Organizational culture and its relationship between job tension in measuring outcomes among business executives

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Abstract Investigates the nature of role stressors and its impact on job tension in predicting outcome constructs. The research examines the relationship that exists between the three organizational cultures and the role stressors within a business environment. The best fit model is statistically created and tested by applying a structural equation model. The results indicate that a constructive culture will significantly reduce role stressors, thereby: decreasing job tension and increasing job satisfaction, job performance, and job commitment. The corporate culture's taproot is the organization's beliefs and philosophy in how it conducts business. Beliefs and practices that become embedded in a company's culture can originate from a number of sources. The beliefs, vision, objectives, and business approaches and practices supporting a company's strategy may be compatible with its culture or possibly not. When they are, the culture becomes a valuable ally in strategy implementation and execution. When this is not accomplished, a company finds it difficult to implement the strategy successfully.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Nature of role stressors
Business executives strive to meet organizational goals by utilizing an effective role. A role is defined as a set of expectations involving an executive's position within a business organization. Expectations are defined as behavioral requirements or limits, which the business executives must pursue. Depending on the behavioral requirements and expectations, executives may form high levels of stress in carrying out these requirements. The two role stressors in measuring stress are role conflict and role ambiguity.

Role conflict occurs when the messages and cues from a superior about the role are clear, but maybe contradictory or mutually exclusive (Kahn et al., 1964). This is defined in terms of the dimensions of congruency-incongruency or compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Role ambiguity arises when a role is unclear. Role ambiguity is the need for clear instructions so that the individual may perform their organizational tasks successfully. Unclear instructions may result from the overall complexity of the organization, constraints in the communication of information, or a very high dynamic performance environment (Fogarty, 1996). Role ambiguity may prevent individuals from understanding what is expected on the job and this expectation may bring an unsecured feeling involving their position within the organization.
Executive positions are known for the high level of stress and this may affect their jobs. Examples of stress may consist of: downsizing; restructuring; mergers; acquisitions; competing in high velocity markets; or limited time management constraints may contribute to the high stress environment and create detrimental effects on executives.

Many studies have inquired into the nature of role stressors among business executives. Singh et al. (1996) researched the impact of business organizational practices and the impact on role stressors. They discovered clear and communicated organizational practices will reduce role stress. Also, if superiors are unclear as to the expected behavior, role stress will increase among executives. If role stressors reach an intensified level among individuals, this will reduce job satisfaction and organizational commitment as discussed and researched by Igharia et al. (1992). There are direct and indirect cost of role stressors and this is measured in both humanistic and financial terms. The humanistic perspective identifies the relationship between role stressors and the impact on the individual. The financially healthy organizations are successful in reducing or maintaining acceptable levels of job stress, thus, retaining a productive workforce (Cooper and Cartrigh, 1994). The importance of understanding job stressors is stated in the a 1997 survey entitled, The Worklife Report. The report reveals most workers in the USA believe that stress is increasing in their jobs and must work harder to earn a living compared to workers 20 or 30 years ago (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1997). Understanding how role stressors have a negative impact on organizations and identifying the culture which may reduce the effects of stressors is a critical issue for management.

