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Intragroup conflict: Role stressors and work attitude

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Abstract

Intragroup conflict can adversely affect employee work attitudes and performance. Vagueness regarding conflicting roles and demands can lead to tension and conflict among group members, which in turn can reduce positive work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and job engagement. This study aims to determine the role of intragroup conflict in mediating effect of role stressor on work attitude. This research was conducted on contract education personnel in Udayana University with a sample of 87 employees. The samples were collected by using proportionate random sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. The result showed that intragroup conflict was not able to mediate the effect of role stressors on work attitude performance (no mediation). These results showed that even though employees feel they know what to do for every aspect of the job, employees still feel that there are often differences of opinion in the workplace. But that does not degrade employees' strong sense of organizational ownership. Employees still love their jobs and still make sure tasks are completed properly.

Keywords: Role stressor; Work attitude; Intragroup conflict; Performance; Conflict Role

1. Introduction

Work attitude performance can effect employee behavior and performance in the workplace and plays an important role in influencing organizational success (Robbin & Judge, 2017). Research has shown that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more committed to the organization, have lower absenteeism rates, and tend to make greater contributions to organizational goals (Beehr et al., 2000). According to Organizational Role Theory (ORT), work attitude performance is influenced by two main factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from within the employee, such as personality, employee motivation and ability, while external factors are factors that come from outside the employee, such as work environment and work relationships. A conducive work environment can support employees to work well. Good working relationships with coworkers and superiors can create a positive work environment and support employees to work (Silva and Ranashinghe, 2017: 77).

Raub et al. (2021) explained that role stressors, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, can trigger intragroup conflict in the workplace and affect employee work attitudes. Role ambiguity and conflicting demands can lead to tension and conflict between group members, which in turn can reduce positive work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and work engagement role conflict shows a positive relationship with relationship conflict. When an employee perceives role conflict, he or she faces demands from coworkers or superiors that are inherently conflicting. As a result of this "barrier" stressor (Dawson et al., 2016). Apart from role conflict, there is another factor, namely role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is a situation when information related to a particular role is lacking or unclear (Kahn et al. in Beauchamp et al. 2002). According to Kreitner & Kinicki (2014), role ambiguity is the unknown expectations of others. Lack of information or because there is no information at all or the information is not conveyed, role ambiguity will arise.

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In 2022, Udayana University procured non-civil servant education personnel in fulfilling human resources due to the large number of education personnel who had retired and several others were accepted as civil servants in other government agencies. This new Tendik fills the executive positions proposed by each unit which has previously analyzed the workload to calculate the required HR needs and competencies of each of these executive positions. The work placement process is carried out after being determined by the Chancellor's Decree and then submitted to the unit leader in carrying out his duties.

These new Education Personnel are expected to be able to blend in with the existing tendiks and it is hoped that there will be no problems regarding conflicts of relationships with other tendiks and can achieve the expected job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction felt by new tendik at Udayana University is an interesting phenomenon and should be studied to see employee job satisfaction. This research is important to do considering that Udayana University is a university that should provide excellent service to students, the community, other academicians to produce quality graduates.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

In this study we will focus on three Work Attitude variables namely: presence, job satisfaction and affective commitment. With respect to job satisfaction and affective commitment, both are important predictors of turnover, which is a perennial concern in the service context. Employees facing stressor barriers are likely to conclude that the link between increased effort and the likelihood of meeting job demands is weakened or severed altogether. Supporting this rationale, meta-analytic evidence (LePine et al., 2005) suggests that barrier stressors have a direct negative effect on job performance. In addition, unsatisfactory psychological situations due to stressors such as role ambiguity will contribute to employees' intention to quit their jobs, thus further weakening their performance (Fried et al., 2008; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Employees who perceive role conflict have the impression that they face contrasting and conflicting demands from different role partners in the organization. These may be direct or indirect supervisors or coworkers. Similar to role ambiguity, role conflict can also be viewed as a "barrier" stressor (Dawson et al., 2016). When the demands directed at an employee are conflicting, this implies that meeting the demands of one role partner is equivalent to violating the expectations of the other role partner. Since the focal employee is not in a position to reconcile these conflicting demands, the role conflict situation will be perceived as being beyond the employee's control, with negative consequences for work attitudes (Fried et al., 2008).

