. Li et al., 2022; Linda & Rino, 2023). This integrative framework implies that WFC may function as a mediating mechanism linking role conflict and role ambiguity to job stress, an assumption supported by emerging studies demonstrating the intermediary role of WFC in stress-related outcomes across occupational groups.

The setting of Makassar, Indonesia, characterized by the rapid growth of women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), offers a pertinent empirical context for investigating these relationships. Women entrepreneurs in this context frequently operate within flexible yet ambiguous business structures while simultaneously maintaining culturally reinforced family responsibilities. Such conditions may amplify role conflict and role ambiguity, thereby increasing work-family conflict and job stress experiences (Harris, 1999; Saragih et al., 2022).

Although prior research has examined the direct effects of role conflict, role ambiguity, work-family conflict, and job stress, a critical gap persists in understanding the mediating role of work-family conflict in explaining how role stressors translate into job stress, particularly within female entrepreneurial contexts in emerging economies (Amoozegar et al., 2025a; Gholipour et al., 2010; Huang et al., 2022). Most existing studies remain concentrated on formal employment settings and rarely incorporate gendered entrepreneurial realities characterized by blurred role boundaries and limited institutional support. Consequently, the absence of integrative empirical evidence limits theoretical generalization of role stress and work-family interface frameworks to women entrepreneurship domains (Amoozegar et al., 2025b; Chen & Cheng, 2025; Fang et al., 2025; Harris et al., 1999). Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the relationships among role conflict, role ambiguity, work-family conflict, and job stress among women entrepreneurs in Makassar, with particular emphasis on the mediating mechanism of work-family conflict. By doing so, this research seeks to extend theoretical discourse in organizational behavior and occupational health psychology while providing contextually grounded insights for stress management interventions targeting women entrepreneurs.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, explanatory design to investigate the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on job stress, with work-family conflict serving as a mediating mechanism, among women entrepreneurs in Makassar, Indonesia. The conceptual framework is anchored in role theory and the stressor-strain paradigm, which assert that incompatible and ambiguous role expectations constitute primary stressors leading to psychological strain. Within the entrepreneurial context particularly for women balancing business and family responsibilities work-family conflict represents a critical transmission mechanism through which organizational role stressors escalate into job stress.

Research Population and Sample

The population comprises approximately 8,756 women entrepreneurs operating MSMEs in Makassar. From a population representativeness perspective, Slovin's formula with a 5%

margin of error yields a minimum required sample of approximately 383 respondents. However, in variance-based structural modeling such as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), sample size determination must consider not only representativeness but also statistical power, parameter stability, and mediation estimation precision. Based on power analysis guidelines (Hair et al., 2022), with three predictors of job stress, a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), power of 0.80, and $\alpha = 0.05$, the statistical minimum requirement ranges between 77 and 85 respondents. Nevertheless, this threshold merely satisfies minimum detection criteria and may not guarantee stable indirect effect estimation in mediation models (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Henseler et al., 2016).

To enhance inferential robustness, reduce standard error inflation, and ensure reliable bootstrapping results, the study methodologically established 250 respondents as the final sample size. This figure substantially exceeds minimum power requirements and aligns with recommended sample ranges (200-400 cases) for mediation analysis in PLS-SEM. With 250 observations, parameter estimates become more stable, confidence intervals narrower, and indirect effect detection more reliable factors that are particularly critical for publication in high-impact, Scopus-indexed journals emphasizing methodological rigor (Ghozali, 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). Purposive sampling was employed with strict inclusion criteria: female entrepreneurs who actively manage MSMEs in Makassar and have operated their businesses for at least one year. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM due to its suitability for predictive modeling, mediation analysis, and robustness under non-normal distribution conditions. The analysis followed a two-stage approach: evaluation of the measurement model (indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity) and evaluation of the structural model (collinearity diagnostics, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples). Mediation was assessed through the significance of indirect effects and the calculation of Variance Accounted For (VAF) to determine partial or full mediation. By employing 250 respondents within a rigorous PLS-SEM framework, the study ensures statistical adequacy, parameter stability, and theoretical contribution to the literature on women entrepreneurship and occupational stress dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Descriptive Analysis Test

