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Role Stressors and Job Performance: An Empirical Investigation in Malaysia

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The purpose of this study was to empirically evaluate the influence of role stressors (role conflict and role ambiguity) in predicting job performance (task performance and contextual performance). Survey data was drawn from a sample of 136 customer-contact employees within the telecommunications industry of Malaysia. Results of the regression analyses showed that role conflict alone had a significant and negative relationship with task performance. On the other hand, both role conflict and role ambiguity were found to be significantly and negatively related to contextual performance. Implications of the findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: *role conflict, role ambiguity, task performance, contextual performance, customer contact employees, Malaysia.*

Introduction

The lifeblood of a service organization is its employees, particularly front-line, customer-contact employees (Bienstock, et al 2003). This is because as boundary spanners, these employees represent the main link between the external customer and the organization. The way these employees work with, serve or handle their external customers, supervisors, coworkers, and the organization will convey the message to the public regarding the organization's ability to provide high quality services and satisfy customers (Yoon and Suh, 2003). For instance, customer-contact employees who carry out task activities efficiently such as keeping customers' records correctly and systematically, as well as solving customers' queries instantaneously would provide a favorable impression of the service encounter, thereby, enhancing organizational image. Similarly, customer-contact employees that go beyond their formal role prescriptions such as assisting their colleagues that are temporarily burdened with work, and providing informal mentoring of new or lesser skilled customer-contact employees, may be more likely to contribute to better service. A superior service quality will eventually result in enhanced reputation, improved customer retention, and greater financial performance and profitability (Wang et al. 2003). In a competitive business environment, it is essential for service organizations to have the support of frontline employees who are able to perform their job roles and willing to work the extra mile since such behaviors would ensure successful organizational performance.

Scholars have argued for the importance of both task performance and contextual performance and their independent contribution to organizational effectiveness and overall success (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Conway, 1999; Katz, 1964). Task performance is a role prescribed behavior (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and is synonymous with in-role behavior (Bot et al., 2003). This form of behavior reflects how well a person completes his/her assigned duties and responsibilities (Williams and Anderson, 1991), and is governed by organizational appraisal and reward systems (Puffer, 1987). Another type of behavior that has been recognized as equally salient relates to contextual performance. This form of extra-role job behaviors are generally discretionary, interpersonally-oriented, and yet expected to meet organizational needs (Van Scotter, 2000).

Prior studies abroad have largely focused on identifying the antecedents of either task performance (Langhorn, 2004, Morgeson, et al., 2005; Williams, 1999) or contextual performance (Farh, et al., 1990; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Yoon and Suh, 2003). These antecedents can be classified under organizational, job/role, and individual-related categories. Organizational-related factors include organizational commitment (Chen and Francesco, 2003; MacKenzie, et al., 1998; Moorman, Niehoff, and Organ, 1993), organizational justice (Jin and Shu, 2004; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Konovsky and Organ, 1996; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993), leadership (Netemeyer, Boles et al 1997; Podsakoff et al., 1996), perceived organizational support (Farh et al., 1990; Kaufman et al 2001), and trust (Aryee et al 2002; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). Among the job-related variables are job satisfaction (Bateman and Organ, 1983; MacKenzie et al.,1998; Moorman, 1993), job scope (Farh et al., 1990; Morgeson et al., 2005), job characteristics and burnout (Bakker et al., 2004), and role stressors (Fried et al., 1998; MacKenzie, et al, 1998). Individual-related predictors comprise of demographic variables (Pelled et al., 2000; Tang and Ibrahim, 1998; Van Emmerik and Sanders, 2004), personality traits (Bott et al., 2003; Williams and Sanchez, 1998), and emotional intelligence (Carmeli, 2003; Langhorn, 2004). In the case of Malaysia, few studies have been conducted in the area of job performance particularly extra-role performance in the form of citizenship behavior (Hemdi et al.,2007; Ishak,., 2003; Nasurdin and Ramayah, 2003). Since the definition of performance has been broadened to acknowledge its extra-role aspects (MacKenzie et al., 1998), incorporating both task performance and contextual performance as measures of job performance in this study is justified.

