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Dual Roles, Dual Burdens: Working Mothers' Psychological Experiences in Early Adulthood

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Abstract

Background: The dual roles played by working mothers often give rise to conflicts between family and work demands, which can impact their psychological condition and subjective well-being.
Aim: This study aims to explore the psychological experiences of working mothers in carrying out their dual roles as mothers and workers in the early adult development stage.
Method:. This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore in depth how subjects interpret and experience this dual role. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven working mothers aged 20–40, then analyzed using thematic analysis.
Result: The research results found four main themes, namely: (1) the conflicting demands of work and family roles, (2) psychological burdens and emotional conflicts in the form of guilt, stress, and mental fatigue, (3) adaptation strategies developed by participants to manage dual roles, and (4) personal growth that emerged from these experiences. These findings indicate that the experience of being a working mother in early adulthood is complex and multidimensional — on the one hand, it presents psychological pressure, but on the other hand, it also provides a space for the formation of psychological resilience and self-maturity. Social support from partners, family, and the work environment has been shown to be an important protective factor in helping working mothers manage dual roles in a more psychologically healthy manner.
Conclusion: This study contributes to the understanding of the interaction between dual role conflict and psychosocial developmental tasks in early adulthood, particularly in the context of Indonesian culture.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of working mothers is not new in modern society, but the psychological complexities that accompany it remain a relevant issue that deserves continued study. In Indonesia, the female labor force participation rate in 2023 was recorded at 54.52%, with over 60% of female informal workers spending more than 10 hours per week on housework or caregiving (BPS 2025, 2020). According to 2022 BPS data, there are 53.41 million women working in Indonesia, equivalent to 38.98% of the total national workforce, with the majority working in the sales, agriculture, and production sectors (BPS 2025, 2020). However, most Indonesians still have the habit of assigning most of the household chores to women, even though these women also work to help support the family economy (Vinasevaya & Puspitawati, 2022).

Micro data from the 2022 BPS National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) even shows another, more worrying side: as many as 2.9 million working women stopped working after getting married, with 35% of them citing their inability to fulfill their dual roles as housewives and workers (BPS 2025, 2020). The consequences are not only psychological, but also economic: family income drops by about 30% when women stop working, from an average of two incomes of Rp3.95 million per month to a single income of Rp2.76 million per month (BPS 2025, 2020). Another study on the time allocation of housewives in West Java also found that mothers spent the most time on domestic activities and the least on leisure activities for themselves (Vinasevaya & Puspitawati, 2022).

Women who fulfill the roles of both mother and worker face dual demands that are often difficult to reconcile. This issue becomes even more complex after the birth of a child, as a woman's responsibilities increase and multiply when she also works, giving rise to various adjustment issues that trigger psychological stress. (Pathak, 2022)This condition gives rise to what is known as dual role conflict, which often impacts the

psychological condition, stress levels, and subjective well-being of working mothers (Pathak, 2022; Armaijn et al., 2024) The psychological well-being of working mothers has become a significant issue in modern life, particularly due to the increasing pressure of dual roles between domestic and professional responsibilities, which can trigger stress, emotional exhaustion, and a decreased quality of life if not balanced with adequate support (He et al., 2025).

A similar phenomenon has been found in various other countries. The dual demands of paid work and domestic work have become a major source of stress, particularly for working mothers who must balance family obligations with contemporary values related to women's career aspirations (He et al., 2025)Even in a post-pandemic context, higher levels of family-to-work conflict have been shown to be associated with greater psychological distress and lower job satisfaction among working parents, and these findings underscore the need for more gender-sensitive social and employment policies (Schnettler et al., 2024) Another study of the healthcare workforce also found that parenting stress in working mothers stems from the dual burden of work and daily caregiving responsibilities, which contributes to depressive symptoms.(Wu et al., 2022; Article et al., 2025).

