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## **ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's highly dynamic and competitive organizational context stress is an inevitable phenomenon. Though stress is as old as work is, its origin can be traced in the literature to the 17th Century when it was identified with hardship, straits, adversity or affliction as meant by the Latin word: Stringere. In the 18th and 19th Centuries, the meaning of stress changed to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person (Hinkle 1973). The concept of stress was transferred from physicists to social scientists (Cooper & Marshall 1978). The first reference to Stress in humans was made by Selye (1936) who conceptualised it as a nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon. Lazarus, Cohen, Folkman, Kanner and Schaefer (1980) clarified that stress is not only a response, but also a function of individual appraisal of the situation.

One of the most important tenants of stress management is the role that perception plays in stress. Most people believe that it is external stressful situations or people that cause their stress but this is not 100% accurate, if it were, everybody who was exposed to a particular stressor would be affected, but this is not the case. Stress is not a black and white issue of "Cause and Effect". It is the result of a number of complex and interacting factors such as the interaction between the stressors and our perception of the stressors. How we perceive/appraise an event (stressor) plays a very large role in whether the stressor triggers our fight/flight response. For example if our perception is influenced by a negative, pessimistic thinking style the potential event will be perceived as more of a threat than say another person exposed to the same potential stressful event but who has a flexible, non-rigid, optimistic thinking style.

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Some stressors are universally painful and stressful to most of us such as the death of a loved one. Fortunately, these Major Life Event stressors are relatively rare; most of the stressors we encounter occur on a daily basis and are known as daily hassles. Our perception of these every day, non-life event, stressors, depends very much on our individual perception of those particular stressors.

An example of a daily hassle is a traffic jam. One person in the traffic jam may sit and fume becoming very angry at the delay, but another person in the same traffic jam may quietly accept the situation, calmly read a book and think that getting upset or irritable won't move the car one millimetre further. This is the same potential stressor for both drivers, yet two different responses and this is partly due to the perceptions of the event by both individuals.

Stress researcher and Psychologist Doctor Richard Lazarus developed the Transactional model of stress which does not view the stressor or the person as the cause of stress; he says :

"Stress resides neither in the situation nor in the person, it depends on a transaction between the two."(Dr Richard Lazarus, PhD, Clinical Psychologist )

*Occupational stress* is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or be caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture or personality conflicts. As with other forms of tension, occupation stress can eventually affect both physical and emotional well being if not managed effectively.

Stress is an inherent factor in any type of vocation or career. At its best, the presence of stress can be a motivator that urges the individual to strive for excellence. However, excess amounts of stress can lead to a lack of productivity, a loss of confidence, and the inability to perform routine tasks. As a result, quality employees lose their enthusiasm for their work and eventually withdraw from the company.

When left unchecked, occupational stress can lead to emotional and physical disorders that began to impact personal as well as professional lives. The individual may develop a level of tension that interferes with sleep, making relaxing outside the workplace impossible. Over time, the stress can trigger emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression and in some cases various phobias that further inhibit the ability to enjoy any aspect of living.



*Role stress* results from problems encountered in role performance. When these problems are confronted or resolved, the resulting role stress reduces or gets eliminated. This in turn promotes enhanced well being of the role occupant and enhanced performance and effectiveness at the individual and organisational levels. Homogeneity of role stress indicates that the same kind of problems are prevailing throughout the organisation and the same kind of solutions/interventions hold good for all parts of the organisation. Heterogeneity of role stress, on the other hand, signifies that different kinds of problems are prevailing in different parts of the organisation and different kinds of solutions/interventions are required for different parts of the organisation. Realisation of these differences is useful for formulating a contingency model for enhancing organisational performance and effectiveness.

### **THE CONCEPT OF STRESS**

We generally use the word "stress" when we feel that everything seems to have become too much - we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressures placed upon us. Anything that poses a challenge or a threat to our well-being is a stress. Some stresses get you going and they are good for you - without any stress at all many say our lives would be boring and would probably feel pointless. However, when the stresses undermine both our mental and physical health they are bad. In this text we shall be focusing on stress that is bad for you.