Nature of organization culture
Organizational culture is defined as a set of processes that binds together members of an organization based on the shared pattern of basic values, beliefs, and assumptions in an organization (Sethia and Von Glinow, 1985). Organizational culture allows an organization to address the ever-changing problems of adaptation to the external environment and the internal integration of organization resources, personnel, and policies to support external adaptation. Schein (1985) states organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions and is developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. The organization’s culture serves as a foundation for an organization’s management system. This foundation is a set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles (Denison, 1990). These principles or beliefs are held in common by the members of a group or organization (Homans, 1950; and Mills, 1967). Such expectations or norms specify the ways in which all members of the organization are expected to approach their work. They represent strategies for survival that worked well in the past and members believe will work again in the future.
Organizational culture is a dominant theme of the management literature in the 1980s and 1990s, as demonstrated by special issues devoted to this topic such as, Administrative Science Quarterly (1983), Organizational Dynamics (1983), Journal of Management Studies (1986), and Organization Science (1995). Organizational culture is an important topic for today’s business executives, because these are periods of change occurring in mergers and acquisition, growth or downsizing phase, in an organization’s life-cycle, and periods of conflict or diversification (Gardner, 1995). Dramatic changes for organizations are important change agents. These accelerating changes to be successful must fit the organization’s culture to reach successful business goals strategically. The dramatic changes that were tried, but failed at large corporations, are quite evident as researched by Clement (1994). Understanding your culture before implementing a business strategy is an important domain for organizations. These findings indicate corporations communicating specific goals and providing feedback will create a positive environment for organizational learning (Lawson and Ventress, 1992). A positive learning environment from an organization’s culture may reduce role stressors and should be studied further. Contemporary businesses are interested in studying their organizational culture to enhance its humanistic and financial returns, so the company can maintain a competitive advantage over its competition. (Fulmer and Gibbs, 1998; Barney, 1986). Researchers, Kolb and Shephed (1997), have utilized concept mapping to identify major components of a business culture. Despite the attention organizational culture has received from specialist in organizational behavior, organizational theory, and organizational design, comparatively; little research has been conducted to examine the relationship between an organization’s culture and job tension, with their effects on outcome variables such as job commitment, job satisfaction and job performance.

Direct consequences of role stressors
The study of stressors is imperative, because its potential relationship with job performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Also, the literature supports that role stressors may affect these outcomes.


Organizational commitment reflects an individual’s identification with and attachment to the organization. A highly committed person enjoys working for the organization and seeks to remain a member of the organization in the future. Individuals who are satisfied with their jobs and highly committed to their work often extend way beyond to ensure they perform their jobs with

Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which people find gratification or fulfillment in their work. Extensive research in job satisfaction indicates personal factors such as individual's needs and aspirations determine attitude, along with group and organizational factors such as relationships with co-workers and supervisors, working conditions, work policies and compensation (Smith et al., 1969). Role conflict and job satisfaction have demonstrated an inverse relationship as measured by Jackson and Schuler (1985). Also, role ambiguity has illustrated empirical work that demonstrates an inverse relationship with job satisfaction (Kemery et al., 1987; Posner and Randolph, 1979; Johnson and Stinson, 1975).

The mixed research results suggests that role conflict and role ambiguity are potential stressors (Fogarty, 1996). Fogarty (1996) suggests a conceptual model be utilized to distinguish between environmental conditions and psychological reaction. Goolsby (1992) and Edwards (1992) advocate the need to have a clear distinction between environmental stressors and the psychological reactions. Researchers have utilized job tension measurements in measuring its effect on job performance (Tate and Whatley, 1997). Executives working in the retailing industry found reduction of job tension increased their individual performance (Lusch and Serpken, 1990). Job tension can help to clarify this distinction which measures role stressors. Job tension examines the effect of stressful conditions at the workplace. This is related to, but different from, the extent individuals perceive stress in their work (Macon, 1994). Job tension has been included in many studies as an element of the stress phenomenon (Klenke-Hamel, 1990).

In better understanding role stressors, coping skills are studied to investigate its impact on role stressors. Individuals differ in their ability to manage stressful conditions constructively within their work environment. The individual responses are customarily defined as coping skills. Business individuals employing coping skills may interrupt or modify the alteration of stressors into tension (Dewe, 1989; Bhagat et al., 1991). A stress model not including coping skills may underrepresented the important effects they may have on the tension construct (Dewe, 1989).

In reviewing the literature, there is limited research in the recognition of potential intermediation of role stressors involving job tension. Moreover, the coping skills in business have not been studied sufficiently. These erratum imply that past research has unduly simplified the stress environment.

