

ROLE AMBIGUITY AND EMPLOYEES ORGANIZATION BASED SELF ESTEEM

Role Ambiguity and Employees Organization Based Self Esteem: Moderating Effect of Workplace Spirituality

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to examine the extent to which role ambiguity impact employee's organization based self esteem in Pakistani context. The study also investigated the extent to which workplace spirituality moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and employee's organization based self esteem. Globalization, dynamic working environment and increase in market competition required an employee to play multiple roles at the same time employees on the other side feel stress when they are unable to justify these roles. Stress not only affect the individual performance of an employee but it also threat to the organization in the form of poor performance. Spiritually at workplace is an emerging concept and believed to have strong influence on work attitudes of employees as well as on the overall performance of the organization. The findings of this study have provided a comprehensive relationship between role ambiguity and employee's organization based self esteem and workplace spirituality. This study is concluded with a number of implications and research directions for both the business managers and the research scholars.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, role ambiguity, organization based self esteem

INTRODUCTION

Dynamic work environment with unpredictable economical, technological, market and political changes required organizations to become more responsive to their internal as well as external environment. Under highly competitive environment organizations exerts a stabilizing force on the employees by promoting harmony and desirable work behaviors from employees (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Nemeth and Staw, 1989) and required employees to play multiple roles, employees on the other side feel stress when they are unable to justify these roles. These conflicting set of employer expectations about the nature of work from the employees may lead to role ambiguity and stress among employees. The job characteristics theory of work attitudes and performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1980) is based on the consideration that the work itself is a mean of employee motivation. According to their model there are five main job characteristics of an employee which are task identity, autonomy, task significance, skill variety and feedback. These job characteristics are most likely to impact three critical psychological conditions of the employees which are experienced responsibility for outcomes, knowledge of the actual results and experienced meaningfulness. These psychological conditions influence work outcomes which are work motivation, job satisfaction, absenteeism, self esteem etc. Various studies have revealed that job related stress results in employee's high absenteeism, dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment and low job performance (Ortqvist and Wincent, 2006). Thus employees are exposed to stressful working conditions and in such working conditions employees reveal strains which include behaviors like absentees, increased smoking, depression, physical illness, intention to quit the job and psychological distress.

This study has focused on the impact of role ambiguity on the employee organization based self esteem. Role ambiguity occurs when employees are doubtful about their job responsibilities and functions, whereas the organization based self esteem is the employee's perception about his worthiness and personal adequacy in the organization. Trott (1996) proposed that workplace spirituality which includes a sense of community and alignment with organizational values is positively related to the employee's psycho/social adjustment. Alignment of individual values with organizational values can also be expected to enhance employee's organization based self esteem. Employees who feel them self an important member of the organization, experience a high sense of service (Hawley, 1993) and contribute their thoughts, potential and energies to the promotion of the organization. Organizational culture plays a vital role in shaping and improving overall employee's attitudes ast work thus there exist theoretical assumption that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and performance. Spirituality in workplace can be considered as a step towards organizational development by enabling the expression of values like corporate citizenship, honesty, virtue and integrity (Petchsawang and Morris 2006). This research study contributed significantly by

showing the moderating role of workplace spirituality on the relationship between role ambiguity and employee's organization based self esteem.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Does the Role ambiguity has significant impact on employee's organization based self esteem and also examine to what extent the workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and employee's organization based self esteem.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a. To study the impact of role ambiguity on employee's organization based self esteem.
- b. To examine the moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship between role ambiguity and employee's organization based self esteem.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is always important for an organization to understand the work attitudes of its employees because people coming from diverse backgrounds and cultural values have to work together like a team for the organization. Dealing with the employees individually is always difficult for the employer because a large number of employees work in an organization, workplace spirituality is a variable that can be used to measure and change in a working environment and at the same time it can be helpful in measuring the collective working attitude of the employees in an organization. Findings of this study will assist employers to understand and befitting the employees work attitudes with the objectives of the organization. It will further help the employers to enhance employees' potential through different means to handle the stress at work.