#### *Fight or flight response*

The way you respond to a challenge may also be a type of stress. Part of your response to a challenge is physiological and affects your physical state. When faced with a challenge or a threat, your body activates resources to protect you - to either get away as fast as you can, or fight. If you are upstairs at home and an earthquake starts, the faster you can get yourself and your family out the more likely you are all to survive. If you need to save somebody's life during that earthquake, by lifting a heavy weight that has fallen on them during the earthquake, you will need components in your body to be activated to give you that extra strength - that extra push.

Our fight-or-flight response is our body's sympathetic nervous system reacting to a stressful event. Our body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline, which trigger a higher heart rate, heightened muscle preparedness,



sweating, and alertness - all these factors help us protect ourselves in a dangerous or challenging situation.

Non-essential body functions slow down, such as our digestive and immune systems when we are in fight-or flight response mode. All resources can then be concentrated on rapid breathing, blood flow, alertness and muscle use.

When we are stressed the following happens:

- Blood pressure rises
- Breathing becomes more rapid
- Digestive system slows down
- Heart rate (pulse) rises
- Immune system goes down
- Muscles become tense
- We do not sleep (heightened state of alertness)

Most of us have varying interpretations of what stress is about and what matters. Some of us focus on what happens to us, such as breaking a bone or getting a promotion, while others think more about the event itself. What really matters are our thoughts about the situations in which we find ourselves.

We are continually sizing up situations that confront us in life. We assess each situation, deciding whether something is a threat, how we can deal with it and what resources we can use. If we conclude that the required resources needed to effectively deal with a situation are beyond what we have available, we say that that situation is stressful - and we react with a classical stress response. On the other hand, if we decide our available resources and skills are more than enough to deal with a situation, it is not seen as stressful to us.

Stress cannot result from any opportunity/challenge/constraint/demand, whatsoever, unless its outcome is perceived to be both important and uncertain at the same time (Schwarzer 2009). Stress is a part of our everyday life. Moderate level of stress is in fact necessary for an individual to stay alert and active. High level of stress, on the other hand, would lead to impairment of human wellbeing and performance. Stress is additive. It is necessary to prevent spiralling of stress to contain it within a reasonable limit for harnessing its benefits, while avoiding its perils.



## **STRESS IN ORGANISATIONAL ROLES**

Role stress in organizations is widespread. About half of all American workers feel the pressures of Role-related stress. Extensive research shows that excessive Role stress can adversely affect the emotional and physical health of workers. The result is decreased productivity, less satisfied, and less healthy workers. This paper will first discuss the symptoms and causes of stress, and then explore ways in which managers might reduce stress in themselves and their subordinates.

Role stress can have a substantial negative effect on physical and emotional health. Williams and Huber (1986) provide a comprehensive list of the symptoms of stress. These are: "constant fatigue, low energy level, recurring headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, chronically bad breath, sweaty hands or feet, dizziness, high blood pressure, pounding heart, constant inner tension, inability to sleep, temper outbursts, hyperventilation, moodiness, irritability and restlessness, inability to concentrate, increased aggression, compulsive eating, chronic worrying, anxiety or apprehensiveness, inability to relax, growing feelings of inadequacy, increase in defensiveness, dependence on tranquilizers, excessive use of alcohol, and excessive smoking." (p. 246) Furthermore, Role stress can make people more susceptible to major illnesses. High stress managers are twice as prone to heart attacks as low stress managers. (Rosenman and Friedman, 1971)

Excessive role stress is not a small or isolated problem. Recent studies have found evidence of dangerous physical changes attributed to prolonged stress. One New York study reported a twenty gram increase in heart muscles of those suffering from job stress. There was a significant "thickening of the heart's left ventricle, or chamber, a condition that often precedes coronary heart disease and heart attacks." (Pieper, C., 1990) Omni magazine (March, 1991) wrote about a series of experiments with rats to examine the physiological effects of prolonged stress. The researchers found that there was actually a loss of neurons in the hippocampus section of their brains. The article concluded with a warning that there is some evidence of a similar neuron loss occurs in humans.