Another aspect of this issue also touches on the impact on children. Some studies have shown mixed results: maternal work hours are positively associated with depressive symptoms and parenting stress, and negatively associated with mothers' self-reported health. Meanwhile, a systematic review with meta-analysis found that maternal employment is associated with more behavioral problems in children but also with fewer withdrawal and anxiety/depression symptoms, while full-time work is associated with more externalizing behavior problems and hyperactivity. (Kopp et al., 2024) This mixed evidence confirms that the psychological impact of the dual role of working mothers is complex and cannot be simply generalized.(Gan et al., 2000; Baker & Milligan, 2008; Garcia et al., 2006).

Cultural dimensions also contribute to understanding this phenomenon. In collectivist societies like Indonesia, childcare is considered the responsibility of the extended family, not just the nuclear family. Therefore, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives often help ease the burden of care for working mothers. (Voinea, 2020; Yim, 2022). Collectivist values in mothers are related to higher expectations of family obligations, which on the one hand can be a source of support but on the other hand also a source of social pressure for working mothers to continue to prioritize family over personal interests or careers.

Within the framework of developmental psychology (lifespan psychology), this phenomenon becomes even more interesting to study when linked to the developmental stage of early adulthood. The intimacy versus isolation stage occurs in early adulthood, from the 20s to the early 40s, with the primary challenge being the formation of deep and meaningful relationships. Successfully navigating this stage fosters emotional closeness and strong bonds, while failure fosters loneliness and isolation. Once individuals develop a strong sense of self during adolescence, they become ready to share their lives with others. At approximately the same time, some individuals in early adulthood also begin to engage with the task of generativity, as in mid-adulthood, individuals focus on guiding the next generation, whether through childcare, mentoring, or community involvement. Working mothers in early adulthood simultaneously navigate both developmental tasks—building a family and pursuing a career—making their experiences a rich representation of how individuals negotiate these overlapping developmental demands.

Many previous studies have highlighted the impact of dual roles from a sociological or human resource management perspective. Work-family balance is understood as the acceptable level of participation or compatibility between the various roles in a person's life. Another qualitative study documented that women who occupy dual roles as workers, students, and mothers must continually balance academic, professional, and childcare responsibilities simultaneously.(Sudweste & Jumamil, 2024) From an organizational perspective, it has been found that social support in the workplace not only reduces stress from job demands, but also helps maintain an individual's psychological resources in both work and family domains.(Kossek et al., 2011). Work-family balance itself is defined as the extent to which an individual is equally involved and equally satisfied in both his or her work and family roles, a definition that includes three components: balance of time, balance of involvement, and balance of satisfaction between the two roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Several studies have also highlighted the importance of work flexibility as a protective factor. Workplace flexibility, namely control over when and where one works, is associated with reduced work-family conflict, especially among working mothers (Yucel & Fan, 2023). When available, flexible work schedules are associated with fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety in new mothers. Social support in general has also been shown to act as a psychological buffer: both instrumental and emotional support from the environment can mitigate the negative impact of work-family conflict on an individual's work ability. A study of child welfare practitioners found that supervisor support moderated the relationship between work-family conflict and workers' psychological well-being (Lizano et al., 2014).

However, studies that specifically explore the subjective psychological experiences of working mothers, how they interpret, perceive, and manage this double burden from the perspective of personal psychological development, are still relatively limited, especially using qualitative approaches that are able to

capture the depth of the subject's inner experience as a whole. One of the most prominent psychological dimensions that has not been explored in depth in the local context is maternal guilt. Research addressing this guilt is still limited, especially in non-Western cultural contexts, even though mothers tend to believe that they must balance work and family life perfectly, a belief shaped by the cultural and social pressures around them (Ba, 2023; Dehghanizadeh et al., 2020; Hairina et al., 2024).

Yet, understanding this psychological dimension is crucial, given that the psychological well-being of working mothers impacts not only the individual, but also child-rearing patterns and overall family dynamics. Without adequate support, these challenges can trigger significant stress and a decrease in overall life satisfaction for working mothers. Conversely, protective factors such as family and coworker support, work flexibility, resilience, self-compassion, and the quality of mother-child relationships have been shown to play a crucial role in helping working mothers maintain their psychological well-being amidst the demands of their dual roles (Kossek et al., 2011; Mansournia, M. A., Higgins, J. P. T., Sterne, J. A. C., & Hernan, 2017; Yucel & Fan, 2023).