Similarly, when employees are faced with role conflict, they will understand that increased effort to meet the demands of one role partner will be unrelated, or even potentially inversely related, to their ability to meet the demands of the other role partner. Again, the effort-performance relationship in this case would be considered weak or non-existent (LePine et al., 2005). Frustration and demotivation resulting from the inability to simultaneously meet conflicting job demands will lead to reduced effort and, as a result, reduced performance.

- H1: Role Stressors have a Negative and Significant Effect on Work Attitudes.

There are many theoretical reasons why relationship conflict should be negatively associated with work attitudes. Perceived relationship conflict triggers negative emotions in employees, which include fear, anxiety, frustration, uncertainty and wariness towards other group members (Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 2010). Lack of trust towards other group members leads to communication problems, decision-making problems and lack of productivity in the work group, which further leads to stress, job dissatisfaction and reduced commitment to the work group (Friedman et al., 2000; Guerra et al., 2005; Jehn et al., 1997, 1999; Tjosvold and Sun, 2002). Similarly, cognitive processing theories of conflict (Carnevale and Probst, 1998; Jehn et al., 2010; Taylor and Brown, 1988, 1994) suggest that employees who perceive less conflict will be more satisfied with their work environment. From a job performance perspective, perceived relationship conflict places a cognitive burden on employees (Carnevale and Probst, 1998). These employees will devote their resources to understanding, discussing, and possibly trying to resolve the conflict (Jehn, 1995). As a result, they will have a reduced ability to focus on solving work-related problems (Taylor and Brown, 1988) as well as reduced motivation and energy to devote to actual task performance.

- H2: Intragroup conflicts have a negative and significant effect on work attitudes.

Research on intragroup conflict generally shows that individual perceptions of conflict in work groups are negatively related to a variety of work-related outcomes (De Dreu and Van Vianen, 2001; Spector and Jex, 1998). Based on the foundational work of Guetzkow and Gyr (1954), and its extension by Jehn (1995, 1997), two basic types of intragroup

conflict have been distinguished. Task conflict concerns "disagreements among group members regarding the content of the task being performed, including differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions" (Jehn, 1995: 258). Relationship conflict is characterized by "interpersonal incompatibility among group members, which typically includes tension, hostility, and annoyance" (Jehn, 1995: 258). Challenging the universally negative perspective regarding the consequences of interpersonal conflict, research has shown, that task conflict can actually produce positive outcomes (Amason, 1996; De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Jehn and Mannix, 2001; Jehn and Chatman, 2000). The exchange of conflicting opinions and viewpoints, provided the debate is not interpreted as a personal attack by group members, can actually result in better solutions and improved performance. However, there is no evidence of the potential beneficial consequences of relationship conflict.

The researchers suggest that role ambiguity and role conflict should be positively associated with interpersonal conflict. When employees feel role ambiguity, they lack information and direction in their work and are unclear about how they can contribute to the efforts of their work group (Teh et al., 2014). As a result, feelings of helplessness in the face of uncontrollable obstacles (Onyemah, 2008) will turn into a negative attitude towards their current job situation and will negatively impact their performance (Fried et al., 2008; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). When employees give the impression of disorientation and frustration, other work group members will tend to interpret their behavior as an inability and/or unwillingness to shoulder their share of the workload. In the high-pressure work environment of the hospitality industry where everyone's contribution is needed and stress levels are very high (Koc and Bozkurt, 2017; Ross, 1995; Teoh et al., 2019), interpersonal tension and resentment with focal employees that are characteristic of relationship conflict will be an almost inevitable outcome.

By its nature, role conflict shows a positive relationship with relationship conflict. When an employee perceives role conflict, he or she faces demands from coworkers or superiors that are inherently conflicting. As a result of this "barrier" stressor (Dawson et al., 2016), whenever the employee tries to conform to the expectations of one of the role partners, the other role partner will come to the conclusion that the employee is unwilling and/or unable to fulfill their specific demands and expectations. Personal conflict, tension and annoyance between the focal employee and at least some of his/her role partners will be the result.

- H3: Role stressors have a positive and significant effect on intragroup conflict.