Frontline, customer-contact employees especially in service organizations are more likely to experience stress. According to Singh (2000), as boundary-spanners, customer-contact employees are "caught-in-the-middle" by having to deal with customers (demanding attention and service quality) as well as the organization (demanding efficiency and productivity). Hence, the roles played by customer-contact employees represent major sources of stress (stressors). Three common role stressors include role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1980). Of these, role conflict and role ambiguity have been posited as key determinants of employees' job performance particularly among sales personnel (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Brown and Peterson, 1993; Fried et al., 1998; Singh, 1993; Rhoads et al., 1994; Walker et al., 1975). Therefore, the goal of the present investigation was to examine the influence of these two role stressors (role conflict and role ambiguity) on both forms of job performance (task performance and contextual performance) among customer contact employees in Malaysia.

Review of Literature

Job Performance

Job performance has been a major dependent variable in theories of management and organizational behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1996). However, there has been a growing realization that job performance is not a unitary construct. Katz (1964), and Katz and Kahn (1978) were perhaps the first two organizational scholars to suggest partitioning job performance. They asserted that an effective organization elicit three relatively different patterns of behavior from its members. According to these authors, for an organization to function: a) people must be induced to enter and remain within the system, b) its members must be able to exhibit dependable role performance, i.e. meet and preferably exceed certain minimal standards, and c) its members must innovatively and spontaneously go beyond prescribed roles to accomplish organizational goals. Campbell (1990) in separating the performance domain developed an eight-factor model, which can be further categorized into two distinct behaviors which are labeled as role prescribed behavior and organizational citizenship behavior. Subsequently, empirical support for the two-component model of performance (task performance and contextual performance) resulted from the work of Borman and Motowidlo (1993). Task performance comprises of behavioral activities that directly transform raw materials into the goods and services provided by the organization as well as behaviors that support and maintain these technical activities. In contrast, contextual performance behaviors do not support the technical core itself as much as they support the broader organizational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function (Motowidlo, 2000). Although there are various ways of dissecting the performance domain, they still converge on the distinction between task performance and contextual performance (Conway, 1999; McManus and Kelly, 1999; Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996).

The term "task performance" refers to role-prescribed behaviors (Katz and Kahn, 1978) which is also synonymous with in-role behaviors (Bott et al., 2003). Task performance describes essential aspects of work behaviors captured in traditional descriptions of job performance. According to Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994), task performance includes two classes of behaviors. The first class consists of activities which directly transform raw materials into the goods and services the organization produces. The second class comprises of activities that service and maintains the technical core. In other words, when employees use technical skills and knowledge to produce goods or services through the organization's core technical processes, or when they accomplish specialized tasks that support these core functions, they are engaging in task performance (Van Scotter, 2000). Thus, task performance behaviors are directly related to the organization's technical core, either by executing its technical processes or by maintaining or servicing its technical requirements (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994).

Contextual performance, on the other hand, includes a variety of non-job specific behaviors (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). When employees voluntarily help coworkers who are getting behind, act in ways that maintain good working relationships, or put in extra effort to complete assignment on time, they are engaging in contextual performance (Van Scotter, 2000). These non-task behaviors that are relevant to the work context but not directly related to focal tasks were initially referred to as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (thereafter termed as OCB) by Organ (1988). In reviewing the construct, Organ (1988) opined that, "OCB is discretionary, not directly and explicitly recognized by the formal reward system,

and that in the aggregate, promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p.4). Over the past two decades, various labels have been assigned to behaviors that generally fit the definition of OCB such as prosocial organizational behavior (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; Puffer, 1987), organizational spontaneity (George and Brief, 1992), and extra-role behavior (Van Dyne, Cummings et al 1995). Recognizing the difficulties in conceptualizing the OCB construct based on his earlier definition, Organ (1997) further redefined it as behavior that contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance. This modified definition of OCB resembles Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) definition of contextual performance.

In light of the above explanation, differentiating contextual performance from task performance is considered valid. Besides, past scholars (Bott et al., 2003; MacKenzie et al., 1998; Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Van Emmerik and Sanders, 2004) have argued that each of the performance construct is linked to a different set of antecedents, and contributes independently to the total worth of the organization.

