

COPING STRATEGIES OF MINISTERS IN DEALING WITH DUAL ROLE CONFLICTS AT THE GTDI CHURCH IN LUMBAN TONGATONGA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the dual role conflict experienced by church ministers, its impact on their ministry and work roles, and the coping strategies used to deal with this conflict. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects consisted of two church ministers at the Church of God in Indonesia (GTDI) Lumban Tonga-tonga who also had roles as professional workers and family members. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that dual role conflict manifested in the form of time constraints, emotional pressure, and differences in behavioural demands between work, church ministry, and family roles. This conflict has an impact on the effectiveness of ministry, work performance, and the psychological condition of the subjects. To overcome dual role conflict, the subjects developed various coping strategies, including time management, prioritisation, communication with relevant parties, social support from family and fellow ministers, and spiritual strengthening through prayer and reflection on faith. These coping strategies help subjects maintain role balance and continuity of service amid the various role demands they face. This study provides an understanding of the dynamics of dual role conflict among church ministers and the importance of coping strategies in maintaining balance between ministry, work, and family life.

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INTRODUCTION

Dual roles are a condition in which individuals perform two or more roles simultaneously in their social lives, which often have overlapping demands on time, energy, and responsibility. Dual roles reflect a person's involvement in various obligations that must be carried out simultaneously, thereby potentially causing psychological stress and

role conflict (Handayani & Pratama, 2022). In the context of church ministry, dual roles are becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, especially for church ministers who also have formal jobs outside of ministry.

Church ministers have a great responsibility in building the spiritual life of the congregation, managing ministry activities, and supporting the growth of the church organisation (Kusni, 2025). However, on the other hand, they are also required to fulfil their roles as professional workers, family members, and members of society. This situation often gives rise to dual role conflict, which is a situation where the demands of the various roles they play conflict with each other and are difficult to fulfil simultaneously. This role conflict is similar to the concept of work–family conflict, where the demands of work and personal life often clash (Putri & Pramudita, 2025).

Initial observations at the GTDI Church in Lumban Tonga-tonga Village show that most church ministers play dual roles as ministers and as professionals, such as educators, health workers, and workers in other fields. The high intensity of church activities, such as regular worship services, fellowship, ministry meetings, and special activities during religious occasions, often conflicts with formal work schedules. This situation causes church ministers to experience physical fatigue, emotional stress, and difficulties in managing their time and priorities.

The field findings were also reinforced through personal communication with several church ministers. One subject stated that the conflict between work and ministry is often considered normal, so it is rarely discussed seriously (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025). Another subject revealed that the demands of ministry and work made him feel pressured because he had to choose between the two (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025). In addition, there were also ministers who felt physically and mentally exhausted due to the demands of roles that had to be fulfilled simultaneously (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025).

When faced with dual role conflicts, individuals tend to use coping strategies as an effort to manage stress and adjust to environmental demands. Coping is a series of cognitive and behavioural efforts made by a person to overcome stressful situations in accordance with their abilities (Ambararie et al., 2021). Through coping, individuals strive to balance role demands, manage emotions, and maintain their social and professional functioning (WiratmajaFolkman & Moskowitz, 2025). Several church ministers revealed that they try to manage their time and strengthen their spiritual side through prayer so that they can continue to perform both roles (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025). However, not all church ministers are able to manage the conflict of dual roles effectively. Some of them choose to resign from ministry because they feel unable to divide their time and energy (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025). This condition shows that dual role conflicts can have an impact on the sustainability of ministry, performance quality, and the psychological well-being of church ministers.

