

## TRAPPED BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS: INVESTIGATING THE INDIRECT EFFECTS OF ROLE CONFLICT AND AMBIGUITY ON TURNOVER INTENTIONS VIA EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyse the indirect influence of role conflict and role ambiguity on the intention to leave work, with emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable, among educators and administrative staff at the Bina Insan Mulia Islamic boarding school. This study is based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model and Role Stress Theory, which are used to understand how psychological stress resulting from unclear or conflicting roles can lead to emotional exhaustion and ultimately increase an individual's desire to leave the institution. Data were collected through the distribution of a structured questionnaire to 147 respondents, selected using convenience sampling. Data processing and analysis were conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. The analysis results indicate that role conflict has a significant direct effect on turnover intention, while role ambiguity does not have a direct effect but influences turnover intention indirectly through emotional exhaustion. The findings also reveal that emotional exhaustion is the strongest predictor of turnover intention among all the variables studied. This study highlights the importance of managing role clarity and emotional well-being in the pesantren environment, where staff face complex multidimensional demands. The practical implications of these findings include the need for role clarification strategies, structured work communication systems, and emotional support programmes for staff. In addition to contributing to the limited empirical literature on role stress in religious-based educational institutions, this study also offers practical recommendations for improving staff retention and psychological resilience in pesantren settings in a sustainable manner

**Keywords:** Role conflict, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, turnover intention, pesantren.

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### INTRODUCTION

In organisational behaviour studies, an individual's intention to resign, known as turnover intention, is an initial response to chronic work pressure that disrupts psychological stability and role clarity. This phenomenon is particularly significant in the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, where educators and administrative staff are required to perform diverse roles, not only as teachers and administrators but also as spiritual guides. The complexity of these roles creates a high potential for role stress, which can negatively impact work well-being.

Role conflict arises when individuals face conflicting demands from various parties, such as superiors, colleagues, students, or religious authorities. This inconsistency creates psychological tension, task confusion, and reduced role effectiveness (Kalra et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2024). On the other hand, role ambiguity refers to uncertainty regarding job responsibilities, performance evaluation standards, or decision-making authority, which can lead to a lack of confidence, uncertainty, and reduced job satisfaction (Ntopi, 2019).

The internal impact of prolonged role stress is emotional exhaustion, a condition where individuals experience deep psychological fatigue, loss of emotional energy, and decreased enthusiasm for work. Unlike physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion stems from psychological

pressure that exceeds an individual's capacity to cope (Shah et al., 2022). This condition often triggers dysfunctional behaviour such as emotional withdrawal, decreased motivation, and even the intention to leave the organisation.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, turnover intention is understood as the conscious intention of employees to end their employment. This phenomenon serves as an early indicator of potential human resource loss that could disrupt the continuity of the educational process (Saleh et al., 2023; Varshney, 2014). Therefore, understanding the mechanisms leading to the emergence of intentions to quit is crucial, especially in work environments that demand high emotional and spiritual engagement. Although the relationship between role stress and turnover has been extensively studied in secular and corporate organisational contexts (Tayyab & Shareef, 2025), research in religious-based institutions such as Islamic boarding schools remains limited. Most of the theoretical frameworks used have not fully considered the unique characteristics of these institutions, such as role diversity and informal management systems.

This study aims to address this literature gap by examining the influence of role conflict and ambiguity on turnover intentions through the mediation of emotional exhaustion. Using the Role Stress Theory (House & Rizzo, 1972) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), this study contributes both theoretically and practically. This study proposes that emotional exhaustion is the primary internal mechanism linking unclear or conflicting role expectations to turnover intentions. Through empirical evidence from religious-based educational institutions, this research offers strategic recommendations regarding role clarity and emotional regulation to enhance workforce retention in pesantren settings.

This research brings new ideas to the study of how organizations work by looking at how role stress, emotional exhaustion, and the desire to leave a job are connected in religious schools, especially pesantren in Indonesia. While many studies have looked at how role stress affects turnover intention in regular businesses, this research is important because it examines these issues in unique settings like pesantren, which have different roles, spiritual aspects, and informal management styles. The new idea in this study comes from combining two main theories, Role Stress Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, to show how feeling emotionally drained is connected to wanting to leave a job through role conflict and confusion. This study takes a comprehensive look at what causes people to want to leave their jobs, highlighting emotional exhaustion as the main factor that hasn't been thoroughly explored in religious education settings. By gathering real-world data from pesantren settings, this research helps create management strategies that are tailored to the specific context, aiming to strengthen the workforce's ability to cope and ensure the ongoing educational process in religious institutions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

### Role Conflict and Turnover Intention

Role conflict occurs when employees face incompatible demands from different role senders, such as supervisors, coworkers, or organizational structures. This misalignment creates tension and emotional strain, which can reduce work satisfaction and commitment (Asfahani, 2022). In today's complex and multitasking workplaces, employees often juggle several overlapping responsibilities, especially in organizations that emphasize both administrative and moral duties, such as educational or religious institutions.

