EXAMINING EFFECTS OF ROLE STRESSORS (ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ROLE CONFLICT) ON INTENTION TO LEAVE, ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Asst. Prof. Engin KANBUR

Kastamonu University, School of Civil Avition, Aviation Management, ekanbur@kastamonu.edu.tr, Kastamonu/TURKEY

Dr. Mustafa CANBEK

Police Directorate of Diyarbakır Province, mcanbek@msn.com, Diyarbakir/TURKEY

ABSTRACT

In this study it is aimed to examine role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict) in the context of their effects on intention to leave, organizational identification and individual performance. Uncertainty regarding to a spesific role or the requirements of the role might cause role ambiguity. On the other hand, employees might experience role conflict depending on incompatible expectations from others or having two or more roles. Role stressors have been analyzed from various aspects in the literature. Organizational outputs of role stressors takes attention among researches to see the reflections of role stressors. Within this perspective, role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict) may increase employees' intentions to leave and reduce their organizational identification and performance. For understanding this, an empirical research was conducted. A questionnaire form prepared and delivered to Police Directorate of Tokat Province. Collected data analyzed with statistical methods. According to the findings, role ambiguity has a positive and significant effect on intention to leave, but negative and significant effects on organizational identification and self-reported individual performance. Additionally, role conflict has a positive and significant effect on intention to leave but hasn't any effect on organizational identification and self-reported individual performance. These findings were discussed in this study.

Keywords: Role ambiguity, role conflict, intention to leave, organizational identification, self-reported individual performance, police officer.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's business environment requires organizations which have skilled and qualified work teams in the context of sustainable competitive advantage. It can be said that organizations are more aware of importance of having skilled and qualified employees who interiorize their organizations and they focused on required measures in this manner. Nevertheless, complex structures of organizations and complicated business relations might cause organizations to face some obstacles such as role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict). Role ambiguity and role conflict might obstruct employees to fulfil the requirements of their roles, thus, these concepts cause an employee to face high level of stress and sanctions (Vukic et al., 2012: 354). Strict regulations or well planned job descriptions may not be enough alone to deal with role ambiguity or role conflict. Besides that, organizations need some agents to provide employees to adopt their organizations and works.

In this study, it is aimed to see the reflections of role ambiguity and role conflict in organizational and individual context. With this aim, intention to leave, organizational identification and individual performance variables attached to research. These constructs, with their abilities of providing

information about the situations of organizations and attitudes of employees, can be considered as good indicators to see the reflections of role ambiguity and role conflict.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

Role stress have attracted attention of researchers since Katz and Kahn (1966) and Rizzo et al. (1970) explained them as destructive concepts of organizational behavior (Moss, 2014: 33-37). Role, can be defined as a set of expactations from a person regarding his/her position in a social group (Shahbaz & Shakeel, 2013: 6). Schuler et al. (1977: 111) mention three main characteristics of roles; a) roles represent expectations of the individual and the organization, b) roles serve as boundary between the individual and the organization, c) roles can serve to tie the individual and the organization to each other. Employees might experience stress in relation with the roles they have owned. Even if researchers mention a few dimensions for the role stress, it can be said they generally focus on role ambiguity and role conflict mostly (Jackson & Schuler, 1985: 16; Ambrose et al., 2014: 1071).

In some cases, roles might not be defined clearly by management and so employees might face with uncertainty while performing his/her role. Uncertainty regarding to a spesific role or the requirements of the role might cause role ambiguity. Role ambiguity might emerge when the expectations from an individual relating to his/her role remain unclear (Keller, 1975: 57; Shahbaz & Shakeel, 2013: 6). Besides that, employees might experience role conflict depending on incompatible expectations from others or having two or more roles. When employees feel pressure to fulfill incompatible expectations and demands from others or required to play two or more roles simultaneously, these might cause employees to experience role conflict (Liu et al., 2014: 914; Çelik, 2013: 197).

