

A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF ROLE STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG THE EXECUTIVES IN BHEL TRICHY

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Abstract

Stress is a universal and common challenge to organization and employee productivity, it is the reality of modern day workplace Employees working in different sectors and organizations have to deal with stress. BHEL workers are among the group of workers under a great deal of stress due to many antecedents of stress. Stress contributes to decreased organizational performance, decreased employee overall performance, high error rate and poor quality of work, high staff turnover, and absenteeism due to health problems such as anxiety, emotional disorder; work life in balance depression and other forms of ailments such as frequent headache; obesity and cardiac arrests. This paper aims to examine the impact of job related stress on employee performance and job satisfaction. A sample of 500 Executives from the BHEL, Trichy was used for this survey. Findings of this study for all other attributes under Job satisfaction due to the effects of Role stress on Job performance among the Executives the above said statement is statistically significant and thus identified as the most influencing variable and under job performance due to the effects of Role stress among the Executives the above said statement is statistically significant and thus identified as the most influencing variable.

Keywords: *Job performance, Job satisfaction, Load; Role Conflict; Monetary Reward*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's business setting is very vibrant and experience fast changes due to the effect of technological innovation, increased cognizance and demands from customers. These changes become the reason for high level of stress among the employees working in the organizations. The technological changes, especially extensive use of computers in organization has changed the patterns of doing work by the employees. These types of changes affected the social, economic and psychological domain of the employees and relations with other employees. From the previous studies it is evident that more than 80% of the employees have one or other problem directly or indirectly related to these drastic changes. Along with other sectors, the manufacturing concerns are also leaning towards the policy of appointing contract labors.

They are also using various compulsive and rewarding options for their employees. The key to the long-term success has been and will remain how organizations manage and keep their employees happy because, this will be the main pillar behind the organizational success with consistent results on operations management in long term. Therefore it is imperative to investigate the extent of the impact of occupational role on the ability of the employees to perform their duties effectively or otherwise. However, "Role is the position one occupies in a social system, and is defined by the functions one performs in response to the expectations of the significant members of a social system, and one's own expectation from that position".

Role stress and its impacts

According to *Pestonjee*, it is natural and healthy to maintain an optimal level of stress and opined that success, achievement, higher productivity and effectiveness call for stress. When stresses are left unchecked and unmanaged, they create problems in performance and as a result, it affects the health and well-being of the mankind. He has identified three sectors of life in which stress originates: - (a) Job and the organization, (b) Social sector, and (c) Intra-psychoic sector.

Job and organization sector is represented by all aspects of the work environment. The social sector consists of socio-cultural factors, such as religion, caste, language etc. Intra-psychoic sector consists of intimate and personal factors like attitudes, temperament, interest, health etc. It is noted that, from any of these sectors stress comes out. At present one of the major sources of stress is the organization.

Task demands: They are related with different aspects of the job occupied by the employee. For example, task variety, physical working conditions, opportunity to take decisions, freedom to choose their own methods of working etc.

Interpersonal demands: They consist of poor relations with co-workers, family members, friends etc, inadequate interpersonal relationship with other workers and pressure from the superiors and subordinates.

Role demands: When a person occupies a role in the organization, certain force exerted on it forms that role, which is called role demand. Role demands generally occur in the form of Role conflict, Role overload and Role ambiguity.

Organization structure: It includes job hierarchies, rules and regulations, company policy and lack of industrial democracy.

Organizational leadership: Factors which comes out from the functioning of top authorities are included in it. Due to power and prestige from the superiors an unrealistic pressure arises among the employees. Their working style creates depression and anxiety in the workers.

Organization's life stage: It includes the establishment, growth, and maturity and decline of the organization. These things sometimes create problems for the workers. Establishment and decline stage are more stressful because establishment produces more excitement and uncertainty, whereas decline stage consists of downsizing, layoffs and different other types of uncertainties.

Role set: It is the role system within the organization of which roles are part and by which individual roles are defined. The role set conflicts arises due to the incompatibility among these expectations by the significant effects and by the individual himself. Role set conflicts take the forms of.

Role Ambiguity: When there are doubts within the individual regarding the expectations that people have from the role then he comes under the stress of role ambiguity. It may be due to the lack of information available to the role occupant, or he may not fully understand the provided information. Role ambiguity may be in relation to activities, responsibilities, norms or general expectations. It may operate at three stages:

- (a) When the role sender holds his/her expectations about the role
- (b) When he/she sends it, and
- (c) When the occupant receives those expectations.

