

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i2/4496>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i2/4496

Received: 20 December 2017, **Revised:** 10 January 2018, **Accepted:** 15 February 2018

Published Online: 26 February 2018

In-Text Citation: (Kamarudin, Zulkafaly, & Hassan, 2018)

To Cite this Article: Kamarudin, K., Zulkafaly, F., & Hassan, N. M. (2018). Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Job Stress among Police Officers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(8), 843–855.

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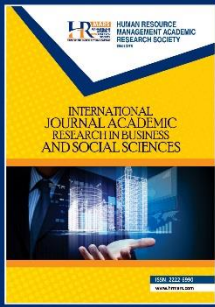
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Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2018, Pg. 843 – 855

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Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Job Stress among Police Officers

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Abstract

The general aims of this study were (i) to identify the relationship between role conflict and job stress among police officers (ii) to identify the relationship between role ambiguity and job stress among police officers. The sample comprised of 280 police officers from several contingents using purposive sampling process. For the data collection, a questionnaire was distributed, which consisted of items regarding role conflict, role ambiguity and job stress. The instruments Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity was developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale Version 21 (DASS 21) developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). Analysis data used Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicated that police officers perceived role conflict and ambiguity when performing their job, thus lead to the job stress. Police officers are affected more by role ambiguity than by role conflict, but both role conflict and role ambiguity produced job stress.

Keywords: Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, Job Stress, Police Officers.

Introduction

Role conflict is a demonstration of the situation of a person's crisis. Role conflict is also called as role stress (Srivastav, 2010) and role strain (Goode, 1960) caused by the role that individuals need to internalize in an organization. Despite the assortment of constructs used to describe role conflicts, the main component of all constructs is the incompatibility or equivalence in performing the work tasks in an organization. The definition of role conflict is pioneered by Kahn et al. (1964); Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970). Rizzo et al. (1970) defined role conflict as the incompatibility of demands and expectations in engaging work role.

Jones et al. (2007) argued that insufficient time and effort in implementing role of work in an organization can produced role conflict. Two or more demands need to be fulfilled at the same time and fulfillment with one's demand will make fulfillment with others more difficult or impossible caused role conflict exist (Pandey & Kumar, 1997). Role conflict take place when individuals who are uncertain how to perform the task and when to perform the tasks (Tidd &

Friedman, 2002). Cooper, Dewe and O'Driscoll (2001) defined role conflicts as inappropriate demands in work tasks that produced negative emotional responses at work.

Menon and Aknilesh (1994) clarified that role conflicts in work can be solved with abstract thinking and decision-making techniques. Grace (2012) classified role conflicts into two main categories, i.e. inter-role conflicts and intra-role conflicts. Inter-role conflicts occur when a person holds two or more positions simultaneously and the role of both positions has to be performed at the same time. While, intra-role conflicts refer to conflicts that exist from the sources of roles. Role conflicts can be described in structural and interaction functions. Stryker and Macke (1978) argued that structural functions are divided into five forms of role conflicts, i.e. the structure of demands from various roles, demand structures arising from different parts of various roles, conflicting reactions from individual behavior, differences in the expectations others and the conflict between the expected roles and individual self-concepts.

On the other hand, role ambiguity occurs when individuals do not comprehend the role they need to play and the effective way to solve a task (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). The role ambiguity is defined as uncertain about the specific job requirements because of lack of information, unclear commands and unclear objective (Karatepe et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2007) vague expected role, the requirements, procedures and methods necessary to complete tasks closely related to their work (Glissmeyer et al., 2007). In general, the role ambiguity occurred when something unclear about the role and means to fulfill the roles (Graen, 1976).

In addition, Katz and Kahn (1978) defined the ambiguity of the role as uncertainty about what a person should do. Meyerson (1991) says that role ambiguity can exist in both the organization and the individual. Bedeian and Armenakis (1981) identified the four dimensions of the role ambiguity, namely ambiguity in terms of goals, processes, priorities and behaviors. Role Congruent Theory introduced by Kahn et al. (1964) stated engagement in a coping strategy to deal with stress that caused by inherent role conflict and role ambiguity. Both role conflict and role ambiguity need to settle in order to avoid job stress, motivation loss, dissatisfaction, anxiety and decreased job performance.

Role Conflict and Job Stress

Previous research produced different results regarding role conflict in different job setting. The previous study found that role conflicts were closely related to job stress (Quarat-ul-ain, Khattak & Iqbal, 2013) emotional fatigue (Ahmad, 2010) intention to quit from the job (Glissmeyer, Bishop & Fass, 2007). The evaluation of threats, barriers and challenge were closely related to role conflict and job stress (Tuckey, Searle, Boyd, Winefeld & Winefeld, 2015). Role conflict contributed to 41% to job stress (Hsu et al., 2010).

