



## A Study of Organizational Role Stress and Organizational Commitment in Organized Retail Sectors

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### 1. ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS (ORS)

Since the dawn of human civilization, mankind has ceaselessly been striving for the goal of happiness, peace and stress free life. These have been considered as parameters of human well-being and prosperity. The quest had led to a dynamic technological whirlpool which has spawned mega-bureaucracies, micro-task specialization and greater urbanization and privatization (Pestonjee, 1987).

The 17<sup>th</sup> century has been called the 'Age of Enlightenment', the 18<sup>th</sup> century the 'Age of Reason', and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century 'the Age of Progress'. The modern world which is said to be a world of achievements is also the world of stress and anxiety. One finds stress everywhere, whether it be family, a business organization/enterprise or any other social or economic organization. The extent of Stress, however, is a matter of degree. In India most of the public enterprises are very harmonious whereas private enterprises have greater friction and tension.

During the 1980s changes in economic scene and on the industrial front were taking place in the US, Western Europe, Great Britain, etc. For example, the Enterprise Culture period was taking shape. By the end of the decade there was a substantial personal cost for many individual employees both at the shop floor level and at the managerial levels. The cost was captured by a single word, 'stress'. High Pressures in the workplace was costly to stress to US organizations for absenteeism, reduced productivity, compensation claims, health insurance and direct medical expenses has been at approximately \$150 billion per year (Karasek and Thorell, 1990). In Great Britain, stress related absence were ten times more costly than all industrial disputes put together. In Norway, economic cost of work related sickness accident amount to more than 10 percent of gross national product (GNP), a high proportion of which is considered stress related. In Japan were 16 hours of work days are common, experts estimate shows that 10,000 Japanese die each year from 'karoshi' which means sudden death by heart attack or stroke triggered by overwork.

Stress has been approached in at least four different ways. Firstly, as the stimulus or external force acting on the organism; Secondly, as the response or the change in physiological function; Thirdly, as an interaction between an external force and the resistance to it; and finally, as comprehensive phenomenon encompassing all the three.

Hans Selyes's (1956) General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) has been widely held as a comprehensive model to explain the Stress phenomenon. This three-stage model states that when an organism is confronted with a threat to the general physiology response occurs in three stages:

1. Alarm Reaction: The first stage includes an initial shock phase in which resistance is lowered and a counter-shock phase in which defensive mechanisms become active.
2. Stage of Resistance: Maximum adaptation occurs during this stage. Resistance increases to levels above normal. If stressors persist, or the defensive reaction proves ineffective, the organism deteriorates to the next stage.



3. Stage of Exhaustion: When adaptation energy is exhausted, sign of alarm reaction reappears and resistance levels begins to decline irreversibly, the organism collapses.

The first major shortcoming of theory, according to the Pestonjee (1987a) is that, it is based on researches carried out on infra-human subjects. In such experiments, the stressors are usually physical or environmental whereas the human organism is not always confronted by such stressors.

Secondly, Selye's work on stress depends on the existence of a non-specific physiological response. It has been noted by researchers that there are certain stimuli, for example, exercise, fasting and heat which do not produce non-specific response and hence, the GAS does not hold true.

Thirdly, intrapsychic or social (interpersonal/interactional) factors emerge as major stressors in Human beings these have not been given their due place in this approach. Finally, the reaction of the intra-human subjects is more directed, perceptible and hence easily measurable. This is not true of human subjects as 'their responses are always mediated through several layers of cultural and social filters'.

As a comprehensive definition, 'stress' is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important..

The nature and consequences of the stress phenomenon have been diagrammatically presented by Pestonjee (1992), there are three important segments of life, in which stress originates:

- (i) Job and Organization Sector: This includes work environment and policies, task, responsibilities, power and accountability, working hours and atmosphere, compensation and rewards, subordinated, colleagues and superiors, etc.
- (ii) Social Sector: this includes Political and cultural factors, religion and caste, religion and language, civic amenities and recreational avenues, health services and educational facilities, etc.
- (iii) Intrapsychic sector: The main constituents are person-specific aspects like temperament, attitude, values and believes, aspiration, desires health services, and abilities.