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Test Result

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Age	18 to 25	34	13,6%
	26 to 30	92	30%
	31 to 36	49	19,6%
	37 to 45	75	36,8%
Education Level	Undergraduate	167	66,8%
	Postgraduate	83	33,2%

Source: Data Generated (2026)

Based on Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the 250 women entrepreneurs in Makassar who participated in this study, particularly highlighting age distribution and education level. These characteristics provide an important contextual basis for examining role conflict, role ambiguity, job stress, and the mediating role of work-family conflict among female entrepreneurs.

The age distribution indicates that respondents are concentrated within productive entrepreneurial age groups. Specifically, 34 respondents (13.6%) are aged 18-25 years, while 75 respondents (30.0%) fall within the 26-30 age category. Additionally, 49 respondents (19.6%) are

between 31-36 years old, and the largest proportion, 92 respondents (36.8%), are aged 37-45 years. This pattern suggests that most women entrepreneurs in Makassar are situated in mature adulthood stages, during which individuals commonly experience simultaneous demands related to business management, family responsibilities, and social roles. Such conditions make this demographic composition particularly relevant for analysing role conflict and role ambiguity as predictors of job stress.

Regarding educational attainment, the findings reveal that the majority of respondents, 167 individuals (66.8%), hold undergraduate degrees, whereas 83 respondents (33.2%) possess postgraduate qualifications. This distribution reflects that women entrepreneurs in the sample generally have higher education backgrounds, potentially supporting their managerial and decision-making capabilities in business operations. Nevertheless, higher educational attainment may also be associated with broader role expectations, which can contribute to increased perceptions of role conflict and role ambiguity when balancing entrepreneurial and family domains.

Overall, the demographic profile demonstrates that the sample consists predominantly of well-educated women entrepreneurs within productive age groups who are likely to encounter overlapping work and family demands. This context reinforces the relevance of investigating work-family conflict as a mediating mechanism linking role conflict and role ambiguity to job stress among women entrepreneurs in Makassar.

Measurement Model Evaluation
Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Stress_(Y)	0.78	0.79	0.86	0.60
Role Ambiguity_(X1)	0.81	0.81	0.89	0.72
Role Conflict_(X2)	0.77	0.77	0.85	0.59
Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.64

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The results of the measurement model evaluation presented in Table 2 indicate that all constructs in this study satisfy the criteria for convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. This is evidenced by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50, suggesting that the indicators adequately capture the variance of their respective latent constructs. Specifically, the AVE values were 0.60 for Job Stress, 0.72 for Role Ambiguity, 0.59 for Role Conflict, and 0.64 for Work-Family Conflict. These findings imply that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by the corresponding constructs, thereby confirming convergent validity.

Furthermore, the assessment of internal consistency reliability demonstrates that all constructs achieved Cronbach’s Alpha values above 0.70, ranging from 0.77 to 0.88. This indicates a satisfactory level of internal consistency among the indicators within each construct. Consistent results are also observed in the rho_A values, which range between 0.77 and 0.89, providing additional evidence of adequate construct reliability within the Partial Least Squares framework.

In addition, the Composite Reliability values for all constructs surpass the minimum acceptable level of 0.70, with values ranging from 0.85 to 0.91. The high Composite Reliability scores further confirm that the latent constructs exhibit strong measurement stability and consistently represent their theoretical dimensions.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the measurement model meets the established requirements for convergent validity and construct reliability. Therefore, the model is deemed suitable for subsequent structural model evaluation to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Job Stress_(Y)	Role Ambiguity_(X1)	Role Conflict_(X2)	Work-Family Conflict_(Z)
Job Stress_(Y)				
Role Ambiguity_(X1)	0.61			
Role Conflict_(X2)	0.80	0.80		
Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	0.78	0.74	0.75	

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The discriminant validity assessment presented in Table 3 demonstrates that all constructs in this study meet the recommended Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. Overall, the HTMT values between constructs are below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90, indicating that each construct captures a distinct conceptual domain and that no critical measurement overlap is present.