Role Ambiguity and Job Stress

Role ambiguity is a significant predictor with the intention to quit the job (Glissmeyer, Bishop & Fass, 2007) job stress (Ramadan, 2013) negative effects on psychological stress (Lang, Thomas, Bliese & Adler, 2007) reduced innovation, self-perfection, autonomy, self-esteem, and increased physical pressure (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974) job satisfaction (Busch & Bush, 1978) negatives relationships between subordinate and supervisor (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock, 2011). Srikanth and Jomon (2013) found that feedback from supervisors and colleagues are significant in reducing role ambiguity in work performance. However, feedback from supervisors is more

useful than feedback from colleagues in reducing role ambiguity in an organization. Yesiltas (2014) found that there was a negative impact between the role ambiguity and the behavior of the task execution in the task description and the additional role in the job.

Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Job Stress

Role conflict and role ambiguity lead to job stress (Idris, 2011; Muchinsky, 2000). Factors that cause stress are divided into two categories, which are related to occupational tasks or those related to role characteristics, such as role conflicts and role ambiguity (Muchinsky, 2000). Capel, Sisley and Desertrain (1987) find that role conflicts and role ambiguity are two variables that are consistent with job stress. According to Yongkang et al., (2014), role conflicts and role ambiguity have significant positive effects on working pressure. However, Ahmadi, Feizi and Alipour (2013) found that there was no significant relationship between role conflict and work stress but there was a significant relationship between role ambiguity and job stress. Darat (2010) stated that both role conflict and role ambiguity were closely related which an individual who are clear with the task objective would decrease role conflict.

Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Job Stress among Police Officers

There are several studies conducted in police settings. Both role conflict and role ambiguity play an important role in determining the health of the police (Izzaty et al., 2015) increase number of wrong doing in police officers due to the clash of role conflict and role ambiguity (Yesiltas; 2014; Cooper, 2012). There are some gaps this study wants to highlight. A little attention given to conduct job stress issues in police officers in Southern Asia and Malaysia area (Masilamani et al., 2013). Judeh (2011) argued that no existence of consensus related to organizational factors that lead to job stress in police settings. According to Wong (2003) listed several constraints that researchers encounter in conducting study in police settings such as political factors, different practice and theory, conservative organizational settings and protection of confidentiality in police settings. Therefore, this study was conducted to fulfill the gaps.

Study Model

Role conflict and role ambiguity were independent variables whereas job stress was dependent variable in this study. The study model is presented in Figure 1.

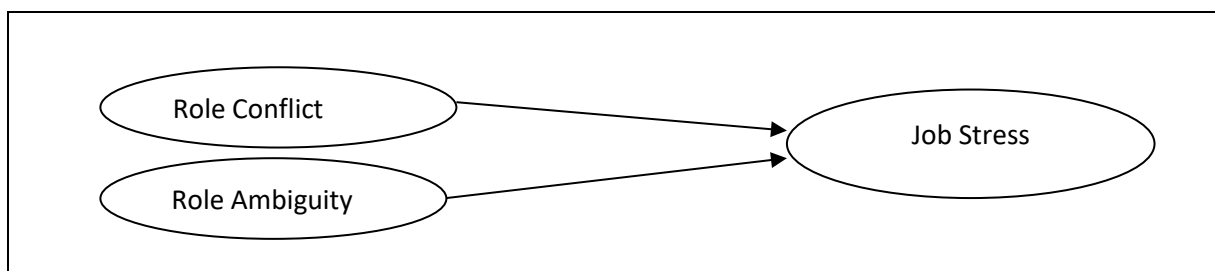


Figure 1. Study Model

Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

Objectives of this study were (i) to identify the relationship between role conflict and job stress in police officers; (ii) to identify the relationship between role ambiguity and job stress in police

officer. Hypotheses of this study were H₁: There was no significant relationship between the role conflict and job stress in police officers. H₂: There was no significant relationship between the role ambiguity and job stress in police officers.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of 268 police officers from several contingents using purposive sampling process due to constraint to access the particular sample and confidentiality practiced by police. The sample was selected through purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling method was utilized because there was a constraint in accessing the sample in senior officer category and the confidentiality policy that the researcher needs to follow. The purposive sampling method is supported by other scholars such as Chua (2006) Sekaran and Bougie (2010).

Data Collection Process

Before the study was conducted, the researcher applied for permission from Bukit Aman Training Division to collect the data. The researcher distributed questionnaire form to the sample. Before the survey form was distributed to the sample, the researched give a briefing regarding the study. After the sample completed the questionnaire form, the researcher provided an inquiry session to sample.

