

Concept of role and role episode model



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Role stress is highly inevitable in nature and has become a problem at workplace for employers and organization. The main purpose of this paper is to study the concept of role, role stress, their biosocial variables as well as the role episode model. . Number of studies found that there is a difference in the impact of role stress across occupations.. This paper also deals with the management of role stress with the help of mentoring and the role episode model. The role episode model is a classical model used to measure role stress.

Key words: Role episode model, Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, bio-social variables, job stress, job satisfaction, job performance.

Introduction :

The concept of stress was first proposed by Hans Selye (1936). Selye's well-known definition of stress, based on his research, is "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974). Stress is broader in term and to define stress is very difficult. Due to its complex nature most of the researchers cannot agree on a single definition (Kahn & Boyssiere , 1992). Stress can be a motivator and get the job done . Some stress researchers (e. g Golembiewski, Munzernrider and Stewenson , 1986; Sharahan and Mortimer , 1996), distinguish between negative stress , termed 'distress' and positive stress, termed 'eustress'. This "good stress" or 'eustress' can be defined as is actually a positive and healthy form of stress and some people enjoy it . Eustress activates and motivates people to accomplish goal. The "Distress" is when the good stress becomes too much to bear or cope with. It is important to note that there are three levels of stress -low level, moderate or optimal level and high level. Moderate or Optimal level of stress may acts as a motivator. On the basis of literature

survey it is clearly understood that too much stress is toxic to employees and too little stress can also lead unexpected problem. e. g too little stress can result in boredom & apathy and can be accompanied by low performance and too much stress can cause depression, dissatisfaction, anxiety, tension and low performance. An optimal level of stress results in high energy, motivation and high performance. The cause of stress is known as “ stressors “& stressors are conditions and events that evoke strain (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). According to Cooper & Marshall (1978) sources of managerial stress can be categorized into six components -intrinsic to job , role in organization , career development , organizational structure and climate, relationship within organization and organizational interface and outside . Matteson & Ivancevic (1999) and Cook & Hunsaker (2001) identified that stress can be caused by environmental, organizational, and individual variables. Role stressors belong to organizational variables.

Role stressors are major antecedents of job stress among employees in organization . According to Ivancevich & Matteson (1980) and French Caplan & Harrison (1982) , role ambiguity and role conflict have been identified as a major source of stress and job tension. Work overload both quantitatively and qualitatively has been empirically linked to a variety of physiological , psychological and behaviour strain symptoms(Beehr & Newman, 1978; Roberts et al., 1997; Miller &Ellis, 1990). It was found that role stress variables are associated with job dissatisfaction, lower performance , increased stress , lower commitment and intention to leave the organization . According to various researchers (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983; Jackson and Schuler, 1985; Van Sell et al., 1981; Lee, 1997; Jones, 1993),

role stress is responsible for individual as well as organizational outcomes , such as job tension , job dissatisfaction , employee turnover and employee burnout and low organizational commitment and performance (Johnston et al., 1990; Jackson and Schuler, 1985).

Concept of Role & Role episode model

The term role can be defined as a expected mode of behaviour. There are three types of roles (I) the expected role, (ii) the perceived role and (iii) the actual role. The expected role is what other people expect from an individual. The perceived role is how the individual thinks he or she should behave to fulfil the expected role and the actual role is the way the person actually behaves in the organization. Linton (1936) defined role from culture perspective .