More specifically, the HTMT value between Role Ambiguity and Job Stress is 0.61, reflecting a clear distinction between these constructs. The relationships between Role Conflict and Job Stress (HTMT = 0.80) and between Work-Family Conflict and Job Stress (HTMT = 0.78) exhibit relatively stronger associations; however, these values remain within acceptable limits, thereby supporting adequate discriminant validity.

Furthermore, the HTMT values among exogenous and mediating constructs also demonstrate consistent results. The HTMT value between Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict is 0.801, between Role Ambiguity and Work-Family Conflict is 0.745, and between Role Conflict and Work-Family Conflict is 0.75. All values fall below the recommended cut-off level, confirming that the constructs are empirically distinguishable.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the measurement model satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity. Consequently, the constructs employed in this study are considered sufficiently distinct and appropriate for subsequent structural model evaluation to examine the hypothesized relationships among variables.

Structural Model Evaluation

Collinearity

Table 4. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Job Stress_(Y)	VIF	Role Ambiguity_(X1)	VIF	Role Conflict_(X2)	VIF	Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	VIF
JS1	1.58	RA1	1.70	RC1	1.65	WFC1	2.97
JS2	1.83	RA2	1.94	RC2	1.92	WFC2	1.97

Job Stress_(Y)	VIF	Role Ambiguity_(X1)	VIF	Role Conflict_(X2)	VIF	Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	VIF
JS3	2.48	RA3	1.74	RC3	2.31	WFC3	2.37
JS4	2.75			RC4	1.29	WFC4	3.84
						WFC5	2.13
						WFC6	2.04

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The collinearity assessment results presented in Table 4 indicate that all measurement indicators exhibit Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values within the recommended threshold, suggesting the absence of significant multicollinearity issues among indicators. Overall, the VIF values range from 1.29 to 3.84, demonstrating that the indicators maintain acceptable levels of independence in representing their respective latent constructs.

For the Job Stress construct, the VIF values of the indicators range between 1.58 and 2.75, indicating moderate inter-item correlations that do not compromise parameter estimation stability. Similarly, the Role Ambiguity construct shows VIF values between 1.70 and 1.94, reflecting a satisfactory degree of indicator distinctiveness within the construct.

The Role Conflict construct also demonstrates relatively low VIF values, ranging from 1.29 to 2.31, further confirming that redundancy among indicators is not present. Meanwhile, the Work-Family Conflict construct displays VIF values between 1.97 and 3.84. Although one indicator approaches the upper acceptable limit, it remains below the commonly recommended threshold of 5, and therefore remains acceptable within the Partial Least Squares analysis framework.

Taken together, these findings suggest that collinearity is not a concern in the measurement model. Consequently, the indicators are considered appropriate for representing their respective constructs, allowing the analysis to proceed to structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 5. R-Square Test Result

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Job Stress_(Y)	0.72	0.71
Work-Family Conclict_(Z)	0.63	0.62

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The coefficient of determination (R-square) results presented in Table 5 indicate that the endogenous constructs in this study demonstrate substantial explanatory power within the structural model. The R-square value reflects the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs that can be explained by their respective predictor variables.

The Job Stress construct achieved an R-square value of 0.72 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.71. This finding suggests that approximately 72.1% of the variance in Job Stress is explained by the predictor variables included in the model, namely Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, and Work-Family Conflict, while the remaining 27.9% is attributable to factors outside the scope of this study. Based on commonly accepted criteria for structural model evaluation, this value can be categorized as substantial, indicating strong predictive capability for the Job Stress construct.

Furthermore, the Work-Family Conflict construct reported an R-square value of 0.63 and an adjusted R-square value of 0.62. This result implies that 63.2% of the variance in Work-Family Conflict is accounted for by its predictor variables, specifically Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict,

whereas 36.8% is explained by other variables not incorporated in the model. This value falls within the moderate to substantial range, suggesting that the model adequately captures the determinants of Work-Family Conflict.