Many researchers have studied the effects of stress on performance. McGrath (1978) reported that mild to moderate amounts of stress enables people to perform some tasks more effectively. The rationale is that improved performance can be attributed to increased arousal. However, if the stressor continues, it eventually takes its toll, and results in



decreased performance and deleterious health consequences. Furthermore, workers are aware of the toll that stress has had on their own performances. Half of all workers say that job stress reduces their productivity. (Lawless, 1992)

Research indicates that our personality traits can be one factor in stress and that our perception of ourselves and the world in general is partly linked to our personality. Now, this does not mean that because it is our personality and perception that we cannot learn alternative ways of dealing with our difficulties. It is possible to change our perception from an unrealistic, inaccurate one, to a more realistic and accurate assessment.

1. Inter-role distance : It is experienced when there is a conflict between organizational and non-organisational roles. For example, the role of an executive vs. the role of a husband/wife.

2. Role stagnation : It is the feeling of being stuck in the same role. Such a type of stress results in perception that there is no opportunity for the furthering or progress of one's career.

3. Role expectation conflicts : This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons, i.e. superiors, subordinates and peers, about the same roles and the role occupant's ambivalence as to whom to please.

4. Role erosion : This type of role stress is the function of the role occupant's feeling that some functions which should properly belong to his/her role are transferred to/or performed by some other role. This can also happen when the functions are performed by the role occupant but the credit for them goes to someone else. Another manifestation is in the form of underutilization in the role.

5. Role overload : When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his/her role set, he/she experiences role overload. There are two aspects of this stress: quantitative and qualitative. The former refers to having too much to do, while the latter refers to things being too difficult and the accountability in the role.

6. Role isolation : This type of role stress refers to the psychological distance between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role set. It is also defined as role distance which is different from inter-role distance , in the sense that while IRD refers to the distance among various roles occupied by the same individual, role isolation (RI) is characterized by the feelings that others do not reach out easily, indicative of the absence of strong linkages



of one's role with other roles. This can be geographic or systemic.

7. Personal inadequacy: It arises when the role occupant feels that he/she does not have the necessary skills and training for effectively performing the functions expected from his/her role. This is bound to happen when the organizations do not impart periodic training to enable the employees to cope with the fast changes both within and outside the organization.

8. Self-role distance : When the role a person occupies goes against his/her self-concept, then he/she feels self-role distance type of stress. This is essentially a conflict arising out of a mismatch between the person and his/her Role.

9. Role ambiguity : It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations regarding the role which may arise out of lack of information or understanding. It may exist in relation to activities, responsibilities, personal styles and norms and may operate at three stages:

a. When the role sender holds his/her expectations about the role,

b. When he/she sends it, and

c. When the occupants receives those expectations.

10. Resource inadequacy: This type of stress is evident when the role occupant feels that he/she is not provided with adequate resources for performing the functions expected from his/her role.

### **ROLE ADVISORS AND ROLE STRESS**

Role advisors can be important in the context of entrepreneurship and new venture management. Role advisors are individuals that are included in a focal person's role set. Role advisors influence role stress by the social support to the person at hand. This support has received much attention in the role stress literature and is often cited as an antecedent to role stress. In an organizational setting, this support has been studied as support from supervisors or co-workers (e.g., Babin and Boles, 1996; Gil-Monte, Valcarcel, and Zornoza, 1993). Some studies have focused on support provided by other actors. For instance, Berkowitz and Perkins (1984) examined support given by husbands to working farm women, which they found to be an antecedent to role stress. Tetrick, Slack, Da Silva and Sinclair (2000) argued that support, consisting of support from supervisors, peers, subordinates, friends, and significant others, had a preventive affect on stressors (i.e., role stress). In the context of entrepreneurship, a number of other actors might be influential as role advisors,



including ventures stakeholders (e.g., financiers, co-operators, employees, suppliers, customers, governments, universities, society, contractors, consultants, and supporting actors) and family and friends outside the work setting. Schaubroeck, Cotton, and Jennings (1989) argued that social support can decrease role ambiguity, since high levels of social support increase communication between the stakeholders and entrepreneurs. Schaubroeck et al. (1989) also argued that support (from co-workers) decreases role conflict since social support reflects cooperation among peers and enables negotiation of role demands, which as well indicates that role advisors might have the same effect on role overload. As a result, supportive role advisors are likely to reduce role stress among entrepreneurs.