Role Stressors

Work experiences that give rise to stress are often referred to as stressors. Specifically, a stressor may be defined as any "demand made by the internal or external environment that upsets a person's balance and for which restoration is needed" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987). McShane and Von Glinow (2003) identified four main types of work-related stressors including role-related, interpersonal, organizational, and physical environment stressors. Although prior research has examined many sources of stress in the work arena, role-related stressors particularly role conflict and role ambiguity have been identified by past scholars (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Cooper and Marshall,1978) as major stressors for people in boundary positions.

Role Conflict and Job Performance

Role conflict is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures, such that compliance with one makes compliance with the other more difficult (Kahn et al.,1964). According to Manshor et al., (2003), work role conflict exists when an employee receives an incompatible set of expectations that needs to be satisfied concurrently. The demands associated with these incongruent roles at work will lead to increased levels of stress (Elloy, 2001). For individuals working as boundary spanners, role conflict arises because conflicting expectations are placed on them by constituents both inside and outside the organization (Agarwal, 1993). When a customer contact employee cannot possibly satisfy these diverse demands at the same time, he or she will feel dissatisfied. Similarly, role conflict can affect a person's motivation to perform, which in turn, will result in poorer performance (Churchill et al., 1987). This line of argument is consistent to that of Rizzo et al ., 1970). These authors asserted that role conflict will lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and ineffective performance since the employee's effort will be compromised and misdirected.

Therefore, experiencing high levels of role conflict will lead to lower levels of job performance (Brown and Peterson, 1993, Singh, 1998). The findings by past researchers (Singh, 1998; Fried et al., 1998) have shown support for the direct negative effect of role conflict on task performance. Additionally, role conflict has been found to affect both in-role and contextual performance through job satisfaction and commitment (Bettencourt and Brown, 2003; MacKenzie et al., 1998). Thus, the following

hypothesis is offered:

H_1: Role conflict will be negatively related to job performance.
H_{1a}: Role conflict will be negatively related to task performance.
H_{1b}: Role conflict will be negatively related to contextual performance.

Role Ambiguity and Job Performance

According to Kahn et al. (1964), role ambiguity is the lack of clear, consistent information regarding the actions required in a particular position. Subsequently, Rizzo et al. (1970) defined role ambiguity as the feeling that arises when roles are inadequately defined or substantially unknown. In other words, employees are unclear and uncertain about work objectives, what actions are to be taken, and what is expected in performing or fulfilling a role (Manshor et al., 2003). As uncertainty concerning work roles increases, employees may need to use more mental energy to understand it. Consequently, the affected person's cognitive resources will be substantially diminished, which in turn, reduces their ability to work efficiently and effectively (McGrath, 1976).

In a sales setting, role ambiguity occurs when a salesperson feels he or she does not have the information necessary to perform his or her job adequately, feels uncertain about what some role partners expect of him or her in certain situations, how he or she should go about satisfying those expectations, or how his or her performance will be evaluated and rewarded (Churchill et al., 1987). Theoretically, high levels of role ambiguity impede the opportunity of an individual to perform effectively and efficiently (Kahn et al., 1964). Uncertainty about the expectations, responsibilities, and demands of various role members will lead to increased anxiety, tension, fear, decreased job satisfaction, loss of self-confidence, and lower performance (Kahn et al., 1964). Previous research supports the premise that role ambiguity is negatively related to job performance particularly task performance (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Brown and Peterson, 1993, Singh, 1998; Walker et al.,1975). According to Rhoads et al. (1994), in the case of salespeople, their job performance will be more negatively affected when they are uncertain about how they should behave in their sales encounter with their external customers (selling behaviors) than when they are uncertain about filling out reports and meeting internal demands imposed by their supervisors (administrative tasks). The preceding discussion provides a basis for expecting a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance (task performance and contextual performance) for customer-contact employees since they occupy positions at the boundary of their organizations. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H_2: Role ambiguity will be negatively related to job performance.
H_{2a}: Role ambiguity will be negatively related to task performance.
H_{2b}: Role ambiguity will be negatively related to contextual performance.