Instruments

A Malay version questionnaire was used to collect the data consisted of demographic data such as gender, ranking and level of job tenure, role conflict and ambiguity issues developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). The second part was to measure job stress variable using Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21) presented by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). Analysis data was used Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Results

Respondent Profile

In the gender category, 157 men (58.60%) 111 women (41.40%) were participated in this study as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Sample by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	157	58.60
Female	111	41.40
Total	268	100.00

There were 81 (30.20%) senior officers and 187 (69.80%) lower ranking police officers involved in the study as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Sample by Ranking

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage
Senior Officer	81	30.20
Lower Ranking	187	69.80
Total	286	100.00

For the level of job tenure, there were 115 (42.90%) of police officers served within a year to five years. A total of 53 police officers (19.80%) served within six to 10 years. A total of 31 police officers (11.60%) served within 11 to 15 years. A total of 27 police officers (10.10%) served within 16 to 20 years. A total of 42 police officers (15.70%) served within 21 to 30 years as described in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of Sample by Job Tenure

Job Tenure	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5 years	115	42.90
6 to 10 years	53	19.80
11 to 15 years	31	11.60
16 to 20 years	27	10.10
21 to 30 years	42	15.70
Total	286	100.00

The sample was selected by Central Zone of 95 police officers (35.40%), whilst North Zone was 107 police officers (39.90%) and the South Zone was 66 police officers (24.60%) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Sample by Zone

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Central Zone	95	35.40
North Zone	107	39.90
South Zone	66	24.60
Total	286	100.00

Analysis of Measurement Model

Analysis of measurement model consisted of composite reliability, Indicator Reliability, Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion), Discriminant Validity (Cross Loadings) and Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait Monotrait-HTMT Criterion) as follow:

Composite Reliability

Table 5 showed that composite reliability value is above 0.70 which confirmed that constructs of this study have satisfactory reliability (Chua, 2006b; Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Table 5

Composite Reliability

Variables	Composite Reliability
Role Conflict	0.75
Role Ambiguity	0.77
Job Stress	0.87

Indicator Reliability

Table 6 showed the correlation between items and constructs which loaded values from 0.66 to 0.77. These values are greater than 0.5 (Chin, 1998) confirmed that the items reach a high level of reliability.

Table 6

Loading Values of Constructs/Items

Constructs/Items	Loadings
Role Conflict	
RC21 I receive unsuitable requests from two people at a time.	0.71
RC23 I perform task according to different requirements.	0.69
RC25 I received tasks without sufficient resources.	0.73
Role Ambiguity	
RA10 I know to divide my time diligently.	0.75
RA12 I know my responsibilities in my work.	0.72
RA26 I receive clear explanations of what to do.	0.71
Job Stress	
JS10 I think I have nothing to expect.	0.66
JS13 I feel sad and lost direction.	0.71
JS14 I can't wait when something stopped me to obtain what I want.	0.77
JS15 I easily to get panic.	0.74
JS18 I feel that I am quite sensitive.	0.73
JS19 I realize my heart beat easily increase.	0.70

Convergent Validity

Table 7 showed the average value of Extracted Variance for each construct between 0.50 and 0.53. The value is accepted, confirmed that the constructs of the study consisted of the average variance in items (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler *et al.*, 2009).

Table 7

Convergent Validity

Constructs	Average Extracted Variance (AVE)
Role Conflict	0.50
Role Ambiguity	0.53
Job Stress	0.52

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Table 8 shows that the \sqrt{AVE} value shown diagonal is greater than the correlation between the other constructs. These constructs reached discrimination validity standards, i.e. the value of \sqrt{AVE} of a construct must be greater than the correlation between the other constructs (Barclay *et al.*, 1995; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler *et al.*, 2009).

Table 8

Evaluation of Discriminant Validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

Constructs	Role Ambiguity	Role Conflict	Job Stress
Role Conflict	0.73		
Role Ambiguity	0.17	0.71	
Job Stress	-0.29	0.22	0.72

Discriminant Validity (Cross Loadings)

Table 9 shows the value of cross loading between items and constructs that are greater than other items and constructs. The items and constructs reach the level of discrimination validity, that each item must have a higher loading value on the constructs it represented as compared to the weighting value of other constructs (Haie *et al.*, 2011; Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler *et al.*, 2009).