Based on this background, this study aims to explore in depth how the psychological experiences of working mothers in carrying out their dual roles as mothers and workers, and how these experiences relate to the tasks and challenges of psychological development in early adulthood. Through a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews, this study is expected to be able to capture personal narratives, coping strategies, and the meanings constructed by working mothers in facing the demands of these dual roles—a perspective that has not been widely explored in developmental psychology studies based on subjective experience, especially in the context of Indonesian culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Dual Roles and Role Conflict in Working Mothers

The phenomenon of working mothers is often conceptually associated with the term dual role conflict, which is the psychological tension that arises when someone must meet the demands of both family and work. The multiple roles of being both a worker and a parent can cause individuals to experience stress to the point of reducing their quality of life, and the resulting psychological stress can even disrupt household harmony and trigger tension between partners. This emphasizes that dual roles are not simply a matter of time management but also a profound psychological issue (Whelan, 2014).

The burdens that accompany this dual role are also visible physically and socially. Having a child increases a woman's responsibilities, which are further compounded if she also works, giving rise to various adjustment challenges. Other studies confirm that time is a crucial issue in the lives of working mothers, with consequences in terms of health, well-being, and financial burdens predominantly borne by women in various parts of the world (Pathak, 2022).

Psychological Well-Being of Working Mothers: Two Sides of the Coin

Interestingly, not all studies view dual roles as solely a source of stress. Working women experience dual roles as a source of satisfaction from both work and family which can actually enhance their psychological well-being. Similarly, involvement in family roles also helps women become more effective in managerial roles at work, indicating the potential for positive spillover between the family and work spheres. However, the impact of these dual roles is highly dependent on the individual context not the work itself, but rather the quality of the home and workplace environment that determines the impact of work on the psychological well-being of women in dual-earner families.(Vanteemar S. Sreeraj et al., 2019).

Personality factors also play a role in determining how this role conflict is perceived. Individuals with high levels of conscientiousness experience a more significant decline in work engagement when work-family conflict increases, compared to individuals with low levels of conscientiousness. Furthermore, marital status also influences the level of distress experienced; single working mothers report lower levels of psychological distress, financial hardship, work-family conflict, and psychosocial quality of work than working mothers with partners.(Vanteemar S. Sreeraj et al., 2019).

Previous Qualitative Studies on the Experiences of Working Mothers

Several qualitative studies have attempted to capture the subjective aspects of working mothers' experiences, particularly in stressful situations. A descriptive phenomenological study conducted in Indonesia, for example, examined stress resulting from dual role conflict and coping strategies among three mothers working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, with children aged 0–12 years old and no domestic help to assist them. (Thania et al., 2021)The study found that mothers experienced stress due to dual role conflict caused by time pressure, tension, and behavioral conflict between work demands and household demands. (Thania et al., 2021). Other qualitative research has also highlighted the impact of dual roles on parenting patterns, finding that parenting provided by working mothers has positive aspects such as supporting children's self-confidence and social adaptability through improving the family's economic status but also has negative aspects in other aspects of child development. (Mansournia, MA, Higgins, JPT, Sterne, JAC, & Hernan, 2017) These findings indicate that the psychological experiences of working mothers are multidimensional and cannot be reduced to a single

conclusion, so that a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews is relevant to explore this complexity more fully (Ratnawati & Umah, 2025).

Stages of Early Adult Development in Erikson's Psychosocial Perspective

To understand the experiences of working mothers more deeply, this study uses Erikson's psychosocial theory as a developmental lens. The intimacy versus isolation stage occurs in early adulthood, from the 20s to the early 40s, with the primary challenge being the formation of deep and meaningful relationships. Once individuals develop a sense of self during adolescence, they are ready to share their lives with others. However, individuals who have not successfully completed the previous identity stage are generally less able to build truly deep relationships, as true intimacy requires self-understanding before one can truly share oneself with others.