Role expectation conflict: The role occupant experiences this type of stress when there are conflicting expectations or demands by different role senders (persons having expectations from the role). This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons about the same role and the role occupant think as to whom to please. These conflicting expectations may be from the boss, subordinates, peers or clients.

Role overload: The role occupant feels role overload when there are too many expectations from the significant others in his role set. It has been measured by asking questions regarding the feelings of the people. For example, can you finish the work during the modified work day? or can the amount of work you do may interfere with how well it is done.

Role erosion: When the role occupant feels that the functions he would like to perform are being done by some other role then the stress of role erosion emerges. It is the subjective feeling of the individual. He thought that some important expectations that he has from his role are shared by some other role within the role set. This also happen when the functions are performed by the role occupant but the credit goes to someone else.

Resource inadequacy: This type of stress is generated when the proper resources are not available for performing a role effectively. Some of the common resources are people, information, material, finance or facilities.

Personal inadequacy: It happens when the role occupant feels that he does not have enough knowledge, skill or training to undertake a role effectively or if he thought that he has not enough time to prepare the assigned task. Individuals who are assigned new roles without adequate preparations or orientation are likely to experience feeling of personal inadequacy. It happens when the organizations do not impart periodic training to enable the employees to cope with the fast changes both within and outside the organization.

IRD: This type of stress refers to the psychological distance between the role occupant's role and other roles in the same role set. It is also defined as role distance which is different from inter-role distance; in the sense that while IRD refers to the distance among various roles occupied by the same individual.

Role isolation: It is characterized by feelings that others do not reach out easily. This indicates the absence of strong linkages of one's role with other roles. When a role occupant feel that certain roles are psychologically closer to him, while others are at a great distance then the stress of role isolation comes up. The distance may be due to the frequency and ease of interaction. If the linkages are strong then the role isolation will be low and vice versa. Hence we can measure role isolation in terms of existing and desired linkages. The gap between them indicates the role isolation.

Role Efficacy: A person's performance in an organization depends on his work potential effectiveness, technical competence, managerial experience, etc. It is the combination of the individual and the role. A person should have appropriate knowledge, technical competence and skills required for the role. The designing of the role is also important to make the performance effective. If an employee is not able to use his competence and if he continuously feels frustrated in the role then his performance falls down.

Role Efficacy characteristics: The more the aspects present in a role, the higher the efficacy of that role. These aspects can be classified into three dimensions. Role making is an active attitude towards the role,

whereas role making is a passive attitude responding to others expectations. The aspects in the second dimension are concerned with increasing the power of the role, making it more important.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pestonjee (1992) proposed that job and organizational factors as one of the three important segments of life, in which stress originates. Job and organization sector includes work environment and policies, task, responsibilities, power and accountability, working hours and atmosphere, compensation and rewards, subordinated, colleagues and superiors, etc.

Management role of an organization is one of the aspects that affect work-related stress among workers (*Alexandros-Stamatios et al 2003*). Role holders or rather employees being given certain specific ranks in the organization, irrespective of their individual differences are bound to experience more stress than others present in the organization, say casual labours (*Orpen 1991*). Thus, the emphasis is on the individual demands of various jobs that have the capacity over a period of time to exhaust the physical and psychological resource of employees in the organization.

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Rizzo (1970) found role ambiguity correlated significantly with low satisfaction, their study revealed little support for a significant relationship between job satisfaction and role conflict.

A study by *Tosi (1971)* however, failed to find a significant relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction. *Rizzo (1970)* and *Lyons (1971)* both found a significant relationship between role ambiguity and expressions of the desirability and likelihood of leaving the job. *Lyons (1971)* has obtained a significant relationship between role ambiguity and expressions of the desirability and like hood of leaving the job. *Lyons (1971)* has obtained a significant relationship between role ambiguity and turnover and *Johnson and Grean (1973)* have obtained significant relationship between both role ambiguity.

Work family conflict is positively related to the number of hours worked per week (*Burke et al., 1980; Keith & Schafer 1980; Pleck et al., 1980*) as well as the number of hours worked/commuted per week (*Bohen & Viveros-Iong, 1981*). Work family conflict also has been associated with the amount and frequency of overtime and presence and irregularity of shift work (*Pleck et al., 1980*). *Schwenk (1990)* showed that high conflict is associated with high quality for the Executives of non-profit organizations but with low quality for Executives of profit organizations. *Hall Copur (1990)* reported that role conflict experienced by faculty are not found to be