It is natural and healthy into maintain optimal levels of stress. Success, achievements, high productivity and effectiveness call for stress (Pestonjee, 1987b). When stresses are left unchecked and unmanaged they can create problems in performance and affect the health and well-being of the organism.

The present day practitioners and researchers visualize the phenomenon of stress in new perspective. Each individual needs a moderate amount of stress to be alter and capable of functioning effectively in the organization. Stress is inherent in the concept of creativity (Pestonjee, 1992) and entrepreneurship (Pareek, 1995).

One of the major areas of research in India in the field of stress in the organizational role stress. The concept of organizational stress first evolved in the classic work of Kahn et al.(1964). An organizational can be defined as a system of roles. From the point of an individual, there are two role systems: Role Space and Role Set (Pareek, 1993).

Pareek (1983) pioneered research work on role stress by identifying as many as 10 different types of organizational role stresses. This are described here briefly:

1. Inter-role Distance (IRD): When there is conflict between the organizational role and other roles, e.g., an executive not being able to divide his time between work demands and family demands.



2. Role Stagnation (RS): when there are few opportunities for learning and growth in organization.
3. Role Expectations Conflict (REC): When there are conflicting demands made on the role by different people in the organization.
4. Role Erosion (RE): When an individual feels that some important functions which related to his work are given to someone else to carryout he/she feels that the job which he is doing is not challenging. The stress indicators found to be related to role erosion are a feeling of worthlessness, low self-esteem, mood swing, low motivation to work, etc.
5. Role Overload (RO): When there is a feeling that too much is expected from the role than what the occupant can cope with.
6. Role Isolation (RI): When there is a lack of appropriate linkage of one's role with the others' role in the organization .
7. Personal Inadequacy (PI): When there is a lack of knowledge, skills or adequate preparation to be effective in a particular role.
8. Self-Role Distance (SRD): When there is conflict between one's values and self-concepts with the requirements of the organizational role.
9. Role Ambiguity (RA): When an individual does not have a clear picture of work objectives, co-workers' expectations and the scope and responsibilities of his/her job. The stress indicators found to relate to role ambiguity and depressed mood, lowered self-esteem, low motivational to work and intention to leave the job.
10. Resource Inadequacy (RI): When there is non-availability of resources needed for effective role performance.

## 2. ORGNISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The concept of organizational commitment has received increased attention in the research literature (Steers, 1977; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Morrow; 1993). Porter et al., (1974) define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed a three-dimensional attitudinal construct of organizational commitment namely, affective, normative, and continuance commitment. According to Allen and Meyer affective commitment is an individual's emotional attachment to the organization. Normative commitment reflects individual's sense of moral obligation to remain with the organization. On the other hand, continuance commitment is based on the individual's recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization. Affective commitment is considered more effective measure of organizational commitment since it indirectly influences the other two dimensions of organizational commitment (Boles et al., 2007) and is more consistent with the conceptual and operational definition of attitudes (Iverson and Buttigieg, 1999). Research also provides evidence that, there is high correlation between affective and normative commitment (Cohen, 1996; Meyer et al.,2002). Therefore, for this study we have focused on this aspect of commitment in Allen and Meyer's three-dimensional commitment model.

Meyer and Allen (1997) proposed a three component model of organizational commitment – affective, continuance, and normative commitment. This model has been subjected to the greatest empirical scrutiny and has arguably received the greatest support. (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Hers



