



A Study on Gender Difference in Organizational Role Stress

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Received: 23 March 2022/ Accepted: 18 April 2022/ Published: 23 April 2022

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to determine the difference between genders in organizational role stress. The Organizational Role Stress Scale was administered to 60 (30 men and 30 women) working professionals between the ages of 21 and 60 through purposive sampling procedures. Ten stressors of role stress were assessed using the scale ORS. Independent samples t-test was used to calculate the data, and hypotheses were tested using p-value. The results showed that there were no gender differences among professionals.

Key words: Gender; Employee; Organizational Role Stress; Working Professionals

How to cite: Khushboo (2022). A Study on Gender Difference in Organizational Role Stress. *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics*. *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics*, 26(1), 67-76. doi:10.29081/JIPED.2022.26.1.06

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1. Introduction

The 21st century has been called the age of "anxiety and stress" (Colman, 1936). According to Salye (1976), stress is a dynamic activity in which a person is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand. Sinha and Sinha (2018) described stress as a "defense mechanism of the body that acts against unwanted internal or external constraint." In today's world, the term stress is often used in the context of work organizations (Agarwala, Malhan & Singh, 1979). Occupational stress is more of a concern today than it was decades ago. It is a major problem not only for the employees of an organization but also for the organization itself.

Cooper and Marshall (1978) proposed six different groups of stressors. Among these roles, stress is considered very important and has a negative impact on organizational outcomes. The stress caused by a person's role is called role stress (Pareek, 1993). A role is defined as a set of functions that an individual performs in response to the expectations of others as well as his or her own expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). Role is a set of duties created by "valuable" others. It refers to the functions an individual performs in response to the expectations of "valued" others and his or her own expectations of his or her position in the workplace (Pareek, 1993, p. 3).

Jones (1990) defined stress as a state in which a specific demand is placed on the individual, who must then respond in some way to cope with the situation. In a broader sense, organizational stress can be defined as the stress that is primarily and directly related to the evaluation of the structure and functioning of the organization in which the individual works. Any negative experiences that an individual worker has at work increase the likelihood that he or she will develop work-related stress disorders. The total stress related to the work situation is referred to as Organizational Role Stress.

Bano & Jha (2012, p. 24) emphasize that employment in any type of organization is a significant source of stress; the increased workload and working under deadline pressure negatively increase the demands on employees. Organizational role stress is the stress a person feels when individual needs do not match the demands of the organization (Pathak, 2012, p. 155; Bano et al., 2011, pp. 105-106). Uday Pareek is known as a pioneer in the field of organizational role stress. He developed a ten-stressor structure to examine how a person apprehends organizational role stress.

Previous research conducted by role researchers has paid more attention to certain dimensions of role stress. However, other important dimensions of role stress have been overlooked. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the ten different stressors on the overall stress levels of employees. A number of researchers have examined the sources of stress among employees of organizations. The researchers have identified various sources of work stress. Landy & Trumbo (1976) identified five types of stressors such as high competition, hazardous working conditions, job insecurity, task demands, and long or unusual work hours. Hendrix (1995) identified work overload, job autonomy, control, supervision and support, role ambiguity, and role conflict as important organizational stressors. Cummins (1990) identified five major types of role stressors as role conflict and ambiguity, work overload, underutilization of skills, inadequate resources, and lack of involvement.

Satyanarayan (1995) examined stressors in managers and supervisors. Stress leads to various undesirable, costly, and harmful outcomes. These negative outcomes affect both the individual and the organization. The consequences of stress were described by Pestonjee (1992) and he stated that there are three major areas of life where stress occurs: Work and organizational sector: this includes work environment and policies, responsibilities, control and accountability, work hours and atmosphere, compensation and rewards, colleagues and supervisors, etc. Social sector: includes political and educational factors, religion, caste, language, urban facilities, recreational opportunities, health services and educational facilities, etc. Intrapsychic sector: the

main elements are person-specific dimensions, e.g., behavior, temperament, values, beliefs, aspirations, and abilities.