Overall, these findings indicate that the structural model possesses satisfactory explanatory power for the endogenous constructs examined. Consequently, the model is considered appropriate for further analysis of the structural relationships and hypothesis testing.

Effect Size

Table 6. f-Square

	Job Stress_(Y)	Role Ambiguity_(X1)	Role Conflict_(X2)	Work-Family Conflict_(Z)
Job Stress_(Y)				
Role Ambiguity_(X1)	0.06			0.19
Role Conflict_(X2)	0.13			0.16
Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	0.16			

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The effect size (f-square) results presented in Table 6 illustrate the relative contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous constructs within the structural model. The f-square statistic is employed to assess the extent to which a predictor construct enhances the explanatory power of the model for a given endogenous variable.

The findings indicate that Role Ambiguity exhibits an f-square value of 0.06 on Job Stress, which falls within the small effect category. However, Role Ambiguity demonstrates a higher f-square value of 0.19 on Work-Family Conflict, indicating a moderate effect and suggesting that this variable contributes meaningfully to explaining the emergence of work-family conflict.

Similarly, Role Conflict shows an f-square value of 0.13 on Job Stress, representing a small-to-moderate effect, and an f-square value of 0.16 on Work-Family Conflict, which is categorized as moderate. These results imply that role conflict plays a relatively important role in shaping work-family conflict while also contributing to variations in job stress, albeit not as a dominant predictor.

In contrast, Work-Family Conflict demonstrates an f-square value of 0.16 on Job Stress, which is considered a moderate effect. This finding highlights that work-family conflict serves as a comparatively stronger predictor of job stress within the model relative to other exogenous constructs.

Overall, the effect size evaluation indicates that most structural relationships fall within the small to moderate range, with no relationships exhibiting large effect sizes. Nevertheless, the observed contributions remain substantively meaningful within the structural model, supporting the relevance of all proposed relationships for subsequent hypothesis testing.

Predictive Relevance

Table 7. f-Square

	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SS00)
Job Stress_(Y)	392.00	236.06	0.40
Role Ambiguity_(X1)	294.00	294.00	
Role Conflict_(X2)	392.00	392.00	
Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	588.00	365.12	0.38

Source: Data Generated (2026)

The predictive relevance assessment using the blindfolding procedure is presented in Table 7. The Q^2 value, calculated based on the cross-validated redundancy measure ($Q^2 = 1 - SSE/SSO$), is employed to evaluate the model's out-of-sample predictive capability for endogenous constructs. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the respective construct.

The results show that the Job Stress construct obtained a Q^2 value of 0.40, indicating substantial predictive relevance. This finding suggests that the structural model possesses strong capability in predicting the observed indicators of job stress based on the relationships specified among the constructs. Similarly, the Work-Family Conflict construct yielded a Q^2 value of 0.38, which also exceeds the zero threshold and falls within a moderate-to-high predictive relevance range. This result implies that the model adequately captures the underlying mechanisms influencing work-family conflict and demonstrates satisfactory predictive performance for this construct.

In contrast, the exogenous constructs (Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict) do not report Q^2 values, as predictive relevance assessment through blindfolding is only applicable to endogenous constructs within the structural model. Overall, the positive Q^2 values obtained for both endogenous constructs indicate that the proposed structural model exhibits adequate predictive relevance. Therefore, the model is considered robust in terms of predictive capability and suitable for subsequent structural relationship interpretation and hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Result

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Role Ambiguity_(X1) -> Job Stress_(Y)	0.24	0.26	0.17	1.45	0.15
Role Ambiguity_(X1) -> Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	0.44	0.43	0.12	3.79	0.00
Role Conflict_(X2) -> Job Stress_(Y)	0.34	0.32	0.13	2.63	0.01
Role Conflict_(X2) -> Work-Family Conflict_(Z)	0.40	0.42	0.11	3.67	0.00
Work-Family Conflict_(Z) -> Job Stress_(Y)	0.34	0.34	0.12	2.88	0.00