Methodology

Subjects

Participants in the study were customer-contact employees working in the northern and central branches of a telecommunication company in Malaysia. The northern region covering the 10 branches in the states of Penang, Perlis, Kedah, and Perak had 107 customer-contact employees. On the other hand, the central region comprising of 14 branches in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor had 160 customer-contact employees. Questionnaires were distributed to these 267 employees with the help of the northern and central regional managers. Respondents were given a period of two weeks to answer the

questionnaires as stated in the cover letter.

Measurement

The predictor variables in this study are role conflict and role ambiguity. The criterion variables are task performance and contextual performance. Role conflict was assessed using 4 items adopted from Rizzo et al. (1970). Items included: I have to do things that should be done differently, I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it, I have to go against a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment, and I receive incompatible requests from two or more people. Role ambiguity was gauged using 4 items adopted from Rizzo et al. (1970). Items included: I feel certain about how much authority I have, I know I have divided my time properly, I know what my responsibilities are, and I know what is expected of me. Responses to these items were made on a 5-point scale (1= very false to 5= very true). These items were reverse-scored due to the positively-worded statements.

The criterion variables relate to the two forms of job performance namely task performance and contextual performance. These two variables were assessed via supervisory ratings whereby the questionnaires on performance of the employees were rated by their respective supervisors. Seven items were used to measure task performance adopted from Williams and Anderson (1991). Five positively-worded items included: adequately completes assigned duties, fulfils responsibilities specified in job description, perform tasks that are expected of him/her, meets formal performance requirements of the job, and engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation. Two negatively-worded items included: neglects aspects of the job he /she is obligated to perform, and fails to perform essential duties). Another eight items were utilized to gauge contextual performance adapted from Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Gundlach, and Stoner (2004). Items included: help others without being asked, treat others properly, praise others when they are successful, support and encourage others with personal problems, put in extra hours to get the work done on time, tackle difficult work assignments enthusiastically, work harder than necessary, and persist in overcoming obstacles to complete tasks. Responses to the items were made on a 5-point scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree).

Method of Analysis

Since job performance may be influenced by personal variables such as gender, age, race, job tenure, and organizational tenure and following previous researchers (Bott et al., 2003; Chen and Francesco, 2003; Jones and Schaubroeck, 2004; Hochwarter et al., 2004; Williams, Pitre, and Zainuba., 2002), these five variables were controlled in the statistical analyses to reduce the possibility of spurious relationships based on unmeasured variables. Data was initially factor analyzed using the criteria developed by Igbaria, Iivaria, and Maragahh (1995). All items conform to the original factors. In the present study, the two hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression as recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1975).

Results

Profile of Respondents

After the stipulated period, a total of 136 useable questionnaires were returned and analyzed representing a response rate of 50.94%. A total of 34 superiors were involved in assessing the job performance of the participating customer-contact employees. The demographic profile of the respondents is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Sample

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	39.7
	Female	82	60.3
Marital Status	Unmarried	50	36.8
	Married	86	60.3
Ethnicity	Malays	80	58.8
	Chinese	40	29.4
	Indians and others	16	11.7
Education	Secondary School Certificates	55	40.4
	Polytechnic and College Certificates	35	25.7
	Diploma	46	33.8
	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Age (years)	27.32	3.53	
Job Tenure (years)	3.40	1.89	
Organizational Tenure (years)	3.75	1.98	

From Table 1, of those who completed the survey, 54 (39.7%) were males and 82 (60.3%) were females. In terms of marital status, 86 respondents were married (63.2%) and 50 were unmarried (36.8%). For ethnicity, 80 respondents were Malays (58.8%), 40 respondents were Chinese (29.4%), with the remaining 16 respondents (11.7%) being Indians and others. Regarding education, a majority of the sample (59.5%) have polytechnic/college certificates and diplomas. The mean age for the sample was 27.32 years (SD= 3.53 years). The mean job tenure and organizational tenure were 3.40 years (SD= 1.89 years) and 3.75 years (SD= 1.98 years) respectively.