Most of the research on workplace spirituality has addressed a Western context but this study is significant to approach workplace spirituality in Pakistani context. Furthermore findings of this study will help researchers to develop mechanisms and tools to cope with the issue of role ambiguity and suggest ways to develop a more spiritual environment to increase the productivity of employees at work.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study is delimited to the organizations located in the Islamabad.
- The study is delimited to the middle line managers of target organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ORGANIZATION BASED SELF ESTEEM:

The word self is complex and multidimensional because it reveals diverse attributes and abilities, some of which are manifested in external objects such as the body and others are internal consisting of perception and beliefs. Organization based self esteem determine the self perceived value that an employee has for himself as organization member acting within an organizational context. Employees with high level of organization based self esteem perceive themselves as important, worthwhile and meaningful within their organization and contribute effectively towards organizational goals (Dunham, & Cummings, 1993; Gardner & Pierce, 1998). According to Taylor and Brown in 1988 OBSE should be encourage to increase the performance of employees actually employees performance at a high level have favorable attitudes about an organization and engage in other organization related behaviors that would benefit the organization. Employees with low level of OBSE are more reactive than the employees with high OBSE and they are more vulnerable to unfavorable role conditions, such as role conflict, role ambiguity and poor work condition, poor supervisory support and work overload. Research revealed that there is a significant moderating effect of OBSE on role condition response relationships.

According to Pierce et al (1989) organization based self esteem is positively related to organizational satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance and citizenship behavior. OBSE and job satisfaction are related to each other i.e. employees with high OBSE have high level of job satisfaction and consider themselves as meaningful, respected and important for their organization. Employees who feel that their work is appreciated by the employer and are also aligned with the organization's objectives believe they can make a real difference to the organization and to others (Catlette and Hadden, 1998). Similarly Trottn (1996) proposed that spiritual well being of an employee that includes a sense of community and alignment with organizational objectives will also be positively related to an employees' social adjustment. Alignment with organizational values can also be expected to enhance employee organization based self esteem because employee feel himself a responsible person for the organization's success or failure (Catlette and Hadden, 1998). Thus employees with high level of OBSE experience a high sense of service and contribute their energies, expertise and thoughts to the company (Brown, 1992). Ganster and Schaubroeck in 1991 stated that employees with low level of self esteem are more reactive of role conflict and role ambiguity than employees with high self esteem but they are also more passive in coping with these stressors. Low self esteem employees react more strongly to negative variables in the environments than those with high self esteem.

ROLE AMBIGUITY:

Role ambiguity occurs due to acquisitions and restructuring of organization, where employees are uncertain of their new job responsibilities or roles. Role is most typically defined as a set of expectations of a certain behavior of a person who hold a specific position in a social structure. Role ambiguity refers to the degree of predictability one's behavior responses and the clarity of behavior requirements (Glissmeyer et al., 2008; Shen, 2005). Role ambiguity occurs when role expectations are unclear due to lack of information about the role and the work it entails. The employee does not know where to direct his efforts and employee is unable to predict the success and failure of his actions (Beehr and Bhagat, 1985; Rizzo et al., 1970). According to Jamal in 2005 stress is a high when there is imbalance between job demands and employee capabilities to handle the situation. Employee job control can reduce stress when the work life balance practices are perceived high whereas when work life balance is low then job control may not have the intended impact on stress. According to research by Cohen (1980) role stress affects the availability of cognitive resources because organization tends to dedicate more resources to handle the role stress and hence fewer resources can be used to perform job responsibilities. Singh (1993) reported that role ambiguity among retailers must have a strong influence on the level of customer satisfaction i.e. when retailers recognize obligations which are related with job performance are ambiguous; they experience greater complexity in their efforts to meet customer expectations. Managers experiencing high levels of ambiguity are unlikely to focus on relevant factors during negotiation periods. The experience of role stress can cause unusual attitude at work and long term stress may lead to psychological problems and be conducive to psychiatric disorders resulting in absentees from work, employee turnover, low self esteem of employees and preventing employees from being able to work again. Under stressful working environment employees find it difficult to maintain a healthy balance between work life and non work life.