Empirical research indicates that role conflict has a significant positive correlation with the intention to leave the organisation. When individuals feel trapped in conflicting expectations, work motivation tends to decline and the desire to remain in the organisation weakens (Kalra et al., 2023). Repeated exposure to this role tension can trigger psychological withdrawal, which ultimately increases the likelihood of seeking alternative employment.

***H1: Role conflict has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention***

### **Role Ambiguity and Turnover Intention**

Role ambiguity refers to a condition of uncertainty in work expectations, goals to be achieved, or the limits of responsibility held by individuals within an organisation. This uncertainty makes it difficult for employees to set work priorities, evaluate performance, and predict expected outcomes, leading to confusion and frustration (Alblihed & Alzghaibi, 2022). Factors such as ineffective communication from leadership and the absence of formal job descriptions are the primary causes of role ambiguity.

Several recent studies have confirmed that role ambiguity is a significant predictor of intention to leave a job. Research by Unguren and Arslan (2021) shows that role ambiguity can increase cognitive stress and reduce affective commitment, thereby increasing the likelihood of individuals leaving the organisation. Role ambiguity also weakens perceptions of organisational support, which ultimately affects employee loyalty.

***H2: Role ambiguity has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.***

### **Role Conflict and Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is a state of psychological fatigue that arises from prolonged work stress, in which individuals feel emotionally drained and lose the energy to perform professional tasks. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) approach, role conflict is categorised as a primary work demand that can lead to burnout, particularly in the form of emotional exhaustion (Maunder et al., 2021). Employees who are constantly faced with conflicting expectations tend to expend emotional energy to adjust to these demands, which ultimately leads to exhaustion.

Recent studies support this relationship. (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) demonstrated that healthcare workers who experienced high levels of role conflict also reported increased emotional exhaustion. This finding aligns with other organizational contexts, such as education and hospitality, where unclear or conflicting expectations are routine.

***H3: Role conflict has a positive and significant effect on emotional exhaustion.***

### **Role Ambiguity and Emotional Exhaustion**

Similar to role conflict, role ambiguity is also a major cause of emotional exhaustion. Uncertainty in work roles causes chronic psychological stress because employees do not have clear references in carrying out their duties (Jung et al., 2022). The absence of guidance or structural support makes individuals feel incompetent and lose control, thereby draining their emotional resources.

(Ferdinando et al., n.d.) shows that during remote work periods, role ambiguity significantly increases burnout symptoms, particularly in sectors with minimal managerial communication. This effect is consistent across various demographics, underscoring the importance of role clarity in preventing emotional exhaustion.

***H4: Role ambiguity has a positive and significant effect on emotional exhaustion.***

### **Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention**

Emotional exhaustion has long been recognised as a key determinant of turnover intentions. According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals tend to withdraw from their work environment to protect their remaining psychological and emotional resources. When emotional exhaustion reaches a high level, employees feel unable to continue their work effectively and consider quitting as an escape strategy (Atalay et al., 2022).

Recent research reinforces this perspective. (Jung et al., 2022) supports this argument by showing that emotional exhaustion significantly increases resignation intentions among service sector workers in Korea. The inability to recover emotional energy is the main factor driving exit behaviour.

***H5: Emotional exhaustion has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.***

### Emotional Exhaustion as a Mediator

The mediating role of emotional exhaustion has been widely examined in stress–strain models. Emotional exhaustion explains how role-related stressors influence behavioral outcomes like turnover. In this model, emotional exhaustion acts as a bridge between role conflict/ambiguity and turnover intention.

Empirical studies support this mediating effect. (Unguren & Arslan, 2021) demonstrated that emotional exhaustion partially mediated the relationship between role stressors and turnover among frontline employees. This suggests that mitigating emotional exhaustion could buffer the negative impact of role stress on organizational outcomes.

***H6: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between role conflict and turnover intention.***

***H7: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention.***

### RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyse the indirect influence of role conflict and role ambiguity on intention to leave work, with emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable. The study was conducted in West Java, with a specific focus on Pesantren Bina Insan Mulia, an Islamic educational institution known for its integration of formal education and spiritual guidance. The selection of this location was based on the complexity of the work structure at the pesantren, where educators and administrative staff perform various overlapping roles, both in academic, managerial, and religious dimensions. This uniqueness makes the pesantren an ideal environment for testing the phenomenon of role stress and its consequences on turnover intentions.

