

Examining the Mediating Effects of Role Ambiguity on Relationship between the Job Characteristics and Intention to Quit

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to examine the mediation effect of role ambiguity on the relationship between job characteristics and employee intention to leave in the public sector. This study try to concentrate on the way jobs are designed and its impact on outcomes that are important to workers job satisfaction and to employers' performance from the connection between how employees view their jobs and the various outcomes measures and that the characteristics of the job are primary determinants of work outcomes and study was based in the following specific objectives, job characteristics (job autonomy, task significance, skills variety and feedback from job) employee turnover in and the role ambiguity in the public sectors.

The target population of this study was 193 personnel consisting of staff of public sector, middle, and lower management. And the results indicate that there is a significant negative relationship between job characteristics and Role Ambiguity, also significant negative relationships exist between job characteristics and intention to leave.

Also the mediating effects of role ambiguity on relationship between job characteristics and employee intention to leave was measured and confirmed by using baron and keney method.

Keywords: Job characteristics, intention to quit, role ambiguity.

Introduction

In the current times, in which the war for talent is uninterrupted, organizations and researchers are increasingly taking interest in how not only to retain their talent, but also to optimize their leadership and engagement practices to maximize organizational outcomes through their talent.

And in this domain we should answer on the most significant question (What causes lead to occur of employees' turnover intention?)

Many aspects have been studied by researchers and the main studied factors such as job satisfaction (Halbesleben et al, 2008) and organizational commitment (Chang et al., 2006). Besides other studies found job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employee gradually weakened before he/she actual turnover (De Lange, 2008).

Moreover that, job related factors such as job characteristic can also be viewed as a major factor that affect the intention to leave. Job characteristic model include of: skill variety, task identity, task significance, job autonomy, and job feedback (Hackman and Oldham, 1978). Different parts let employees occur different cognition then occur different level of intention to leave. It's not difficult to understand when employee felt that work more than their ability range and cannot get a clear feedback, he/she will be upset and discouraged even not really satisfied with their job and the organization.

On the contrary, the employee occur higher organizational commitment when he/she highly satisfied his/her job (Slattery et al, 2010).

If the employee who has a low level of commitment to organization, he/she has a negative work-related attitudes and behaviors such as often absenteeism, join in unproductive even turnover intentions (Halbesleben et al, 2008).

Panzano and Seffrin, (2001) suggested that managers should focus on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job characteristic to improve employee attitudes.

Research Objectives

Objectives of this study are explored as follow:

1. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of job characteristics on employee intention to leave in public sector. The research study was guided by the following objectives:
 - To examine the influence of job autonomy on employee intention to leave.
 - To assess the effects of task significance on employee intention to leave.
 - To assess the effects of skills variety on employee intention to leave.
 - To investigate the influence of feedback from job on employee intention to leave.
 - To examine the influence of task identity on employee intention to leave.
2. We aimed to investigate whether the effect of role ambiguity as mediators in the relationship between job characteristics and intention to quit.
3. We aimed to provide a comprehensive model of intentions to quit that could be extrapolated to inform quitting behavior.

Research questions

- I. How does job characteristic effect the intention to leave?
- II. How does role ambiguity effect the intention to leave?
- III. Does role ambiguity mediate the relationship between job characteristic and intention to leave?

The Concepts of the study

Job characteristics

Job characteristics are all factors of the job and are directly associated with employee attitudes and behaviors at work (Hackman and Oldham, 1978).

Hackman and Oldham have introduced the concept of the study and development model of job characteristics which consists of five dimensions as follows:

Skill variety

Researchers define that skill variety as the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involves the using of a number of different skills and talents (Slattery, et al 2010).

In other words it is the extent up to which a job demands a number of various behaviors in performing the work, it involves the usage of a set of different skills and traits of the person for purposeful accomplishment.

Task Identity

Task identity is described as the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work, the employee is doing a job from start to finish with a visible outcome (Slattery, et al 2010).

And it is the level up to which a job requires accomplishment of Full and considerable part of work from starting to end that brings a viable outcome.

Task Significance

Task significance is described as the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on lives or work of other people whether in organizational or external environment Whether a big task or small task, managers must make staff aware of its importance and illustrate the significant effects of this task.

Meaningfulness of a job is more if it is of same importance to others like to the performer for the same reason being.

Job Autonomy

Job Autonomy defined as the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the employee in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. (Rentsch et al, 1998)

Therefore the job autonomy makes employee believe that this is the trust from organization and also be a psychological encourage, he/she will innovative thinking and develop his/her ability, thus more keen to their job then improve the organizational commitment.

Job Feedback

Job feedback is the degree to which the employee receives clear information about his or her performance (Slattery, et al 2010). It indicates that the employee cares about the outcome of his/her work, he/she needs to know whether his/her be a large role to organization and what is the role, eager to get the supervisors recognition.