related to general job satisfaction but are Significantly correlated with faculty dissatisfaction in decisions that affect their work and work environment.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported in their study that among male Executives role ambiguity was negatively related with job performance, but role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance. *Bateman (1981)* found that role overload resulted in poor job performance. *Singh (1990)* observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Role ambiguity may be negatively related to self-efficacy for the following two reasons (*Li and Bagger, 2008*). First, role ambiguity diminishes the quality of the information available to evaluate correctly an individual's ability to perform a task. Secondly, according to social cognitive theory (*Bandura, 1977*), achieving a high level of self-efficacy requires that an individual can visualize an excellent performance in a given situation. However, high role ambiguity inhibits an individual's ability to visualize one's performance, ultimately reducing one's confidence in their ability to perform effectively. Clearly, role ambiguity may negatively affect an employee's self-efficacy. Additionally, self-efficacy may influence employee creativity. In this respect, *Bandura and Schunk (1981)* stated, that "a sense of personal efficacy in mastering challenges is apt to generate greater interest in the activity than is self-perceived inefficacy in producing competent performances" (p. 587). Their test results indicated that self-efficacy is positively related to intrinsic interest. Moreover, intrinsic interest (or motivation) is essential for employee creativity (*Amabile, 1988; Amabile et al., 1994; Tierney et al., 1999*).

A study conducted by *Elovainio et al (2002)* suggested that Organizational Stress inadvertently consequences low organizational performance. Stress makes the person strained which reflects in his performance. So, if a manger is able to face the stress boldly, he will perform well and as a result will be considered more effective. *Pestomjee (1987)* argued that it is natural and healthy into maintain optimal levels of stress. Success, achievements, high productivity and effectiveness call for stress. When stresses are left unchecked and unmanaged they can create problems in performance and affect the health and well-being of the organism.

Innstrand, et al. (2004) conducted a study to measure the mean differences of stress, burnout and job satisfaction after different intervention approaches were applied to staff in one of the municipalities. Staff in the other municipality acted as a control group. Using the pre-test score as the covariate, by analysis of covariance the findings reveal that the experimental group showed a significant reduction in stress and exhaustion, and a strong significant rise in job satisfaction after intervention.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem

Stress virtually influences an individual in every aspect of the life. Organizations are the place where people spend a major part of their active life, are understandably the soft targets of its onslaught. Occupational stress has in fact become a predominant feature of modern organizational life and the sources of such stress are manifold.

Apart from extra-organizational factors like familial, social, economic and political, the stressors are mostly organizational, either attached to the role occupied by the individual in the organization or emanating from rest of the organizational structure and climate. Besides the physiological, psychological and emotional costs to the Executives, stress induced behaviours place a considerable burden on organizations and greatly affect their bottom line. Work related stress costs the business in terms of productivity loss, absenteeism, turnover, alcoholism and medical expenses. Globalization and privatization have brought new work-relationships, job insecurity, insecurity regarding future working conditions and rapid obsolescence of skills.

The evolution of computer and information technology is perhaps one of the most dominating factors in the ever changing work-life today. Productivity, efficiency and low cost are centre stage issues of any organization. Managing stress is an area to be focused to address the significantly high attrition rate in the industry. The work culture in the organizations affects the mental health and the quality of life of Executives or Executives. Introduction of new technology and computerization into the working environment adds on stress for Executives in the organizations. Hence there is a need to study the organizational Role stress among the Executives of the selected manufacturing organization.

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To understand the effects of role stress, its nature and complexity experienced by the executives of BHEL, Tiruchirappalli.
2. To analyze the relationship between Job involvement and role stress among the executives in BHEL, Tiruchirappalli.
3. To evaluate the impacts of role stress that affects the job performance of the executives.
4. To measure the influence of role stress over the job satisfaction of the executives in BHEL, Tiruchirappalli.
5. To suggest suitable solutions to overcome the role stress and ascertain job satisfaction by the executives of BHEL, Tiruchirappalli

Population size: The total number of people in the group you are trying to study. If you were taking a random sample of people across the U.S., then your population size would be about 317 million. Similarly, if you are surveying your company, the size of the population is the total number of Executives.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire is constructed to get the primary data from the sample respondents. It includes socio economic profile of the Executives and all other dimensions of the study. It was pre tested among 50 executive Executives and appropriate modifications were made in the questionnaire.

Measurement scale

Apart from the Socio demographic profile of the Executives that are analyzed with nominal scaling, Executives Perception towards Role stress, Job Involvement, Effects of Role stress among the Executives, Executives Role efficacy and their Job performance are measured with ordinal five point scaling such as strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, and strongly agree. The executive employee's Job

Satisfaction is measured by five point scaling such as highly dissatisfied, dissatisfied, Neutral, satisfied, and highly satisfied.

