ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS IN SOFTWARE INDUSTRY IN BANGALORE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the sources and the factors responsible for organizational role stress. The scope of study was a software industry situated in Bangalore The sample comprised of 100 respondents drawn from a well known software company. The results revealed the factors responsible for organizational role stress amongst the employees of a software company. It was found that Inter -role distance, Role stagnation, Role expectation conflict and Role Erosion were the main concern of the software employees that lead to stress at the work place. The current paper puts forth relevant suggestions and recommendations aimed at improving the stress scenario in the industry based on the findings.

Keywords: organizational role stress, role stressors, software company employees, Role space Conflicts, Role stress conflicts,

1. Introduction

Stress is *sine-qua-non* in modern life. As the complexity in organizations increases, the potential for stress increases. Urbanization, division of labour, specialization and increase in scale of operations are some of the reasons for rising stress. Role stress is on account of problems encountered in the performance of positional demands. When these problems are confronted clarified and resolved, the resulting role stress gets minimized. This in turn promotes enhanced psychological well-being of the role occupant increased performance and effectiveness at the

individual and organizational levels. Homogeneity of role stress indicates that the organization the same kind of problems is present throughout the organization and the same kind of solutions hold good for all parts of the organization. Heterogeneity of role stress, on the other hand, signifies that the organization is facing different kinds of problems in different parts and different kinds of solutions are required for different parts of the organization. Identifying these differences is useful in formulating strategies for increasing the organizational performance efficaciously.

Organization can be defined as a system of roles, the system of various roles which one performs, and the system of various inter linkages of roles. A person performs various roles which are centered the self. These roles are at varying distances from the self. These relationships define the role space. The role space is a dynamic interrelationship between the self and the various roles one occupies, and also amongst these roles.

The gap between a role and the self indicates the extent to which the role occupant and the role are entwined. When we don't get pleasure in performing a particular role or don't get involved in it, there is a distance between the self and the role known as self-role distance. Similarly, there may be distance between two roles that a person occupies and is known as inter role distance or inter role conflict.

The individual's role in the organization is defined by the expectations of other significant roles, and those or the individual himself.

The performance of a person working in an organization depends on his/her own potential effectiveness as a person, technical competence, managerial ability, etc., as well as, the way in which one performs the role he occupies and how the organization is designed. It is the integration of the two, the person and the role, that ensures a person's effectiveness in the organization. Unless the person has the requisite knowledge, technical competence, and skills required for a role, he/she cannot be effective. Equally important is how the role that the individual occupies is designed. If the role doesn't allow the individual to use his or her competence, so that he/she constantly feels frustrated in the role, the individual's effectiveness is likely to be low. The integration of the person and the role comes about when the role is able to fulfill the needs of the individual, and when the individual is able to contribute to the fruition of the role. The more we from role taking (More passive attitude of merely responding to others' expectations) to role making (showing positive attitude towards the role as evidenced by the

effort and initiative taken to go beyond the brief), the role and the role occupant are likely to be effective.

The effectiveness of a role occupant in an organization, therefore, depends on potential effectiveness of the individual, the role he occupies and the organizational climate. This potential effectiveness can be called efficacy. Personal efficacy would mean the potential effectiveness of the person in both personal and interpersonal situations. Role efficacy then means the potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization.

2. Conceptual Frame work of Organizational Role Stress

The   role concept in general and the two role systems namely role space and role set in particular have sufficient potential for conflict and stress.

Role Space Conflicts

Role space is the dynamic relationship between the various roles an individual occupies and his self. It has three main variables: the role under consideration, self and the other roles the person occupies. Any conflict among the above mentioned variables is known as role space conflict or stress. These conflicts may take several forms.

- Self-role distance: This results when the role occupant experiences a conflict between the self and his role; the role demands what the role occupant doesn't like to do. If a person occupies a role that he or she subsequently finds is conflicting with his or her self-concept, the person feels stress. Example, an introvert, who is fond of studying and writing rather than meeting people, accepts the role of a salesman in an organization, where the expectations from the role would include him meeting people and being social experiences considerable self-role distance.