#### Population and Sample

The population in this study included all educators and administrative staff at the Bina Insan Mulia Islamic boarding school, which numbered 202 people at the beginning of 2025. Based on (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) table, the minimum number of respondents required for this population was 132 people. This study successfully collected data from 147 respondents, exceeding the recommended minimum limit. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling, which involves selecting respondents based on ease of access and their willingness to participate. This technique was chosen because the entire population was located in a centralised location, allowing the data collection process to be conducted efficiently without compromising the representativeness of the organisational context.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires that were distributed directly to respondents in the pesantren environment. Prior to distribution, coordination was carried out with the pesantren's internal administrative unit to ensure ethical approval and smooth distribution of the instruments. Data collection was carried out in May 2025. All respondents participated voluntarily and their identities were kept confidential. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested at an early stage with the involvement of an internal validation team.

#### Measurement of Variables

All variables in this study were measured using previously validated instruments, adapted to the pesantren context, and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The operationalization of each variable is as follows: Role Conflict was measured using four dimensions: (1) *Person-role conflict*, referring to a misalignment between personal values and institutional demands; (2) *Intrasender conflict*, which captures inconsistencies in expectations from the same authority figure; (3) *Interrole conflict*, involving competing demands from multiple roles (e.g., teacher and administrator); and (4) *Conflicting expectations and*

*organizational demands*, highlighting structural contradictions in the pesantren's functional requirements. Role Ambiguity was assessed through four indicators adapted from organizational role theory: (1) *Clarity of responsibilities*, measuring how well job duties are defined; (2) *Clarity of evaluation criteria*, gauging understanding of how performance is assessed; (3) *Clarity of time allocation*, examining whether role expectations include clear time boundaries; and (4) *Clarity of authority and role objectives*, referring to how well the staff understands their authority and institutional goals. Emotional Exhaustion, the mediating variable, was measured using three symptom categories: (1) *Cognitive symptoms*, including forgetfulness or difficulty concentrating due to stress; (2) *Emotional symptoms*, such as feeling emotionally drained or apathetic; and (3) *Social-interactive symptoms*, including withdrawal from coworkers or reduced interpersonal engagement. Turnover Intention was operationalized with three indicators: (1) *Thinking of quitting*, reflecting the cognitive aspect of resignation considerations; (2) *Intention to search for alternatives*, indicating active efforts to find new job opportunities; and (3) *Intention to leave*, representing the behavioral tendency to exit the organization. Each construct was measured using items that had been validated in prior studies and demonstrated strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and construct validity.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS version 4.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it can accommodate complex models and test latent constructs even with relatively small to medium sample sizes. The analysis process involved evaluating both the measurement model (indicator validity, composite reliability, and AVE) and the structural model (path coefficients, R-squared, and effect sizes). Significance tests were conducted using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples to ensure stable and robust parameter estimates. Additionally, interaction effects were tested to examine the potential moderating influence within the model.

This methodological approach enables researchers to comprehensively uncover the psychological dynamics resulting from role stress and identify causal pathways influencing turnover intentions in religious-based educational settings. The analysis results are expected to contribute to the development of more adaptive and contextual human resource management strategies in Islamic boarding schools.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Respondent Demographic Profile

This study involved a total of 147 respondents from Pesantren Bina Insan Mulia, consisting of educators and administrative staff. To gain a clearer understanding of the sample characteristics, demographic data were analyzed based on gender, age, education background, and Length of Service. The majority of respondents were female (63.27%), which indicates that women dominate the staffing composition at Pesantren Bina Insan Mulia. This gender distribution may reflect organizational practices that place female educators and staff in central roles, potentially influencing how role stress and emotional dynamics are experienced in daily activities. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in the following table:

Table1: Gender, Age, Length of Service, and Educational Background of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	54	36.7%
	Female	93	63.3%
Age	15–20 years	35	23.81%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Length of Service	21–25 years	97	65.99%
	25–30 years	15	10.20%
	Less 1 years	35	23.81%
Length of Service	1–3 years	97	65.99%
	4–6 years	15	10.20%
	Education	SMA/SLTA	121
Education	S1 (Bachelor)	26	17.69%

