

ROLE STRESS AND ITS OUTCOMES: EVIDENCE FROM HOTEL INDUSTRY OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Keeping in view the importance of services industries especially the hospitality sector, the study analyzed behavioral outcomes of role stress in frontline employees of three, four and five star hotels in Lahore for the first time in the Pakistani context. Stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data from 262 frontline employee of six job positions. By using smart PLS 3.0 software that utilizes Partial Least Square Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique, the study found role stress negatively affecting job satisfaction and positively affecting both burnout and turnover intention of employees. All relationships were significant at 99% confidence level. The result showed eroding effect of stress on job satisfaction and accumulating tendency towards burnout and turnover intention. The results of this study, not only confirmed to previous results, both in direction and strength of the relationship. Rather, provided new insight to understand the phenomenon in the hospitality sector of Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: *Role stress, Job satisfaction, Burnout, Turnover intention, Hospitality industry*

INTRODUCTION

A growing contribution of services sector in national economies is quite evident as share of this sector in world economy is raising day by day. In Pakistan, the sector contributes 54% in GDP and about one third in employability (Munir, Shaukat, Zahra, & Asghar, 2015). As far as hospitality and hotel industry are concerned, they also show a revival and growth of about 6% in the last six years (Haq, 2014). However, contribution of this industry is meager in GDP and limited to only 3% in contrast to countries (Costa Rica, Switzerland etc.) with a contribution of 20% or more in GDP. The reasons are not limited to the law and order situation in the country alone, they also include deplorable working conditions, low wages lack of training etc., The share of hospitality industry can be raised by focusing on service deliverers and their wellbeing (Chaudhry, Sohail, & Riaz, 2013). Because, these are the people, who not only deliver services but also, their emotions. Being human, these employees are affected by various factors ranging from intra organization to extra organizational stressors, which affect

their performance, behavior and wellbeing (Shahab & Ali, 2013). One of the main factors in the intra organizational group that affect an employee variously, is role stress.

The study aims to find the behavioral outcomes of role stress felt by frontline employee of hotel industry in Lahore city. Stress, that appears in the form of role conflict (RC), role ambiguity (RA), work overload (WoL), work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) affects one's satisfaction with job, burnout and turnover intention (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie, & Alam, 2009; AlAzzam, AbuAlRub, & Nazzal, 2017; Shahab & Ali, 2013).

The study is beneficial not only for employee and managers but for all stakeholders of the industry including customers and government. It is essential to know and settle the problems of employees, in order to motivate them to do their best, which consequently results in emotional and financial gains for the managers. The position and performance of organization are improved and customers find good returns of their money. Last but not the least, excellent customer services raise tax income domestically and repute for the country in international community. The study is also important in present scenario. In this backdrop where, Pakistan has got GSP plus status and complying to abide by the twenty seven conventions addressing the employee's wellbeing, the study will explore present status and provides map for further improvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is a mismatch between demands and energies one possesses to meet these demands (NIOSH, 2015). Role stress is simply the stress due to various roles and responsibilities (Ahsan et al., 2009). In organizational research, it is the stress that appears in the form of various role related stressors that may engulf resources and create an imbalance between demands and energies (Karatepe & Orhen, 2008). The role stressors are various inter and intra role conflicts in the form of role conflict and work family and family work-conflict, role ambiguity and quantitative overload in work (Shahab & Ali, 2013) and these stressors predict employee on job behavior (AlAzzam et al., 2017).

According to conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) every person endeavors to make conserve and own, resources that are in the form of condition, object, individualities and energy resources (Westman, Hobfoll, Chen, Davidson, & Laski, 2004) and whenever, one finds something as threat to these resources feels stressed. The situation remains under control till the normal condition (Fogarty, Singh, Rhoads, & Moore, 2000) however, when it perpetuates, it leads to fight or flight situation (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004) depending upon personalities, culture and other factors (Echchakoui, 2013; Hobfoll, 2001; Kokkinos, 2007). However, some researchers argue that it is the perception of individual about organization which, determines stress level (Jung & Yoon, 2013).