Researchers analyze role stressors from various aspects. While certain amount of studies focusing on organizational outputs of role stressors such as performance (Çelik, 2013), self-efficiency (Kanbur et al, 2016), employee deviance (Chiu et al., 2015), organizational commitment (Addae et al., 2008), turnover intention (Hang-Yue et al., 2005; Nazir et al., 2016), job satisfaction (Koustelios et al., 2004; Madera et al., 2013), some other studies are constructed with the aim of determining antecedents of role stressors (Rogers & Molnar, 1976; Minnick, 2013; Bravo et al., 2003; Wincent & Örtqvist, 2009).

2.2. Intention to Leave

Intention to leave is one of the most investigated construct in the literature of organizational behavior. This is because of intention to leave has a prominent role as an indicator which might provide reliable information regarding to situations of working environment. In the context of business management, intention to leave can be defined as employees' tendency to leave from their organization in the near future. Intention to leave causes various-mostly undesired-outcomes for organizations. Principally, intention to leave is a crucial antecedent of actual turnover (Ma et al., 2009: 179). Researchers take attention on direct or indirect costs of employee turnover such as advertisement, selection, recruitment and hiring processes (Khan et al., 2016: 7; Hong & Kaur, 2008: 3). Additionally, employee turnover might depress employees who stay within the organizations (Barutçugil, 2004: 465).

Existence of intention to leave does not mean it will result in an actual turnover, definitely. Even if intention to leave would not result in employee turnover, however it will cause certain costs and unfavorable outcomes for the organizations such as deviant behaviors and low performance (Krishnan & Singh, 2010: 422; Christian & Ellis, 2014: 202). It can be seen that intention to leave has numerous reflections in the organizational and individual context.

In last decades, dramatical changes observed at capabilities and qualifications of employees depending on revolutionary changes in production and sales styles. Todays' workforce gains more

importance with its improving qualifications, and so, organizations need to develop strategic approaches for keeping qualified, skilled and experienced employees within the organization (Soundarapandiyan & Ganesh, 2015). Considering the importance of workforce and numerous reflections of intention to leave, current study investigates how role ambiguity and role conflict are effective on intention to leave.

2.3. Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is one of the critical construct in the literature of organizational behavior (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 20). Studies commonly mention organizational identification concept refering to Social Identity Theory which claims that individuals are aware of their own membership in a social group (Van Gils et al., 2017: 156). Mael and Ashforth (1992: 103) define organizational identification as "the perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own". Dutton et al. (1994: 239) describe organizational identification as the degree of a member's defining himself/herself with the same features which used to define the organization. It can be said that organizational identification occurs when members adopt the characteristics of an organization. Regarding to an organization with a distinguished culture, structure or other distinctive characteristics, members of such organizations likely to experience high level of organizational identification (Dutton et al., 1994: 242-246). Researchers assume that high level of organizational identification will provide positive outcomes for both employees and organizations. Fuller et al. (2017: 1) declare that employees with high level of organizational identification show greater organizational commitment, work more cooperatively with other employees, exhibit higher work effort, and are less likely to quit. Conversely, members with low level of organizational identification, display weak cognitive and emotional ties to relevant organization (Zavyalova et al., 2016: 257). Researchers who approach organizational identification construct from a different standpoint emphasize that high level of organizational identification might lead to various deleterious consequences such as unethical behaviors, resistance to organizational change, lower performance, interpersonal conflict, negative emotions, and reduced well-being (Conroy et al., 2017: 184). Organizational identification is a concept which may cause researchers to be confused when they need to establish distinguishing characteristics of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior concepts. Besides that, organizational identification differs from mentioned concepts regarding to its typical antecedents and consequences (Mael & Ashforth, 1992: 104).

2.4. Individual Performance

An extended definition of individual performance suggested by Dar et al. (2011: 1) as "an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to him/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources". Individual performance is one of the most complicated construct with its variety, components and predictors. Pekdemir (2014: 336) emphasizes knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors of individuals when describing individual performance. Researchers mentioned numerous organizational and individual factors effective on individual performance such as job stress, motivation, communication, leadership styles, workplace climates, organizational justice etc. (Muda et al., 2014: 74; Iqbal et al., 2015: 6; Cooke & Meyer, 2007: 30; Sökmen et al., 2013: 41).