Role episode model is known as interactional management tool between Role Set Members & Role Incumbent given by Katz and Kahn (1978) . In order to examine and integrate the research on role conflict and ambiguity, Khan et al. role episode model is very useful. The model depicts transactional relationship between role senders and focal person. Focal person or role incumbent occupies a particular position (social location) within organization. Individuals who send role expectation to the focal person regarding his or her activities in the role compromise role set (Merton 1957) . They are called role senders or Role Set Members. When Role Set Members communicated their expectations are called sent role carries role pressure . The set of expectations a role incumbent or focal person receive from Role Set Members is the received role. The role episode model consists of a cyclic series of communications between Role Set Member and the Role

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

Incumbent. This process continues until the role episode finishes, creates shared expectations or postpone negotiations. Fig 1 suggests that there are organizational, personal, and interpersonal factors which affect the role episode model. The organizational factors consist structure, level in the organization, role requirements, task characteristics, physical setting, and organizational practices. The personal factors (which can be applied to both the role senders and focal person) refer to such variables age, sex, and tenure in the organization. The interpersonal factors in the relationship between role senders and focal person include frequency of their interactions, mode of communication, importance of senders to focal person, physical location, visibility, feedback and participation. The role senders can be the focal person's supervisors, clients, co-workers, or subordinates. Role sender – focal person relationship have generally been investigated by gathering perceptual data on role conflict and ambiguity from the objective responses. Affective responses include job satisfaction, job involvement, tension, threat, anxiety, and propensity to leave the organization.

Interpersonal Process

Focal Person

Experience Response

Role Sender

Expectations Sent Role

Inter

Interpersonal Factors

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

Personal Factors

Organizational Factors

Structure Status Mode of Communication

Level Needs Frequency of Interaction

Role requirements Values Importance of sender

Task Education Mode of Interaction

Physical Setting Ability Physical location

Practices Age Visibility

Sex Feedback

Tenure Participation

[Source Van Sell et al (1981)]

Fig: 1

Literature Review

Role stress/Role stressors and Bio-social Variables:

Role stressors can be defined as anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual (Kahn and Quinn, 1970).

Role related stress are concerned with how individuals perceive the expectations others have of them and includes role ambiguity and role conflict (Alexandros -Stamatios et. al., 2003) . According to Schafer (1998) role stressors are “ associated with social roles, which are social positions

with clustered expectations” . Role problems that may cause occupational stress include “ role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity and role conflict” (Greenberg, 2009). S (Kahn, 1980; Scbauberock , Cotton and Jenning, 1989; Kellaway and Barling, 1990) role stressors are made-up of three variables but related constructs : role conflict , role ambiguity & role overload. The major role stress variables are -role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload/work overload .

Role conflict

Role conflict takes place when individuals simultaneously perform multiple roles and they conflict each other. Drafte (1998) defined role conflict “ job roles that interfere with on another” and Schafer (1998) defined “ incompatible expectations associated with a social position, such as student, employee, or mother”. Kahn et al (1964) have defined role conflict existence of two or more roles such that to manage with one would make difficult to manage with other. Kahn et al. identify five major forms

of

roleconflict:

1.

Intra-sender conflict:-

2.

Inter-sender conflict:-

3.

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

Inter-role conflict:-4. Person-role conflict:-

5.

Role-overload: -conflicting prescriptions/proscriptions from the same sender. conflicting prescriptions/proscriptions from different senders. conflict between roles in situations where an individual holds more than one role. where an individual's role requirements are incompatible with his/her own beliefs, values, and norms. reasonable expectations may have been received from role senders, but he/she may not have enough time

to

address them

all.

Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not . possess requisite information to enable effective execution

of

his/her role. The type

of

information normally required by the role incumbent includes [Kahn et al., 1964]:

1.

relevant expectations relating to the role such

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

as

rights, duties, and responsibilities;

They identified five major forms of role –

i) Intrasender Conflict -This type of conflict occurs when a Role Set Member requires the Focal person to perform contradictory . For example a Role Sender may request the Role incumbent to perform task and task cannot be completed without disturbing rules. But Role Sender attempts to enforce the rule.

ii) Intersender Conflict -The Focal person experiences this type of conflict , if the role behaviour demanded by one Role Set Members incompatible with the role behaviour demanded by another Role Set Members.

iii) Interrole Conflict -This type of conflict occurs when the Focal person receives two or more role at a time which are incongruence in nature.

iv) Intrarole conflict (Person-Role) Conflict – Intrarole conflict occurs when the role requirements are incongruent with the focal person's attitudes , values and profession behaviour.

v) Role Overload – Role overload occurs when the Focal person is required to number of tasks by different Role Set Members .