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities of the Study Variables

Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations of the study variables are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, on the average, the levels of role conflict and role ambiguity were judged to be rather low. On further scrutiny, respondents in this study perceived the level of role ambiguity (mean = 1.75, SD=0.55) to be lower than that of role conflict (mean = 2.52, SD=0.86). The mean values for task

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	RC	RA	TP	CP
RC	2.52	0.86	(0.88)			
RA	1.75	0.55	-0.266**	(0.72)		
TP	3.80	1.03	-0.720**	0.190*	(0.95)	
CP	3.88	0.68	-0.258**	-0.373**	0.517**	(0.94)

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Note: Values in parentheses on the diagonal indicate reliability coefficients; RC denotes Role Conflict, RA denotes Role Ambiguity, TP denotes Task Performance, and CP denotes Contextual Performance.

performance and contextual performance were 3.80 (SD = 1.03) and 3.88 (SD=0.68) respectively. On the average, it can be surmised that the levels of task performance and contextual performance exhibited by the sample were slightly above moderate.

The reliability coefficients for the study variables were above 0.7 which concur with Nunnally's (1978) minimum required level of 0.70. These relatively high alpha values indicate that the measurements used were reliable. In terms of the correlation values, role conflict had significant and negative associations with task performance (r = -0.720, p<.01) and contextual performance (r = -0.258, p<.01). Role ambiguity also had a significant and negative associations with contextual performance (r = -0.373, p<.01). However, role ambiguity was found to be significantly and positively associated with task performance (r = 0.190, p<.01). The correlation coefficient between role conflict and role ambiguity was significant and negative (r = -0.266, p<.01). Finally, the correlation coefficient between task performance and contextual performance was significant and positive (r = 0.517, p<.01).

Hypotheses Testing

The two dimensions of role stressors (role conflict and role ambiguity) were regressed on to the two dimensions of performance (task performance and contextual performance) separately. By controlling the personal variables and given that the results were not significant as can be observed from the standardized beta values in Tables 3 and 4 respectively, it can be surmised that the two forms of job performance (task performance and contextual performance) do not differ with regards to age, gender, race, job tenure, and organizational tenure.

Table 3 depicts the results of regressing role conflict (RC) and role ambiguity (RA) on task performance (TP).

As reflected in the first column of Table

Table 3. Results of Regression Analysis: Impact of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity on Task Performance

Independent Variables	Task Performance (TP)	
	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)
Control Variables		
Age	0.082	-0.026
Job Tenure	0.099	0.001
Organizational Tenure	-0.237	-0.018
Gender (Female=1, Male=0)	-0.163	-0.097
Race 1 (Malay=1,Others=0)	0.135	0.080
Race 2 (Chinese=1, Others=0)	0.079	0.121
Model Variables		
Role Conflict		-0.711**
Role Ambiguity		0.004
R^2	0.063	0.533
Adj. R^2	0.019	0.504
R^2- Change	0.063	0.470
F-Change	1.444	63.895**

**$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

Table 4. Results of Regression Analysis: Impact of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity on Contextual Performance

Independent Variables	Contextual Performance (CP)	
	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)
Control Variables		
Age	-0.177	-0.206*
Job Tenure	0.037	0.053
Organizational Tenure	-0.007	0.015
Gender (Female=1, Male=0)	-0.042	-0.019
Race 1 (Malay=1,Others=0)	0.103	-0.023
Race 2 (Chinese=1, Other=0)	0.146	0.074
Model Variables		
Role Conflict		-0.413**
Role Ambiguity		-0.482**
R^2	0.034	0.322
Adj. R^2	-0.010	0.279
R^2- Change	0.034	0.287
F-Change	0.768	26.918**

**p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

3 control variables were able to explain 6.3% of the variance in task performance (R^2 = 0.063). However, none of them was found to be related to task performance. The F-change (1.444) was also insignificant. When the two model variables comprising of role conflict and role ambiguity were added into the regression equation as indicated in the second column of the table, the additional variance explained was 47% (R^2-Change = 0.470, F-change = 63.895, p<.01). Only role conflict (□ = -0.711, p<.01) had a significant and negative effect on task performance. Role ambiguity, on the other hand, had no effect on task performance. This finding provided support for H_{1a} but not H_{2a}.