Whether role stress is good or bad, it depends upon its amount and frequency (Karatepe, 2010). Adequate amount of stress is good, rather essential, for organizational setting as it acts as a source of challenge and motivation for employees and managers (Fogarty et al., 2000), known as "eustress". However, it is not always good and fruitful rather excessive or chronic stress comes with endless consequences ranging from low performance to emotional depletion and high ups in physical illness (Akgunduz, 2015; Karatepe, 2010). These consequences are a matter of concern for managers and employees because, they bring extra cost associated with them (Shahab & Ali, 2013). Various studies linked the outcomes of role stress differently in various groups of, job outcomes, behavioral and physical consequences (Chao, Jou, Liao, & Kuo, 2015; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Lu et al., 2017; Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015).

Job satisfaction may be defined as positive feeling about one's job as a result of good experience or it may be defined as general feeling about one's job based on experience (Locke, 1976). Satisfaction with job is a general feeling of a person about one's job, on a continuum ranging from low to high indicating dissatisfaction to satisfaction (Lui, Ngo, & Wing-Ngar Tsang, 2001). Among the consequences of excessive stress, lowering of one's satisfaction with job and life is the prominent one (Naseem, 2018). In a study, Kim et al. (2009) found a significant negative relation between role stress and employee job satisfaction. The study further found a stronger negative association between the variables in females and managerial employee as compared to males and non-managerial staff. In the same line, Moura, Orgambidez-Ramos, and Gonçalves (2014) in a sample of 312 Portuguese worker found role stress as a predictor of job satisfaction. Similarly, Karatepe (2010) observed moderating role of social support in the negative relationship between the two variables. Contrary to these Örtqvist and Wincent (2010) reported a spiral relationship between stress and job satisfaction, where one leads to the other and so on. Other argued that it is not the role stress rather its constituents that affect satisfaction and performance one way or the other (Ahsan et al., 2009; Akgunduz, 2015). However, some studies advocate no relationship between the two variables (Amponsah, Annor, & Arthur, 2016). In hospitality sector, where level of stress is usually high (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016) researchers observed low level of job satisfaction due to the excessive stress (Khan, Mahmood, Ayoub, & Hussain, 2011; Yang, 2010).

Burnout (BO) is a feeling of emotionally or physically exhaustion along with doubt about one's competence, work's value and a disintegrated behavior with job and job-related people (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). The three dimensions go in sequence, where emotional/physical exhaustion (EE) leads to depersonalization (DP) that ultimately results in diminished personal accomplishment (PA) (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Research also found role stress as an escalating agent to employee burnout (Karatepe & Orhen, 2008). In a sample of social workers, Kim and Stoner (2008) observed a negative association between role stress and social workers burnout and turnover intention. Some researchers consider burnout as the end point of stress process starting from stressors and ends up in emotional exhaustion, disengagement from job and job related people and uncertainty about one's own capabilities (McCormick & Barnett, 2011; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Many other argue that it is the burnout as result of chronic stress, that paves the way to other consequences (Ambrose, Guthrie, & Iyer, 2012; Ashill & Rod, 2011; Yu et al., 2015). However, some researchers think the process in reverse direction where burnout results in stress or spiral association exists between the two, where one causes the other and again the later affect the former and so on (Örtqvist & Wincent, 2010). However, many believe that burnout is not an end point rather an intermediate state that starts a phase of worse outcomes (Han, Han, An, & Lim, 2015; Khan, Imran, & Nisar, 2016).

Voluntary turnover encircles, leaving one's job with own will for the sake of another job or avoidance of certain situation (Price, 2001) brings huge cost for organizations in the form of brain drain, social capital loss (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Organizational studies use "Turnover intention (TOI)" as a measure to address actual turnover. It is the propensity of leaving one's job in near future, which may appear by action (not by participating in organizational activities) or by words (Dess & Shaw, 2001; Price, 2001). In case of chronic stress, people are left with fight or flight option and they tend to opt for the flight to preserve energy resources (Hobfoll, 2001; Westman et al., 2004). Researchers consider stress among the prominent factors that contribute to employee's voluntary withdrawal behavior (Hopkins, Cohen-Callow, Kim, & Hwang, 2010). In professions, where the stress is imminent such as policing, nursing, teaching and hotel jobs, persistent stress leads employee to think about quitting their jobs or even the professions (Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2011; Han et al., 2015; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Shakeel, 2015). In hospitality sector, the factor of stress is comparatively more serious (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016) that results into lower job satisfaction (Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015), elevated levels of

burnout and escalated tendency of employees to leave their jobs (Karatepe & Karatepe, 2009; Kidd & Eller, 2012).