Intention to leave

Turnover intentions defined as conscious willfulness to seek for other alternatives in other organization. (Rizzo, 1970) therefore turnover is referred as an individual's estimated probability that they will stay an employing organization.

Also intention to leave is defined as an employee's plan of intention to quit the present job and look forward to find another job in the near future (Sager, J.K. (1991).

Intention to leave has been described as behavioral intention of a worker to voluntarily leave his job, profession or organization (Almada et al, 2004).

Role Ambiguity

Role Ambiguity is defined as the absence of satisfactory information which is required in order for persons to accomplish their role in a satisfactory manner (Sager, 1991).

Rizzo et al. (1970) also defined role ambiguity as reflect certainty about duties, authority, allocation of time, and relationships with others; the clarity or existence of guides, directives, policies; and the ability to predict sanctions as outcomes of behavior.

Literature review

The objective of job characteristic model is to understand the feeling of employees toward their jobs is positive or negative? Job characteristics is not only influence the employees' feelings but also their behavioral outcomes and based on the past studies there should be relationships between job characteristics and job outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention (Firth et al,2004).

Hackman, and Oldham (1978) identified five core job characteristics as follow: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from job. It analyzed the relationship between them, as well as analyzed the influence on the employee productivity, job motivation, satisfaction and commitment.

According to the job characteristic model, any position can be description from five core job characteristics. The five job characteristics relate to three underlying psychological states: work meaningfulness, knowledge of results, and sense of responsibility as seen in the (figure 1).

From the other side employee turnover is a very important factor which reduces organizational effectiveness and employee productivity to a certain extent, and therefore manager must spend more time, energy and material to develop a new talent to replace the employees who leave out. (De Lange et al, 2011). Hence employee turnover is worth managers to pay attention to it.

According to (Cotton et al, 1986), their results showed that employee turnover can be divided to involuntary or voluntary.

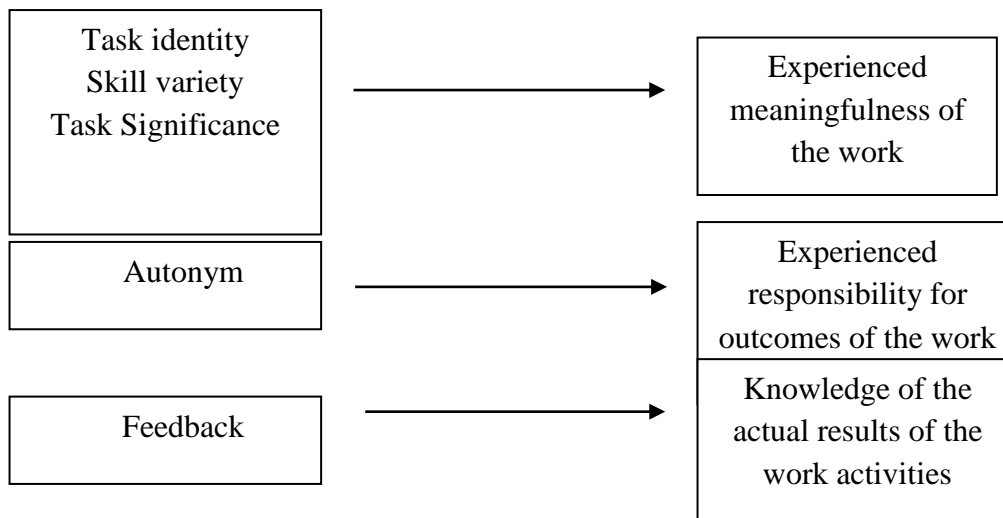


Figure -1- Job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1978)

(Chang, 2006) indicated that when employee cannot get happiness from their work then the dissatisfaction of job is high, they will look for other opportunities which can give them happiness or satisfaction. Hence job satisfaction is viewed as significant predictors of turnover intention.

However, job satisfaction and organizational commitment pour on employee's attitudes about job and organization, but turnover is an actual move out from an organization (Panzano et al , 2001) showed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment maybe intermediate of turnover intention.

Empirical studies support the fact that intention to leave is inversely related to job satisfaction. Intention to leave is high when job satisfaction is low. However, this may not be true in all cases, particularly when unemployment is high, a worker may choose to remain in the present employment despite being less satisfied with the job (steel et al, 1984)

Role ambiguity arises when roles for a particular position are unclear, uncertain and poorly-defined. Performers deviate on role anticipations, not due to role conflict but because role expectations are unclear (Rizzo et al, 1970).

Morgeson et al., (2006) stated that there are two types of ambiguity one is subject ambiguity and other is resource ambiguity. The subject ambiguity consists of product, market, process and organizational resources while in the resource ambiguity multiplicity, novelty, validity and reliability are included.