On the other hand, some working mothers in early adulthood also begin to come into contact with the issue of generativity, considering that generativity refers to the concern to guide and nurture the next generation through childcare, mentoring, teaching, community involvement, or creative work that will transcend the individual itself. This is relevant to the context of working mothers who simultaneously carry out relational tasks (intimacy through family) and contributive tasks (generativity through career), so that their experience can be understood as an intersection between two psychosocial tasks that ideally run sequentially, but in reality are carried out simultaneously.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that previous research has focused on two major directions: (1) the impact of dual roles on distress, well-being, and family relations from an industrial/organizational psychology perspective, and (2) Erikson's psychosocial theory which explains the developmental tasks of early adulthood in general, but is rarely linked specifically to the context of working mothers. Research that explicitly integrates the psychological experiences of working mothers with the framework of developmental tasks of early adulthood especially through a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews in the Indonesian context is still relatively limited. This gap is what this study seeks to fill.

METHODS

Research Approach and Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, which aims to understand and describe the meaning of the lived experiences of a group of individuals related to a particular phenomenon — in this case, the psychological experiences of working mothers in carrying out dual roles in the early adult development stage. The phenomenological approach was chosen because this study does not intend to test cause-and-effect relationships statistically, but rather explores in depth how the subjects interpret, feel, and experience these dual roles from their own perspectives.

The following is the research procedure.

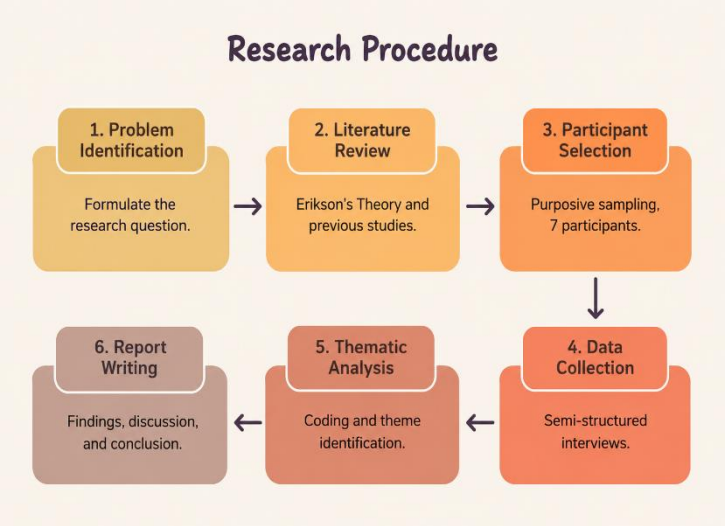

Figure 1. Research Procedure

Research Subjects

The subjects in this study were seven working mothers in the early adulthood age range (approximately 20–40 years old), who had at least one child under active care, and who were actively working (either full-time or part-time) outside the home. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, rather than randomly. The number of seven subjects was determined by considering the principle of data saturation in phenomenological research, which is the condition when additional participants no longer produce meaningful new information or themes

(Morse, 1994). This number is also within the commonly recommended range for phenomenological research, namely 5–25 participants (Dahal et al., 2024; Sarfo et al., 2021) so that it is considered adequate to explore the depth of the subject's experience without sacrificing the quality of data exploration.
Subject inclusion criteria:

- Working mothers aged 20–40 years (early adulthood stage)
- Have at least one child still under active care (e.g. toddler to elementary school age)
- Have worked for at least 1 year since becoming a mother
- Willing to be a research participant and sign the informed consent form
- Subject exclusion criteria:
- Mothers who were on long-term leave (more than 6 months) at the time the study was conducted
- Mothers who are willing to be recorded during the interview process

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven subjects, allowing researchers to have a guideline for basic questions but still have the flexibility to delve deeper into the responses and narratives emerging from each subject. Interviews were conducted in person or online (depending on the participant's circumstances and availability), recorded with an audio recorder (with the participant's permission), and lasted approximately 45–90 minutes per session. If necessary, follow-up interviews could be conducted to deepen or clarify data from previous sessions.
Examples of interview questions that can be structured in guidelines:

- How do you interpret your role as a mother and worker in your daily life?
- What psychological challenges do you feel most in carrying out these two roles?
- How do you manage feelings of fatigue, guilt, or stress caused by the demands of this dual role?
- What strategies or methods do you use to maintain balance between family and work?
- How did this experience influence your view of yourself as a developing individual?