Observations also show that dual role conflicts have an impact on service quality and work performance. In some cases, ministers experience a decline in participation in church activities, decreased concentration, and feelings of guilt when they are unable to fulfil one of their roles optimally. This pressure increases during busy periods for the church, such as Christmas and Easter, when the intensity of ministry activities increases significantly (Personal Communication, 11 September 2025). In addition to individual impacts, dual role conflict also has the potential to affect the growth of the congregation's faith and the overall effectiveness of the church's ministry. Prolonged stress, spiritual fatigue, and decreased motivation for ministry can hinder the church's goal of nurturing the spiritual life of the congregation. Therefore, dual role conflict cannot be viewed as a purely personal issue, but rather as a social and organisational issue that requires serious attention.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the form of dual role conflict experienced by GTDI Lumban Tonga-tonga Village Church ministers, its impact, and the coping strategies used in dealing with this situation. Understanding the coping strategies of church ministers is expected to be a source of learning for other ministers, as well as a basis for the church in designing policies and assistance that are more responsive to the needs of ministers. Thus, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of social and pastoral psychology, as well as practically to the management of sustainable church ministry. Through this study, it is hoped that church ministers

will be able to carry out their dual roles in a more balanced, healthy, and productive manner, thereby supporting the growth of the congregation's faith and the optimal development of the church.

METHODS

This study utilises a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of church ministers in dealing with dual role conflicts. This approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring the meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences of individuals within their social context (Oscar, 2025). The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, namely two female church servants aged 40–60 years, with four to ten years of service, and working as formal employees. The research was conducted at the GTDI Church in Lumban Tonga-tonga Village, North Tapanuli Regency, from September to December 2025. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation study. The data obtained were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed using thematic analysis to find patterns and main themes related to dual role conflict and coping strategies. Data interpretation was carried out by linking the research findings with stress coping and dual role conflict theories. The credibility of the research was maintained through triangulation of techniques, member checking, and systematic data documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers used Folkman and Moskowitz's (2004) coping theory as a framework to understand how church ministers deal with dual role conflicts. According to this theory, coping is a cognitive and behavioural effort made by individuals to overcome internal and external demands that are considered to exceed their resources (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Coping strategies can be problem-focused, which is an attempt to overcome the source of stress directly, or emotion-focused, which is managing emotional responses to stress (Ningsih & Surawan, 2025). Coping strategies are influenced by personal, social, and situational factors, which shape how individuals adjust to complex role pressures (Izzah et al., 2025).

Based on interviews with several church ministers at GTDI Lumban Tonga-tonga, dual role conflict arises because ministers must balance their responsibilities in ministry, professional work, and domestic or family roles. Internal pressures such as commitment to ministry and inherent religious values, as well as external pressures in the form of work demands, regular ministry schedules, and family responsibilities, are sources of stress that trigger the need for coping strategies. Data analysis shows that ministers use problem-focused coping strategies, such as time management, prioritising activities, and structured role sharing, to complete various responsibilities that come simultaneously. Meanwhile, emotion-focused coping strategies are applied through prayer, spiritual reflection, and open communication with family members or partners to calm the mind and manage emotional stress. Extensive experience in ministry, social support, and strong religious values are aspects that strengthen ministers' ability to deal with dual role conflicts.

Using Folkman and Moskowitz's (2004), theory, researchers can systematically explain patterns of coping among ministers, identify factors that influence coping strategies, and understand how ministers maintain a balance between their professional lives, church ministry, and family responsibilities in the context of dual role conflict.

1. Subject IEM

The dual role conflict experienced by servants such as Mrs EM not only has a personal impact, but also manifests as a social symptom within the church environment. When a servant has to balance professional work, household responsibilities and church ministry, the excessive burden of roles can affect the effectiveness of ministry and the coordination of church activities. This condition makes some ministry programmes less than optimal, so that the church faces difficulties in advancing and developing to its full potential. This dual role pressure is an indicator

that the personal challenges of church members have a direct impact on organisational dynamics, congregational interactions, and the sustainability of church activities as a whole.

Mrs EM is a 50-year-old teacher who lives in Siborong-borong District, specifically in Lumban Tonga-tonga Village. Since childhood, Mrs EM has been accustomed to a disciplined and independent environment because her family encouraged education and personal responsibility. Her journey as a teacher has been fraught with challenges, particularly in balancing her professional role, church service and family life.