Several studies found that role ambiguity reduced job satisfaction (Chang et al, 2006). The meta-analyses of Loher et al (1985) bring out, for example, a negative relationship between role ambiguity and general satisfaction, satisfaction with the immediate superior, satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with colleagues, satisfaction with salary; and satisfaction with opportunities for advancement.

(Bline et al., 1991) find that if ambiguity is too great, then employees tend to examine other possible solutions to reduce their discomfort and they contemplate leaving the organization

Moreover, role clarity is also positively related to innovation (Panzano et al, 2001). Role clarity refers to how clearly a set of activities expected from an individual are expressed. Role

ambiguity or role uncertainty is the reverse situation (Jansen and Gaylen, 1994). This implies that role ambiguity negatively and significantly affects employee creativity.

METHODOLOGY

Measures

Responses to the measures were rated on a 5 - point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). The appendix provides a detailed list of scales.

- **Job Characteristic Variables**

The job characteristics scale was assessed with five subscales: skill variety, task Identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. All of the items were adapted from Hackman and Oldham (1975).

- **Role ambiguity**

Role ambiguity was measured by using the six items from the role ambiguity scale developed by Rizzo et al. (1970).

- **Intention to quit**

Intention to quit was measured by using The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS), as adapted by Cotton (1986)

See the appendix for the specific items that were summed together to measure indexed variables.

Data Collection

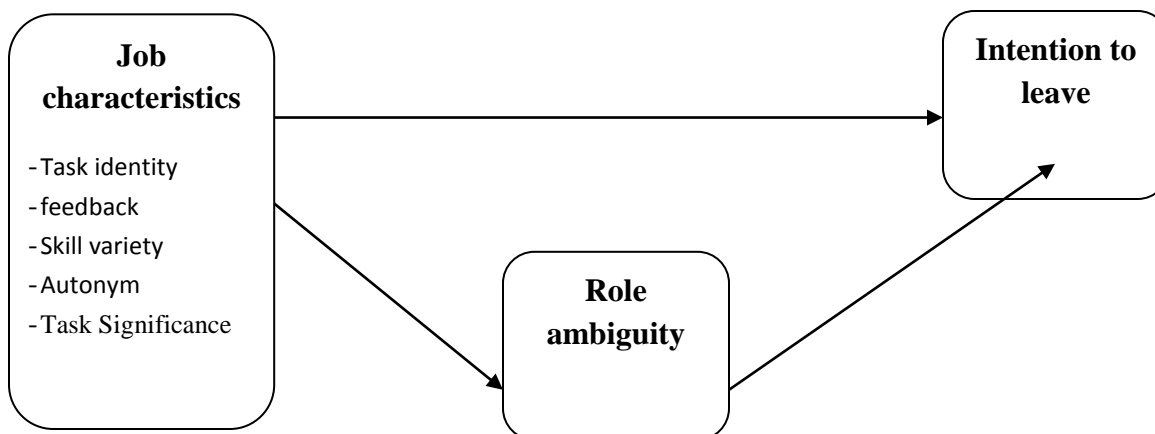
For the collection of data structured questionnaire were distributed. The distribution was made personally and the questionnaire was used comprised only closed-ended questions.

Population, Sample and procedures

The population of study consisted Employees of public radio stations in syria were selected for as population of research and sample size is 193.

Study Hypotheses:

- There is a significant negative relationship between Job characteristics and intention to leave.
- There is a significant negative relationship between job characteristics and Role Ambiguity.
- Role Ambiguity mediates between Job characteristics and intention to leave.



Study Results

Table 1: means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Autonomy	3.22	1.88	(0.85)						
2 Skill Variety	3.25	1.90	0.33*	(0.89)					
3 Task Significance	2.9	2.01	0.45**	0.43*	(0.85)				
4 Task Identity	2.89	1.93	0.32*	0.31*	0.55*	(0.79)			
5 Feedback	3.11	1.99	0.56**	0.12*	0.45	0.52*	(0.82)		
6 Intention to leave	3.89	1.55	-.48*	-.31*	-.36*	-	-	(0.84)	
						.28**	.58**		
7 Role ambiguity	3.15	1.22	-.42**	-.46*	-.23*	-	-	0.56**	(0.79)
						.58**	.45**		

Note. *p <05, **p<01

Table -1- shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables along with internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) for those variables with multiple items. Correlation table above show that Job characteristics (Task identity Feedback Skill variety Autonym Task Significance) have significant negative relation with Intention to leave. Also Job characteristics (Task identity Feedback Skill variety Autonym Task Significance) have significant negative relation with Role ambiguity. Intention to leave has significant positive relation with Role ambiguity.