Organizational stress has received considerable attention in previous research conducted on different types of professionals. Lehal (2005) found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and organizational role stress. A study by Nirmala (2002) examined the effects of various sources of job stress on job performance in the nationalized banks of Haryana. The results show a significant negative correlation between occupational stressors and job performance. An employee who is exposed to organizational role stress for a prolonged period of time is likely to burn out, his or her overall performance decreases, and the morale of colleagues is also negatively affected (Ratna et al., 2013, p. 361).

Organizational Role Stress negatively impacts employee productivity, which affects the overall competitiveness of the organization (Bano et al., 2011, pp. 109-110). Empirical studies suggest that coping is the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to manage, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among individuals (Folkman and Lazarus 1980, p. 34). Denzo and Robbins (1999) examined the role of social support in stress from social and family tasks among 300 working Indian women and reported that social support acts as a buffer against stress. Gender is an important determinant of a person's health, and there is a clear pattern for gender-specific prevalence rates of various mental and physical disorders Rohit (2011).

Jick and Mitz (1985) examined 19 different studies on gender differences in organizational stress and concluded that women are more likely to experience psychological stress than men, and on the other hand, men experience more physical stress than women. Men and women report different responses to stress, both physical and psychological. This is because they try to cope with stress in very different ways and also have different perceptions of their ability to do so. It is characterized by "fight-or-flight" in men and "tendency-and-friend" in women Taylor SE (2000).

A study conducted by the American Psychological Association (2010) on gender and stress shows that women are more likely than men to report experiencing a lot of stress and physical and emotional stress symptoms. Barboza and Thomas (2017) reported that female employees experience more role stress compared to male employees. Akbar & Akhter (2011) found high levels of pressure among management faculty members at a Pakistani college. They also found that female faculty members exhibited higher levels of pressure than their male counterparts. The empirical results showed that men in the Indian IT sector were more stressed than their female counterparts (Ratna et al., 2013, p. 379).

Conversely, Aziz (2003) studied organizational role stress among Indian IT employees and reported that men were more stressed compared to women. Verma (1985) conducted a study with college teachers to determine the stressors and examined several similar studies. The result was that male teachers experienced more stress than female teachers. Bano & Jha (2012) also conducted a study in India to examine the differences in perceived organizational role stress between private and public sector employees. The target population included 302 private and financial sector employees in India. The population worked in various public sectors and organizations such as Treasury Boards, Tata Motors, and Pashupati Oil Mills (Bano & Jha, 2012, pp. 27-28). The study identified role erosion as an extremely important stressor and lack of resources as a minimally important stressor. Most importantly, the study found no significant differences in perceived levels of organizational role stress between private and public sector employees (Bano & Jha, 2012, p. 34).

Sharma & Bajpai (2010) conducted a study among public and private sector executives and officials and found that public sector executives and officials showed higher levels of organizational promise than private sector executives and officials. Tankha (2006) conducted a comparative study of role stress among public and private sector hospital nurses by using Pareek's (1993) ORS scale to measure stress levels. The results showed that male nurses had significantly higher stress levels compared to female nurses. Second, male nurses from private hospitals showed significantly higher stress levels on eight of the ten dimensions of the Organizational

Role Stress Scale compared to government nurses. The ten role stressors of the scale ORS are described in Table 1.