Ovitz & Topolnytsky, 2002.). Affective commitment describes an alignment that employees feel between their organization and their personal value systems and desires. The continuous commitment refers to a state whereby employees are bound to their organization to the extent they “have to be” due to the benefits associated with staying versus the personal costs associated with leaving. Finally, the normative component refers to commitment based on a moral belief or obligation that “it is the right and moral thing” to remain with the organization. Each type of Commitment ties the individual to the organization in different ways and will differently affect the manner in which the employee conducts him/herself in the workplace (Meyer et al., 2002). It has been found that three dimensions of commitment are related significantly to many work-related outcomes. According to Allen & Meyer (1996) it is only affective and normative commitment, which is found to be positively related with job performance and organization citizenship behavior (Organ & Ryan, 1995) and negatively correlated with W-F and F-W conflicts (Casper et al., 2002). On the other hand, continuance commitment is negatively related with performance and other work related outcomes (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Affective commitment refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in, the organisation [based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organisation]. The antecedents for affective commitment include perceived job characteristics [task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback], organisational dependability [extent to which employees feel the organisation can be counted on to look after their interests] and perceived participatory management [extent to which employees feel they can Influence decisions on the work environment and other issues of concern to them].

Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs the employee associates with leaving the organisation [committed due to the high cost of leaving]. Potential antecedents of continuance commitment include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can function as predictors of continuance commitment, primarily because of their roles as surrogate measures of investment in the organization

Normative commitment refers to an employee’s feeling of obligation to remain with the organization [based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization]. The potential antecedents for normative commitment include coworker commitment [including affective and normative dimensions, as well as commitment behaviors], organizational dependability and participatory management. Co-workers’ commitment is expected to Provide normative signals that influence the development of normative commitment. Organizational dependability and perceived participatory management are expected to instil a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to the organisation.

Commitment is one of the original 4-Cs (Commitment, Congruence, Competence, Cost effectiveness) in the influential Harvard model of HRM (Beer et al., 1984). It is regarded as an immediate and, perhaps, the most critical outcome of human resource strategy. In this model, employees’ commitment is seen as the key factor in achieving competitive performance. For Hendry (1995) commitment ‘implies an enhancement of the individual and his or her skills, and not simply what this can deliver to the organization’.

### 3. ORGANISED RETAIL SECTOR

The Indian retail market has been ranked the second most attractive emerging market for investment after Vietnam<sup>1</sup>. The Indian retail industry is estimated to be worth Rs 13-14 lakh crore in FY 2008<sup>2</sup>. The Indian retail sector is highly fragmented in nature. The penetration of Organised Retail in the Indian market is much below the levels in other countries. Organised/Modern retailing refers to trading activities undertaken by licensed retailers and includes formats such as hypermarkets and supermarkets, and retail chains. Organised Retail, valued at Rs 96,500 crore in 2008, accounts for



around 5% of the total retail market. Organised Retail has been growing at an impressive rate of 35% to 40% Y-O-Y in the last few years compared to 9-10% growth in the overall retail industry. Traditional/unorganised retailing contributes to about 95% of total retail revenues. Traditional/unorganised retailing which involves the local kirana shops, paan /beedi shops, hand cart and pavement vendors, etc. continues to be the backbone of the Indian retail industry. India has one of the highest densities of shops per population with 1.5 crore<sup>4</sup> small retail outlets in India (14 shops per 10,000 people).

#### 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

##### ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS

Sayed , Alam and ansar i(1997) studied Organisational Role Stress in railways guards and Engine Drivers', in Pestonjee, and Pareek (eds.), *Managing stress in Organizations*. Role stressors are conceptualized using three interrelated but distinct constructs: role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Singh, 1998; Montgomery et al., 1996). According to Larson (2004) role conflict results from conflicting job demands such that compliance with one makes compliance with another difficult or impossible. Rizzo et al., (1970) define role conflict in terms of the dimensions of compatibility-incompatibility in the requirements of the role, where compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards which impinge upon role performance

Rutledge (2000) studied organizational role stress in two small low enforcement agencies. A total of 86 officers were surveyed as part of this study. The objectives of the null hypothesis are to examine compare the self reported existence of role stressors that exist within the agencies and between the agencies. The research found that there is a difference between the agencies new questions wise from the study as to the nature and cause of the organizational stress differences that warrant further research. Nirmala (2002) attempted to identify main sources of occupational stress and the relationship between various sources of occupational stress and job performance.