Based on the collected data, the majority of respondents at Pesantren Bina Insan Mulia were female (63.3%), while male respondents comprised 36.7%. In terms of age distribution, most participants were between 21 and 25 years old (65.99%), followed by those aged 15–20 years (23.81%), and a smaller portion aged 25–30 years (10.20%). Regarding their length of service as cadres, 65.99% had served for 1–3 years, indicating that most respondents were in the mid-stage of their organizational tenure. Additionally, 23.81% had less than one year of experience, and only 10.20% had served for 4–6 years. In terms of educational background, the majority held a high school diploma (SMA/SLTA) (82.31%), while 17.69% were bachelor's degree holders. These demographic characteristics suggest that the respondents are predominantly young, relatively early in their careers, and primarily educated at the secondary level, which may influence their susceptibility to role-related stress and emotional exhaustion.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the help of SmartPLS software. According to (J. Hair et al., 2022), PLS-SEM is suitable for predictive research models and is widely used in exploratory studies, especially when the research model involves complex relationships and is supported by a relatively small to medium sample size. This method allows researchers to assess both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) to evaluate the reliability, validity, and significance of hypothesized relationships.

### Validity Test

The validity test aims to determine how accurately the research instrument measures the intended constructs (J. Hair et al., 2022). In SmartPLS, construct validity is assessed using two approaches: convergent validity and discriminant validity.

### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each indicator on its respective latent construct. According to (J. F. Hair et al., 2014), an indicator is considered to have adequate convergent validity if its outer loading is  $\geq 0.70$ , indicating that the item sufficiently reflects the underlying construct. In the first stage of testing, most indicators from the constructs of role conflict, role ambiguity, and emotional exhaustion showed outer loading values below the threshold of 0.70. This indicates that these indicators were not adequately representing the intended constructs, thus requiring model refinement through the removal of low-loading items.

Table 2. Outer Loadings

Variabel	Indikator	Loading factor	Conclusion
Role Conflict	RC 1	0,922	Valid
	RC 2	0,861	Valid
	RC 3	0,757	Valid
	RC 4	0,910	Valid
	RC 5	0,922	Valid

Variabel	Indikator	Loading factor	Conclusion
	RC 6	0,926	Valid
	RC 7	0,926	Valid
	RC 8	0,865	Valid
	RC 9	0,797	Valid
	RC 10	0,861	Valid
Role Ambiguity	RA 1	0,851	Valid
	RA 2	0,809	Valid
	RA 3	0,750	Valid
	RA 4	0,700	Valid
	RA 5	0,740	Valid
	RA 6	0,776	Valid
	RA 7	0,757	Valid
	RA 8	0,763	Valid
	RA 9	0,807	Valid
	RA 10	0,824	Valid
Emotional Exhaustion	EE 1	0,702	Valid
	EE 2	0,826	Valid
	EE 3	0,811	Valid
	EE 4	0,816	Valid
	EE 5	0,804	Valid
	EE 6	0,810	Valid
	EE 7	0,830	Valid
	EE 8	0,826	Valid
	EE 9	0,815	Valid
	EE 10	0,930	Valid
Turnover Intention	TI 1	0,826	Valid
	TI 2	0,805	Valid
	TI 3	0,857	Valid
	TI 4	0,892	Valid
	TI 5	0,803	Valid

Following the refinement process, the number of valid indicators for Role Conflict was reduced from 15 to 10, for Role Ambiguity from 15 to 10, and for Turnover Intention from 6 to 5. The constructs Role Conflict and Job Performance retained all of their original indicators, as each demonstrated acceptable loading values from the outset.

#### Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct were calculated to assess the proportion of variance that a latent variable captures from its indicators relative to the amount due to measurement error. According to (Fornell et al., 1981), an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity, signifying that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by the construct. This benchmark is also supported by (J. Hair et al., 2022), who argue that AVE is a robust criterion for confirming convergent validity in reflective measurement models.

As presented in Table 3, all constructs in this study show AVE values above the threshold of 0.50. This confirms that each construct sufficiently explains the variance of its observed variables and that the model meets the convergent validity criteria.

Table 3: Average Variance Extracted ( AVE )

Construct	AVE	Conclusion
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Role Conflict	0,670	Valid
Role Ambiguity	0,606	Valid
Emotional Exhaustion	0,768	Valid
Turnover Intention	0,701	Valid

These results strengthen the evidence that the retained measurement items effectively represent their respective latent constructs, providing a solid foundation for further structural model evaluation.

### Discriminant Validity

#### Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity is considered achieved when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (diagonal value) is greater than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell et al., 1981). The table below presents the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion:

Table 4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	EE	RA	RC	TI
EE	0,819			
RA	0,487	0,779		
RC	0,452	0,680	0,876	
TI	0,843	0,513	0,529	0,837

Based on the Fornell-Larcker table, discriminant validity is achieved when the square root of the AVE (diagonal value) is greater than the correlations with other constructs. The results show that Role Ambiguity (RA) and Role Conflict (RC) meet this criterion. Their AVE values (0.779 and 0.876) are higher than their correlations with other constructs, indicating that their indicators adequately represent the intended constructs.