One study simultaneously reviewed the relationship between job satisfaction and job stress utilizing LISTREL. The study indicates job stress may have an adverse affect on executive's attitudes and suggest further studies be conducted (Boudreau and Bretz, 1994).
Direct consequences of organizational culture

Organizational culture warrants research because the imperative need for organizational effectiveness. Researchers have studied culture and its relationship with corporate performance (Gordon, 1985; Denison, 1990). Gordon and DiTomaso, (1992) and Burt et al. (1994) found a strong corporate culture with the flexibility to adapted to competitive forces did perform better. Other researchers have focused on organizational culture and its impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Odom et al. (1990), Quinn (1988), Cameron (1992), and Sheridan (1992) reported that organizational culture characterized as people-oriented, supportive, and personal was associated with positive affective outcomes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, managers and academics have recommended the organizational culture be considered during periods of change such as mergers and acquisitions, growth or downsizing phases, the organization's life-cycle, and periods of conflict (Perez, 1985; Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Wilkins, 1983). The challenge for an organization is identifying the specific culture that exists within the firm. Once the culture has been identified, then measuring its relationship with job tension and its impact on the outcome constructs can be studied. It is important for executives to understand how an organization's culture may affect such outcomes as organizational performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Hypotheses

The job tension variable and its relationship with role stressors must be established. If role stressors are environmental conditions that can accurately be perceived by individuals, they produce a certain degrees of job tension (Fogarty, 1996). In measuring individual differences, the more exposure of conflict and ambiguity at the workplace; the more they disturb the individuals that experience these variables (Jaworski and Young, 1992; Bedini et al., 1995).

Therefore:

H1:

High levels of the role stressors (conflict and ambiguity) will be associated with high levels of job tension.

If job tension merits study as an element in the stress environment, there must be a connection with work outcomes variables. If experiencing tension is consequential, it should more directly affect perceived levels of personal accomplishments and important feelings about the work and the organization. (Rogers et al., 1993). Therefore:

H2:

High levels of job tension will be associated with low levels of performance, low levels of commitment and low levels of satisfaction.

If organizational culture has an impact on the work outcomes, then its relationship with job tension must be measured:
H3: High levels of constructive organizational culture will be associated with low levels of role stressors (conflict and ambiguity).

H4: High levels of passive and aggressive organizational cultures will be associated with high levels of role stressors (conflict and ambiguity).

The last hypothesis refers to the influence of coping ability. Since individuals conceptually bring a set of resources to the workplace, coping skills should be considered exogenous. Since tension is hypothesized to be the most consequential variable in the model, coping skills may have the largest influence on tension (Lusch and Serpkeni, 1990). Therefore:

H5: Coping ability will be inversely related to job tension.

These five hypotheses create an integrated model for understanding the impact of role stressors within a business environment and its work consequences. With the addition of the exogenous coping construct and its impact on the job tension variable, a set of expected constructs are more congruous with the emergent literature.

The study
Participants
A questionnaire was distributed to 305 business organizations throughout north-eastern Ohio. The business organizations selected were:

- manufacturing;
- retailing;
- financials;
- health organizations;
- accounting;
- energy;
- insurance; and
- transportation industries.

The purpose of selecting diversified industries was to provide a sample that represented an executive from a wide spectrum of companies in measuring their attitudes.

Numerous methods of survey administration were applied to prevent adverse methods effects. Data were collected through company visits, in-house consultation programs, and mailing directly to the company. This was accomplished within a six-month period. The post facto analysis from Oppenheimer (1966) did not detect any systematic adverse technique effects in reviewing the data. The Oppenheimer test provided support in the success of implementing these techniques in collecting data.
Questionnaire and measurement

The personal opinion survey consisted of ten measurement scales. The organizational culture inventory measures 12 sets of normative beliefs or shared behavioral expectations associated with three types of cultures. The three cultural attributes are:

(1) constructive;

(2) passive-defensive; and

(3) aggressive-defensive cultures.

Cooke and Szumal (1993) have conducted and revealed three types of supporting reliability and two types of validity in utilizing the organizational culture inventory. The high alpha coefficients support the internal consistency of the scales, interrater reliability and test-retest reliability. Factor analysis results provided support for the criterion-related validity of individual normative beliefs and shared behavioral expectations. These construct validity of the scales supported measurements related to both individual and organizational criteria. The organizational culture inventory has acceptable measurements of validity and reliability in implementing the instruments. The complete description of the organizational culture inventory by Cooke and Lafferty, (1989), is located in the Appendix.