Sayed and Ahmad (2002) studied Organizational Role Stress among executives of various industries. the result indicated that the executives of private sector enterprises are suffering from higher levels of organizational role stress as compared to their public sector counterparts.

Lehal and Singh (2005) Studied Organizational Role Stress among college teachers of Patiala district. The study indicated that the level of organizational role stress in government college teachers in Patiala district is significantly low than that being experienced by private college teacher. Ritu (2007) studies organizational role stress and job satisfaction among executives of Punjab.

##### ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

In research literature organizational commitment has been investigated from various perspectives. Organizational commitment has been analyzed as a dependent variable for antecedents such as job satisfaction, job involvement, demographic variables, role stressors (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Dixon et al., 2005; Lok and Crawford, 2001; Udo et al., 1997; Addae et al., 2008; Schaubroeck et al., 1989). Numerous studies have treated organizational commitment as a predictor of important outcomes such as turnover intentions, turnover, and absenteeism (Elangovan, 2001; Carmeli and Gefen, 2005; Meyer et al., 2004; Porter et al., 1974; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Lee, 1988; Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007). Apart from antecedent-consequence relationships organizational commitment has also been studied as a mediating variable by various researchers (For example, Suliman, 2002; Clugston, 2000; Tompson and Werner, 1997; Netemeyer et. al., 1995; Udo et al., 1997).



Colarelli, Dean and Ronstans (1987) evinced that both personal and situational variables affected job outcomes, including commitment, and they found that situational variables accounted for greater variance in organizational commitment. These findings were further supported by Colarelli and Bishop (1990). Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) have identified link between Personal and Organization Commitment. Researchers suggest that a number of factors lead to greater organizational commitment including early in an employees' tenure with an employer. Another factor, primarily nonorganizational factors that enhance commitment is the availability of alternatives after the initial choice has been made along with reward, costs and investment (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983). Certain other factors discovered are; job satisfaction and job involvement (Stevens, Beyer & Trice, 1978), work motivation and job satisfaction (Khan & Mishra, 2002; Ahmad & Mishra, 2000; Srivastava, 1999), stress and health (Ahmad & Mishra, 2000; Srivastava, 2002; Srivastava, 1999), social support (Khanna, 2000; Vashishtha & Mishra, 1998) and work environment (Khan & Mishra, 2002).

Montgomery et al. (1996) examined the effect of job stress in the financial service profession on 288 stockbrokers in the US and concluded that excessive job stress decreases productivity and commitment Gaither studied the effect of commitment as a mediating factor on job stress on 1,088 pharmacists.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### I. Sample

The present research was conducted on a sample consisted of 150 executives drawn randomly from different Retail organizations located mostly in North part of country. The age of the executives vary from 29-52 years all the executives were working either at middle or senior level .

### II. Measures

(i) **Organizational Role Stress Scale** (Pareek, 1981) consists of 50 items and measure 10 type of role stressors. Each dimension of ORS is measured by five questions. The ORS scale has high reliability and validity, and detailed norms have been worked out for different types of organizations. Khanna (1986) has suggested ORS norms for managers. Likewise, Surti (1983) has suggested ORS norms for working women; Sen(1982) for Indian bankers; Susniati (1986) for Indonesian Salesman; Rieffel (1986) for American Directors of Special Education; Pestonjee and Singh (1982) for Electric supply managers and EDP managers ; Pestonjee (1983) for civil servants.

(ii) **Organizational Commitment Scale** : Meyer and Allen ( 1997) scale was used to measure organizational commitment There are 18 items in the scale, 6 each for affective, continuance and normative commitment. Reliability coefficient for them .79, .83 and .83 respectively.