However, for Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Turnover Intention (TI), the correlation between the two (0.843) exceeds their AVE values (0.819 and 0.837, respectively). This suggests an overlap between the constructs and indicates a lack of clear discriminant validity. Therefore, only RA and RC demonstrate strong discriminant validity, while EE and TI require further evaluation.

### Cross Loading

Discriminant validity was also examined through cross loading analysis, where each indicator must have the highest loading on its intended construct compared to other constructs. The following is a sample of the cross loading analysis results for several key indicators:

Table 5: Cross Loading

Indikator	EE	RA	RC	TI
EE1	0,702	0,370	0,399	0,793
EE2	0,826	0,503	0,413	0,795
EE3	0,811	0,368	0,238	0,554
EE4	0,816	0,371	0,236	0,547
EE5	0,804	0,469	0,461	0,868
EE6	0,810	0,377	0,437	0,677
EE6	0,830	0,362	0,428	0,681
EE7	0,826	0,370	0,271	0,553
EE8	0,815	0,368	0,238	0,554
EE9	0,826	0,365	0,442	0,693
EE10	0,930	0,851	0,460	0,345
RA1	0,353	0,824	0,512	0,470

Indikator	EE	RA	RC	TI
RA2	0,462	0,809	0,591	0,481
RA3	0,306	0,750	0,501	0,372
RA4	0,296	0,700	0,646	0,361
RA5	0,222	0,740	0,507	0,301
RA6	0,332	0,776	0,453	0,411
RA7	0,370	0,757	0,498	0,453
RA8	0,506	0,763	0,597	0,355
RA9	0,392	0,807	0,527	0,384
RA10	0,443	0,611	0,922	0,388
RC1	0,378	0,571	0,861	0,554
RC2	0,428	0,571	0,861	0,554
RC3	0,437	0,565	0,757	0,489
RC4	0,369	0,615	0,910	0,378
RC5	0,378	0,611	0,922	0,388
RC6	0,382	0,608	0,926	0,394
RC7	0,382	0,608	0,926	0,394
RC8	0,407	0,569	0,865	0,532
RC9	0,317	0,620	0,797	0,461
RC10	0,428	0,507	0,427	0,826
TI1	0,652	0,375	0,416	0,805
TI2	0,712	0,457	0,468	0,857
TI3	0,788	0,414	0,466	0,892
TI4	0,705	0,397	0,435	0,803
TI5	0,661	0,370	0,399	0,793

The cross loading analysis shows that indicators for RA, RC, and TI have the highest loadings on their respective constructs, indicating good discriminant validity. However, the indicator EE4 in the EE construct shows a higher loading on TI (0.868) than on EE (0.816), suggesting potential construct overlap. Overall, discriminant validity is established, except for a few EE indicators that require further evaluation.

### Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement model. Two main indicators were used: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's Alpha is a traditional measure of internal consistency, while Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) is considered a more accurate estimate of construct reliability, particularly in PLS-SEM models (J. Hair et al., 2022). A CR value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable, and values above 0.80 are deemed good to very good.

Table 6: Reliability Test

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$ )	Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ )	Conclusion
EE	0,945	0,945	0,945	Very good
RA	0,928	0,928	0,928	Very good
RC	0,966	0,966	0,966	Very good
TI	0,893	0,893	0,893	Good

Reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$ ), and  $\rho_c$  shows that all constructs exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70. EE, RA, and RC demonstrate very good reliability with values above 0.90, while TI shows good reliability with a value of 0.893. These results confirm that all constructs are internally consistent and reliable for further structural analysis.

**Structural Model Evaluation**

**Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )**

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous constructs. In this study, Turnover Intention and Emotional Exhaustion is the endogenous variable influenced by Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity.

Table 7: Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Emotional Exhaustion	0,264	0,254
Turnover Intention	0,740	0,734

The results show that 26.4% of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion is explained by Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity, which is considered weak. Meanwhile, 74.0% of the variance in Turnover Intention is explained by Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, and Emotional Exhaustion, indicating a strong level of explanatory power. This suggests that the model has good predictive ability for Turnover Intention.