Table 9

Evaluation of Discriminant Validity (Cross Loadings)

Constructs	Item	RA	RC	JS
Role Ambiguity	ra_10	0.75	0.14	0.25
	ra_12	0.72	0.08	0.13
	ra_26	0.71	0.14	0.26
Role Conflict	rc_21	0.10	0.71	0.14
	rc_23	0.08	0.69	0.15
	rc_25	0.17	0.73	0.17
Job Stress	js_10	0.11	0.16	0.66
	js_13	0.12	0.18	0.71
	js_14	0.26	0.16	0.77
	js_15	0.25	0.13	0.74
	js_18	0.20	0.18	0.73
	js_19	0.27	0.14	0.70

Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait Monotrait-HTMT Criterion)

The criterion proposed by Henseler et al., (2014) was $HTMT_{inference} (-1 < HTMT < 1)$. Table 10 showed the HTMT score for this study. These constructs ranged from -1 to 1 which shows the different constructs and the existence of discriminant validity of the construct.

Table 10

Evaluation of Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait Monotrait-HTMT Criterion)

Constructs	Role Ambiguity	Role Conflict	Job Stress
Role Ambiguity			
Role Conflict	0.31		
Job Stress	0.42	0.34	

Analysis of Structural Model

Result indicated that role conflict ($\beta=0.18$; $t>2.79$) and role ambiguity ($\beta=0.24$; $t>3.11$) were positively related to job stress in police officers explaining 11.80 % of the variance in job stress. Thus H_1, H_2 were supported. The results of this study presented on Figure 1.1 and Table 11 as follows:

Table 11

Relationship between Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Job Stress in Police Officers

Relationship	Beta	SD	t	p	2.5% LLCI	97.5%ULCI
Role Conflict -> Job Stress	0.18	0.19	2.79	0.005	0.006	0.31
Role Ambiguity->Job Stress	0.24	0.25	3.11	0.002	-0.41	0.14

Note. *LLCI (Lower Level Confidence Interval) *ULCI (Upper Level Confidence Interval)

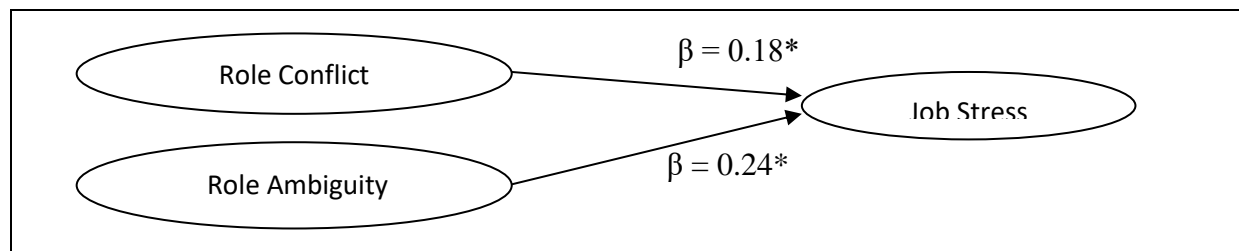


Figure 2. Beta value for role conflict, role ambiguity and job stress (Sig: * $t>1.96$)

The findings indicated that role ambiguity has a more significant relationship than the role conflict. The findings of this study supported Role Congruent Theory introduced by Kahn et al. (1964) which role conflict and role ambiguity have relationship with job stress. However, this theory emphasized more on role conflict than role ambiguity in contribution on job stress. Role ambiguity was higher than role conflict in this study because the sample consisted of 168 police officers (62.70%) who have less than 10 years of job tenure. Job tenure helped police officers to carry out job tasks skillfully and had better understand on job procedures. According to Shirom (2008), the role ambiguity declined as job tenure increased. The results of this study were consistent with the previous findings (Yesiltas, 2014; Ramadan, 2013; Quarat-ul-ain, Khattak & Iqbal., 2013; Idris, 2011; Hsu et al., 2010; Muchinsky, 2000).

Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to identify the relationship between role conflict and job stress in police officers, to identify the relationship between role ambiguity and job stress in police officers. The findings showed that there were significant positive relationships between role conflict and role ambiguity with job stress among police officers. Therefore, the findings have confirmed positive relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity with job stress among police officers.

Some suggestions for police organizations to reduce work pressure among police officers were to ensure that police officers are able to perform the task assigned to the job description. The job description should always be reviewed in order to reduce the role conflict and role ambiguity among police officers. In addition to that, the guidance and feedback from supervisor are significant in ensuring that this agenda can be implemented, especially for police officers who are no experience in job. Besides, command and control should be fully utilized by the supervisor. Command and control would reduce role conflict and role ambiguity in police organizations, work pressure would decrease over time.

However, there were some limitations of this study that need to be highlighted. The sample of the study did not address the real population of police officers due to the constraints of the police organization to protect certain information. In addition, higher ranking police officers are difficult to access to obtain the necessary information. Future studies need to take into consideration these issues that lead to the role conflict and role ambiguity in police officers. The future research can also consider on other factors that contribute to the job stress in police officers.

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