In the previous section, a positive relationship between role ambiguity and relationship conflict was suggested. In addition, we argued that relationship conflict would adversely affect work attitudes and performance. The combination of these two theoretical arguments suggests that relationship conflict acts as a mediator for the relationship between role ambiguity and outcome variables. Since relationship conflict is a more proximal predictor of work attitude and performance than perceived role stressors, the impact of role ambiguity on these outcomes should be partially or fully mediated by relationship conflict. Correspondingly, we argue for a positive relationship between role conflict and relationship conflict, and we argue that relationship conflict will have adverse consequences for work attitudes and performance. Again, this combination of arguments suggests a mediated relationship, linking role conflict to work attitude and performance through the mediator of relationship conflict. Relationship conflict as a more proximal predictor of work attitude and performance should mediate some or all the impact of role conflict on our outcome variables.

- H4: Intragroup Conflict mediates the effect of role stressors on work attitudes

3. Methods

This research applies causality or cause and effect research. Causality research aims to determine the cause-and-effect relationship that occurs between research variables. This associative research was also used by (Heider et al., 2015) and Maria (2018) in their research. In this study, the type of relationship is a linear relationship because it aims to determine the variables that affect work attitude and performance. The variables used are role stressors, intragroup conflict, and work attitude performance. As expressed in the hypothesis, each will be described in the appropriate indicators and then derived into question items in the research instrument. Data is collected through interviews and questionnaires which are further subjected to validity and reliability tests using SEM-PLS.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Convergent Validity

In accordance with the results of outer loading, all indicators have a loading value > 0.7 , this indicates that the indicator can be said to be valid. The detailed explanation of the value of outer loading can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Indicator Loading Value

Indicators	M		X		Y			
	M1	M2	X1	X2	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
M11	0.875							
M12	0.922							
M21		0.843						
M22		0.883						
M23		0.877						
X11			0.830					
X12			0.854					
X21				0.893				
X22				0.883				
X23				0.884				
Y11					0.823			
Y12					0.834			
Y13					0.902			
Y14					0.826			
Y15					0.853			
Y16					0.905			
Y17					0.862			
Y18					0.798			
Y21						0.798		
Y22						0.757		
Y23						0.845		
Y31							0.896	
Y32							0.924	
Y33							0.905	
Y41								0.884
Y42								0.901
Y43								0.871

Primary Data, 2023

The AVE value for each dimension and variable has met the AVE criteria set, namely with a value of ≥ 0.5 . This shows that the Convergent Validity Test is acceptable.

Table 2 AVE

Variable	AVE	Dimension	AVE
M	0.671	M1	0.807
		M2	0.753
X	0.577	X1	0.709
		X2	0.786
Y	0.541	Y1	0.724
		Y2	0.641
		Y3	0.825
		Y4	0.784

Primary Data, 2023

4.2. Discriminant Validity

Furthermore, the validity of the study continued with Discriminant Validity testing through the Fornell-Larker Criterion and Cross Loading tests. The Fornell-Larker Criterion test is carried out by comparing the variable output value with other latent variables. The concept that must be met is that the correlation value of the variable construct itself must be greater than that of other variable constructs. This can be seen by the diagonal and vertical direction of each variable column.

Table 3 Fornell-Larcker Criterion Output

	M1	M2	X1	X2	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
M1	0.899							
M2	0.733	0.868						
X1	0.167	0.383	0.842					
X2	0.106	0.443	0.488	0.887				
Y1	0.009	-0.086	-0.447	-0.360	0.851			
Y2	-0.090	-0.416	-0.654	-0.531	0.578	0.801		
Y3	-0.060	-0.135	-0.573	-0.454	0.570	0.584	0.908	
Y4	0.000	-0.047	-0.421	-0.347	0.713	0.534	0.589	0.885

Primary Data, 2023

The next step to test Discriminant Validity is to use the Cross Loading test. The Cross Loading test itself is a test of the Outer Loading value that a variable construct has to have a greater value for its own variable than for other variables.

