



The Influence of Role Stressor on Negative Affect with Proactive Personality as a Moderating Variable in Civil Servants after Bureaucratic Simplification in Regional Government “X”

Agung Setyawan¹, Purbudi Wahyuni^{1*}, Sri Dwi Ari Ambarwati¹

¹*Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

*Corresponding Email: purbudi.wahyuni@upnyk.ac.id

Abstract

This study investigated the effects of role stressors consisting of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload on negative affect among civil servants in Local Government “X” after bureaucratic simplification and role equalization. The study further explored the moderating role of proactive personality in this relationship. A survey of 70 civil servants, selected using proportional stratified random sampling, provided the primary data, which were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results revealed that all three role stressors significantly contributed to negative affect. Proactive personality showed a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between role overload and negative affect ($\beta = 0.122, p < 0.05$), indicating that proactive individuals may experience increased negative emotions when faced with excessive workload. However, proactive personality did not moderate the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on negative affect. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address workload-related stress in bureaucratic transformation.

Keywords: Proactive personality, role stressor, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload.

1. Introduction

Bureaucratic simplification has become a cornerstone of public sector governance reform, aimed at creating a more dynamic, professional, and efficient administrative system (Tumanggor & Wibowo, 2021). This reform, often involving the equalization of structural and functional positions, seeks to reduce hierarchical barriers while fostering a streamlined and results-oriented bureaucracy. However, this transformation introduces significant changes to work procedures, responsibilities, and relationships among civil servants. These changes frequently result in role ambiguities, competency misalignments, and anxieties associated with performance evaluation systems based on credit scores (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Furthermore, the shift from managerial roles to functional positions often erodes hierarchical authority while maintaining substantial responsibilities, creating a challenging dynamic for civil servants (Watson & Clark, 1984; Y. Zhang et al., 2019). Consequently, individuals undergoing position equalization frequently experience role stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, which may induce negative affect (Carnes, 2017).

Negative affect refers to a range of adverse emotional states, including anxiety, frustration, and dissatisfaction, often triggered by work-related stressors (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Hosseini & Homayuni, 2022). The emergence of negative affect among civil servants not only impairs their well-being but also potentially undermines the effectiveness of public service delivery. Given the critical role civil servants play in implementing government policies, understanding the factors contributing to negative affect is imperative. Furthermore, it is essential to explore mechanisms that could buffer the adverse effects of role stressors (Vandenberghe et al., 2011). Proactive personality, defined as an individual's tendency to anticipate and act on future challenges, may serve as a moderating variable. Individuals with a proactive personality generally exhibit enhanced coping mechanisms and resilience, enabling them to manage workplace stress more effectively (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). However, proactive individuals might also experience greater frustration when faced with uncontrollable or restrictive work environments (Park & DeFrank, 2018).

The urgency of this study lies in its contribution to addressing the psychological and organizational challenges faced by civil servants amidst bureaucratic reforms. The findings can guide policy makers in designing interventions that mitigate the adverse effects of role stressors, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of bureaucratic simplification efforts. Understanding the interplay between role stressors, negative affect, and proactive personality will provide actionable insights into managing the human aspects of bureaucratic transformation.

This study aims to examine the extent to which role stressors influence the development of negative affect among civil servants who have undergone position equalization in Regional Government "X." Additionally, this research investigates whether proactive personality moderates the relationship between role stressors and negative affect. By focusing on these variables, the study seeks to fill the existing research gap in understanding the psychological implications of bureaucratic reforms in the public sector.

The findings of this study are expected to offer practical and theoretical contributions. Practically, it will assist regional governments in devising strategies to support civil servants during bureaucratic transformations. Theoretically, the study will enrich the body of knowledge on role stressors, proactive personality, and their impacts on emotional well-being, particularly within the context of public sector governance. Such insights are pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of reform initiatives and the welfare of civil servants, ultimately contributing to improved public service delivery.

2. Method

This study adopts a quantitative research design with a survey methodology to examine the influence of role stressors on negative affect, with proactive personality as a moderating variable. The population of the study comprises 242 civil servants in Regional Government "X" who experienced the transition from structural to functional positions as part of bureaucratic simplification. Using a proportionate stratified random sampling method, 70 respondents were selected to ensure representation across different administrative strata. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire, which included validated scales to measure role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, negative affect, and proactive personality. The questionnaire was distributed directly to the respondents, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

The research employs primary data collected during the post-reform period, capturing the real-time psychological and professional experiences of civil servants (Ghozali, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019). To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted prior to full-scale data collection. The validity assessment involved confirmatory factor analysis, while reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha values for each construct.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the characteristics of the research variables. For hypothesis testing, Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was employed to evaluate both direct and moderating effects within the research framework (Hair, Joseph et al., 2019). This approach ensures robustness in assessing complex relationships while accommodating potential non-normality in the data. All analyses were conducted using the latest statistical software to enhance precision and reproducibility.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive statistics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal an equal gender distribution, with 50% male and 50% female. The majority of respondents fall within the 41–45 age range (35.70%), representing a demographic likely to have established family responsibilities and job stability. Furthermore, 78.60% of respondents possess a master's degree, indicating a strong educational background that equips them to adapt to functional roles. Before equalization, most respondents held Echelon IV structural positions, with 91.4% transitioning to functional roles at the Young Expert level post-equalization. This reflects the focus of equalization efforts at the mid-management level.