Based on the results of the first interview, Mrs EM recounted the start of her career as a temporary teacher who was later accepted as a permanent teacher. She faced quite high job demands, including administrative burdens and teaching and learning activities that required full concentration and dedication (W1.S1.EM.040220.B10–12). Despite being busy, she remained active in church ministry, which was an important part of her life.

In the second interview, Mrs EM explained how role pressures began to emerge after she married and took on household responsibilities. She had to juggle teaching, serving at church, and taking care of the house and family, which often left her feeling exhausted (W2.S1.EM.161125.B20–24). She realised that all these responsibilities were her life choices, so she tried to adapt to the various demands.

In the third interview, Mrs EM emphasised that the dual role conflict she experienced was not only a matter of time, but also energy and attention. "Sometimes it does feel heavy, but that's my choice in life. I still have to teach, serve at church, and take care of the household" (W3.S1.EM.221125.B18–22). This statement indicates an internal role conflict, where professional, spiritual, and domestic values must be carried out simultaneously.

Overall, Subject I demonstrated a high level of adaptability to the demands of dual roles. Professional experience as a teacher, active involvement in church ministry, and domestic responsibilities formed an effective coping pattern, enabling her to maintain a balance between her domestic, professional, and spiritual lives, despite the pressures of complex roles.

2. Subject II J.V

Mrs JV is a 39-year-old woman who lives in Siborong-borong District, specifically in Lumban Tonga-tonga Village. She is the daughter-in-law of her husband's youngest child (the seventh child) and the daughter of a pastor. Growing up in a family environment steeped in ministry, Mrs JV became accustomed to church life, even though she studied health and works as a health worker.

Since the beginning of her marriage, Mrs. JV has faced the challenge of balancing her roles as a wife, mother, healthcare worker, and church minister. The pressure of these roles often causes internal conflict, especially when her work and church duties interfere with her domestic responsibilities. She recounts that she sometimes has to work overtime at the hospital, while her church schedule still requires her presence, causing her to feel tired and divided in her attention (W1.S2.JV.081125.B12–14).

In addition to professional and ministry demands, Mrs. JV also faced social pressure from her husband's family regarding expectations of her role as a daughter-in-law. She tried to maintain family harmony by continuing to respect her husband's parents and adapting to family traditions, while also carrying out her ministry and professional work. "After getting married, I had more responsibilities. There was work, ministry, and taking care of the house. Sometimes it does feel overwhelming, but that's the life I've chosen" (W3.S2.JV.221125.B18–22).

This combination of responsibilities led Mrs JV to develop various coping strategies. She uses problem-focused strategies, such as organising her work and ministry schedules and dividing her time between home, work and church. Meanwhile, emotion-focused strategies such as prayer, spiritual reflection and sharing experiences with family or close friends are used to calm herself and manage the emotional stress caused by her dual roles (W2.S2.JV.161125.B20–23).

Despite facing the challenges of balancing multiple roles, Mrs. JV continues to strive to maintain harmony in her household. She emphasizes open communication with her husband and children, teaches religious values and

discipline, and remains active in church activities. Support from her husband's family and her spiritual experiences from childhood are factors that strengthen Mrs. JV's ability to balance various roles. Overall, Mrs. JV successfully adapts to the demands of complex multi-role responsibilities. Her professional experience, active involvement in church service, and domestic responsibilities shape effective coping patterns, allowing her to maintain a balance between household life, work, and ministry, while also serving as a role model for her children and the church congregation.

Based on the findings in Subject I (Mrs. EM) and Subject II (Mrs. JV), the dual-role conflict experienced by church workers is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing professional, domestic, social, and spiritual aspects. This condition aligns with the coping theory of Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) which states that stress arises when environmental demands exceed individual resources, thereby necessitating adaptive strategies to manage it. Furthermore, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explained that coping is a dynamic process influenced by an individual's cognitive appraisal of stressful situations. In the context of this study, the demands of ministry, work, and family are perceived as life challenges that must be faced, rather than merely as burdens, thus encouraging the subjects to develop positive self-adjustment strategies.