From review of literature of services industries and especially of hospitality sector, following relationships are hypothesized.

H1: *Elevated level of role stress lowers the job satisfaction of frontline hotel employees.*

H2: *Elevated level of role stress raises the burnout level of frontline hotel employees.*

H3: *Elevated level of role stress raises the intention of frontline hotel employees to leave their jobs.*

METHODS

Operationalization of latent constructs is a critical step in social sciences research (Wong, 2013). For this purpose, measures from previous studies were used to the constructs. Role stress is captured by its five dimensions of RC, RA, WOL, WFC and FWC, with four indicators measuring each dimension. Job satisfaction is measured by six items from Hartline and Ferrell (1996). Burnout is measured by its three dimension of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Short form of “Maslach Burnout Inventory” (MBI) from Bhanugopan and Fish (2006) is used for the concept operationalization. Turnover intention is unidimensionally scaled by three items of Singh, Verbeke, and Rhoads (1996). All the measures are previously used by numerous researches (Karatepe, 2013; Shahab & Ali, 2013; Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhipongs, 2016; Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2011).

The study is cross-sectional in nature. For this purpose primary data was collected from frontline employees of three, four and five stars hotels in Lahore. According to the information from management of the hotels, total number of frontline employees in the three categories of hotels are 2771. By using Cochran (1977) formula adjusted for population size and stratified random sampling technique, a total of 340 surveys were distributed to six job positions of frontline employee (Desk clerk, concierge, waiting staff, housekeeping, bell boy, room service) of the three categories of hotels. 291 surveys were collected at the end of stipulated time, however, as 29 of them were excluded due to incomplete information, the researcher was left with 262 complete surveys for further analysis.

Demographics Information

The demographic analysis revealed that most of the respondents are males (87 %), from four star hotels (56%), who are between age 22-31 (71%) having graduation (69%) and singles (59.5%).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

PLS-SEM

Prediction oriented basis of research, unfocused and balanced model, and hierarchical component modeling guide us to opt for PLS path modeling techniques by using SmartPLS software (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). In PLS-SEM, we get two types of models:, one that shows relationship of indicators with their measures and is used to asses reliability and validity, known as outer or measurement model., the other, that shows relationship among variables and is used for assessment of structural links, is termed as inner or structural model (Cheah, Memon, Chuah, Ting, & Ramayah, 2018; Wong, 2013). Moreover, we have used hierarchical component model (HCM) with two-stage measurement

approach, in which the latent scores of the first order constructs (RA, RC, WOL, WFC, FWC) are used to measure second order constructs i.e., role stress and burnout (Hair et al., 2016).

Measurement Model

Outer model is analyzed for psychometric properties evaluation. Reliability was assessed from Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2011). Alpha values in this model ranged from 0.781 to 0.896, well above the benchmark value of 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Similarly CR values were also above the minimum required value of 0.7, assuring the measures as reliable (Hair et al., 2016).

For assurance of validity, multiple criteria were used. Convergent validity, that describes cohesiveness of indicators with their relevant measure, was assured from the values of outer loadings, and average variance extracted (Wong, 2013). All the values of outer loadings that measure indicators reliability, were above benchmark value of 0.6, except RA (0.323) and PA (0.534) (Ab Hamid, Sami, & Sidek, 2017). The former is dropped from further analysis while the latter is kept due to its significance, judged from its t-value (Hair et al., 2016). Values of third measure of convergent validity, AVE are above minimum required values of 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). All the values of outer and inner model along with their significance appear in table 1.