### III. Procedure

Both the measures were simultaneously administered on the selected respondents and they were asked to read the instructions given in the questionnaires. No time limit was given to fill the questionnaires but it was expected that respondents would fill the same within 20-25 minutes.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

**TABLE-I: Showing Mean and SD of ORS and OC**

S.No	PARAMETERS	MEAN VALUE	S.D VALUE
1.	<b>Inter-Role Distance (IRD)</b>	<b>7.16</b>	<b>4.13</b>
2.	<b>Role Stagnation (RS)</b>	<b>5.58</b>	<b>4.08</b>



3.	<b>Role Expectation Conflict (REC)</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>3.00</b>
4.	<b>Role Erosion( RE)</b>	<b>9.70</b>	<b>4.04</b>
5.	<b>Role Overload (RO)</b>	<b>5.12</b>	<b>3.33</b>
6.	<b>Role Isolation (RI)</b>	<b>6.90</b>	<b>4.10</b>
7	<b>Personal Inadequacy (PI)</b>	<b>6.48</b>	<b>3.99</b>
8.	<b>Self Role Distance (SRD)</b>	<b>6.80</b>	<b>2.85</b>
9	<b>Role Ambiguity (RA)</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>3.04</b>
10.	<b>Resource Inadequacy (RIN)</b>	<b>6.54</b>	<b>3.88</b>
11.	<b>ORS Total</b>	<b>62.77</b>	<b>22.27</b>
12.	<b>Normative</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>0.61</b>
13	<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>0.47</b>
14.	<b>Continuance</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.51</b>
15.	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	<b>10.48</b>	<b>1.19</b>

It is clear from the Table-I that the employee of the retail sectors are showing substantially level of organizational role stress and main stressors are role erosion, inter role distance, role isolation, self role distance, resource inadequacy and personal inadequacy. Before discussing the results it is necessary to understand the nature of the job in retail sectors. The timing in retail sectors are generally between 09.0 am to 10.0 pm, almost 13 hours in one go and at the same time most of the employees keeps standing through out their duty hour and it is expected from them that they should be very attentive and polite with the customer. The most dominant stressor in our research is role erosion which means the employees feels that some important functions which are related to his work are given to some one else to carry out and they feel that the job they are doing is not challenging. The second dominant stressor is inter role distance means when there is conflict between the organizational role and other role e..g this happens when an employee fails to divide his time between work demand and family demand and its very natural because employees of retail sectors are spending their almost full time doing activities for organizations and they do not have time to perform other family and society related work which are equally important. The third dominant stressor is role isolation means there is lack of appropriate linkage of one's role with others' role in the organization and if we look in to the work profile of retail sectors employees there jobs are highly independent in nature and they hardly see any coordination in one' role or others. The fourth important stressor in this research is self role distance means, when there is conflict between one's values and self concepts with the requirement of the organizational role. During the data collection we interacted informally with so many employees of various retail outlets and the general complaint that they describe to us was really painful. They said that they are suppose to perform so many task or jobs that they never thought of doing and management forced them to do the same which are very contradictory to their values and self concept and they are doing for the sake of survival. The fifth dominant stressor is resource inadequacy means when there is lack of resources or non availability of the resources needed to perform his role effectively. Employees of retail sectors are working with lot of resource crunch. The last important dominant stressor in this case is personal inadequacy means when there is lack of knowledge, skills and attitude needed to perform certain operation effectively. In retail sectors employees are not well trained and at the same time they majority of them are not having adequate exposure in retail sector and also there is no any hard and fast educational back ground they are looking for, because of very strenuous working environment they picks all those who are willing to come with whatever back ground and this leads toward lack of required knowledge , skills and other ability to perform their task effectively even they are do not have any appropriate training or induction programme by doing so they can remove or reduce their some difficulty.