Table 4 displays the results of regressing role conflict (RC) and role ambiguity (RA) on contextual performance.

Results in the first column of Table 4 showed that control variables in combination were able to explain 3.4% of the variance in contextual performance (R^2= 0.034). None of them was significantly related to contextual performance. The F-change (0.768) was also insignificant. When the two model variables were added into the regression equation as illustrated in the second column of the table, the additional variance explained was 28.7% (R^2-Change = 0.287, F-change = 26.918, p<.01). Both role ambiguity (□ = -0.482, p<.01) and role conflict (□= -0.413, p<.01) were found to have a significant and negative effect on contextual performance. This finding provided support for H_{1b} and H_{2b}

Discussion,implications, Limitation and Conclusion

This study examined the negative effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on job performance (task performance and contextual performance) of customer-contact employees within the Malaysian telecommunication industry. The regression results obtained revealed that role conflict alone was found to have a negative impact on task performance.

On the other hand, both role stressors have negative and significant relationships with contextual performance.

The findings on the negative effect of role conflict on both forms of performance (task performance and contextual performance) are consistent with previous researchers (Bettencourt and Brown, 2003; MacKenzie et al., 1998; Singh, 1998; Fried et al., 1998). When employees receive incompatible work role demands from two or more members of the role set which they could not simultaneously satisfy, they are more likely to become more stressful and more dissatisfied resulting in lower performance. Furthermore, under such circumstances, role conflict will lead to lower performance because the employee's effort is compromised and misdirected (Rizzo et al.,1970).

In this study, however, role ambiguity was found to significantly and negatively affect contextual performance but not task performance. This result supports those of Bettencourt and Brown (2003). When employees are unclear and uncertain about their work objectives, what actions are to be taken, and what is expected in performing or fulfilling a role (Manshor et al., 2003), their uncertainty level is likely to increase. According to McGarth (1976), in such situation, employees may need to use more of their cognitive resources to understand it, which in turn, reduces their ability to work efficiently and effectively. As boundary-spanners, customer-contact employees are more likely to feel uncertain about what their customers really expect in the way of service delivery as opposed to the expectations of their superiors. As such, their extra-role behavior (contextual performance) will be more likely to be affected than their in-role behavior (task performance). Nevertheless, the finding concerning the non-relationship between role ambiguity and task performance is in contrast with past researchers (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Brown and Peterson, 1993, Singh, 1998; Walker et al.,1975). One plausible reason may be attributed to the rather low level of role ambiguity perceived by the sample. Respondents in this study seemed to have sufficient information on their in-role job prescriptions and are clear about their responsibilities. In such situation, this variable would not have any significant impact on their task performance.

The study holds implications for managers as well. It is evident from the findings that relevant authorities concerned with improving job performance need to take actions aimed at mitigating role conflict and role ambiguity. Organizational and managerial practices such as offering frequent and specific feedback concerning expectations and responsibilities, providing structured leadership guidance, implementing clear policies, and facilitating participation in decision making among customer-contact employees that lead to the reductions in role conflict and role ambiguity are recommended.

The study results are subject to two limitations. First, all participants were customer-contact employees within the telecommunications industry which may be associated with certain unique characteristics. Thus, the findings obtained may not be generalized to other samples across different industries. The use of a larger sample from diverse sectors would make it easier to generalize the findings. Second, both forms of role stressors (role conflict and role ambiguity) accounts for about 47% and 28.7% of the variance in task performance and contextual performance respectively. Although these figures are acceptable, the amount of unexplained variance in job performance is rather high. This should encourage future researchers to expend their efforts towards identifying other variables that may be able to explain performance, which include those relating to the organization, job, and individual.

In conclusion, the results of this study

suggest that role conflict has deleterious effects on both forms of job performance (task performance and contextual performance). Additionally, the negative impact of role ambiguity was observed for contextual performance alone.

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