Table 1. Outer and Inner model statistics

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	R ²	f ²	Q ²
Role Stress	RC	0.777					
	RA	0.323					
	WFC	0.826	0.608	0.861	-	-	-
	WOL	0.803					
	FWC	0.708					
Job Satisfaction	JS_1	0.785					
	JS_2	0.823					
	JS_3	0.809	0.659	0.920	0.154	0.182	0.097
	JS_4	0.850					
	JS_5	0.850					
	JS_6	0.747					
Burnout	DP	0.935					
	EE	0.949	0.687	0.862	0.156	0.185	0.093
	PA	0.534					
Turnover intention	ToI_1	0.916					
	ToI_2	0.902	0.823	0.933	0.261	0.354	0.205
	ToI_3	0.903					

RA was deleted due to low loading (0.323)

Discriminant validity

Divergent or discriminant validity, measures how much the construct is empirically distinct and unique from other construct(s) (Franke & Sarstedt, 2018; Hair et al., 2016). To hinder multicollinearity, the validity is required to be established when latent variables are used (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). In this study, it is assessed by using three criteria i.e., cross loadings, Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait Monotrait ratio (Franke & Sarstedt, 2018; Hair et al., 2016). All the indicators in the study load higher on their own construct as compared to other constructs assuring discriminant validity first criteria. The second measure is Fornell-Larcker criterion. According to that, the square root of AVE of each construct should be higher than the inter construct correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, the values in bold, showing square roots of AVE, are higher than the values in rows and columns showing their correlations as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Burnout	0.829	-	-	-
2. Job Satisfaction	-0.692	0.811	-	-
3. Role Stress	0.395	-0.393	0.780	-
4. Turnover Intention	0.571	-0.573	0.511	0.907

Note: Square root of the AVE (Bold Values)

Third measure of discriminant validity is HTMT, expressing the ratio of within the trait and between the trait correlations (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). In this study, HTMT criterion is met as all the values are below 0.85 ceiling value (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015). (See Table 3)

Table 3. HTMT Criterion

	1	2	3	4
1. Burnout				
2. Job Satisfaction	0.762			
3. Role Stress	0.489	0.453		
4. Turnover Intention	0.627	0.637	0.581	

Structural Model

Inner model is assessed from values of R-square, path coefficients, f-square effect size, Q-square predictive relevance t-statistics and p-values (Hair et al., 2016). Values of co-efficient of determination (R^2) that express the variance explained in the dependent variable by independent variables, show 15% change in both JS and BO and 26% change in TOI, due role stress. The values of R^2 are also similar expressing importance of all paths (Hair et al., 2016). It is verified by effect size values, expressing importance of each path in terms of f^2 values. The values of f^2 show medium to large effect (Cohen, 1988). Values of Q^2 also shows good predictive relevance of the model, as all the values are above zero (Hair et al., 2016).

From path analysis, it is evident that role stress has negative association with JS, while having positive association with both BO and TOI. The values show that negative relationship between stress and JS is moderate (-0.393) while positive association between stress and BO is also moderate (0.395). The third relationship between stress and TOI is strong (0.511). Bootstrapping significance analysis reveals that all path are significant event at 99% confidence level (Kock, 2018). Path coefficient, and their corresponding t- statistics and confidence intervals in table 4 and figure 1 support to accept all three hypotheses

Table 4. Path Coefficients

Paths	Beta	STDEV	t value	Confidence Interval	
				LL	UL
Role Stress -> JS	-0.393	0.059	6.694	-0.511	-0.284
Role Stress -> BO	0.395	0.050	7.842	0.302	0.498
Role Stress -> TOI	0.511	0.048	10.713	0.417	0.604

JS = Job Satisfaction, BO = Burn Out, TOI = Turnover Intention, LL = Lower Level, UL = Upper Level