Table 1. The description of stressors of Organizational Role Stress Scale

Stressors	Description
Inter Role Distance	The conflict that can arise when a person attempts to play multiple roles, such as the leadership role in an organization and the family role (Sinha & Subramanian, 2012).
Role Stagnation	It occurs when an individual feels a lack of development and a sense of being stuck in the same role (Bano et al., 2011).
Role Expectation Conflict	This is a result of the different expectations an individual develops in their social environment and in identifying with other peers. One's expectations of one's role may differ from the expectations of peers or managers, resulting in stress (Sinha & Subramanian, 2012).
Role Erosion	An individual's perception that some functions in an organization are part of his or her role but are performed or delegated by someone else (Chauhan, 2014).
Role Overload	It occurs when an individual with a particular role has difficulty meeting requirements of other roles (Coverman, 1989).
Role Isolation	A direct result of insufficient cooperation and communication links between a person's role and other roles in the organization (Bano et al., 2011).
Personal Inadequacy	It occurs when a person does not have the necessary skills to perform the tasks expected of them in their role (Chauhan, 2014).
Self-role Distance	The stress that occurs when a person's role does not match their personality (Chauhan, 2014).
Role Ambiguity	The lack of information available to the employee that they need to perform adequately (Kahn et al., 1964).
Resource Inadequacy	Resource Inadequacy is experienced by a person when resources such as "human relationships, buildings, infrastructure, materials, machines, tools, equipment, books, documents, and information" required to perform the role are inadequately provided (Srivastava, 2006).

Despite a body of work in the area of organizational role stress, the area of gender seems to have been somewhat neglected by researchers. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to examine the effects of Organizational Role Stress among male and female employees.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To identify the stressors of organizational role stress;
- To evaluate the organizational role stress between male and female employees.

Hypothesis: there is no significant difference in organizational role stress between employees of both genders.

2. Method

The research study was conducted using a structured questionnaire that contained 50 questions about organizational role stress in working men and women in a work environment. The questionnaire was a Google form with a closed-response format, and each question contained a 5-point scale from least preferred (item 1) to most preferred (item 5). The study used a descriptive research design to compare Organizational Role Stress between male and female employees working in government and private organizations.

2.1. Participants

The participants in this study include both men and women with a sample size of 60 (30 men and 30 women) working in an organization in India (30 in the private sector and 30 in the government sector). The technique of purposive sampling was used for data collection. The age range of the participants was from 21 to 60 years.

2.2. Research instrument

The research was conducted using a questionnaire. Data were collected using a Google form that contained a structured questionnaire with close ended format along with specific reference to Organizational Role Stress Scale, which was sent to participants via social media/internet. Uday Pareek, who is considered a pioneer in the field of Organizational Role Stress, developed a framework with ten different stressors to examine how a person perceives organizational role stress. These are as follows: Inter Role Distance (IRD), Role Stagnation (RS), Role Expectation Conflict (RES), Role Erosion (RE), Role Overload (RO), Role Isolation (RI), Personal Inadequacy (PI), Self-Role Distance (SRD), Role Ambiguity (RA), and Resource Inadequacy (RIN) (Pareek, 1983 cited in Ratna et al., 2013 p. 366) There were a total of 50 items distributed across 10 role stressors. Each dimension of ORS is measured by five questions. Khanna (1986) proposed ORS norms for managers. These items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where '1' represents "if you never or rarely feel this way" and '5' represents "if you feel this way very often or always." The ORS scale is a comprehensive tool for analyzing the various role stressors that influence a respondent.

2.3. Procedure

The questionnaires were administered to the selected respondents and they were asked to read the instructions included in the questionnaires. No time limit was given for completing the questionnaires, but it was expected that the respondents would complete the questionnaire within 20-25 minutes.

2.4. Reliability

Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) is used to test the statistical reliability of the scale. The reliability of a measure is its ability to produce consistent results (Nunnally, 1988). Compared to other methods of reliability testing, the internal consistency method is simple and easy to calculate. An alpha coefficient of 0.60 and above is considered a good reliability estimate (Nunnally, 1988). The Organization Role Stress scale yields a sample alpha coefficient of 0.93.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

Data were collected by coding and using SPSS. The use of statistical distribution such as tables with mean and S.D. were adopted. The hypothesis was tested in the study were subjected to t-test statistics for independent samples.

3. Results

The calculated p-value proved not to be significant at the alpha level of 0.05. On the ten role dimensions, male and female employees did not differ on any of the stressors. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in organizational role stress between employees of both genders was accepted.

For the first role dimension, the Inter role distance, the mean score for the level of interrole distance was lower for males (mean = 14.07, S.D. = 4.92) than for females (mean = 14.60, S.D. = 6.05). This suggests that IRD was lower in male professionals than in females. Although there was a mean difference between the two sample groups, the reported p-value (0.71) was not found to be significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, there is no gender difference between working professionals in terms of IRD.