The research findings are also in line with the role conflict theory proposed by Kahn et al. (1965), which states that conflict arises when individuals have to perform multiple roles with conflicting demands. Mrs. EM and Mrs. JV experienced role conflict because they had to meet expectations as professional workers, family members, and church servants simultaneously. This conflict has the potential to cause physical and emotional fatigue if not managed properly. However, the study results show that both subjects were able to manage the conflict through time management, role prioritization, and effective communication, so that role conflict did not develop into prolonged stress.

Furthermore, from the perspective of work-life balance theory, Greenhaus and Allen (2011) explain that balance is achieved when individuals are able to meet the demands of both work and personal life harmoniously. In this study, balance not only includes work and family, but also church service. Mrs. EM and Mrs. JV demonstrated the ability to maintain this balance through role flexibility, family support, and spiritual commitment. This indicates that life balance for church servants is holistic, encompassing professional, domestic, social, and religious dimensions.

From the perspective of social support theory, House (1981) stated that emotional, instrumental, and informational support play an important role in reducing the impact of stress. Research findings indicate that support from family, partners, congregations, and church environments is a key factor that strengthens the psychological resilience of the subjects. JV's mother, for example, gained strength from her husband's family and her religious background from a young age, while EM's mother received support from professional experience and service communities. This support helps the subjects maintain emotional stability and motivation in carrying out dual roles.

Furthermore, the research findings can also be explained through the resilience theory proposed by Masten (2014), which views resilience as an individual's ability to rise and endure in difficult conditions. Both subjects demonstrated high resilience through optimistic attitudes, self-acceptance, and positive meaning-making regarding their life roles. The conflict of dual roles is not seen as an obstacle, but rather as part of the process of maturation and the strengthening of spiritual character. This reinforces the view that religious values play an important role in shaping an individual's mental toughness.

Overall, the research results indicate that church servants at GTDI Lumban Tonga-tonga are able to manage role conflict through the integration of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, social support, and personal resilience strategies. These findings reinforce Folkman and Moskowitz's coping theory (2004), role conflict theory Kahn et al. (1965), work-life balance theory by Greenhaus and Allen (2011), as well as Masten's resilience theory (2014). Thus, dual-role conflict does not always have a negative impact if individuals have adequate psychological, social, and spiritual resources, but can instead serve as a means to strengthen personality, emotional maturity, and sustained service commitment.

CONCLUSION

The research results show that both subjects experienced role conflict as church servants, workers, and family members, primarily influenced by time constraints, overlapping responsibilities, and emotional pressure in fulfilling these roles simultaneously. In facing these conditions, both subjects applied adaptive coping strategies through time management, open communication with family, spiritual approaches through prayer, and the utilization of social support. The combination of spiritual, emotional, and social strategies, implemented flexibly and contextually, proved effective in helping the subjects maintain psychological well-being, family harmony, and active involvement in church service. These findings emphasize that strengthening family support, effective time management, and positive spiritual meaning are important factors in helping church servants sustainably cope with dual-role conflicts.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the church, particularly GTDI Lumban Tonga-tonga, develop a service system that is more adaptive, humane, and supportive through fair distribution of tasks, continuous pastoral guidance, and open communication with servants who have multiple roles. Church servants are also expected to recognize their own limitations and develop healthy coping strategies, whether focused on problem-solving, emotion management, or spiritual strengthening, as well as to enhance communication with their families and church leaders. Furthermore, future research is advised to expand the subjects and study locations, use a variety of methodological approaches, and explore more deeply the influence of cultural factors, church organizational structure, and family support on coping strategies, thereby enriching theological and psychological studies on church ministry in the context of modern life.

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