Interview data was supplemented with non-participatory observation and field notes during the interview process, to capture non-verbal expressions and situational context that could enrich data interpretation.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using the thematic analysis method following the Braun & Clarke stages, namely:

- Data ta
- familiarization involves reading and transcribing all interview results from the seven subjects repeatedly.
- Initial coding identifies units of meaning from the transcript.
- Theme search groups codes that have similar meanings into major themes.
- Reviewing themes ensures that the themes formed are consistent with the data as a whole.
- Defining and naming themes gives a clear name and description to each theme.
- The report presents findings in narrative form supported by direct quotes from participants.

Data Validity (Trustworthiness)

To maintain the credibility and validity of the data, this study implemented several strategies:

- Source triangulation, by comparing data from interviews, observations, and field notes of the seven subjects.
- Member checking, namely reconfirming the results of the researcher's interpretation with each subject to ensure it matches their experience.
- Bracketing/epoché, namely the researcher's efforts to set aside personal assumptions and experiences related to the research topic so that they do not influence the data interpretation process, in accordance with the basic principles of phenomenological research.

Research Ethics

This research pays attention to the ethical principles of research involving humans as subjects, including:

- Voluntary participant consent (informed consent) before the interview is conducted.
- Confidentiality of the identities of the seven participants (using initials or pseudonyms in reporting, for example P1–P7).
- The participant's right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- Ethical approval from the relevant institution (ethical clearance), if your institution/campus requires it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with seven working mothers (P1–P7), four main themes were obtained that describe the psychological experiences of working mothers in carrying out dual roles at the early adult development stage, namely: (1) conflicting role demands, (2) psychological burden and emotional conflict, (3) adaptation strategies in managing dual roles, and (4) self-growth through dual role experiences.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with seven working mothers (P1–P7)

Theme 1. Conflicting Role Demands

All participants revealed that fulfilling the roles of mother and worker often presents simultaneous demands, requiring them to meet family and work expectations simultaneously.

P1 stated:

"Sometimes, while I'm focused on work, my kids call because they need to get things done at home. On the other hand, work also needs to be finished quickly. It feels like I'm being pulled in two directions at once."

P4 said something similar:

"I have to leave early in the morning and come home late in the evening. When I get home, there's still homework waiting. There's no truly free time."

Role conflict most often arises when work demands clash with the needs of children and family, so that participants must continually make adjustments in managing time and priorities.

Theme 2. Psychological Burden and Emotional Conflict

Dual roles not only cause physical exhaustion, but also significant psychological burdens in the form of guilt, stress, emotional exhaustion, and worry.

P2 said:

"The hardest part is actually the guilt. When I'm working, I feel like I'm not being there for my children, but when I focus on them, I worry that my work will be neglected."

P6 revealed:

"There were times when I felt so mentally exhausted. Sometimes I cried alone because I felt like all the responsibility was on my shoulders."

Nearly all participants described pressure to be both a “good mother” and a “professional worker” — pressure that gave rise to repeated emotional conflicts, especially when they felt they were not meeting the standards set by themselves or their social environment.

Theme 3. Adaptation Strategies in Managing Dual Roles

Despite facing pressure, participants developed various strategies for managing their dual roles: time management, communication with partners, family support, and efforts to maintain psychological health.

P3 explains:

"I make a fairly detailed daily schedule. Otherwise, work and household chores can get messy."

P5 emphasized partner support:

"My husband helps me take care of the kids when I work overtime. That support makes me feel less alone."