Gender

Women experienced more role conflict than men (Frone et al. (1992); Gutek et al. 1991 and Duxbury et al. (1994). Working women face more inter-role conflict & role overload as compare to men /or non-working women (Kapur, <https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

1974). Cooper and Davidson (1982) reported that the female executives have more role conflict and role overload because of dual responsibilities. According to Sangamitra, Buddhapriya and Preetham Khandewal (1995), female executives face conflict between job demands and family obligations than the male managers.

Age

There are contradictory findings obtained between age and role conflict. Most of the studies support a negative relationship between age & role conflict (Peltit, 1973; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984) and some studies which prove the opposite (Redfeck, 1973; and Flora 1977, Madhu & Harigopal, 1980).

Marital status (Married / Unmarried)

It was found that married persons experience more role conflict than unmarried persons. Married working women have to perform dual roles and child bearing could be one reason.

Number of Children-

According to Itshree Padhi, 1999, working mothers with more children experience a high level of conflict than those who have fewer children. Kala Rani (1976) also found a similar correlation pattern in her study.

On the basis of the above literature review, a role conflict conceptual framework can be designed.

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity arises when focal persons do not have clear authority or knowledge about how to perform the assigned jobs (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; Ashforth & Lee, 1990; Kahn et al., 1964). Individuals having unclear plans and objectives, lack of clarity of one's duty and uncertainty about the amount of authority to perform assignment (Rizzo et al., 1970). Role ambiguity occurs when employees perceive a lack of clarity in the behavioural requirements of their job (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). The focal person is likely to experience two types of role ambiguity. One, concerning the task and the related activities; the other concerning the feedback regarding his performance of the task. Role ambiguity is a significant source of stress. For example, in the case of academics, lack of regular feedback about how well academics were doing was the highest source of stress (Dua; 1994 & Sharpley et al. 1996). Feedback is important to enable the academics to evaluate their performance on the job and how they are progressing in their effort toward task accomplishment. Since positive feedback may serve as a source of higher performance and less stress, academics who do not receive regular feedback may experience considerable uncertainty about their role performance (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Higher ambiguity may also arise due to lack of clarity regarding how to prioritize different academic activities of teaching, research and professional services that are necessary for the successful accomplishment of academic role. Regular feedback from a supervisor may exacerbate role ambiguity, which in turn reduces stress.

Bio-social Variables that are associated with role ambiguity.

a) Gender-

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

b) Age- Peltit (1973) reported a negative relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Elsenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981) but this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in a similar background. Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age. Increasing age was associated with ambiguity , according to Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship between age and job ambiguity . But contradictory findings was obtained by Peltit (1971), he found negative relationship between age and job ambiguity. Increasing age was associated with role ambiguity , Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship between age and job ambiguity . Studies reported that role ambiguity is maximum at lower age group. It has been established that females experience more role ambiguity at lower age group because of the adjustments they have to make at the beginning of their married life and the presence of infants in the house etc.

c) Length of service / Tenure -According to Madhu (1982) & Nath (1980) there is negative

relationship between length of service & role ambiguity . Malhan, Agarwal & Krishna (1983) reported that managers with relatively less number of years of service might experience role

ambiguity detrimental to their performance. There found to be a negative correlation existing

between role ambiguity and length of service. Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation

between role ambiguity and age.