- Intra-role conflict: This arises due to incongruity between the different expectations of his role. Example, a professor may see an incongruity between the expectations of teaching students and of conducting research. These may not be intrinsically conflicting, but the individual may perceive these as conflicting.

- Role Stagnation: Role stagnation (RS) results from incapability to occupy a new role; the role occupant keeps on stagnating in the old role due to lack of competence for the new role. This kind of stress is the result of the gap between

the demand to outgrow a previous role and to occupy a new role effectively. It is the feeling of being stuck in the same role. Such type of stress results in perception that there is no opportunity for one's career progression.

- Inter-role distance: Inter role distance (IRD) arises when the role occupant finds it tough to adjust between the organizational and non-organizational roles. Example, the role of an executive versus the role of a husband/wife. Such inter role conflicts are common as individuals are usually occupying multiple roles in various organizations and groups.

Role set conflicts

The role set consists of important persons who have different expectations from the role occupant. The incompatibility among these expectations by the significant others and by the individual himself are referred to as role set conflicts. These conflicts may be any one mentioned below.

- Role ambiguity (RA) arises when the role occupant is not clear about expectations from his/her role. This arises due to the lack of information available to a role occupant, or due to the individual's lack of understanding of the cues available. Role ambiguity may be in relation to responsibilities, priorities, expectations or activities. Persons occupying the roles that are newly created in organizations, roles that are undergoing change, or process roles experience Role Ambiguity.

- Role expectation conflict: When there are conflicting expectations or demands by different role senders, the role occupant experiences this type of stress. The conflicting expectations may be from the boss, subordinates, peers or clients. The role occupants ambivalence as to whom to please.

- Role overload: This arises when there are too many or too high expectations from one's role. There are two aspects of this stress. The first refers to having too much to do, while the other refers to things being too difficult and the accountability in the role which are refered as Quantitative and Qualitative overload.

- Role erosion: This results when some of the important functions belonging to one's role are performed by other roles. This can also happen when the functions are carried out by the role occupant but the reward for them goes to someone else.

Another manifestation is in the form of underutilization in the role. For example, in a bank if the role of a general manager was split into two roles, of GM (operations) and GM(Planning). The role occupants of both these new roles experienced role erosion, and felt that their roles had become less important compared to the old role.

- Resource Inadequacy: This results when the role occupant encounters inadequacy of resources like information, people, material, finance and facilities for performing in his/her role.

- Personal inadequacy: This arises when the role occupant feels that they do not have the necessary skills and training for performing the functions expected from their role effectively. This is bound to happen when the organizations don't plan for periodic training which helps the employees to cope with the fast changes both within and outside the organization.

3. Review of literature

Weiss M. (1983). -The Author studied the role stress sources and linked it to Job dissatisfaction, Job oriented tension and anxiety and decreased employee productivity. He advocated that the sources of dis-stress be reduced in the organization so that one can reduce the consequences ill health amongst employees. Through his study he demonstrated the power of social support that reduces the negative consequences of stress.

Singh A. P.& Singh S.(2009) –This study concentrates on the Job Satisfaction in the organizations. According to them, Job Satisfaction is directly proportional to Organizational Role Stress and culture that prevails in the organization. This study identified three sectors of the organization in which job stress originate and classified stress into two main types i.e. positive stress is called as '*eustress*' and negative stress *distress*. Further, they pointed out the importance of positive stress and absence of negative stress for better productivity and job satisfaction.

Gladies J. J. & Kennedy V.(2011)- The authors established a significant relationship between Organizational Climate and Role Stress among the women working in IT companies of India. Learning how to manage work-life balance is a critical thing that should be developed in IT companies so that they can reduce the stressors.

Charu M. (2013) The author is of the opinion that quality of work life is directly proportional to the job stress in IT professionals. Factors like stable role expectations, peer and superior support, autonomy in the work, amiable work environment and job stress directly affect the quality of work life. Rapid change in technology is cited as the foremost reason for stress amongst the associates of IT industry.

Kavitha (2012)- The author has attempted to study the organizational role stress among the employees in the IT Sector. The author has found out that women employees in general and married women in particular faces more stress than men employees.