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY:

Initially workplace spirituality was believed to be a religious tendency, later on researcher stated that several factors including religion are associated with workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality is not about religion only or about converting people towards a specific belief system or it may not be related to any religious belief but rather it is based on personal values and philosophy (Laabs, 1995; Cavanagh, 1999). Enhancing spirituality in workplace can be seen as an approach to organizational development by enabling the expression of values including integrity, honesty and corporate citizenship (Petchsawang and Morris, 2006). Waddock (1999) found that bringing employee heart, soul and mind collectively at workplace can facilitate organizations to encourage community as a basis on which organizational objectives can be achieved. Researchers also emphasized that workplace spirituality is a type of

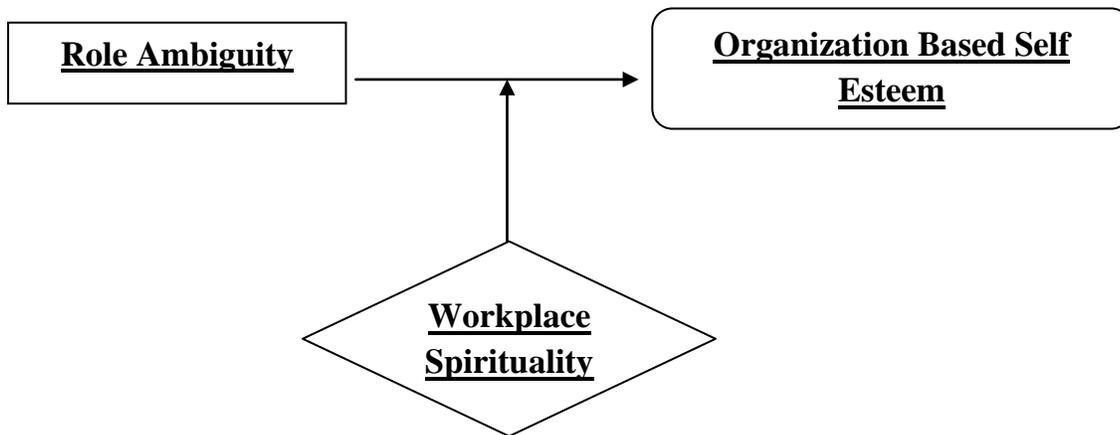
treatment for the problems of modern management and a source to develop the trust between employer and employee and contributed towards organizational performance (Brown, 2003, p. 396; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003 and 2004). Workplace spirituality brings employee spiritual values to the workplace which is highly motivated by the spiritual need to experience a feeling of inspiration and community in their work (Fry & Matherly, 2006, 2007). There has been a constant discussion in the literature regarding the role of gender in relation to occupational stress like Rodriguez Calcagno and Brewer (2005) found that amongst Hispanic professional's females experience higher levels of job stress than do males. Therefore the demographic variables including working experience and gender are the part of our data collection and measure of our study.

HYPOTHESIS

H1a: The employee's role ambiguity has significant impact on their organization based self esteem.

H1b: The workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between employee's role ambiguity and their organization based self esteem such that if workplace spirituality is high than negative relationship between the variables will be weakens.

RESEARCH DESIGN



POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The employees working in organizations located in Islamabad city. Islamabad city has been selected as target population because Islamabad city is diversified in terms of culture so employees working in organizations located in Islamabad are truly representative of diversified culture of Pakistan. Managers having more than 02 years of experience in an organization and not involved in policy making or taking major decision for the organization or not the part of Board of Directors of the organization are middle line managers. The study is delimited to middle line managers of target organization the number of middle line managers is always higher than any other level of management in any organization. So it is convenient for the researcher to collect the data from the large group of employee in an organization. Secondly collecting data from a specific managerial level help us to control various unknown variables because the effect of these variables may vary with the managerial level. A sample of 300 middle line managers was chosen from different organizations including government, private, local and multinational organization based in Islamabad. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed to the selected respondents 190 completed questionnaires were returned and yielding a response rate of approximately 63 % , rest 110 questionnaires were either incomplete or respondents did not respond at all. The number of respondents from each organization is given below in table:

Table 1: Number of Respondents from each target organizations

Respondent Organizations	Number of questionnaire distributed	Number of questionnaire received	Number of measurable/completed questionnaires	Response Rate in percentage
Faysal Bank	40	29	24	60
Standard Chartered Bank	40	32	29	72.5
Zong Telecom	40	31	25	62.5
Institute of Space Technology	50	41	36	72
National Space commission	50	42	36	72
National housing authority	40	25	21	52.5
OGDCL	40	22	19	47.5
TOTAL	300	222	190	63.3