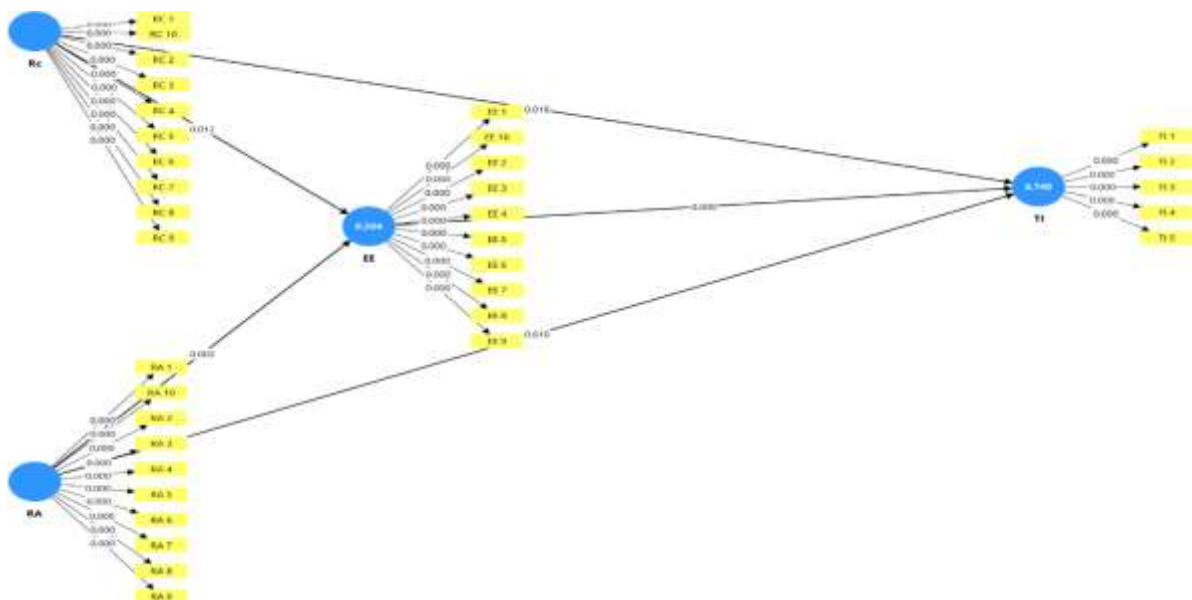


Figure 1. Bootstrapping

**Hypothesis Testing**

The following table summarizes the results of hypothesis testing based on path coefficients (beta), t-statistics, and p-values generated through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples in SmartPLS. A hypothesis is considered statistically supported (accepted) when  $p < 0.05$  and the t-value  $> 1.96$  (J. F. Hair et al., 2014).

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing

No	Hypothesis	Beta	t-Value	p-Value	Discussion
H1	RC -> TI	0,166	2.359	0.018	Accepted
H2	RA ->TI	0.035	0.511	0.610	Not Accepted

H3	RC-> EE	0.225	2.501	0.012	Accepted
H4	RA->EE	0.334	3.031	0.002	Accepted
H5	EE -> TI	0.752	17.205	0.000	Accepted
H6	RC -> EE->TI	0.169	2.399	0.016	Accepted
H7	RA -> EE ->TI	0.251	3.231	0.001	Accepted

**Note:** Decision is based on  $t$  -value > 1.96 and  $p$ -value < 0.05 (significant at 95% confidence level).

Based on the Hypothesis Testing Results, the following interpretations can be made:

1. RC → TI: Role Conflict (RC) significantly influences turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 2.359 and a p-value of 0.018, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of conflict in roles increase the tendency of individuals to consider leaving their job.
2. RA → TI: Role Ambiguity (RA) to influence turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 0.511 and a p-value of 0.610, which is not significant. This suggests that its influence may be mediated by another variable, such as Emotional Exhaustion.
3. RC → EE: Role Conflict (RC) significantly influences emotional exhaustion, with a t-statistic of 2.501 and a p-value of 0.012, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of conflict in roles increase role conflict contributes to higher levels of emotional exhaustion.
4. RA → EE: Role Ambiguity (RA) significantly influences emotional exhaustion, with a t-statistic of 3.031 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating a strong positive relationship. Unclear job roles tend to increase an individual's emotional fatigue.
5. EE → TI: Emotional Exhaustion (EE) significantly influences turnover intention, with a t-statistic of 17.205 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive relationship. The higher the emotional exhaustion experienced by an individual, the more likely they are to intend to leave the organization.
6. RC -> EE->TI : This result indicates that the indirect effect of Role Conflict (RC) on Turnover Intention (TI) through Emotional Exhaustion (EE) is statistically significant. with a t-statistic of 2.399 and a p-value of 0.016,we can conclude that Emotional Exhaustion significantly mediates the relationship between Role Conflict and Turnover Intention.
7. RA -> EE ->TI : This result indicates that the indirect effect of Role Ambiguity (RA) on Turnover Intention (TI) through Emotional Exhaustion (EE) is statistically significant. with a t-statistic of 3.231 and a p-value of 0.001, this confirms that Gamma is a strong mediator in the relationship between Beta and Turnover Intention.