Table 4 Cross Loading Output

	M	X	Y
M11	0.710	-0.013	-0.020
M12	0.886	0.255	-0.025
M21	0.888	0.356	-0.098
M22	0.806	0.455	-0.196
M23	0.793	0.455	-0.135
X11	0.270	0.633	-0.561
X12	0.268	0.680	-0.431
X21	0.300	0.790	-0.313
X22	0.101	0.849	-0.534
X23	0.492	0.823	-0.400
Y11	-0.061	-0.467	0.788
Y12	0.094	-0.288	0.777
Y13	-0.028	-0.388	0.843
Y14	-0.065	-0.328	0.708
Y15	-0.022	-0.411	0.730
Y16	-0.008	-0.422	0.864
Y17	-0.026	-0.362	0.837
Y18	-0.241	-0.401	0.787
Y21	-0.235	-0.626	0.617
Y22	-0.168	-0.342	0.594
Y23	-0.343	-0.623	0.568
Y31	-0.126	-0.512	0.620
Y32	-0.045	-0.554	0.697
Y33	-0.135	-0.499	0.769
Y41	-0.117	-0.539	0.735
Y42	-0.053	-0.379	0.710
Y43	0.083	-0.242	0.775

Primary Data, 2023

The table above shows that the indicator has a higher value on its own variable compared to other variables, the results of the Fornell-Larker Criterion and Cross Loading calculations above show that the validity of the research referred to from Discriminant Validity shows its validity.

4.3. Reliability Test

The results of the previous calculations show that the research has shown its validity through the Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity tests. Furthermore, testing was carried out to test the reliability of the research through the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values which were above 0.6. The following is the value of research reliability:

Table 5 Construct reliability

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability coefficient
M	0.875	0.884
X	0.812	0.816
Y	0.945	0.948

Primary Data, 2023

The table shows that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values of each variable have met the standard of being above 0.60. This shows that the reliability of the research is acceptable. In addition, the Composite Reliability value is also higher than the Cronbach's Alpha value. This indicates that all research variables have met the requirements regarding the appropriate reliability criteria as the basis for SEM research that can be analyzed using SmartPLS.

The results of measuring validity and reliability using the Measurement Model above show that the data collection tools used in this study are valid and reliable. These results indicate that the research measuring instrument has a consistency that can be accounted for.

4.4. Structural Model

Inner model evaluation in this study was carried out on the structural model using the R² formula and Q² predictive relevance. Evaluation of the structural model aims to determine how much the exogenous variable Role Stressors (X) can explain or influence the variance in the endogenous variables Intragroup Conflict (M) and Work Attitude / Outcome (Y). the results of the R² analysis using SmartPLS are presented in the following table:

Table 6 R-square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Intragrup Conflict	0.143	0.132
Work Attitude	0.364	0.348

Primary Data, 2023

For the calculation of Q² predictive relevance using the following formulation:

$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2)$		
Q2	=	$1 - (1 - 0.143)(1 - 0.364)$
	=	$1 - (0.857)(0.636)$
	=	$1 - 0.545$
Q2	=	0.455

Based on the calculation, the value of Q² = 0.455 or 45.5% is obtained, which means that the predictive relevance is moderate. The value of 45.5% states that the variation in the Work Attitude variable can be explained by the Role Stressors and Intragroup Conflict variables by 45.5%. While 54.5% is explained by other variables outside the research model.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is done with bootstrapping techniques. The data used for bootstrapping is data that has been carried out at the Measurement stage. Hypothesis testing is included in the Structural Model and shows the hypothesized relationship with simulation practice. This bootstrapping test also aims to determine the direction of the relationship and the significance of the relationship between each latent variable. Hypothesis testing is done by comparing the t-statistic or t-count that has been determined. the t-count generated in the bootstrapping test must be greater than the two tailed t-table of 0.67 for a standard error of 5% or a p value below 0.05 (Hair et al. 2017: 320).

Table 7 Path coefficients

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
M -> Y	-0.125	- 0.141	- 0.105	1.188	0.238
X -> M	0.378	0.372	0.108	3.508	0.001
X -> Y	-0.640	-0.650	- 0.095	6.718	0.000

Primary Data, 2023

The table shows the results of hypothesis testing using Bootstrapping. Of the four hypotheses, there is one negative relationship direction, namely the relationship between X and Y. This is indicated by the negative Original Sample number of 0.640. Hair et al (2017: 172) explain that Original Sample shows the sign of the direction of the relationship between variables in the entire research sample. As for the significance, this study uses a two-tailed hypothesis so that the significance figure is seen from the t-statistic value above 0.67 for a significance of 0.05. Based on these criteria, the accepted hypothesis is in the latent variable relationship between X -> M, X -> Y, M -> Y. This happens because the research t-statistic has a value of more than 0.67. This explains that all direct effect hypotheses are accepted.