The Rizzo et al. (1970) instrument was utilized in measuring the role stressors. Rizzo’s instrument scale has provided strong support in measuring each on these role stressors involving role conflict and role ambiguity (Jackson and Schuler, 1985). Many studies repeatedly discovered satisfactory psychometric properties for this instrument (House et al., 1973; Berkowitz, 1980). The minor revisions to this scale have enabled a more balanced measurement between these two subscales (Tracy and Johnson, 1981).

The measurement of job tension utilized a validated instrument developed by Lyons (1971). The job tension measurements utilized in other research studies found strong support for the psychometric scales (Kahn et al., 1964); (Indik et al., 1964). The coping scale has received favorable psychometric finding developed by Hall (1972).

The commitment scales were developed by Meyer and Allen (1984) and Mowday et al. (1979). Their results of a canonical correlation analysis suggest that the affective and continuance components of organizational commitment are empirically distinguishable constructs.

The performance measurement criteria is determined by reporting the return on investment and return on sales percentages as researched by Denison (1990). Although financial criteria is an important element in defining effectiveness, these criteria measurements must be researched further to reveal the relationship with organizational effectiveness. However, there are several
distinct advantages when applying financial data as indicators for effectiveness. First, financial ratios are a comprehensive measurement that identifies effectiveness and performance of an organization. Second, the financial indicators are recognized by investors who study an organization’s performance. Third, they are an outcome measurement quite distinct in measuring the organization. Finally, the data is available and measurable with behavior variables in conducting comparative research. There is support of utilizing financial ratios as measured in the efficiency perspective (Katz and Kahn, 1966; 1978) and the resource acquisitions model (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967).

The job satisfaction construct was measured by utilizing the index of job satisfaction by Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The instrument has a high product moment reliability coefficient and face validity. The constructs utilized in this study had favorable psychometric scales and therefore were employed in this research.

**Data analysis methods**
Confirmatory factor analysis utilizing EQS Structural Equation Program (Bentler and Weeks, 1980) was implemented in determining the dimensionality of the role stress perceived by executives. EQS utilized linear structural equation modeling to test the hypotheses. This statistical method is an effective method for specifying, estimating, and testing hypothesized interrelationship among a set of important variables (Bentler, 1995). The EQS computer program provides a diagrammer which the researcher designed a theoretical and practical model before running the data analysis. The theoretical model diagram is included in Figure 1 (a-d). EQS permits the hypothesized relationships simultaneously be tested on all variables. The statistical results measures the specific relationships and its contribution to the overall model. In this research model, the linear structural equation model measured the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

In testing these relationships, Fogarty (1996) recommends a two-step procedure. There is a large number of measurements necessary to measure culture, role stressors, job tension, and the outcome variables. This may cause measurement error for the structural equation design. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis was performed on all the constructs which enabled a selection of a small set of observed variables. Those variables with the highest lambda values were chosen which illustrated a greater relative degree of freedom as compared to measurement error (Joreskog and Sorbum, 1989). Although this procedure reflected the use of an arbitrary statistical cut-off, the results were found insensitive to composition of the observed variables and as applied in other studies (Fogarty, 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Category analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>20 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years with organization</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 months-1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1a.**
Descriptive statistics (continuous demographic variables)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnic</th>
<th>Organization level</th>
<th>Organizational type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>females</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African/American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1b.**
Descriptive statistics (discrete demographic variables)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession/occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data processing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1c.**
Descriptive statistics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Possible range</th>
<th>Empirical range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Coefficient variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>24-120</td>
<td>40-101</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>18-90</td>
<td>35-83</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>0.00-0.50</td>
<td>0.00-0.50</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>15-75</td>
<td>28-60</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>15-75</td>
<td>29-62</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension</td>
<td>9-45</td>
<td>9-41</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>16-80</td>
<td>34-71</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive</td>
<td>40-200</td>
<td>57-192</td>
<td>132.8</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>40-200</td>
<td>58-179</td>
<td>107.3</td>
<td>21.77</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>40-200</td>
<td>66-182</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>23.01</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1d.**
Descriptive statistics (summary statistics)

**Results of the study**

**Sample and variable description**

A total of 305 questionnaires were distributed within the different business organizations throughout north-eastern Ohio. A total of 238 usable questionnaires were received representing a 78 percent response rate. The descriptive statistics are reported in Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d.