The analysis of tenure indicates that 61.4% of respondents had held their structural roles for 1–5 years prior to equalization, while 57.1% of respondents had total tenure as civil servants of 11–20 years. This disparity between structural role tenure and overall service suggests that respondents might not have had sufficient time to fully consolidate their structural roles before transitioning to functional positions, which could influence their adaptation process and perceptions of role changes.

3.2 Validity and Reliability

This study investigates five variables: negative affect (Y), role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and proactive personality (Z). According to respondents' assessments, the average value of the proactive personality (Y) variable is elevated, suggesting that employees generally exhibit a very proactive disposition. The mean value of respondents' perceptions regarding role conflict and role ambiguity indicates a low rating, suggesting that the majority of employees perceive their tasks and responsibilities as quite clear following the streamlining of bureaucracy. Simultaneously, the mean value of respondents' judgments of the job overload variable indicates a substantial level, suggesting that certain employees have an excessive workload following the streamlining of bureaucracy. The mean value of respondents' views of negative affect reflects a low rating, suggesting that personnel impacted by bureaucratic simplification experience comparatively few unpleasant emotions.

Table 1. Mean Values, AVE, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Means	AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
Role Conflict	2.46	0.646	0.950	0.944
Role Ambiguity	2.51	0.549	0.948	0.938
Role Overload	2.60	0.696	0.948	0.937
Proactive Personality	3.59	0.614	0.964	0.961
Negative Affect	1.95	0.789	0.981	0.979

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, 2024

Validity and reliability assessments demonstrate that all constructs possess Cronbach's alpha values over 0.70, signifying that each variable is deemed reliable and appropriate for study application. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds 0.50, signifying adequate validity for each variable.

3.3 Correlation Among Variables

The subsequent testing phase entails evaluating the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, considering the parameter coefficients and the

significance of the t-statistic values. The assessment of path coefficients demonstrates the strength of the influence exerted by exogenous variables on endogenous variables. If the P-value is less than or equal to α , it is considered significant. Access the path coefficient value in the SmartPLS Bootstrapping report by selecting the path coefficient (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 2. Bootstrapping Results of Direct Effect

Path	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Description
Role Conflict -> Negative Affect	0.291	0.052	5.598	0.000	Accepted
Role Ambiguity -> Negative Affect	0.342	0.071	4.815	0.000	Accepted
Role Overload -> Negative Affect	0.425	0.066	6.392	0.000	Accepted

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, 2024

The analytical results in Table 2 demonstrate that role conflict significantly influences negative affect directly, as evidenced by a P-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Role ambiguity significantly influences negative affect, evidenced by a P-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Likewise, role overload substantially affects negative affect, yielding a P-value of 0.000 (<0.05).

Table 3. Bootstrapping Results of Effects

Path	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistic (O/STDEV)	P-value	Results
Proactive Personality x Role Conflict -> Negative Affect	0.047	0.053	0.893	0.372	Rejected
Proactive Personality x Role Ambiguity -> Negative Affect	0.016	0.064	0.255	0.799	Rejected
Proactive Personality x Role Overload -> Negative Affect	0.122	0.051	2.395	0.017	Accepted

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS, 2024

The bootstrap analysis results in Table 3 demonstrate the moderating effect of proactive personality on the association between role stressors and negative affect. The proactive personality moderates the link between role overload and negative affect, exhibiting a substantial positive effect ($\beta = 0.122$, $p < 0.05$). Nonetheless,

proactive personality does not influence the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity on negative affect.

3.4 Discussion

The findings indicated that role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload elicited negative emotions in employees following bureaucratic simplification. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) assert that high work pressure can induce emotional stress, adversely impacting psychological well-being. In this setting, role stressors serve as contributors to bad affect, particularly when individuals perceive themselves as incapable of fulfilling job obligations.

The discovery that role conflict and role ambiguity influence negative affect aligns with Kahn et al. (1964), which demonstrated that such factors might elevate job stress and diminish employee well-being. Furthermore, the substantial influence of role overload in this study corroborates the conclusions of Beehr et al. (1976), who asserted that excessive workload is a primary catalyst of job stress.

3.4.1 Role Conflict (X_1) and Negative Affect (Y)

Role conflict (X_1) exerts a positive and significant impact on negative affect (Y). This suggests that increased role conflict correlates with elevated negative affect among employees. The findings of this study align with the research conducted by (Hosseini & Homayuni, 2022), which identified a substantial positive correlation between role conflict and poor affect among nurses. Role conflict exacerbates anxiety and depression by heightening negative affect. Research by (Rukundo et al., 2020) established a positive correlation between role conflict and time pressure and poor affect among employees in China.