Individual performance is a key point which is directly related to organizational success (Hassan, 2016: 17; Pekdemir, 2014: 336). Carlos and Rodrigez (2016: 291) suggest that organizational performance can be understood if individual performance is understood primarily. Therefore, researchers and practitioners stay focused on techniques and strategies to enhance individual performance which remains so open to effects of numerous variables mentioned above (Dutton and Kleiner, 2015; Christiana, 2016). In this context, well-conceived measures to prevent performance diminishment gain importance as much as measures to increase performance. Understanding factors which have negative effects on individual performance and eliminating their devastating influences might be a useful way to keep performance at desired level.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate how role ambiguity and role conflict of employees effect their intention to leave, organizational identification and performance. Individuals have very different roles in their lives. Individuals are also involved in a business organization that is part of their lives and have roles in this organization that are attributed to them. The fact that these roles in the organization are not fully known by the individuals and their conflict with other roles might be cause them to become insensitive to their organizations, decrease their commitment, change the work they have done, leave their work and as a result cause to decrease their performance. In this context, organizations should not allow any confusion or conflict in the workplace, ensuring that their employees' roles are clear and understandable. It should be noted that the ability of organizations to achieve sustainable competitive advantage depends on the ability of their employees to understand, accept and accomplish the roles they have.

3.2. Sample, Hypotheses and Limitations

Data was collected from police officers who work under the central units of Police Directorate of Tokat Province. When deciding the targeted population some criterias were taken into consideration. First of all, police directorate has specific units. While some units deal with the managerial issues such as staff management, logistics, training; some other units deal with criminal cases such as public order, children protection, cyber crime. It can be said managerial units have a narrow field in contrast to criminal police units. Criminal police units have a large range of interaction with other stakeholders and citizens. Hence, it can be said officers of criminal police units might face much more extra-ordinary situations and cases then officers of managerial police units who generally deal with routine tasks. Therefore regarding to role stressors, collecting data from criminal police units and excluding managerial police units might be helpful to increase the reliability of the data. In this context, target population of the research consists of 380 police officers. Sample consists of 192 employee is statistically acceptable to represent the target population in the context of $\alpha=0,05$ confidence interval and $\pm\ 0,05$ margin of error (Gürbüz ve Şahin, 2016: 132). In the research process, 250 questionnaire forms were delivered to central units of Police Directorate and 198 questionnaire forms were recycled with a response rate of 79.2%, and incomplete and unreliable questionnaires were not included in the analysis. As a result, the data contained in the 198 questionnaire forms which represents the target population, was included into the analysis.

Focusing on the main purpose of the research the following hypotheses were derived.

H_1: Role ambiguity has positive and significant effect on intention to leave.

H_2: Role ambiguity has negative and significant effect on organizational identification.

H_3: Role ambiguity has negative and significant effect on individual performance.

H_4: Role conflict has positive and significant effect on intention to leave.

H_5: Role conflict has negative and significant effect on organizational identification.

H_6: Role conflict has negative and significant effect on individual performance.

Limitations of the research can be generally specified as its target population and participants, its data gathering technique and the measures used used for the research.

3.3. Measures

In the research process, questionnaire technique is used to collect the data. In the context of questionnaire, *Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict Scale* is used to measure role ambiguity and role conflict degree of police officers. This scale is developed by J.R. Rizzo, R. J. House and S. I. Lirtzman (1970) and revised by Schuler, Aldag and Brief (1977). The scale consists of 14 items, 8