Table 8 Specific Indirect Effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X -> M -> Y	0.039	0.042	0.035	1.123	0.264

Primary Data, 2023

Furthermore, to determine the mediation function, researchers used the bootstrapping method of the specific indirect effects table whose results are listed in the table, The use of the bootstrapping method according to Hair et al (2017: 239) is done because the Sobel Test assumes a normal distribution which is inconsistent with the nonparametric PLS-SEM method. In addition, the parametric assumptions of the Sobel test usually do not apply to indirect effects because the multiplication of two normally distributed coefficients results in an abnormal distribution. Therefore, a bootstrapping method was used to sample the distribution of indirect effects. Based on the SmartPLS Botstrapping output, the direct X - Y relationship is significantly negative, while the indirect relationship (X - M - Y) is insignificantly positive. The relationship indicates that there is no mediation effect and falls into the Direct-Only Non-Mediation category. Based on the description above, testing the assessment hypothesis can be done as follows:

4.6. Role Stressors on Work Attitude

The test values of X -> Y are respectively: Original sample of -0.640, t-count of 6.718, p-value of 0.000. The negative original sample value indicates that the direction of the X - Y relationship is negative. The t-count value of 6.718 is greater than the t-table 0.67 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between X - Y is significant. The interpretation of this test is that the higher the role stressors, the lower the level of work attitude/outcome. The test results show that role stressors have a negative and significant effect on work attitudes or H1 is accepted.

4.7. Intragroup Conflicts on Work Attitudes

The test values of M -> Y are respectively: Original sample of -0.125, t-count of 1.188, p-value of 0.238. The positive original sample value indicates that the direction of the M - Y relationship is positive. The t-count value of 1.188 is greater than the t-table of 0.67 and the p-value of 0.238 is greater than 0.05 indicating that the relationship between M - Y is not significant. The interpretation of this test is that high intragroup conflict does not affect the level of work attitude/outcome. The test result value shows that intragroup conflict has a positive and insignificant effect on work attitudes or H2 is rejected.

4.8. Role Stressors on Intragroup Conflicts

The test value of X -> M is respectively: Original sample of -0.378, t-count of 3.508, p-value of 0.001. The positive original sample value indicates that the direction of the X - M relationship is positive. The t-count value of 3.508 is greater than the t-table of 0.67 and the p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between X - M is significant.

The interpretation of this test is that the higher the role stressors, the higher the level of intragroup conflict. The test results show that role stressors have a positive and significant effect on intragroup conflict or H3 is accepted.

4.9. Intragroup Conflicts Mediate Role Stressors on Work Attitudes

The test value of X → M → Y is respectively: Original sample of 0.039, t-count of 1.123, p-value of 0.264. The positive original sample value indicates that the direction of the X - M - Y mediation relationship is positive. Although the t-count value of 1.123 is greater than the t-table 0.67, the p-value of 0.264 is greater than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between X - M - Y is not significant. The interpretation of this test is that despite low or high intragroup conflict, it does not play a role in mediating the effect of role stressors on work attitude/outcome. The test result value shows that intragroup conflict does not mediate the effect of role stressors on work attitude/outcome or H4 is rejected.

5. Conclusion

This study develops previous research which states that Role Stressors have a direct influence and indirect influence on Work attitude and performance. This study uses the development of Work Attitude and performance variables by combining several dimensions consisting of measurement items. This research has implications for institutions that want to improve employee work attitude and performance. This study provides a general and detailed description of employee perceptions of role stressors, intragroup conflict and work attitude performance experienced by employees.

This study provides information about the effect of high and low role stressors experienced by employees with high and low work attitude and performance of employees in educational institutions. This research can be used as the basis for educational institutions in overcoming and managing possible conflicts that occur to maintain the level of work attitude and performance of employees.

This study has several limitations that should be conveyed for improvement in future studies. This research was conducted at one time (cross sectional). If the research is conducted over a long period of time, it may have different results. This study uses a specific population, namely contract employees at educational institutions.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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