In the context of streamlining the bureaucracy within the Regional Government "X", despite the low average perception values of the two variables, the positive and significant correlation indicates that an increase in perceived role conflict corresponds with a heightened negative impact. Job Stress Theory posits that role conflict is a primary source of job stress (role stressor), potentially leading to psychological anguish and adverse emotions. Despite a modest level of role conflict, stress may still occur if individuals perceive an inability to fulfill expectations or encounter contradictory demands (Kahn et al., 1964).

3.4.2 Role Ambiguity (X_2) and Negative Affect (Y)

Role ambiguity (X_2) has a favorable and large impact on negative affect (Y). This suggests that increased role ambiguity correlates with elevated negative affect among employees. The findings of this study align with the research conducted by Zhang et al. (2019), which established a positive correlation between role ambiguity and

negative affect. Additionally, study conducted by (H. Zhang et al., 2023) demonstrated that role ambiguity is positively correlated with emotional weariness and work alienation, both of which are elements of negative affect, among nurses in China.

In the context of streamlining bureaucracy within the Regional Government "X", when linked to Kahn et al., (1964) Role Ambiguity Theory, low role ambiguity signifies that employees possess a clear comprehension of expectations, responsibilities, and interrelations among roles within the organization. Role ambiguity-induced stress is mitigated, lessening the effects of unpleasant emotions. Minimal perceived role ambiguity may correlate with a supportive work atmosphere and effective communication, hence diminishing the occurrence of negative affect.

3.4.3 Role Overload (X_3) and Negative Affect (Y)

Role overload (X_3) positively and dramatically affects negative affect (Y). Increased role overload correlates with heightened negative affect in the individual. The findings of this study correspond with the research conducted by (Y. Zhang et al., 2019), indicating that role overload positively affects negative affect. Maslach et al., (2001) assert that workload is directly correlated with the fatigue component of burnout. Macewen et al., (1992) discovered that role overload correlates favorably with anxiety, a facet of negative affect. This study's results corroborate the findings of Beehr et al., (1976), who identified work overload as a primary cause inducing occupational stress.

Lazarus & Folkman (1984) posits that role overload arises when job expectations surpass an individual's capabilities or resources. This elicits a stress reaction resulting in emotional tiredness, worry, and discontent, all of which constitute negative affect.

In the context of studies on Regional Government "X", the average feeling of role overload among respondents is moderate, signifying work-related pressure. The little level of negative affect suggests that individuals are adept at managing this strain, potentially through proficient coping mechanisms. Potential coping strategies encompass enhancing work efficiency through technology, such as utilizing online meeting platforms and assignment-related information systems to facilitate task execution; establishing work priorities to manage workload; seeking social support from colleagues to alleviate anxiety; and reframing the perception of workload as a challenge rather than a threat.

3.4.4 Proactive Personality (Z), Role Overload (X_3) and Negative Affect (Y)

The moderating effect of proactive personality suggests that persons with proactive traits are more susceptible to emotional impact when confronted with

heavy workloads. This finding aligns with Bateman & Crant (1993) research, indicating that persons possessing proactive personalities exhibit greater emotional engagement in demanding job settings. This impact suggests that proactive individuals are more prone to feeling overwhelmed when their expectations for handling the situation are not fulfilled.

The research findings in Regional Government “X” indicate that the simplification of bureaucracy has introduced new issues in the allocation of activities and responsibilities among public institutions. In this context, role overload frequently arises from the diminishment of hierarchical structures, resulting in an unequal distribution of workload. Proactive individuals often assume extra responsibilities to facilitate a seamless transition, hence heightening the likelihood of adverse emotional outcomes. Proactive individuals, when aligned with the SATRIYA organizational culture (Harmony, Noble character, Exemplarity, Willingness to serve, Innovation, Confidence, and Professional expertise), will feel obligated to embody these values, despite the resultant emotional strain.

4. Conclusion

This study determined that role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload significantly exacerbate negative affect in employees transitioning from structural to functional jobs following bureaucratic simplification. A proactive personality moderates the association between role overload and negative affect, but does not influence the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity. This study demonstrates that proactive personality can mitigate the association between role overload and bad affect, thereby enhancing the comprehension of personality characteristics in workplace stress management.

The conclusions indicate strategic implications for controlling role pressures that may lead to adverse impacts. Organizations must delineate staff roles and responsibilities while managing workloads efficiently by equilibrating job allocation to avert role overload. Enhancing job comprehension and fostering proactive personality development can assist employees in managing work-related stress and adapting to bureaucratic transformations. Organizations must cultivate organizational support and adeptly manage proactive individuals through career development initiatives and stress management training.

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