P7 added personal coping strategies:

"When I'm really tired, I try to take some time for myself. Even if it's just an hour or two, it really helps restore my energy."

Theme 4. Personal Growth Through Dual Role Experiences

Interestingly, all participants viewed the dual role experience as a learning and self-development process.

P1 stated:

"I used to feel like I couldn't handle too many things at once. Now I'm more confident because I've overcome many challenges."

P4 said:

"I feel like I've become a stronger, more patient person, and I value time more."

Participants interpreted the experience of dual roles as a process that shapes independence, psychological resilience, the ability to manage emotions, and increases self-confidence as adult women.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis Results: Main Themes, Subthemes, and Number of Participants

Main Theme	Subtheme	Number of Participants	Participant Code
Role demands collide	Time conflict	7	P1–P7
	Conflict of priorities	6	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7
	Job demands	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7
Psychological Burden	Guilty feeling	7	P1–P7
	Stres	7	P1–P7
	Emotional exhaustion	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7
Adaptation Strategy	Time management	6	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7
	Partner support	5	P2, P3, P5, P6, P7
	Family support	4	P2, P4, P5, P6

	Personal coping	5	P1, P3, P5, P6, P7
Personal Growth	More confident	6	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7
	Psychological resilience	7	P1–P7
	Emotional management	5	P2, P3, P4, P5, P7

The research results show that the psychological experiences of working mothers in early adulthood are characterized by conflict between work and family demands. This finding aligns with Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) concept of work-family conflict, which is a condition where the demands of two different roles are difficult to fulfill simultaneously, resulting in psychological distress. Participants experienced clashes in time, energy, and attention between work and childcare responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

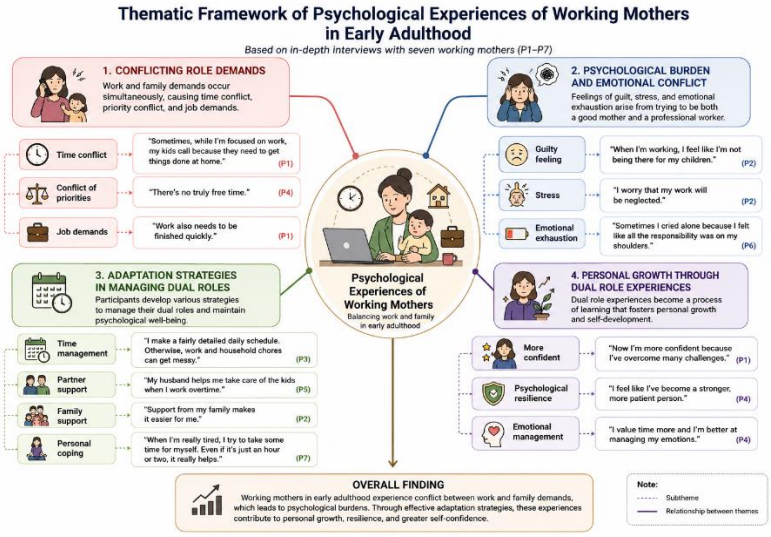

Figure 2. Thematic Framework of Working Mothers' Experiences

Discussion

According to Santrock (2020), the early adulthood stage is a developmental period marked by increased responsibilities in various aspects of life, including work, marriage, and childcare. The role conflict experienced by participants can be understood as a consequence of the various developmental tasks that occur simultaneously during this phase, when individuals must meet various demands simultaneously, increasing the potential for psychological stress (Development et al., nd).

Guilt is one of the most dominant emotional experiences (Aarntzen et al., 2023). Most participants felt they were not able to give optimal attention to their families while focusing on work, or vice versa. (Constantinou et al., 2021) This finding supports the concept of maternal guilt, a feeling of guilt that arises from the perception of not fulfilling expectations as an ideal mother, which can be reinforced by socio-cultural norms that still place women as the primary responsibilities for childcare and domestic work (Ba, 2023; Dehghanizadeh et al., 2020).