Role Overload /Work Overload

Work overload also known as role overload & role overload is a complex form of role conflict. According to Kahn et al (1964) role overload is a kind of person-role conflict and it is combining aspects of intersender and person-role conflicts . It occurs simply when employees have more task than he or she can handle. Role overload occurs when role expectations are higher than the focal person's capabilities (terms taken from Kahn et al , role episode model) . It can be either qualitative & quantitative . Quantitative task can be defined as the person has too many tasks to perform or too little time to perform them and Qualitative occurs when person lacks ability to perform task . Workload stress can be defined as reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure (i. e. no effort is enough) accompanied by the general physiological, psychological, and behavioural stress symptoms (Division of Human Resource, 2000).

a) Gender-Cooper and Davidson (1982) reported that the female executives have role conflict and role overload because of their dual roles in the family and the office. Mehta , Chandwani & Mehta were of the opinion women face more workload as compare to men. Coverman (1989)) found that the role overload scores of women were higher than men . But men have higher overall satisfaction than women . Role overload could be one of the major reason of women's psychological stress. Pleck (1985) has suggested that women complain of role overload not because of exhaustion or doing too much, rather her husband is doing too little.

b) Age or Length of service & span of control – Researchers(Philip C Koshy , 1994 , Gupta & Pratap, 1987 ; Pestonjee , 1992 ; Sen , 1981) explored that there is negative relation between work load and length of service , age & span of control . Managers who are younger and those having lesser tenure of service experience more role overload. But contradictions finding was obtained For example Johnson et al .(2005) conducted comparative studies of 26 occupations(2005) concluded that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations. The most stressful aspects of the job perceived by teachers include workload, time pressures and no guidance pertaining to various teacher roles (Hui & Chan, 1996). There was a national survey on occupational stress in Australian universities, research shows that employees at senior level face more workloads and more role-overload (Dua, 1994; Lease, 1999; Winter et al., 2000).

Consequences of Role stress:

Researchers had proved that role stress affects individual and organization both . Kahn et al , concluded from their study role incumbent experiences low job satisfaction , lower confidence in organization , high degree of tension & intention to quit organization. Role ambiguity was found to be prevalent as role conflict and the consequences are similar. Netemeyer , Johnston and Burton (1990) , role conflict and role ambiguity may responsible to leave job indirectly through other factors such as job dissatisfaction and low organizational commitment. According to Division of Human Resource, (2000) Workload stress is responsible for physiological, psychological, and behavioural stress symptoms. A number of studies by

various researchers (Behrman & Perrault , 1984; Brief and Aldag , 1976; Fisher & Gitelson , 1983; House & Rizzo , 1972)

Relationship between Role stress & Job Stress

A number of studies proved that role stress are positively associated with anxiety, tension , low performance and job dissatisfaction. RHL (Rizzo , House and Lirtzman , 1970) identified that role ambiguity responsible for job dissatisfaction , anxiety , tension and poor performance. Rosenheim (1976) found that anxiety is directly related to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. A number of studies by various researchers (Behrman & Perrault , 1984; Brief and Aldag , 1976; Fisher & Gitelson , 1983; House & Rizzo 1972; Jackson & Schuler , 1985; Johnson & Stinson , 1975; Miles, 1975; Miles and Perrault 1976; Rizzo at al , 1976; Sohi , 1996) found that role conflict is associated with low job involvement & organizational commitment , tension , anxiety & intention to leave organization. According to Caplan & Jones (1975) role ambiguity was positively associated with anxiety, depression, and resentment. Keenan and McBain (1979) found positive relationship between tension and role overload Similarly, most studies report a positive relationship between role ambiguity and tension or anxiety. But two studies report no relationship (Tosi, 1971: Tosi & Tosi, 1970).