of which measures role conflict and 6 of which measures role ambiguity. Besides, it has been used at various studies and its reliability and validity have been proven (Siegall, 2000; Sabuncuoğlu, 2008; Basım et al., 2010; Kanbur et al., 2016). The items take place at the scale can be exemplify as "*I feel certain about how much authority I have.*" and "*I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.*". The scale is structured due to seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). *Intention to Leave Scale* which is developed by Cammann et al. (1983) and adapted to Turkish by Mimaroğlu (2008) is used to measure intention to leave degree of police officers. The scale which has one dimension and 3 items, has been used by various researchers (Yürür & Ünlü, 2011; Şahin, 2011; Gürbüz & Bekmezci, 2012; Yıldırım & Yırık, 2014) and the validity and reliability of the scale has been proven. Items of the scale can be exemplify as "*I often think about quitting.*" and "*I will probably look for a new job in the next year.*" and the scale is structured due to five-point Likert scale (1 = does not apply to me at all; 5 = applies completely to me). Another scale used at the research is *Organizational Identification Scale* which is developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992), adapted to Turkish by Tak and Aydemir (2004) and used at various studies (Tüzün, 2006; Karabey & İşcan, 2007; Polat & Meydan, 2010; Turunç & Çelik, 2010; Kanbur, 2017) and its reliability and validity have been proven. The scale has one dimension and consists of 6 items such as "*When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult.*" and "*When I talk about my organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'.*". The scale is structured due to seven-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree; 7 = completely agree). Last scale used at the research is *Self-Reported Individual Performance Scale – SRIPS* which is developed by Staples et al. (1999), revised and shortened by Rego and Cunha (2008) and adapted to Turkish by Dönmez (2014). Validity and reliability of the scale was tested and proven at various studies (Rego et al., 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2012; Ordu, 2016; Kanbur et al., 2017). The scale has one dimension and consists of 4 items such as "*I believe I am an effective employee.*" and "*My manager believes I am an efficient worker.*". The scale is structured due to seven-point Likert scale (1 = does not apply to me at all; 7 = applies completely to me).

3.4. Reliability and Confirmatory Factor Analyses

The internal consistency analysis of the scales of the research were examined with Cronbach Alpha. Respectively, Cronbach Alpha values were calculated as 84.6% for role ambiguity scale, 73.6% for role conflict scale, 81.3% for intention to leave scale, 81.5% for organizational identity scale and 83.5% for self-reported individual performance scale. The Cronbach Alpha values of the scales are above 70%, which is the acceptability limit for reliability. Skewness and kurtosis values of the research data were examined and found to be between -1 and +1 values, that is, data of the research is acceptable for analyses and shows normal distribution (Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan, 2004: 156).

Additionally, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity of the scales used in the research. Findings related to confirmatory factor analysis were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Scales	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
RAS	2,239	,079	,972	,926	,961	,978
RCS	2,161	,077	,956	,921	,916	,938
OIS	2,224	,079	,972	,928	,951	,972
SRIPS	,448	,003	,997	,987	,997	,998
RAS	Role Ambiguity Scale					
RCS	Role Conflict					
OIS	Organizational Identification Scale					
SRIPS	Self-Reported Individual Performance Scale					
CMIN/DF	Chi-Square Fit Index Divided by Degrees of Freedom					
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation					
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index					
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index					
NFI	Normed Fit Index					

In Table 1, fit measures of confirmatory factor analysis were shown within the context of the frequently used and accepted reference values (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Brown, 2015: 74). It can be said that the role ambiguity scale (RAS), organizational identification scale (OIS), role conflict scale (RCS) and self-reported individual performance scale (SRIPS) confirm their unidimensional factor structure and scales of the research have a good fit with their originals. In addition, unidimensional factor structure of intention to leave intention (ILI) scale was also confirmed as a result of the factor analysis performed by the basic components method and the sampling adequacy (KMO) determined as 0,678, while factor loading values found between 0.779-0.889 and total variance found as 74%.

Research model of the study, which is established depending on the independent variables (role ambiguity and role conflict) and dependent variables (intention to leave, organizational identification, self-reported individual performance) of the research, is presented in Figure 1.
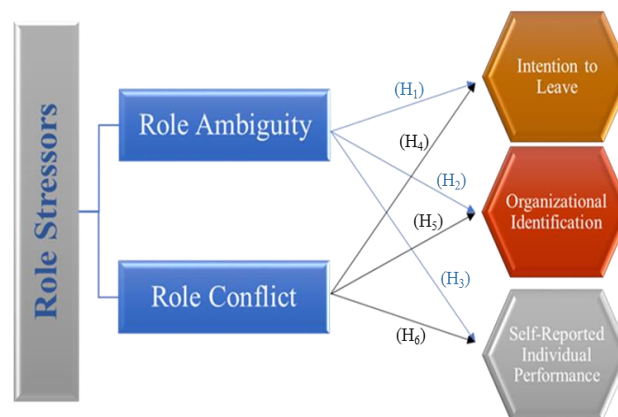

Figure 1: Research Model

4. FINDINGS

Correlation and regression analyses were utilized to determine the relationships between variables of the research and findings were explained in this part.