Analytical tools used

Analysis of data is a critical part in social science researches. Successful analysis of data mainly depends on the reliability of data as well as usage of appropriate statistical tools. The present study takes the tools used to Factor analysis.

Reliability and validity of the data

Dimensions	Reliability	No. of items
Perception towards Role stress	0.706	10
Job involvement of the Executives	0.665	13
Effects of Role stress with respect to role ambiguity	0.763	10
Effects of Role stress with respect to role conflict	0.734	12
Effects of Role stress with respect to role overload	0.820	07
Role efficacy	0.690	14
Job performance of the Executives	0.853	10
Job satisfaction of the Executives	0.771	13

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR JOB PERFORMANCE

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The dimensionality of job performance was examined using factor analysis based on eleven individual statements and the reliability of the subsequent factor structures was then tested for internal consistency of the grouping of the items. The eleven factors of job performance statements are related to the following:

1. Talents are being used
2. Deliver quality output
3. Meet deadlines
4. Effectively manage tasks
5. Ability to solve problems faster
6. Work is error free
7. Deliver better output
8. Achieve my pre-determined work standards
9. Works well under pressure
10. Overwhelmed by the demands of work
11. Handle work related stress effectively

Table – 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test of job performance

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.856
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8715.278
	Degree of freedom	55
	Significant value	0.000

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

High value of KMO ($0.856 > .05$) of indicates that factor analysis is useful for the present data. The significant value for Bartlett's test of Sphericity is 0.000 and is less than 0.05 which indicates that there exists significant relationships among the variables. The resultant value of KMO test and Bartlett's test indicates that the present data is useful for factor analysis.

Table – 2
Total variance explained for job performance

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.527	59.340	59.340	6.527	59.340	59.340	6.524	59.311	59.311
2	2.506	22.785	82.124	2.506	22.785	82.124	2.457	22.332	81.643
3	1.092	9.927	92.051	1.092	9.927	92.051	1.145	10.408	92.051
4	.223	2.025	94.076						
5	.184	1.671	95.747						
6	.177	1.607	97.354						
7	.125	1.135	98.489						
8	.079	.716	99.205						
9	.045	.405	99.609						
10	.030	.271	99.881						
11	.013	.119	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

All the statements of the job performance are loaded on the three factors. The total variance accounted for, by all the three factors with Eigen value greater than 1 is 92.051 percent and the remaining variance is explained by other variables. Among the three factors, the first factor accounts for around 59.311 percent of variance which is the prime criteria considered in job performance.

Table –3
Rotated Component Matrix of job performance

Rotated Component Matrix ^a	Component		
	1	2	3
Deliver better output	.985	.001	-.005
Works well under pressure	.981	.005	.007
Achieve my pre-determined work standards	.969	.007	.017
Overwhelmed by the demands of work	.968	.020	.047
Work is error free	.966	.001	.012
Handle work related stress effectively	.964	.014	.017
Ability to solve problems faster	.923	-.001	-.016
Meet deadlines	.030	.935	-.056
Deliver quality output	-.017	.925	-.085
Talents are being used	.010	.851	.401

Effectively manage tasks	.022	.054	.985
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.			

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

The statements are converted into 3 factors using factor analysis.

The following seven aspects related to job performance are converted into a single factor.

1. Deliver better output
2. Works well under pressure
3. Achieve my pre-determined work standards
4. Overwhelmed by the demands of work
5. Work is error free
6. Handle work related stress effectively
7. Ability to solve problems faster

The following three aspects related to job performance are converted into a single factor.

1. Meet deadlines
2. Deliver quality output
3. Talents are being used

The following one aspect related to job performance are converted into a single factor.

1. Effectively manage tasks

Apart from that, the dimension “Job performance” comprises 14 statements. Out of fourteen statements, three statements contribute more towards job performance. The statements are (1) Deliver better output, (2) Meet deadlines and (3) Effectively manage tasks. The result determines the fact that almost all the attributes under job performance due to the effects of Role stress among the Executives considered for the study are important and the most influencing factor is identified as ‘Deliver quality output, Meet deadlines, and Effectively manage tasks’ of the respondents. The Executives opinion towards the role undertaken and their performance in the job depends on the quality of output delivered and effective management of the task performed by them. This factor is perceived more important among their all other statements of opinion under job performance. Hence among all other attributes under job performance due to the effects of Role stress among the Executives the above said statement is statistically significant and thus identified as the most influencing variable.

FRIEDMAN TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN RANKS OF JOB SATISFACTION OF THE EXECUTIVES

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between mean ranks towards the Job satisfaction of the Executives.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between mean ranks towards the Job satisfaction of the Executives.