Relationship between Role stress & Job Satisfaction

According to Miles (1974) that role stress (role sonflict & role ambiguity) were related to job dissatisfaction . Rosenheim (1976), Organ & Greene (1974), Bemardin (1981), Coldwell (1981), Keenan (1981) and Madhu (1982) found same thing . Jackson and Schuler, 1985; Brown and Peterson, 1993; Tubre and Collins, 2000; and Ortqvist and Wincent, 2006 , they revealed that

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

both role conflict and ambiguity have negative influences on job satisfaction. It has been found that the higher the role conflict, the lower the job satisfaction. (Srilatha ; 1991, Keller ; 1975, Krant ; 1966, Senatra ; 1977, Carter ; 1878, Singh ; 1983, Coldwell ; 1984. Jagdish and Srivastava; 1984. Libby, 1978; Simpson, 1979; Price, 1971; Flora, 1977; Wilson, 1980; Miller 1979; Rigging, 1979; Yarworth, 1979; Monnelt, 1980; Ahrens, 1977) . But according to Hamner and Tosi (1974) reported no relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction in a study among a sample of managers. Christopher Orpen & John Bernath (1987) report that correlation between role conflict and job satisfaction is not significant. Miles (1974) , Roseenheim(1976) , Organ & Greene (1974), Bemardin (1981) . Coldwell (1981) , Keenan (1981) and Madhu (1982) concluded that both role conflict and role ambiguity were negatively related with Job satisfaction Batesman (1981) in his study, reported that role overload resulted in poor job satisfaction.

Note-On the basis of various literature reviews I came to know that relationship between role conflict & role ambiguity with job satisfaction varies among a variety of occupation.

Occupation & Job satisfaction.

The major outcomes of role conflict are job dissatisfaction and job related tension, which have been isolated among a variety of occupational groups (Beehr, Walsh & Taber, 1976; Brief & Aldag, 1976; Brief, Aldag, Van Sell & Melone, 1979; Gross et al., 1958; House & Rizzo, 1972; Miles, 1976; Oliver & Brief, 1977-78). According to Hamner and Tosi (1974) reported no relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction in a study among a sample of managers. They reported a positive correlation between role

<https://assignbuster.com/concept-of-role-and-role-episode-model/>

conflict and job threat among a sample of managers. Tosi and Tosi (1970) found a negative relationship between role conflict and job related threat and anxiety. Keller (1975) observed negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction among research and development professionals but no such negative. The observation suggests the effects of role conflict vary with various occupations.

There are number of studies shown a difference in the impact of role ambiguity across occupations. According to Beehr et al. 1976; Caplan et al. 1975; Greene 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Johnson & Stinson 1975; Paul 1974; Rizzo et al. 1970 role ambiguity to be associated with job dissatisfaction, studies among nurse's aides (Brief & Aldag, 1976) managers (Tosi, 1971) teachers (Tosi & Tosi, 1970) and supervisors and operating employees (Ivancevich & Dobbelly, 1974) found no relationship.

Relationship between Role stress & Job Performance

Shrtom , Fried and Cooper (2008) reported that the negative relation between job performance and role overload was higher for managers and non-managers. According to Kahn & Boysiera 1992; Mc Grath , 1976 & Sahi , 1996 , there is deleterious effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on Job performance .

On the basis of above literature review conceptual framework can be designed :

Major Consequences

Job Stress

Job dissatisfaction

Job Performance

Role conflict

+

Role ambiguity +

Role overload

Fig: 2

On the basis of above literature review of role conflict conceptual framework can be designed

Management of Role stress in Organization

Mentoring -Mentoring can be one effective tool to manage role stress at workplace . According to Hunt & Michael, (1983) mentors are highly experienced person in organization who is interested in guiding and promoting individual's career and also members of that Role Set. In addition mentors can provide role clarifying information to focal person and alternatives for dealing with role demands including role expectation that may create conflict. According to Griffin (1992) suggest that role ambiguity occurs because a person is not clear about her or his role. Role ambiguity occurs when there is non-existent of information or there is no proper communication between Role Set Members and Role incumbent . Mentors can provide information that can clarify role expectation. Sawyer, 1992

found that quality feedback from Role Set Members or supervisors and co-workers is responsible to minimize role ambiguity. According to Major, Kozilowski, Chao & Gardner (1995), intentions to leave organization can be minimized by high quality exchange between leaders and sub-ordinates.