### **INTOLERANCE FOR AMBIGUITY**

Although mixed support, intolerance for ambiguity has been rather well used in entrepreneurship studies. In the role stress literature, Frone (1990) and Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) provided convincing support for a relationship to role stress. They found that although intolerance for ambiguity might be strongly related to role ambiguity, this personality trait likely influence the other facets of role stress (i.e., role conflict and role overload) as well. Risk and uncertainty pervade entrepreneurial activities; as such, ambiguities cannot be avoided. Koh (1996) suggested that entrepreneurs need to have substantial tolerance for ambiguity to manage the process of entrepreneurship or they will be unable to tackle or engage in the required tasks. Therefore, intolerance for ambiguity should increase role stress for entrepreneurs. Also, intolerance for ambiguity can likely moderate the relationships between entrepreneur role stress and job satisfaction. When intolerance for ambiguity is high, high entrepreneur role stress reduces job satisfaction more than if the opposite. Intolerance for ambiguity was an important moderator of role stress outcomes already in the work by Kahn et al. (1964) and has been treated as such in subsequent studies. Frone (1990) used a meta-analysis to understand intolerance for ambiguity as a moderator of role stress. Results showed that individuals with low intolerance for ambiguity perceive stressful events to be less threatening than individuals with high intolerance for ambiguity. Consequently, intolerance for ambiguity is influential in understanding the size of the effect of role stress on job satisfaction. Keenan and McBain (1979) hypothesized that individuals with high intolerance for ambiguity would experience



lower job satisfaction than those with low intolerance of ambiguity. Thus, intolerance for ambiguity likely has two roles to serve in relation to role stress.

### **LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ROLE STRESS**

Locus of control has a long history in serving the field of entrepreneurship. Szilagyi et al. (1976) described internal locus of control as a personality trait that causes individuals to view surrounding events as resulting from their own actions. People with an external locus of control, on the other hand, view surrounding events as the result of fate, luck, or powerful others. Organ and Greene (1974) found empirical support for locus of control as an antecedent to role stress. Although Keenan and McBain (1979) argued that there is a lack of conceptual support for this relationship, later researchers have proposed several explanations. For instance, Singh and Rhoads (1991) found that those with an internal locus of control experience less role ambiguity, since they tend to be better informed about their role and task environment. Similarly, Von Emster and Harrison (1998) argued that “internals” have a greater sense of control over situations and experience less role ambiguity as a result. This extends to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who believe their success or failure is an outcome of their own actions keep track of what to avoid and take greater care in planning, which will lead to reduced levels of role stress. Locus of control likely has an additional, more complicated role. When internal locus of control is low, high entrepreneur role stress reduces job satisfaction more than if the opposite. Support for locus of control as moderating the consequences of role stress has also been found. Grover (1993) argued that locus of control moderated the relationship between role stress and its consequences (i.e., lying and ethical behavior). According to Keenan and McBain (1979), internals react more positively to increased complexities from a high level of role stress than externals. Their research should have particular bearing for the entrepreneurship context. These researchers argued that role stress would be associated with lower job satisfaction among the latter group. Thus, locus of control has two functions in which it influences role stress.

### **ROLE STRESS AND JOB PERFORMANCE**

In the role stress literature, different performance constructs have been widely used and associated with role stress (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Babin and Boles, 1998; Behrman and Perrault, 1984; Dubinsky, Michaels, Kotabe, Un Lim, and Moon, 1992). Job performance is



one of them and is often viewed as the degree to which employees execute their job tasks, responsibilities, and assignments adequately (Dubinsky et al., 1992). Early conceptual work proposed a negative relationship between role stress and job performance since exposure to role stress reduces control over the work environment and hinders job performance (e.g., McGrath, 1976). In boundary spanning roles similar to the entrepreneurial one, the negative relationship between role stress and job performance is explained by role behavior becoming “inefficient, misdirected, or insufficient” (Jackson and Schuler, 1985, p. 43; Singh, 1993, p. 15). In academia, the number of submissions (as a performance measure) is indicative of how role stress (i.e., role ambiguity) influences performance (Bauer and Green, 1994). Jackson and Schuler (1985) established a negative relationship between role stress and job performance in their meta-analysis. They explained this relationship drawing from cognitive and motivational research. According to a cognitive perspective, role stress results in lower job performance since role stress includes lack of information and information overload (Tubre and Collins, 2000). From a motivational perspective, role stress weakens effort-to-performance and performance-to-reward expectancies (Tubre and Collins, 2000). The negative relationship between role stress and job performance likely persists for entrepreneurs (Stoner et al., 1990; Williams, 1984), since it has been reported for CEOs (Shenkar and Zeira, 1992). Most studies, however, have defined entrepreneurs as small business managers rather than new venture creators. The proposed direction of the relationship is relevant for entrepreneurs (conceptualized as new venture creators) as inconsistent demands (role conflict) can lead to inefficiency due to incompatible demands and uncertainty about how time and effort should be allocated (role ambiguity) – both of which make it hard to perform any role well. Not having enough time and resources (overload) is also detrimental to job performance.