P.S. Swaminathan,& Rajkumar S. (2013)-This study focused on different demographic variables like age, hierarchical level, different varieties of job, working hours and work environment and its impact on the level of stress by the employees. Degree of stress experienced by an employee is individual in nature and this study advocates optimum level of stress for an employee to perform in his full capacity. This study has identified three factors that are primarily responsible for organizational role stress namely role overload, self role distance and role stagnation. In this study in software Industry also role stagnation is one of the prime factors responsible for organizational role stress.

Sharma S., Sharma J. & Devi A.(2012)- Individual differences like mindset, age, gender, qualification, pay, level control exercised in the organization, recognition and promotion etc influence the degree of stress experienced by the employee. This study recommended positive reinforcement approach to reduce the stress at the workplace.

According to **Cooper and Marshal (1976)** organizational role stress includes the organizational factors or stressors like role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and deprived working conditions.

Orpen (1991) observed that role occupants in specific occupation are likely to experience role stress. The demands of various roles have the capacity over a period of time to consume the physical and psychological strength of employees in the organization**.**

Srivastav A.K. (2010)– This article focuses on the kind of role that causes the stress. 'One solution for all' may not work in managing organizational Role stress as it was found to be heterogeneous in nature and specific problem oriented intervention is to be adopted for effective management of organizational role stress.

Sinha V. and Subramanian K.S. (2012)- The study highlights that various organizations experience different kinds of organizational role stress. It also states that stress is influenced by various factors like shortage of resources, personal inadequacy within an individual, role

overload, role stagnation, role isolation and expectations from a role occupant.

4. Objectives of the Study

1) To determine the importance of organizational role stress for employees in Software industry

2) To identify the factors that influences the organizational role stress in Software industry.

3) To identify the reasons how organizational role stress plays an important role in Software industry.

4. Research Methodology

The validity of any research depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analyzing the same logically and sequentially. An extensive use of both primary and secondary data was made in the present study. The present study has been mainly based on survey method. Primary data have been collected by issuing questionnaires directly to the respondents who are working in a leading software company in Bangalore. Simple Random sampling technique was employed to select the sample respondents from the selected software company and totally 100 employees were chosen. The data so collected has been analyzed using Factor Analysis with the help of statistical package for social science.

5. Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study lies in its small sample size. However, there exists the potential for studying these factors for a wider population and in other sectors as well. Additional research and inquiry on Organizational role stress is certainly needed may be by including some more areas like coping strategies.

6. Results and Discussion: Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis is a technique used to convert a set of variables into a lesser number of linear composites, which have a highest correlation with original variables. Factor analysis is utilized to examine a complex product (or) services, in order to identify the key characteristics or factors considered important by the respondents. The intent of factor analysis is to determine whether the responses of several statements preferred by the respondents are significantly correlated. If the responses to the several statements are significantly correlated, it is considered that the statement measures some factors common to all of them. Only to continuous variables or interval

scales variables, the factor analysis can be applied. Factor analysis is a kind of regression analysis. The factor analysis attempts to get the „best fit" factor from the scattered data in such an approach that factors describe the variance related to responses to each statement. The researcher has conducted the factor analysis in the following stages in the present research.

1. Secondary Research

2. Questionnaire formulation

3. Data collection

4. Input feeding and processing

5. Output analysis

6. Identifying the factors

7. Conclusions

Factors Chosen for Analysis

Statistics Associated with Factor Analysis: Bartlett's test of sphericity- To test the null hypothesis that the variables chosen are not correlated with the sample universe Bartlett"s test of sphericity can be used. The basis of this test is chi-square. During the process of calculations transformations of determination of correlation matrix is considered. The null hypothesis is rejected by a large value of test statistics.

Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measure of sampling – The magnitude of partial correlation co-efficient is compared by this index, with the magnitude of the observed correlation co-efficient. Instant small values, which specify the correlation between pairs of variables, cannot be explained by other variables. With this indication, the factor analysis for evaluating a particular aspect will not be more appropriate.

Eigen Values and communalities – The sum of squared of its factor loading is indicated a factors Eigen value or latent route. How well a given factor fixes the data gather from the sample respondents is given by Eigen value. The sum of squares of a statement's factor loading describes the communalities of each factor contributions for the selected variables.