Role sender / Role Set Members / Mentors

Clear Role expectations

Quality feedback

Focal Person /Role Incumbent

Experienced less Role conflict / Role ambiguity

Feedback loop

Note- Adapted from Role Episode Model, Mentors can be treated as a Role Set Members.

Fig : 3

Role Episode Model classical tools to minimize level of role conflict and role ambiguity

Role Episode Model (Kahn et al, 1964), which is most suitable model to explain variables related to role conflict and role ambiguity and is widely used by researchers to study role stress variables among workers (Schuler, 1975; Fisher & Gitelson; 1973). According to Dougherty and Pitchard, 1985, the role conflict and role ambiguity measurement captured somewhat global perception of role stress and can be used with any job. Role conflict occurs in organization with the conflicting demands from There are various factors related to role stress such as organizational factors, interpersonal factors and attributes of person (Role Set Member & Focal Person both). For

Examples: Faridah Ibrahim (Predictors of Role Stress Among Malaysian Journalist in Newsroom Decision Making Process , Journal Komunikasi 2001)conducted research on journalist to identify the predictor variables involved in role stress(Role conflict & Role ambiguity) and he adopted Role Episode model which consists of organizational variables , interpersonal variables & personal variables. According to Kahn et al (1964) role stress occurs as enacted by role behaviours could be associated with these factors. Researcher taken 12 independent variables (organizational variables are participation in task decision , participation in decision making , leadership behaviour supportive , task characteristics , leadership structure & deadline pressure . Interpersonal variables are communication relationship and Interpersonal relationship . Personal variables are age , years in formal education , salary & years of working) for investigation and out of the 12 variables four variables (working experience $\beta = -.29$; deadline pressure , $\beta = -.25$, task characteristics $\beta = -.20$ and participation in task decision, $\beta = .13$) were found to be good predictors of role conflict and for role ambiguity , out of the 12 variables four variables (interpersonal relationship , $\beta = -.39$; participation in decision making , $\beta = -.17$, task characteristics , $\beta = -.17$ and years of experience , $\beta = -.11$) were found to be good predictors. it can be said that working experience is the strongest predictor for role conflict .

Conclusion :

There are independent biosocial variables are responsible in contributing stress in role stressors. in role ambiguity. . Biosocial variables are independent variables which interact with role stressors to produce negative

consequences such as job stress, job dissatisfaction and low performance . Researchers found that there is positive relationship between role stressors and job stress, job dissatisfaction and role performance. Contradictory findings were obtained by some researchers in relationship between role stress and job dissatisfaction. It was found that difference in the impact of role ambiguity and role conflict across various occupations. Studies found that role ambiguity to be associated with job dissatisfaction, but studies among nurse's aides, managers, teachers and supervisors and operating employees found no such relationship. Number of researchers explored that there is negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction but in case of research and development professionals but no such negative relationship had been found. Role stress can be managed by mentoring as well as role episode model . Role Episode model is one the classical tool to identify significant predictors associated with role stress and predictors can be analysed to minimize role stress. In mentoring role sender can play role of mentor , who can communicate clear role expectations as well as expectations that match the focal person's expectation . In addition quality feedback from role sender to the focal person can minimize the effects of role stress on individual as well as organization.

Intrapersonal conflict involves diagnosis of and intervention in , conflict .

Diagnosis

Intrapersonal conflict can be diagnosed by self report , observation and interview method . Rizzo et al designed questionnaire to measure role conflict and role ambiguity and is frequently used in organization studies.

Conclusion: Role conflict , role ambiguity and role overload are associated with biosocial variables such as age , gender , years of experience , marital status and number of children . Biosocial variables are independent variables which interact with role stressors to produce

<http://htmlimg1.scribdassets.com/4lk2zrg8e8y8jki/images/27-9e40fbd968.jpg>