In gathering the data from the respondents, approximately every tenth individual was interviewed to enhance the reliability of the survey. The Roschach inkblot technique assists the researcher to measure the subject’s responses and identify any bias that may exist. There were no response bias from those who mailed the survey versus the surveys gathered at their organizations. In utilizing univariate regression analysis, no systematic firm differences existed between the variables gathered from early versus late respondents (Oppenheimer, 1966).

Tables 1a-1d summarizes the descriptive statistics. Also, Tables 1a-1d provides additional information as to how the dispersion of data among the constructs are identified by the business executives. As an example, aggressive and passive organizational cultures means are below the center of the midpoint scale. The constructive culture in this sample is above the center of the midpoint scale. Also, the business executives in this sample have scored role conflict and role ambiguity slightly above the center of the scale. The work in this sample is job commitment, job satisfaction and job performance. The work means are slightly above the midpoint scale.

The Cronbach’s alpha statistic was utilized to measure the reliability of the constructs. The overall rating of all scales was 0.81. Job satisfaction had a reliability rating high of 0.93 and a low of 0.75 for coping skills. The psychometric properties of all scales have been illustrated in other reporting surveys. They have demonstrated acceptable valid and reliable measurements as discussed previously.
**Test of hypotheses**

The structural equation model tested all of the hypothesized constructs. The hypotheses were measured for the best fit model by utilizing EQS software. Figure 1 presents the measurements and results in the structural equation model. The results illustrate that all equations are significant in this best fitted model.

*H1* measures the role stressors and their association with job tension. This hypothesis states that business executives exposed to high levels of role ambiguity and role conflict will experience high levels of job tension. Role ambiguity and role conflict are significant at \( p < 0.01 \). Job tension increases as executives are exposed to role conflict and role ambiguity. *H1* is supported for role conflict and role ambiguity.

*H2* correlated the relationship between work comes with job tension. The high levels of job tension will lower the levels of job satisfaction, job performance, and job commitment. Figure 1 shows that all three work outcomes are significant at \( p < 0.01 \). This conclusion indicates the strong support that job tension will decrease work outcomes among executives when exposed to high levels of job tension.

*H3* measures the associations of a constructive culture and its impact on levels of role stressors. When executives are exposed to a constructive organizational culture, the role stressors are reduced. Figure 1 reveals a significant negative relationship at \( p < 0.01 \) exists when executives operate in a constructive culture. *H3* shows that role conflict and role ambiguity are reduced when working in a constructive organizational culture.

*H4* measures the relationship of passive and aggressive organizational culture and its impact on the role stressors. The relationship indicates executives who are exposed to a passive or aggressive culture, both role
conflict and role ambiguity will increase. Figure 1 illustrates a significant effect at the $p < 0.01$ level that, in fact, executive's role stressors increases, when exposed to a passive or aggressive organizational culture. This supports $H4$.

$H5$ supports an inverse and significant relationship at $p < 0.01$. Those executives with greater coping skills have less job tension. $H5$ is supported as depicted in Figure 1.

**Discussion**

The attitudinal formation of work outcomes among business executives has been illustrated in this article as an important field of study. This article supports and reinforces the findings of current literature; that the level of role tension is relevant to the levels of job performance, job satisfaction and job commitment. The levels of job tension are affected with its relationship with role stressors. Also, the levels of role stressors were mediated depending upon the organization culture in which the executive performed his/her job responsibilities.

Additional studies are required to merit if job tension is the most direct precursor to work outcomes. This study revealed that job tension increases as conditions of role conflict and role ambiguity increases among business executives. They are capable of producing harmful effects on commitment, satisfaction and performance. Other studies should be conducted to strengthen this proposition and investigate if job tension as a construct can convert environmental conditions into behavioral or attitudinal measurements.