INSTRUMENT

In order to qualitative examination of the relationship between the variables of the study, a structured questionnaire, comprised of 26 questions has been adopted from different research studies. The measure of role ambiguity was based on the instrument proposed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzmann and also used by Arne Nygaard and Robert Dahlstrom in 2002. Organization based self esteem was measure by a five items scale proposed by Pierce et al. (1989) and the same is used by John Milliman, Andrew J. Czaplewski and Jeffery Ferguson in 2003. Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) developed a survey instrument for measuring workplace spirituality; the same has been used for this study. . Questionnaire was based on 5 point likert scale ranging from point 1 which is "strongly disagree" to point 5 which is "Strongly agree". Questionnaire attached at Annex 'A'.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTROL VARIABLES:

GENDER:

To check the significance of control variables i.e. gender and experience on the dependent variables of the study ANOVA test has been used. The results are given below:

ANOVA

Table 2: Analysis of variance

	Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.077	1	.077	.079	.778
Within Groups	181.761	188	.967		
Total	181.838	189			

The value of alpha (0.778) is greater than posthoc tukey alpha (0.05) so it is insignificant. It showed that control variable gender has insignificant impact on employee's organization based self esteem.

EXPERIENCE

Table 3: Frequency distribution of number of experienced respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Above 02 years but less than 04 years	80	42.1	42.1
Above 04 years	110	57.9	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

Table shows that 42.1 percent of employees who have been selected as respondents of this study have experienced more than 02 years but less than 04 years whereas 57.9 percent of respondents were above 04 years of experience.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.823	1	1.823	1.904	.169
Within Groups	180.014	188	.958		
Total	181.838	189			

The value of alpha (0.169) is greater than posthoc tukey alpha (0.05) so it is insignificant. It showed that control variable experience has insignificant impact on employee's organization based self esteem.

RELIABILITY TEST:

Table 5: Cronbach's Alpha

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Role Ambiguity	0.853
Organization based self esteem	0.918
Workplace Spirituality	0.894

The reliability of all items used in the research is good and showing acceptable values as all the values are above 0.7. The reliability tests of our constructs have shown good results and affirm the reliability of results of this study.

H1a: The employee's role ambiguity has significant impact on their organization based self esteem.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of all variables of study

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R		
				Role Ambiguity	OBSE	Workplace Spirituality
Gender	1.27	.447	190			
Experience	2.58	.495	190			
Role Ambiguity	2.6541	.81982	190	1		
OBSE	3.5674	.98087	190	-.654	1	
Workplace spirituality	3.4901	.59458	190	-.325	.300	1

Table shows the Mean, Standard Deviation and correlation between role ambiguity, organization based self esteem and workplace spirituality. The results of correlation showed a negative relationship between role ambiguity and organization based self esteem.

REGRESSION

Table 7: Shows the regression Analysis of role ambiguity and OBSE

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.654	.428	.425	.74396

COEFFICIENTS

Table 8: Shows the t value and significance level

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.644	.183		30.789	.000
Role Ambiguity	-.783	.066	-.654	-11.855	.000

The β value gives the rate of change in dependent variable i.e. OBSE due to the independent variable i.e. role ambiguity. Table showed significant value of beta so there is significant impact of role ambiguity on employee's organization based self esteem. So H1a is accepted.

H1b: The workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between employee's role ambiguity and their organization based self esteem such that if workplace spirituality is high than negative relationship between the variables will be weakened.

Table 9: **Model Summary**

model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.661	.436	.430	.74033	.436	72.384	2	187	.000
2	.674	.454	.446	.73038	.018	6.130	1	186	.014

The value of R^2 change with the change in the value of workplace spirituality which shows that workplace spirituality has strong moderating effect on the relationship between the role ambiguity and organization based self esteem. It means that if workplace spirituality is high or low the relationship between role stress and organization based self esteem changed. So H2b is accepted i.e. the workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and Organization base self esteem such that if workplace spirituality is high than negative relationship between the variables will be weaken.