All the 10 factors in the questionnaire of the present study were subjected for factor analysis by using Principle Component Analysis (PCA) with orthogonal rotation. There is no constraint on the number of factors. A factor-loading cut off point of 0.50 was used for the sake of convergent validity. The factor matrix is constructed with the help of matrix loading and correlations

between the variables and factors. A loading of greater than 0.5 will be for pure variables. A higher loading is considered for complex variables, which makes interpretation of the output difficult. To attain the significant variable the researcher rotated the components seven times under three factors. TABLE NO.1.0 indicates that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy in the study are .885. This is a good result, as it exceeds 0.5 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity which is 0.000, meaning that factors that form the variables are adequate and the value is highly significant.

Table No.1.0 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.855
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	918.196
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

The following table shows the variables with the corresponding extraction communality factor value.

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Inter -role distance	1.000	.928
Role stagnation	1.000	.847
Role expectation conflict	1.000	.788
Role erosion	1.000	.868
Role overload	1.000	.873
Role isolation	1.000	.923
Personal inadequacy	1.000	.909
Self -role distance	1.000	.907
Role ambiguity	1.000	.865
Resource inadequacy	1.000	.903

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained

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 %
Inter -role distance	6.663	66.629	66.629	6.663	66.629	66.629	2.571	25.707	25.707
Role stagnation	.941	9.414	76.043	.941	9.414	76.043	2.430	24.300	50.007
Role expectation conflict	.684	6.842	82.885	.684	6.842	82.885	2.379	23.795	73.802
Role erosion	.523	5.233	88.118	.523	5.233	88.118	1.432	14.316	88.118
Role overload	.363	3.626	91.744						
Role isolation	.273	2.731	94.475						
Personal inadequacy	.184	1.839	96.313						
Self -role distance	.174	1.744	98.058						
Role ambiguity	.123	1.233	99.290						
Resource inadequacy	.071	.710	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4
Inter -role distance		.883		
Role stagnation				.622
Role expectation conflict		.534		
Role erosion				.734
Role overload		.762		
Role isolation	.849			
Personal inadequacy			.819	
Self -role distance			.840	
Role ambiguity	.743			
Resource inadequacy	.720			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Findings

It is found that variables like Inter role distance, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy and Resource inadequacy contribute the maximum for Organizational Role Stress amongst software professionals.

Factors like inter-role distance, Role stagnation and Role expectation conflict are responsible to a large extent for Organizational Role Stress amongst employees of software industry.

Suggestions and Recommendations

A more functional strategies like role negotiation which is the process of establishing the mutuality of roles and getting necessary help to play the roles more effectively, role transition which is the process whereby a previous role, however successful and satisfying it may have been, is given up to take a new and more developed role. This is helped by various processes, including anticipatory socialization, role clarity, substitute gratification, and the transition procedure, in order to make role transition more effective, it is necessary to have anticipatory socialization that is preparatory to the taking up of the new role. This would also include delegation of responsibility and functions to people in subordinate roles, so that person can be free to experiment, and get help in such experimentation from others. Such a process of role transition may be very useful. Reasons for role expectation conflict are unclear structure, inadequate communication, overlapping role expectations, which lead to lack of confidence. This can be reduced by introducing the systems so that expectations are uniform. One way to deal with this kind of role stress is Role linkages i.e., linkages are established with other roles and the problem is solved by devising some new ways achieving the conflicting expectations, the individual can experience both the process of growth as well as satisfaction. An approach strategy to handle role erosion may be that of role enrichment. Like job enrichment, role enrichment can be achieved by analyzing the role systematically and helping the individuals see the various strengths and challenges in the role which might not have been apparent earlier.

Conclusion

With increasing intricacies in our lifestyle, the level of stress has been mounting at a phenomenal rate. Different cultures experience different kind of role stress. Even within the same culture, industrial society experiences a different kind of stress than that of the upper class. Various authors have concurred in reduction of organizational role stress results in organizational

productivity and effectiveness.   Factors like role overload, role erosion, inter-role distance, role stagnation, role expectation conflict are primarily responsible for organizational role stress amongst soft ware employees. Organizational initiatives in reducing the above factors will pave way for increased harmony and productivity.

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