From the data, it can be seen that for the second role dimension, the mean value for the degree of role stagnation was lower for men (mean = 13.03, S.D. = 3.72) than for women (mean = 13.17, S.D. = 4.50). To test the significance of this difference, we calculated the p-value (0.90), which was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. So we can say that there was a very small difference between the groups, which was not statistically significant.

The result in Table 2 shows that the mean score for the degree of role expectation conflict was higher for female employees (mean = 14.67, S.D. = 4.82) than for their male counterparts (mean = 12.70, S.D. = 4.04). This indicates that there is a very small difference at REC between employees of both genders, but the p-value (0.09) indicates that this difference was not statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no gender difference between the professionals in terms of Role Expectation Conflict.

From the data, it can be seen that for the fourth role dimension, the mean score for the extent of role erosion is lower for men (mean = 13.33, S.D. = 4.52) than for women (mean = 14.27, S.D. = 4.43). To test the significance of this difference, we calculated the p-value (0.42), which was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. So, we can say that there was a very small difference between the groups, which was not statistically significant.

From the result, we can see that role overload is lower in male employees (mean = 13.30, S.D. = 5.52) than in female employees (mean = 14.07, S.D. = 4.56), which finally resulted in a p-value (0.56) that is not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, there is no gender difference in the Role Overload dimension of Organizational Role Stress.

The data show that the mean score of male (mean = 13.57) employees is lower than that of female (mean = 14.93) employees in terms of role isolation. This mean is described by the standard deviation for males (4.32) and females (3.91) and finally resulted in a p-value (0.20) that is not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, there are no gender differences between employees on Role Isolation.

The data on the seventh role dimension show that the mean score for the level of personal inadequacy is lower for male employees (mean = 12.83, S.D. = 5.12) than for female employees (mean = 13.47, S.D. = 4.48). To test the significance of this difference, the p-value (0.61) was calculated, which was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, there are no gender differences between professionals in terms of Personal Inadequacy.

The data show that the mean score of male (M = 14.23) is higher than female (M = 13.67) employees in self-roll distance. This mean is described by the standard deviation for males (4.39) and females (5.27) and finally leads to a p-value (0.65) that is not significant at the alpha level of

0.05. Consequently, there are no gender differences between employees in terms of Self Role Distance.

For the ninth role dimension, the mean score for the extent of role ambiguity was found to be lower for male employees (mean = 14.07, S.D. = 5.64) than for female employees (mean = 14.50, S.D. = 5.28). To test the significance of this difference, we calculated the p-value (0.76), which was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, we can say that there was no gender difference in Role Ambiguity.

For the last role dimension, the mean score for the level of resource inadequacy was found to be higher for male (mean = 13.53, S.D. = 5.07) than female (mean = 13.03, S.D. = 4.74) employees. This indicates that there is a very small difference between male and female employees in terms of resource inadequacy. The p-value (0.69) was calculated to determine the level of significance, which was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the Organisational Role Stress between male and female employees

Group Statistics					
Stressors	Gender	N	Mean	SD	P-value
Inter-Role Distance	Male	30	14.07	5.64	0.76
	Female	30	14.50	5.28	
Role Stagnation	Male	30	13.03	3.72	0.90
	Female	30	13.17	4.50	
Role Expectation Conflict	Male	30	12.70	4.04	0.09
	Female	30	14.67	4.82	
Role Erosion	Male	30	13.33	4.52	0.42
	Female	30	14.27	4.43	
Role Overload	Male	30	13.30	5.52	0.56
	Female	30	14.07	4.56	
Role Isolation	Male	30	13.57	4.32	0.20
	Female	30	14.93	3.91	
Personal Inadequacy	Male	30	12.83	5.12	0.61
	Female	30	13.47	4.48	
Self-Role Distance	Male	30	14.23	4.39	0.65
	Female	30	13.67	5.27	
Role Ambiguity	Male	30	14.07	5.64	0.76
	Female	30	14.50	5.28	
Resource Inadequacy	Male	30	13.53	5.07	0.69
	Female	30	13.03	4.74	

4. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the difference between male and female workers with respect to various role dimensions indicated by Udai Pareek (1983). Despite numerous works in the field of organizational role stress, the area of gender seems to have been somewhat overlooked by researchers, and the literature is inconsistent with respect to gender. Consequently, the present study is an attempt to examine the effects of Organizational Role Stress among male and female professionals in organizational settings. The present study was conducted among employees of two genders (30 men and 30 women) in private and government organizations.

The results of previous studies supported the assumption that men and women do not differ in terms of RID (Mohanty, 2017). Barboza and Thomas (2017) found that the stressor Inter

Role Distance was more prevalent among female respondents than male respondents. In addition, role distance is a significant contributor to perceived Organizational Role Stress among men compared to their female counterparts (Ratna et al., 2013, p. 379). Previous studies indicated that professional women have high organizational stress due to the same factors (Srivastava 1985). In addition, Sultana (1995) investigated the level of role stress among male and female teachers of professional and non-professional courses. Faculty from professional and nonprofessional courses differed significantly on several role stress dimensions, including Role Stagnation (RS). Chaturvedi (2011) in her study found that there is a significant difference between males and females in government institutes in terms of role expectation conflict. Ratna. et. al (2013) in their study found that men in Indian IT sector are more stressed than their female counterparts due to Role Erosion. There is some empirical evidence to suggest that role overload does not affect role satisfaction or stress for either gender. It is concluded that perceived role conflict affects women's mental health, but role overload does not (Coverman, 1989). In their study, Barboza and Thomas (2017) found that role isolation was more prevalent among female respondents than male respondents.

In previous studies, female employees were found to score higher on personal inadequacy (PI) than their male counterparts. The results of our study can be supported by previous studies (Mohanty, 2017), which found that male and female teachers did not differ significantly on the t-score of personal inadequacy. Barboza and Thomas (2017) found in their study that the Self Role Distance stressor is more prevalent among female respondents than male respondents. The results of our study can be supported by (Gormley & Kennerly, 2010) who found that the effect of gender on role ambiguity was not significant. The empirical results showed that men in the Indian IT sector are more stressed than their female counterparts in terms of role ambiguity (Ratna et al., 2013, p. 379). Mohanty (2017) found that male and female teachers did not differ significantly on the t-score of Resource Inadequacy. Previous research suggests that male employees score higher on RIN than their female counterparts and feel more resource inadequate than the other female employees. In addition, Barboza and Thomas (2017) found that Resource Inadequacy was higher among female respondents than male respondents.

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the differences between male and female workers in terms of stress in the organization. From the present study, it can be concluded that there are no significant gender differences in organizational role stress faced by males and females in private and government organizations. The mean score of all factors in the ORS scale was almost the same for men and women. The reason for this could be that there has been an increase in awareness in society about gender equality, equal pay, gender neutrality, and the division of responsibilities between women and men are the reasons why women are now given roles at the same level as men according to their abilities, and therefore both men and women face the same difficulties associated with the position in an organization. However, research conducted 7-8 years ago showed that there is a big difference between men and women in terms of stress in the organization, but now the scenario has changed. Therefore, we accept our null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in organizational role stress between employees of both genders.

Limitation

First, the sample size was quite small to obtain results that could be generalized to a large population. Second, the use of random sampling rather than purposive sampling would have been a better choice for collecting the sample, in an area with a very diverse population. The third limitation was the complete reliance on the virtual medium for data collection. Due to the pandemic and the lockdown of most locations, the researcher was unable to physically collect the data and therefore used virtual platforms to do so.

Direction for future research

Interview methods may be used in future studies to include nonverbal observation. Researchers can also use random sampling instead of purposive sampling, and samples could be collected from people who are from rural areas and are not well educated, who work in government or private organisations, to get their perspective on role stress, which would provide a 360-degree view of it.

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