The emotional exhaustion and stress reported by participants can be explained by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of stress and coping: this condition arises when an individual perceives environmental demands as exceeding their coping resources. The exhaustion experienced is not only physical but also emotional due to the continuous accumulation of responsibilities, indicating that the double burden can affect psychological well-being if not supported by adequate coping mechanisms.

However, participants not only experienced stress, but also developed adaptation strategies to maintain life balance: time management, sharing tasks with partners, utilizing social support, and religious coping.(Miftakhul Jannah et al., 2022). This finding strengthens the view that social support is an important protective factor in dealing with stress due to role conflict. Support from partners, extended family, and the work environment provides a sense of security and reduces the psychological burden on working mothers (Kossek et al., 2011).

Another interesting finding was the emergence of personal growth amidst the challenges faced. Although initially viewing dual roles as a source of stress, participants eventually saw them as a means of self-development, increasing self-confidence, emotional management skills, independence, and resilience in the face of adversity. This finding aligns with the concept of early adult psychosocial development, which emphasizes the importance of individuals' ability to develop responsibility and commitment to the various social roles they undertake. (Erikson, 2006) Overall, working mothers' experiences in early adulthood are complex and multidimensional. This dual role creates conflict, stress, and emotional burdens, but it also provides a space for psychological resilience and personal growth. Thus, working motherhood can be understood not only as a source of burden but

also as a developmental process that contributes to the formation of an individual's identity and psychological maturity in early adulthood.

Theoretically, this research enhances understanding of how the concept of dual role conflict interacts with psychosocial developmental tasks in early adulthood, particularly within the context of Indonesian culture, which still strongly emphasizes social expectations of women as primary caregivers. Practically, these findings can serve as a basis for: Institutions/workplaces, to consider more flexible and supportive policies for working mothers (e.g. flexible working hours, parental leave, or psychological support in the workplace); Psychology practitioners/counselors, in designing interventions that not only focus on reducing stress, but also facilitate the process of personal growth experienced by working mothers; Families, especially couples, need to be more aware of the importance of role sharing and emotional support in reducing the psychological burden on working mothers.

This study has limitations, including the limited number of subjects (7 people), which prevents broad generalization of the findings, and the cross-sectional design (which does not capture changes in experience over time). Further research is recommended to: Involving subjects with more diverse backgrounds (e.g. different economic status, types of employment, or family structures) to enrich perspectives; Using a longitudinal design to see how working mothers' psychological experiences develop over time, particularly as children enter different developmental stages; Exploring the role of culture and social norms in greater depth in shaping the experience of maternal guilt among working mothers in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the psychological experiences of working mothers in carrying out dual roles in the early adult development stage. Based on the results of in-depth interviews with seven participants, four main interrelated themes were found: (1) the conflicting role demands between work and family, (2) psychological burdens and emotional conflicts in the form of guilt, stress, and mental fatigue, (3) adaptation strategies developed by participants to manage dual roles, such as time management, partner support, and personal coping, and (4) personal growth that emerged from these experiences, marked by increased self-confidence, independence, and psychological resilience.

These findings suggest that the experience of working motherhood in early adulthood is complex and cannot be understood solely as a burden. On the one hand, dual roles do indeed present real psychological stress due to the conflict between work demands and childcare, in line with Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) concept of work-family conflict and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory. However, on the other hand, participants in this study also demonstrated strong adaptive capacity, where the experience of carrying out dual roles actually provided a space for the development of psychological resilience and self-maturity—a process relevant to the psychosocial developmental tasks of early adulthood.

Thus, it can be concluded that the psychological experience of working mothers does not stop at a simple dichotomy of "stressed" or "doing well," but rather is a dynamic process involving a continuous negotiation between challenges and growth. Social support from partners, extended family, and the work environment has been shown to be an important protective factor that helps participants manage this double burden in a more psychologically healthy manner.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Author 1: research conceptualization, data collection, participant interviews, data analysis, writing the initial draft of the manuscript. Author 2: literature review, data validation and triangulation, editing and revising the manuscript, supervision of the entire research process.

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