4.1. Correlation Analysis and Findings

Correlation analysis was applied to measure the relationships between research variables and findings were presented as in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis and Findings between Variables

Variables		1	2	3	4	5
1	Role Ambiguity	1				
2	Role Conflict	,206*	1			
3	Intention to Leave	,430*	,224**	1		
4	Organizational Identification	-,334*	,040	-,158**	1	
5	Self-Reported Individual Performance	-,533*	-,077	-,260*	,299*	1
Correlations are significant at the * p<0.01 and ** p<0.05.						

Findings of correlation analysis presented in Table 2 demonstrate that role ambiguity has a positive and significant correlation with intention to leave (r=,430; p<,01), but negative and significant correlations with organizational identification (r=-,334; p<,01) and self-reported individual performance (r=-,533; p<,01). On the other hand, role conflict has a positive and significant correlation with intention to leave (r=,224; p<,05) but no correlation with organizational identification (r=,040; p>,05) and self-reported individual performance (r=-,077; p>,05).

4.2. Regression Analysis and Findings

Regression analysis was applied to investigate the relationships between independent (role ambiguity and role conflict) and dependent variables (intention to leave, organizational identifiation and individual performance) and findings were presented as in Table 3 and Table 4. Furthermore,

Durbin-Watson (DW) test performed for measuring autocorrelation in residuals of regression analysis.

Table 3: Regression Analysis and Findings between Variables (1)

Independent variable: *Role Ambiguity*						
Dependent variables	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**DW**
Intention to Leave	18,1	44,409	,430	6,664	,000*	1,912
Organizational Identification	10,7	24,626	-,334	-4,963	,000*	1,873
Self-Reported Individual Performance	28,0	77,629	-,533	-8,811	,000*	1,925
* Correlations are significant at the p<0.01.						

Findings of regression analysis between independent (role ambiguity) and dependent variables (intention to leave, organizational identifiation and individual performance) presented in Table 3 demonstrate that role ambiguity explains the 18,1% (R^2=,181) of the variance of intention to leave, 10,7% (R^2=,107) of the variance of organizational identification and 28% (R^2=,280) of the variance of self-reported individual performance. Durbin-Watson test value found between 1,5 – 2,5 and it can be said there is no autocorrelation in residuals of regression analysis. In this context, it can be seen that H_1, H_2 and H_3 hypotheses are supported.

Table 4: Regression Analysis and Findings between Variables (2)

Independent variable: *Role Conflict*						
Dependent variables	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**DW**
Intention to Leave	0,50	10,355	,224	3,218	,002*	1,852
Organizational Identification	0,02	,313	,040	,559	,577	1,948
Self-Reported Individual Performance	0,06	1,162	-,077	-1,078	,282	1,903
* Correlations are significant at the p<0.05.						

Findings of regression analysis between independent (role conflict) and dependent variables (intention to leave, organizational identifiation and individual performance) presented in Table 4 demonstrate that role conflict explains the 0,5% (R^2=,050) of the variance of intention to leave, but role conflict seems not able to explain the variation in organizational identification (R^2=,002) and self-reported individual performance (R^2=,006). Durbin-Watson test value found between 1,5 – 2,5 and it can be said there is no autocorrelation in residuals of regression analysis. According to these results it can be seen that H_4 hypothesis is supported, but H_5 and H_6 hypothesis are not supported.

Based on the findings of the analyses, revised version of research model shaped as in Figure 2.
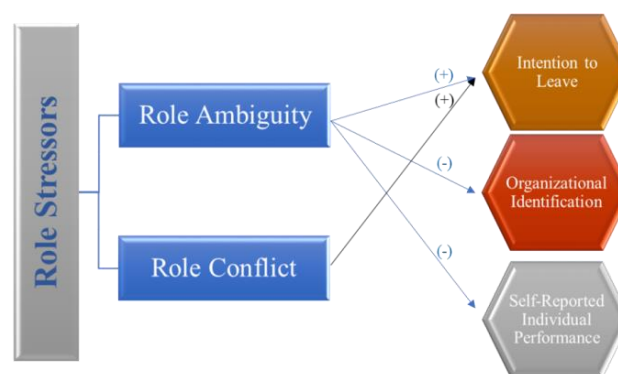