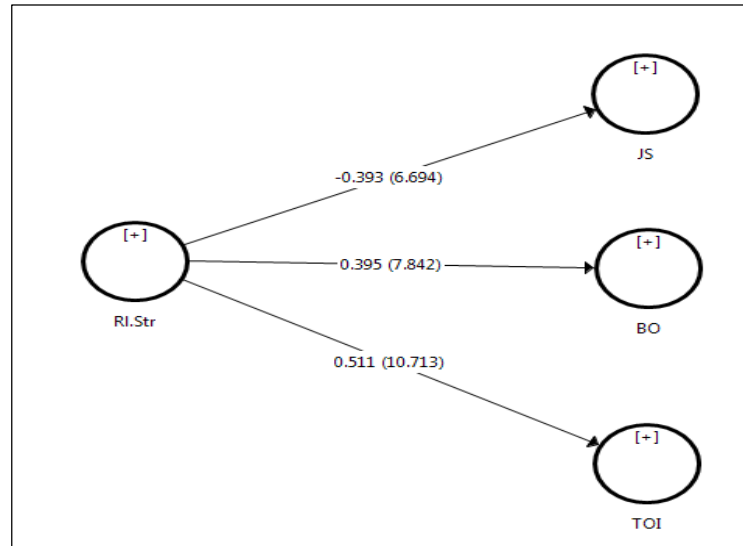


Figure 1: Structural Model

DISCUSSION

The study utilized a new but advanced multivariate technique for data analysis with multiple criteria used for every assessment. Outer model assures the validity and reliability that signals toward evaluation of inner model. Most of the values of outer model evaluation criteria are analogous with previous researches (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Shahab & Ali, 2013) except some anomalies (Shahab & Ali, 2013). For inner model, again multiple criteria was used for assessment. A higher value of R^2 is a good sign for prediction but unnecessary paths may also enhance it. For this purpose, adjusted $-R^2$ and f^2 effect size is used to assess importance of each and every path in the model (Hair et al., 2016). The values are consistent with previous researches (Amponsah et al., 2016). Path coefficient, exhibits significant negative effect of stress on Job satisfaction, is also consistent with previous researches. Similarly, the significant negative effect of stress on burnout and turnover intention is analogous with extant literature (Ahsan et al., 2009; Shahab & Ali, 2013).

Values in table 1 for role stress and job satisfaction with beta value (-0.393) and substantial t-statistics (6.694) are sufficient to support the hypothesized (H_1) negative correlation between them. Similarly, positive correlation between role stress and job burnout along with t-values, supports (H_2). In the last relationship, positive association between role stress and turnover intention is proved, hence supporting (H_3). Although, the coefficient of determination is low in this case yet still sufficient to explain the variation in the outcome variable (Hair et al., 2016). The Negative correlation between role stress and employee job satisfaction is in conformation with previous studies in hospitality sector (Khan et al., 2011; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Yang, 2010) and other disciplines (Ahsan et al., 2009; Khan et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2017; Moura et al., 2014; Shahab & Ali, 2013) but disagree with others, who found no relationship between the two variables (Amponsah et al., 2016). Similarly, positive association between role stress and burnout are analogous with previous results (Kim & Stoner, 2008; Lu et al., 2017; Shahab & Ali, 2013; Yu et al., 2015) but anomalies exist with those studies which argue burnout as an agent to job stress (Khan et al., 2016). In the last relationship, direction and strength of relationship is analogous with previous studies (Amponsah et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2017). The results of this study, not only confirm the previous results, both in direction and strength of the relationship, but also provide new insight into understanding the phenomenon in hospitality

sector in Pakistani context. The results also shows that in our sample, the role stress directly results into turnover intention of employees without attacking job satisfaction first. One reason for this, might be the characteristics of hospitality employees along with long working hours, excessive work, frequent interaction (Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016) and mostly in Pakistan, and in rest of the world they are usually non-professional, lacking formal training. However, this point can be clarified by comparing the attitude of professional and non-professional hospitality staff.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the study following points are recommended for hospitality industry specifically and generally for all industries. Firstly, managers at services organization and especially in hospitality industry should try to search and cater for the constituents of role stress. Because individually these stressors have limited impact however, their collective effect and consequences are quite uncontrollable. Secondly, managers should buffer the harmful impact of excessive stress by addressing the some or all of the dimensions of job satisfaction to retain efficient workforce.

LIMITATIONS

Like every human effort, the study also not an exception to be free from limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional nature of the study binds us to observe causal relationship among the variables. Secondly, the study did not account for the working shifts of employees, to segregate the conflicting demands in each shift. As, two major constituents of role stress (work-family and family-work conflict) are effected by the day or the night shifts. Thirdly, the household responsibilities, like number of children, have not been discussed in the present study. Such responsibilities may affect the employee in terms of stress and its outcomes. Lastly, the study did not consider the role of social support and job anatomy in the model. As job demand resource control model advocates the role of social support that buffers such situation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hope future researches in the area will address these issues in details.

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