Source: Data Generated (2026)

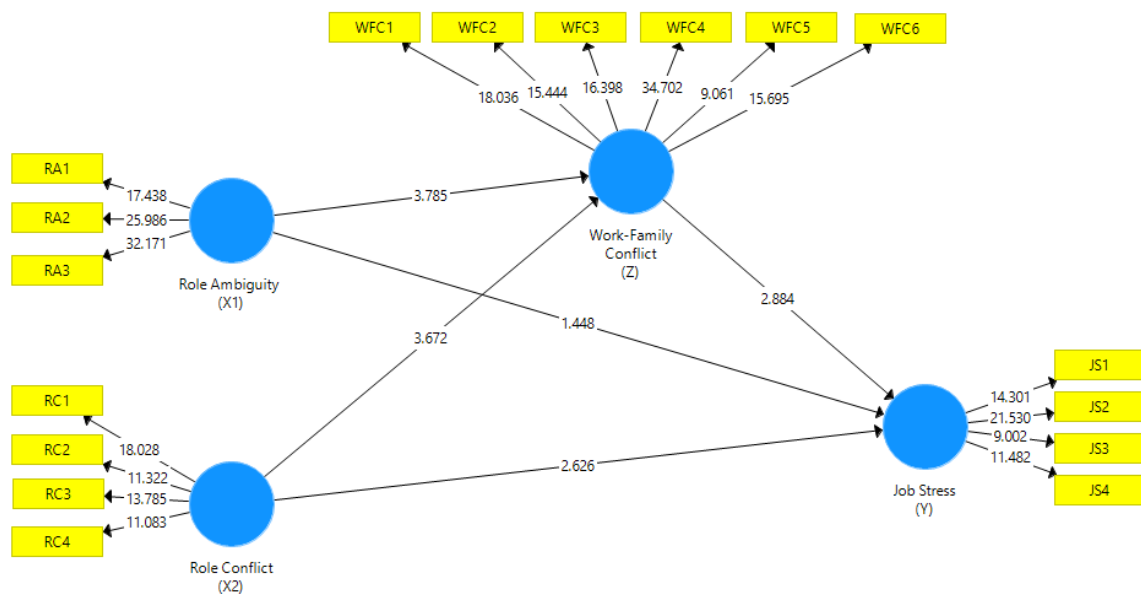


Figure 1. Hypothesis Test Result
Source: Data Generated (2026)

The hypothesis testing results obtained through the bootstrapping procedure are presented in Table 8, illustrating the direction and significance of the structural relationships among constructs. Statistical significance was evaluated based on t-statistics values exceeding 1.96 and p-values below 0.05 at the 5% significance level.

The findings indicate that the relationship between Role Ambiguity and Job Stress produced a path coefficient of 0.24, with a t-statistic of 1.45 and a p-value of 0.15. Although the effect is positive, it is not statistically significant, suggesting that Role Ambiguity does not directly influence Job Stress within the context of this study. Therefore, the corresponding hypothesis is not supported.

In contrast, Role Ambiguity demonstrates a positive and statistically significant effect on Work-Family Conflict, with a path coefficient of 0.44, a t-statistic of 3.79, and a p-value of 0.00. This result indicates that higher levels of role ambiguity are associated with increased work-family conflict, thereby supporting the proposed hypothesis.

Furthermore, Role Conflict shows a positive and significant effect on Job Stress, with a path coefficient of 0.34, a t-statistic of 2.63, and a p-value of 0.01. This finding confirms that role conflict experienced by employees contributes directly to elevated job stress levels. Additionally, Role Conflict exerts a positive and significant influence on Work-Family Conflict, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.40, a t-statistic of 3.67, and a p-value of 0.00, suggesting that increasing role conflict intensifies the tension between work and family demands.