Organizational commitment refers to a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target. Commitment could manifest in terms of three ways i.e. affective , normative and continuance and each type of commitment ties the individual to the organization in the



different ways and will affect the manner in which the employee conduct himself in the workplace. ( Meyer et al, 2002). It is clear from the above Table-I that employees of retail sectors are showing substantially low level of organizational commitment and all the tree dimension of organizational commitment are contributing. The dominant organizational commitment factor is normative. Normative commitment refers to an employee’s feeling of obligation to remain with the organization [based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization]. The potential antecedents for normative commitment include coworker commitment , organizational dependability and participatory management. Co-workers’ commitment is expected to Provide normative signals that influence the development of normative commitment. Organizational dependability and perceived participatory management are expected to instil a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to the organization but all these factors are missing in the retail sectors. The second dominant factor of organizational commitment in this study is affective commitment means the roots of affective commitment can be traced to exchange principle. An organization provides rewards or punishment at its disposal in return for the contribution employees makes or fails to make and employees shows commitment or lack of commitment in return of these rewards and punishments( Meyer and Allen, 1991). If we look in the functioning of retail sector there is hardly any linkage between rewards and performance, the incentive programme is based on the overall performance of the retail sectors and there are hardly very few retail sectors which are recognizing the individuals for their performance. The third dominant factor in continuance commitment. It is widely believed that anything that increase the cost associated with leaving the organization can lead to the development of continuance commitment. Researches suggests there are eight variables as determents of continuance commitment – self investment, general training, social support( supervisory, co-workers, spouse, parents and friends) and opportunity ( Meyer and Allen(1991). Here in retail sectors the employees hardly feels any of the above and hence least committed with his organization. It is the duty of the retail sectors to develop culture and climate keeping in mind their employee growth and over all satisfaction by doing so they can increase the commitment level which is very much required for the defective performance of the retail sectors.

**TABLE-II: Showing correlation between various dimensions of ORS and OC:**

S.No	ORS	AFFIRMATIVE	NORMATIVE	CONTINUANCE	OC TOTAL
1	Inter-Role Distance (IRD)	0.0198	0.28	0.11	-0.05
2	Role Stagnation (RS)	-0.61*	-0.39	-0.14	-0.53*
3	Role Expectation Conflict (REC)	-0.36	-0.55*	0.035	-0.39
4	Role Erosion( RE)	0.15	-0.86*	0.023	0.45*
5	Role Overload (RO)	-0.61*	-0.05	-0.14	-0.579*
6	Role Isolation (RI)	-0.018	-0.21	0.019	-0.086
7	Personal Inadequacy (PI)	-0.48*	-0.24	-0.077	-0.37
8	Self Role Distance (SRD)	-0.36	0.02	-0.17	-0.25
9	Role Ambiguity (RA)	-0.54*	-0.34	-0.18	-0.49*
10	Resource Inadequacy (RIN)	-0.30	-0.37	0.092	-0.26
11	ORS Total	-0.48	-0.48*	-0.06	-0.46*

\* Significant at .01 level of significance.

It is clear from Table II that role stagnation, role overload, personal inadequacy, role ambiguity and total ors are significantly negatively correlated with affirmative commitment, means if the above said



dimensions of ORS will go up the affirmative commitment level will go down and vice-versa. Role expectation conflict, role erosion and total ORS were found to be negatively and significantly correlated with normative commitment. Surprisingly none of the ORS factors were found to be correlated with continuance factor of commitment. If we look in to the table role stagnation, role erosion, role overload, role ambiguity and total ORS were found to be significantly negatively correlated with organizational commitment. Means if in retail sector role stagnation, role erosion, role overload, role ambiguity will go up the organizational commitment will go down. Hence the retail sectors if wishes to increase the organizational commitment beside other factors must also looks in to their stressors and remove them strategically.

## 7. Conclusions

It is observed from this study that employee of retail sectors in India is suffering with organizational role stress and low level of organizational commitments, the dominant stressors are role erosion, inter role distance, role isolation, self role distance, resource inadequacy and personal inadequacy and if we look in to the organizational commitment the dominant OC factor are normative and affective.

## 8. Scope for Further Research

The investigators are of the view that an in depth study of organizational role stress, organizational commitment and stress tolerance level of employ yes must be checked with larger population and wider coverage and come up with some strategy after consulting with some senior retail HR official so that the maximum effective of the employees can be achieved and also the maximum productivity of the retail sectors can be ensured.

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