Table – 4

Friedman test for significant difference between mean ranks towards Job satisfaction of the Executives

Job satisfaction	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	Degrees of freedom	Asymp. Significant
Job is interesting	6.36	109.658	12	0.000
Career development prospects	6.93			
Enjoy my work	7.52			
Satisfied with my job	7.56			
Satisfied with my role	6.30			
Job is rather unpleasant	7.33			
Often bored with my work	6.80			
Unhappy for taking up this job	6.83			
Satisfied with my salary	7.34			
Feelings of accomplishment	7.30			
Happier in my work	6.19			
Co-workers pleasant to work with	7.00			
Quit this job	7.55			

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

From the above table, it is found out that all the variables related to the Job satisfaction of the Executives had significance value less than 0.05 at 1 Per cent significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is significant difference between mean ranks towards Effects of Role stress with respect to role ambiguity. Out of the thirteen Job satisfaction variables, the “Satisfied with my job” has the highest rank (7.56). So, that Job satisfaction is influenced by Satisfied with my job.

The result determines the fact that almost all the attributes under Job satisfaction due to the effects of Role stress on Job performance among the Executives considered for the study are important and the most influencing factor is identified as ‘Satisfied with my job’ of the respondents. The Executives opinion towards the job satisfaction over the effects of Role stress is identified as satisfactory. This factor is perceived more important among all other statements of opinion. Hence among all other attributes under Job satisfaction due to the effects of Role stress on Job performance among the Executives the above said statement is statistically significant and thus identified as the most influencing variable.

5. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Findings

- The dimension “Job performance” comprises 14 statements. Out of fourteen statements, three statements contribute more towards job performance. The statements are (1) Deliver better output, (2) Meet deadlines and (3) Effectively manage tasks. All the attributes under job performance due to the effects of Role stress among the Executives considered for the study are important and the most influencing factor is identified as ‘Deliver quality output, Meet deadlines, and Effectively manage tasks’ of the respondents. The Executives opinion towards the role undertaken and their performance in the job depends on the quality of output delivered and effective management of the task performed by them. This factor is perceived more important among their all other statements of opinion under job

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SUGGESTIONS

Role stress is an important constrain that exhibits predominantly an unfavourable impact in the organizational outcomes. This tends to a major problem not only for individuals working in an organization but also for the organization itself. It has a despairing economic implication such as low quality of work, poor productivity, absenteeism, etc. Organizations can help to create job satisfaction by putting systems in place that will ensure that workers are challenged and then rewarded for being successful.

This study was conducted on executive employees working in the BHEL Manufacturing unit at Trichy which is a PSU (Public Sector Unit) and the following suggestions are made.

- There is a divergent expectation in the roles occupied by the Executives and this can be ruled out by ensuring an open and vowed means of communication at work. Intensive practice of proper communication throughout the workplace helps the employees to choose and prioritize the tasks in their work for better management of their multiple roles possessed.
- Proper Planning in performing the job with the available required resources is imperative for reducing role stress at work. This alarms the resource inadequacy.
- Personal efficiency needs to be emphasized among the employees. It may be noted that personal inefficiency arises from lack of competence for performing in the role.
- Lack of interaction or communication between roles pursues loss of prominence of the focal role and other related roles among the Executives.
- Employee facilitation Program (EFP) can help alleviate stress by providing free, confidential avenue for employees to openly express the stress they are facing while performing their roles as well as the difficulties or hindrance they face while fastening the various roles they are involved with.
- Opportunities for growth and learning in the form of training, development, challenging assignments, etc. may have relevance whereby increasing the variety in work is likely to increase interest and motivation of the employees and will reduce role stress caused due to it.

CONCLUSION

The effects of role stress was analyzed three-dimensionally in terms of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. The three dimensions of role stress in question were also determined to affect the job performance of the employees in the selected study area BHEL, Tiruchirappalli. The findings of the present study will help researchers and practitioners in the industry to acquire empirical evidence of the impact of employees' efficiency and role stress on their job performance. The study indicates that the organization should pay intensive attention towards the employees to boost their performance. However, the employees perceive that the resources they have are insufficient for performing the roles expected of them, and they experience role stress when they try to perform more than one role simultaneously. The study proves that the occupational stress due to the nature of the job involves mental effort, work timing and delivery pressure. The change in role due to change in organizational structure, creates stress and thereby influences the role satisfaction which impacts the performance. This relationship proves the need to reduce the role stress for better performance and strategy to reduce the role stress has been recommended.

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