## Finding and Discussion

This study aims to explore the relationships between role conflict (RC), role ambiguity (RA), and turnover intention (TI), with emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable. The hypothesis testing results reveal several important findings regarding these relationships and their impact within Islamic boarding school-based education.

### Role Conflict and Turnover Intention

In the context of pesantren, the multiple roles undertaken by teachers and staff—as educators, administrators, and spiritual mentors, often give rise to role conflict. The results of this

study indicate that role conflict has a significant direct effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.166$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ). This finding aligns with the *Role Stress Theory* proposed by (House & Rizzo, 1972), which explains that role conflict emerges when individuals face incompatible expectations from various sources, leading to psychological strain and reduced job satisfaction. (Toscano & Zappalà, 2020) found that persistent role tension can diminish motivation and organizational engagement, thereby increasing employees' intention to leave. Implementing a *role clarification* strategy is essential. Pesantren leaders should develop clear and explicit job descriptions that distinguish between administrative, educational, and spiritual responsibilities. Time management training and priority-based task delegation are also recommended to reduce overlapping duties and enhance work focus. These interventions can help alleviate role conflict and improve job satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2014).

#### **Role Ambiguity to Turnover Intention and Emotional Exhaustion as a Mediator.**

Although role ambiguity does not have a direct effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.035$ ,  $p = 0.610$ ), this study shows that it significantly increases emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = 0.334$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), which in turn contributes to turnover intention through a mediating pathway ( $\beta = 0.251$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This finding underscores the importance of emotional strain as a psychological mechanism that connects unclear job roles with employees' desire to leave. According to the *Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model* (Bakker et al., 2014), role ambiguity functions as a job demand that—when not balanced by sufficient resources—can drain emotional energy and result in burnout. Empirical studies by (Unguren & Arslan, 2021) and (Xu et al., 2024) confirm that unclear job expectations amplify stress responses and weaken organizational commitment, especially in educational institutions. Pesantren institutions should implement a *structured communication system*, including daily task agendas, written role guidelines, and weekly briefings. These systems help clarify job expectations and reduce uncertainty. Based on the JD-R framework, these role demands must be balanced with *job resources*, such as clear organizational structure and communicative leadership, to prevent emotional exhaustion. In addition, regular *role audits* can be conducted to identify and correct ambiguous or overlapping responsibilities, ensuring long-term role clarity and psychological stability for staff.

#### **Role Conflict and Emotional Exhaustion**

Role conflict also contributes significantly to emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = 0.225$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). In the pesantren context, staff are frequently subjected to layered emotional demands arising from the expectations of supervisors, students (santri), parents, and fellow colleagues. These multiple and often conflicting sources of pressure intensify emotional strain and lead to psychological fatigue. According to the *Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model* (Bakker et al., 2014), persistent exposure to conflicting role demands constitutes a job demand that drains emotional resources, especially when staff must navigate overlapping responsibilities without adequate support. Empirical evidence by (Purnomo et al., 2021) further confirms that unresolved role conflict significantly increases burnout levels across various organizational settings, including education. Pesantren institutions should establish *emotional support programs*, such as weekly reflection forums, in-house counseling services, or peer discussion groups among teaching staff (asatidz). These platforms allow individuals to express and process emotional challenges in a safe and supportive environment. In line with the JD-R Model, reducing role conflict can also be achieved through *delegation of responsibilities* and *task rotation*, which help distribute workload more evenly and minimize chronic emotional strain. These strategies not only mitigate exhaustion but also foster stronger emotional engagement with the institution.

#### **Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention**

Emotional exhaustion is the strongest predictor of turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.752$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In the context of pesantren, emotional fatigue significantly undermines work engagement, organizational loyalty, and spiritual motivation core values that define the identity and sustainability