Figure 2: Revised Research Model

5. CONCLUSION

Today's organizations ability to meet the changing and transforming needs as a result of globalization, to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage against their competitors, to achieve their objectives within the framework of their mission and vision depends on the ability of their employees to accomplish the roles they have, to identify themselves with their organizations and their individual performance. But achieving this circumstance and making it sustainable is not an easy task or situation. Making employees identify with their organizations and their works and increasing their individual performance requires employees who have clear and understandable

roles distant from confusion and conflict and who have achievable roles in accordance with their physical and mental characteristics. Otherwise, employees may experience role ambiguity and/or role conflict, moreover, this may increase their intentions to leave and reduce their organizational identification and performance.

Findings which acquired in the context of the main purpose of the study demonstrate that the degree of role ambiguity of employees has a positive and significant effect on their intention to leave. When their role requirements are uncertain and not clear and/or employees are not sure how they can respond to the requirements of the role they have own, employees might feel negative emotions towards their organizations and/or works and they might increase their intentions to leave. Glissmeyer et al. (2007) stated that role ambiguity and role conflict have positive and significant relationship with intention to leave. Adıgüzel (2012) reported in his research conducted with nurses that role ambiguity has a significant and positive effect on intetion to leave. Derin and Demirel (2013) also explained similar results in their study which has been conducted with the participation of nurses.

According to the findings in the current study, role ambiguity has a significant and negative effect on organizational identification. It can be said that in case of high uncertainty regarding to tasks, authorities and responsibilities, employees fail to built strong ties with their work and their organization. Consequently, in these cases there will not be a chance to mention about organizational identification. Polat (2009) reported that role ambiguity has a negative and significant relationship with organizational identification. Showail et al. (2013) also declared that role ambiguity is negatively effective on organizational identification.

Due to the findings of this study, it is found that role ambiguity is negatively and significantly effective on individual performance as well. Uncertainty at tasks, authorities or responsibilities leads employees to fail to give the right decision about relevant requirements of a role. In order to keep individual performance high as a desired level, it's neccessary to provide clear and understandable roles to employees. Individual performance might reduce dramatically when requirements of a specific role or the way how to respond relevant requirements remain uncertain. Ceylan and Ulutürk (2006) reported that role ambiguity has a negative and significant relationship with individual performance.

Findings of the current study demonstrate that role conflict degree of employees has a positive and significant effect on intention to leave. Inconsistent demands or expectations regarding to relevant work might cause employees to experience role conflict. In such circumstances, employees might fail to decide to respond to which demands or expectations and might confront dilemma. Thus, employees might develop negative thoughts towards their work which might lead them to increase their intention to leave. Acker (2004) stated that role conflict might be a strong predictor of intention to leave. Onay and Kılcı (2011) also found role conflict has a positive and significant relationship with intention to leave.

According to the findings in the current study, role conflict hasn't any significant effect on organizational identification. Regardless of the type of conflict, if it is not well managed, it can lead to negative emotions of employees towards their organization, decreases in the sense of belonging, and failure in identifying with the organization. Thus, this study distinguishes from Grene (1978) and Vora et al. (2007) who mentioned that role conflict is a strong predictor of organizational identificaton. On the other hand, due to the findings in the current study, role conflict hasn't any significant effect on individual performance. Contradictions, conflicts and stalemates can be experienced in relation to the role in the organization when demands and expectations that are opposite to each other were confronted. In the context of individual performance, different results recorded in the literature. While Bilgiç (2010) reported that role conflict is a negative predictor of individual performance, Saranani (2015) explained that role conflict is not able to influence individual performance.

Consequently, organizations need to focus on measures to prevent or to decrease the negative effects of role ambiguity and role conflict. With this purpose, organizations might provide better conditions for employees to gain adequate knowledge about their roles and how to respond various requirements. Well planned job descriptions, clearly definiation of hierarchial and organizational structure, preconditioned procedures to respond in ordinary and extra-ordinary situations might be helpful to decrease role ambiguity and role conflict degree of employees.

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