CONCLUSION:

This research was conducted to determine the impact of role ambiguity on employee's organization based self esteem and to determine the role of workplace spirituality on their relationship. When employees encounter different types of roles at a time they perceived burdensome, this situation created high role stress among them. Such stress changes their working attitude in the form of reduction in their Job satisfaction, job discretion and job involvement. The results of this study suggested that role ambiguity has a negative implication on employees organization based self esteem (OBSE) if it is accumulated in an employee due to lack of ability to handle and manage stress and it generate the feeling of pointlessness continued working in the organizations. Employees who have high level of role ambiguity at workplace they tend to exhibit low level of organization based self esteem because there is a negative relationship between role ambiguity and OBSE and the employees with low OBSE are dissatisfied. Low self esteem employees feel insecurity in their capability to affect their working environment, the requirement to fulfill the role expectations and there are greater chances of negative feedback and to permit self criticism. Low self esteem employees react more strongly to negative variables in the environments than those with high self esteem (Ganster and

Schaubroeck in 1991). The result of this study is congruent with the study of Jon L. Pierce, Donald G. Gardner, Randall B. Dunham and Larry L. Cummings in 1993 and also with the study of Ortqvist and Wincent conducted in 2006 that has revealed significant affect of role stress on high turnover intentions, low commitment, low satisfaction and poor performance. The study of Cynthia LeRouge, Anthony Nelson and J. Ellis Blanton (2006) also suggested that self esteem had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and role stress fit.

Csiernik and Adams (2005) stated that employees with a greater sense of spirituality at workplace perceive their organizations as being favorable and healthier environment for them. Workplace spirituality does help decrease the perception of workplace stressors and thus contributes to a sense of wellness. The results of this study are also the same and suggested that workplace spirituality is a strong moderator of role ambiguity and OBSE. The change in the value of workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between the role ambiguity and organization based self esteem of employees i.e. if the value of workplace spirituality is high the negative relationship between the two variables, role ambiguity and organization based self esteem will be weaken and if the value of workplace spirituality is low the negative relationship between role ambiguity and organization based self esteem will be strong. This study adds to the increasing evidence that scholar's emphasis on spiritual needs in the workplace produces favorable individual and organizational performance (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Malone & Fry, 2003). The results of this study suggested that organizations have to reframe their approach toward their working and the employees and such an intention call for organizations to develop new systems in order to incorporate the employees' behavioral changes which can be achieved with the integration of spirituality at the workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

This study opens the several areas for the future research. The recommendations are as follows.

- In future, the research can be made by measuring the effect of different job stressor including work overload on employees work attitudes.
- Various other dimensions of employee work attitudes including employees work satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement can be studied as variables for attitude at workplace.
- The similar study can be conducted by selected the top level employees in the organization as target respondents.

- Role stress at workplace has negative association with the psychology as well as health of the employees. Therefore research can be conducted to measure the cause and effect of role stress at workplace on employee's health.

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Annex A

As the student of Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Islamabad I am working on my thesis project and conducting a research *on Role Ambiguity and Organization Based Self Esteem*: I would like you to extend your cooperation by filling this questionnaire. I assure you that your information will be kept confidential and will be used for research study only.

Gender: a. Male b. Female

Designation: _____

Number of Years (worked): (a) Less than 2 Year (b) 2 - 4Years (c) Above 4 Years

Strongly Disagree	1	Disagree	2	Neutral	3	Agree	4	Strongly Agree	5
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Please indicate your response according to the given table:

	Role Ambiguity	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel certain about how much authority I have. (r)					
2	I know what my responsibilities are. (r)					
3	I have just the right amount of work to do. (r)					
4	I know that I have divided my time properly. (r)					
5	I know exactly what is expected of me. (r)					
6	Explanation of what has to be done is clear. (r)					
7	I perform work that suits my values. (r)					
	Organization based Self Esteem	1	2	3	4	5
1	I count around here					
2	I am an important part of this place					
3	I am trusted around here					
4	I make a difference around here					
5	There is faith in me around here					

	Statements	Your Responses				
	Work Place Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5
1	People in my team/group feel as if they were part of a family.					
2	My team/group promotes the creation of a spirit of community.					
3	I feel that the members of my team/group support each other.					
4	I feel that the members of my team/group care about each other.					
5	I feel that the members of my team/group are linked by a common purpose					
6	I feel positive about the values prevailing in my organization.					
7	People feel good about their future with the organization.					
8	My organization respects my “inner life.”					
9	My organization helps me to live in peace/harmony with myself.					
10	The leaders of my organization try to be helpful to the larger social good of the community.					
11	My work is connected with what I think is important in life.					
12	I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community					
13	When working, I feel helpful for the whole society.					
14	I experience joy in my work.					
15	Most days, I feel joy when coming to work.					
16	My spiritual values are not valued in my workplace.					
17	In my workplace, there is no room for my spirituality					