of religious educational institutions. This finding aligns with the *Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory* (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals are motivated to preserve their limited psychological and emotional resources. When these resources are depleted due to chronic stress, employees tend to withdraw behaviorally and cognitively from their roles. Studies by (Yang et al., 2025) reinforce that emotional exhaustion is a major antecedent of resignation in educational sectors, as it erodes the capacity for sustained engagement and job satisfaction. The solution is that pesantren leadership should introduce *well-being interventions*, such as monthly quiet days, designated mental health days, and spiritually enriching activities (e.g., retreats, *muhasabah*, or collective *dzikir* sessions). These initiatives serve as critical *emotional and spiritual resources*, as defined in the *JD-R Model* (Bakker et al., 2014) that help replenish depleted reserves and counteract burnout. By fostering psychological recovery and spiritual renewal, these strategies not only reduce turnover intention but also strengthen long-term commitment and resilience among staff.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the influence of role conflict and role ambiguity on turnover intention, with emotional exhaustion serving as a mediating variable, within the unique educational context of a pesantren. Drawing on the Role Stress Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, the study aimed to explain how role-based stressors contribute to emotional strain and, ultimately, influence an individual's intention to leave their job. The introduction established the problem by emphasizing the challenges faced by pesantren educators who often bear multiple roles, educational, spiritual, and administrative, without formal role boundaries. This structural ambiguity and potential for conflict were hypothesized to affect their emotional well-being and intention to remain in the institution. The literature review substantiated the theoretical basis for expecting that both role conflict and role ambiguity would lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn would be positively associated with turnover intention.

The findings confirmed that role conflict has a direct and significant positive impact on turnover intention, while role ambiguity does not directly influence turnover intention but has an indirect effect through emotional exhaustion. Both role conflict and role ambiguity were shown to significantly increase emotional exhaustion, which emerged as the strongest predictor of turnover intention among all variables tested. The discussion highlighted emotional exhaustion as the central mediating mechanism. Emotional fatigue serves as a psychological bridge linking role stressors to withdrawal intentions, suggesting that employee turnover in pesantren settings is not merely a function of job structure, but of emotional depletion. This insight emphasizes the importance of fostering emotional resilience and clarity in role expectations.

The implications for practice include the need for institutional reforms that focus on role clarity, improved communication, and the integration of emotional well-being programs. Leaders must be trained to manage overlapping demands and provide psychological support systems to mitigate emotional exhaustion. However, the study is not without limitations. Its findings are based on a single institution, limiting generalizability. Moreover, the cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data constrain the ability to draw causal conclusions. Future research should incorporate longitudinal approaches, diversify institutional samples, and explore additional mediators such as job satisfaction or spiritual fatigue.

In conclusion, this study contributes valuable insights into the psychosocial dynamics of turnover intention in religious educational institutions. By emphasizing the mediating role of emotional exhaustion, it provides a deeper understanding of how role-related stressors can erode employee commitment. These findings underscore the urgent need for integrated role and emotional management strategies to support the sustainability of pesantren-based education.

## Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have several practical implications, particularly for educational institutions with complex organizational structures like pesantren. First, leaders and administrators

must recognize the detrimental effects of unresolved role conflict and ambiguity, especially in environments where staff are expected to perform multiple overlapping roles. Role conflict was found to directly increase turnover intention, and both role conflict and ambiguity significantly contributed to emotional exhaustion, which in turn emerged as the strongest predictor of turnover intention.

Institutions should implement role clarification strategies by providing clear job descriptions, structured communication protocols, and defined authority hierarchies. Doing so can reduce confusion and overlapping demands, thereby minimizing emotional exhaustion. Regular role audits and feedback loops can help identify areas of conflict and ambiguity early on.

Furthermore, staff wellness programs aimed at emotional resilience and burnout prevention should be integrated into institutional policies. Providing access to counseling services, mentoring, and emotional support networks may mitigate the psychological impact of excessive demands. Since emotional exhaustion is a critical mediator, targeted interventions to manage emotional fatigue can significantly reduce the risk of employee turnover. Lastly, pesantren leaders should prioritize managerial training that balances spiritual, educational, and administrative roles, equipping leaders with strategies to delegate tasks and reduce cognitive and emotional overload among their staff.

### Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single pesantren institution in West Java, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational or religious-based settings. While the total sampling method ensured a full representation of staff roles, broader sampling across multiple institutions would enhance external validity. Second, the study relies solely on self-reported data using a cross-sectional design, which introduces the potential for common method bias and restricts causal inference. Longitudinal studies are recommended to capture changes in role perceptions and emotional exhaustion over time, and to better establish causal relationships. Third, although emotional exhaustion was analyzed as a mediating variable, other psychological constructs such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or spiritual fatigue may also influence the path between role stress and turnover intention. Future research should explore additional mediators and moderators, including personality traits (e.g., resilience), job resources, and organizational culture.

Lastly, the cultural and religious context of pesantren poses unique dynamics that may not be present in secular organizations. Therefore, comparative studies between pesantren and other educational institutions (e.g., public schools, private universities) could offer a more comprehensive understanding of role stress in different organizational cultures.

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