The levels of stressors in the executives’ work environment explains the levels of job tension. As role stressors increase, the perception among executive's job tension increases. However, many executives utilize coping skills to reduce job tension. This reveals that the executive's personal attributes may be associated with producing this inverse relationship with job tension. The results suggest that more than environmental conditions should be considered in analyzing job tension. If coping skills can moderately deflect job tension in the workplace, it coexistence with role stressors and its impact on job tension must be considered. This suggests that an executive's individual characteristics must be considered when distributing work assignments within the prevalent organizational culture.

Current literature has not measured the impact of an organization’s culture and the relationship between role stressors. This research measures an organization’s culture and its impact on the role stressors. Human Synergistics has developed the organizational culture inventory, which measures normative beliefs and shared behaviors involving three cultures. The three cultures measured in this research are: constructive, passive and aggressive. The results in this research indicate that executives working in a constructive culture reduced the role stressors in their working environment. There was an inverse relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity when compared to the constructive culture. Business organizations that provide a constructive culture are recognized for doing things well, and value executives accomplish their
own goals. These businesses expect their managerial staff to set challenging, but realistic goals and establish plans to reveal these goals. Another important component of the constructive culture is these organizations embrace creativity, which promotes quality over quantity of work. Another important attribute is the expectation of top management towards executives who are expected to deal with other associates in a friendly manner and help others to grow and develop within their business. In this study, the constructive culture was the only culture that reduced the role stressors. It is important for management to consider the positive effects of the constructive culture when establishing a culture that promotes effective work outcomes such as job performance, job commitment and job satisfaction.

The passive culture indicated a positive relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity. The characteristics of the passive culture shows executives always going along with others, always following policies and practices, pleasing those in positions of authority, and waiting for others to act first. Organizations must consider the negative consequences associated with the passive culture and how this culture promotes role stressors that promote job tension and reduce work outcomes.

An aggressive culture illustrated a positive relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity in this study. The attributes involving an aggressive culture are members in the organization who are always pointing out flaws, striving to build one’s power base, turning the job into a contest by outperforming other associates, and striving to do things as a perfectionist. This culture also promotes role stressors which promotes job tension and reduces work outcomes. It is important for organizations to consider these negative consequences when an aggressive culture exists. This research clearly identified and measured the positive impact that a constructive culture contains in an organization. Also, an organization that promotes either a passive or aggressive culture will hinder job performance, job commitment and job satisfaction. An organization will reduce role stressors and job tension when promoting a constructive culture, thereby increasing each of the work outcomes. Also, when studying role stressors and job tension it is important to include the impact of an organization’s culture for the best-fit model. Role stressors may have the effect of either increasing or decreasing the effects on job tension, but organizational cultures can provide additional knowledge when investigating role stressors within an organization.

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JMD
19,1
48


Further reading


Appendix. Human Synergistics International organizational culture inventory

The organizational culture inventory was designed to measure participants’ attitudes involving their organization’s culture. The three organizational culture measured in this study was constructive culture, passive/defensive culture, and aggressive/defensive culture.

The constructive culture reflects a beneficial balance between people and task-related activities. The constructive culture promotes the fulfillment of an employee’s higher-order needs (achievement, self-actualizing, encouraging and affiliating). The organization’s culture is associated with the accomplishment of organizational goals. The organization’s goals are reached by actively promoting the development of people within the organization. Constructive cultures enhance synergy and explain why certain individuals, groups, and organizations are particularly effective with respect to performance, growth and work quality.

The aggressive/defensive culture emphasizes tasks over people. Employees believe they must interact with people in ways that will not threaten their own security. This insecurity leads employees to focus on their own needs at the expense of the team. Although sometimes temporarily effective, the aggressive/defensive styles induce stress. The decisions are based on status, rather than expertise and prohibits team collaboration. The prevalent styles on these cultures: oppositional, power, competitive and perfectionist.

The passive/defensive orientation represents an unduly strong orientation toward people as opposed to tasks, fueled by and reinforcing individual insecurity. These styles characterize people who subordinate themselves to the organizations but, in the process, end up creating
stress for themselves and allowing the organization to stagnate. Passive/defensive styles can produce a predictable and secure situation, but at the cost of learning, adaptability and ultimately survival.