Moreover, Work-Family Conflict significantly affects Job Stress, with a path coefficient of 0.34, a t-statistic of 2.88, and a p-value of 0.00. This result highlights work-family conflict as an important determinant of job stress, supporting the corresponding hypothesis.

Overall, the bootstrapping results reveal that most structural relationships in the proposed model are positive and statistically significant, except for the direct effect of Role Ambiguity on Job Stress. This pattern suggests that the influence of role ambiguity on job stress may occur indirectly through the mediating role of Work-Family Conflict, providing important implications for the refinement of the study's conceptual framework.

Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the structural relationships among role ambiguity, role conflict, work-family conflict, and job stress within the context of women's entrepreneurship. Grounded in role theory and the work-family interface perspective, the research conceptual framework proposed that role-based stressors would influence job stress both directly and indirectly through cross-domain role interaction mechanisms. The empirical findings provide nuanced insights into these relationships and highlight the contextual dynamics shaping stress experiences among women entrepreneurs.

Role Ambiguity as a Contextual Stressor

The findings indicate that role ambiguity does not exert a significant direct effect on job stress, although the direction of the relationship remains positive. This result suggests that unclear role expectations alone may not be sufficient to generate immediate psychological strain among women entrepreneurs. Unlike formal organizational environments characterized by rigid job descriptions and hierarchical structures, entrepreneurial settings often involve flexible role boundaries and self-determined task configurations. Consequently, ambiguity may be perceived as inherent to entrepreneurial autonomy rather than as a dysfunctional work condition.

However, the absence of a direct effect does not imply that role ambiguity is inconsequential. Consistent with role stress theory, ambiguity can create cognitive uncertainty and coordination challenges that manifest through indirect pathways. In this study, role ambiguity significantly increases work-family conflict, indicating that unclear work expectations disrupt the boundary management process between business and family domains. This finding aligns with prior literature emphasizing that ambiguity-related strain frequently emerges through role negotiation difficulties and time allocation challenges rather than through immediate emotional exhaustion.

Within the demographic context of this study, where respondents predominantly belong to productive age groups with active family responsibilities, ambiguous entrepreneurial demands may intensify competing expectations across domains. Thus, role ambiguity appears to function as a contextual antecedent of cross-domain interference rather than as a direct determinant of stress.

Role Conflict as a Direct and Cross-Domain Stress Mechanism

In contrast to role ambiguity, role conflict demonstrates a significant positive influence on job stress, highlighting incompatible role expectations as a salient stressor among women entrepreneurs. Role conflict represents a condition in which individuals encounter mutually incompatible behavioral demands, creating tension that cannot be simultaneously resolved. For women entrepreneurs, such conflict may arise from the need to meet customer expectations, manage employees, maintain business growth, and fulfil family responsibilities concurrently.

The presence of these competing demands may produce cognitive overload, emotional strain, and perceived performance inadequacy, thereby contributing directly to job stress. This finding is consistent with a substantial body of role stress literature identifying role conflict as a primary antecedent of psychological strain across occupational contexts.

Moreover, role conflict significantly influences work-family conflict, reinforcing the spillover mechanism proposed within the work-family interface framework. The entrepreneurial context, characterized by blurred temporal and spatial boundaries between work and family activities, may intensify this spillover process. Work-related conflicts can extend into family life, disrupting role balance and amplifying inter-role interference. Therefore, role conflict operates as both an intra-domain stressor and a cross-domain transmission mechanism.

Work-Family Conflict as a Central Strain Pathway

The study further demonstrates that work–family conflict significantly contributes to job stress, confirming its central role in translating role-related pressures into psychological outcomes. When work demands encroach upon family responsibilities, individuals may experience role overload, guilt, and diminished recovery opportunities, all of which exacerbate stress perceptions. This finding is consistent with cross-domain stress models emphasizing that strain frequently arises from incompatibility between life domains rather than from isolated role demands.

The significant effect of work–family conflict underscores the importance of examining stress within an integrative life-role framework. For women entrepreneurs, whose professional and domestic responsibilities often coexist within overlapping temporal and spatial contexts, work–family conflict represents a critical mechanism linking role structure to well-being outcomes.