**Regression
Hypotheses testing**

Table 2: Model Summary 1 of Job characteristic and Intention to leave

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients Beta
.224	.050	.047	.000	-.224

The R Square value is .050 which shows the variance between Job characteristic And Intention to leave The value indicates that 5% variance in Intention to leave can be predicted from the variable Job characteristic

The Beta value is -.224 which indicates that the rate of change in independent variable is caused by the dependent variable which would indicate that when Job characteristic increase Intention to leave decrease.

Table 3: Model Summary 2 of Job characteristic and role ambiguity

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.	Standardized Coefficients Beta
.411	.169	.166	.000	-.411

The R Square value is .169 which shows the variance between Job characteristic and role ambiguity the value indicates that 16.9 % variance in role ambiguity can be predicted from the variable Job characteristic_

The Beta value is -.411 which indicates that the rate of change in independent variable is caused by the dependent variable which would indicate that Job characteristic increase role ambiguity decrease.

MEDIATION

Table -4- Regression Analysis of role ambiguity mediating between Job characteristic and Intention to leave.

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results

	R	R2	R2 change	Sig.
Job characteristic And Intention to leave	0.224	0.050		0.000
Job characteristic and role ambiguity	0.411	0.169		0.000
Mediation by role ambiguity	0.188	0.035	0.127	0.000
	0.403	0.162		0.000

As shown in table 1 and 2 the Job characteristic significantly affects the Intention to leave as per statistical analysis step 1 is confirmed, Job characteristic significantly affects the role ambiguity as per statistical analysis step 2 is confirmed

In 3rd step when role ambiguity was taken as mediator between Job characteristic and Intention to leave. R value increased from .188 to 2.47 which suggest that role ambiguity successfully mediate between Job characteristic and Intention to leave.

DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which role ambiguity mediated the relationship between job characteristic and Intention to leave.

The findings showed that job characteristics were not only related to Intention to leave but also through role ambiguity as a mediator.

The findings of this study suggest that organizations have powerful influence on employees by managing the meaning of work and by focus on the job designs, organizations can significantly define and shape the “reality” in which employees work in addition it can be assumed that job characteristics such as task variety, autonomy, job feedback, task identity, and task significance can induce engagement and alleviate of intentions leave.

The finding also suggests that when employees perceive their organizations as having greater concern on their job satisfaction and aspects of job characteristics the emotion of employees will be more positive Although motivating job characteristics will most probably be beneficial for organizations as it leads to higher levels of engagement and lower levels of intention to quit. The positive link between job characteristic and Intention to leave of employees also founded with past studies (Altier, M. E. & Krsek, C. A., 2006).

The findings suggest that employees are likely to perform well and stay in their organizations if they have an enough control over their jobs (job Autonomy) and if they receive supported data and information from their supervisors and peers (feedback).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several limitations of this study that can be addressed in future research.

First, the demographics of this study limit the external reliability of the findings specifically due to the uniqueness of the public radio stations in Syria.

Second, employee in public radio stations in Syria may have different working conditions than other employee in other places either in the same job or other sector.

Third, Career success must necessarily be studied using self-reports, non-self-report measures of objective and subjective career success that would have enhanced the validity of the findings.

Finally, factors such as years of experience and employee benefits were not considered for the very important impact of these factors in generating the idea of leave in comparative with other places.

Future studies should test the relationships with many factors such as organizational, personal, occupational and cultural elements apart from job characteristics, demographic variable and role ambiguity that may influence turnover intentions and should be explored for further research.

APPENDIX:

Intention to leave					
Items	1	2	3	4	5
I am actively looking for another job outside of The Company.					
As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave The Company.					
I often think about leaving The Company.					
I intend to leave The Company as soon as I possibly can.					
If another organization offered me a job right now, I would leave The Company even if the salary were to be equal to my present salary.					

Role ambiguity					
Items	1	2	3	4	5
I feel certain about how much authority I have.					
Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.					
I know that I have divided my time properly.					
I know what my responsibilities are.					
I know exactly what is expected of me.					
Explanation is clear of what has to be done.					

Job Characteristics					
Items	1	2	3	4	5
Skill variety					
I get to use a number of complex skills on this job.					
The job involves doing a number of different tasks.					
I can use the skills that I have to handle the problem in my job.					
I have chance to using a wide variety of different skills and talents.					
Task identity					
I do a complete task from start to finish.					
I have chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.					
Once I start a task I have to finish it.					
I never work just do half and then assign to others.					
Task significance					
Only when my job gets done, other jobs can be completed.					
My job is always to get the attention of co-workers.					
My job is an integral part of the organization.					
Job Autonomy					
I control the content of my job.					
I have freedom to decide how I perform assigned tasks.					
I can set my own schedule for completing assigned tasks.					

Job Feedback					
The work shows me with information about my performance.					
Supervisor provides me with constant feedback about my activity.					
I am clearly competent view of my work performance					
I can timely know whether my job is efficiency.					

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