Integrative Interpretation of the Mediating Mechanism

Taken together, the pattern of findings suggests that work–family conflict functions as a key intervening mechanism connecting role-based stressors to job stress. The non-significant direct effect of role ambiguity on job stress, combined with its significant effect on work-family conflict and the subsequent impact of work-family conflict on stress, indicates the presence of an indirect pathway. This configuration supports the notion that ambiguity-related challenges may initially disrupt role coordination across domains before ultimately manifesting as psychological strain.

Meanwhile, role conflict demonstrates both direct and indirect pathways, reinforcing its position as a multidimensional stressor. This dual influence highlights that incompatible role demands not only generate immediate strain but also propagate cross-domain imbalance, thereby amplifying stress experiences.

Theoretical and Contextual Synthesis

The structural model exhibits substantial explanatory power and predictive relevance, suggesting that the integration of role theory and work-family interface perspectives provides a coherent framework for understanding stress among women entrepreneurs. The findings extend existing literature by demonstrating that entrepreneurial stress is shaped by the interaction of role structure within the work domain and role integration across life domains.

From a contextual standpoint, the demographic composition of respondents predominantly well-educated women within productive life stages further reinforces the relevance of these dynamics. This group is likely to experience simultaneous expansion of professional and family roles, increasing exposure to both intra-role tension and cross-domain interference. Consequently, stress experiences among women entrepreneurs emerge as complex, system-based phenomena rather than as isolated occupational outcomes.

Overall Synthesis

Overall, this study reveals that role conflict constitutes both a direct and indirect determinant of job stress, whereas role ambiguity primarily influences stress through the mediating mechanism of work-family conflict. The findings highlight that stress among women entrepreneurs is embedded within a network of role relationships spanning work and family domains. Accordingly, strategies aimed at reducing stress should prioritize enhancing role clarity, minimizing incompatible expectations, strengthening social support systems, and facilitating effective work–family boundary management.

By synthesizing role stress and work-family interface perspectives, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of stress processes within women's entrepreneurship and underscores the importance of multi-domain role management in promoting sustainable entrepreneurial engagement and well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides empirical evidence regarding the role of role-related stressors and work-family interface dynamics in shaping job stress among women entrepreneurs. The findings demonstrate that role conflict emerges as a significant predictor of job stress, indicating that incompatible and competing role demands constitute a primary psychological strain mechanism within entrepreneurial contexts. In contrast, role ambiguity does not directly influence job stress, suggesting that uncertainty in role expectations may be tolerated or adaptively managed by women entrepreneurs without necessarily generating immediate stress responses. However, both role ambiguity and role conflict significantly increase work-family conflict, highlighting the importance of cross-domain role interaction processes. The results confirm that work-related role stressors can extend beyond the occupational domain and disrupt the balance between business responsibilities and family roles. Furthermore, work-family conflict is shown to significantly contribute to job stress, establishing it as a central pathway through which role pressures translate into psychological strain.

The overall pattern of relationships indicates that work-family conflict functions as an intervening mechanism, particularly in the relationship between role ambiguity and job stress. This finding underscores that stress experiences among women entrepreneurs are not solely driven by intra-work role characteristics but are strongly shaped by the interaction between work and family domains. From a theoretical perspective, this study strengthens the integration of role theory and work-family interface frameworks in explaining entrepreneurial stress phenomena. Practically, the results imply that efforts to mitigate job stress among women entrepreneurs should prioritize reducing conflicting role demands, enhancing role clarity, and supporting effective boundary management between work and family responsibilities. In conclusion, the study highlights that sustainable psychological well-being among women entrepreneurs depends on the capacity to manage both role structure within the business domain and role interaction across life domains. These insights contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of stress dynamics in women's entrepreneurship and offer a foundation for future research exploring contextual, cultural, and organizational support mechanisms that may buffer role-related stress effects.

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