The inverse causal relationship between role stress and performance, where performance is an antecedent to role stress, is also proposed and studied. Oliver and Brief (1977) found empirical support for performance as an antecedent to role ambiguity, discussed as performance feedback (as modeled in Figure 1). Shirom and Kirmeyer (1988) found evidence that performance was both an antecedent and a consequence to role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, giving further cause for modeling a feedback relationship between performance and role stress. Other researchers have established that different



performance indicators influence the dimensions of role stress. That is, job or venture performance as an antecedent is negatively related to role stress. Evidence in the literature supports this relationship. For instance, client satisfaction, as a component of venture performance, has been found to be negatively related to role stress (Beard, 1999). In light of this, job performance likely has a feedback loop that reduces levels of role stress. Entrepreneurs scoring high on job performance will likely exhibit low role stress.

Job performance has a multi faceted role as also capable of moderating the relationships between intolerance for ambiguity, locus of control, role novelty, and role advisors and entrepreneur role stress. The rationale is that when having attributes that likely enhance role stress together with a job diagnose of not knowing or having the capacity to perform the entrepreneurial role (i.e., low job performance), the attributes normally leading to role stress should be very influential. In opposite, when job performance is high the experienced role stress should not be substantial as the rationale provoking role stress in the proposed antecedents should be mitigated. Job performance, viewed as a receipt of doing well in the role (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Dubinsky et al., 1992; Lysonski, 1985), might reduce the impact of intolerance for ambiguity, external locus of control, role novelty and low support of role advisors. This is likely since all of these variables have in common that they create doubts and uncertainties of not performing the role sufficient (cf. Oliver and Brief, 1977). Therefore, job performance is likely influential in determining the impact the mentioned variables have on role stress, increasing or decreasing depending on whether it signals positive or negative performance.

### **WORK-FAMILY CONFLICTS AND ROLE STRESS**

Work-family (or work-home) conflict is used as another common outcome of role stress (Babin and Boles, 1998; Bacharach, Bamberger and Conley, 1991). Several researchers have found conflicts between work and home roles heightened for employees working long or inflexible hours (Burke, Weir and Duwors, 1980; Fogarty, Rapoport and Rapoport, 1978; Pleck, Staines and Lang, 1980), a situation that can be recognized for many entrepreneurs and that has received especial support among female entrepreneurs (Shelton, 2006). Greenhaus, Bedeian and Mossholder (1987) found that role conflict and extensive time commitment at work were associated with higher levels of 'work-home conflict' among accountants. As Bacharach et al. (1991: 42) stated: "there seems to be increasing evidence



of a 'spill-over' effect from the work place to the home; that is, an inverse relationship between negative experiences at work and well-being in one's home life". Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) provided a more in-depth explanation of how role stress influences work-family conflict. They noted that time-based conflict, as devoting time to one role and thereby not having time to fulfill expectations in another role, and strain-based conflict, as letting strain created in one role influence the performance, or the ability to perform, in another role. Besides from different types of role conflict, also role overload has been an explanation in that several researchers have noted that work-family conflict is higher when employees are working long and/or inflexible hours (see for instance Fogarty et al., 1978). It is likely that these reactions to role stress are as valid in a sample of entrepreneurs.

In addition to the relationship between role stress and work-family conflict we expect the opposite causality, as work-family conflict has been treated as a construct describing the spill-over effect from one role to others. That is, work-family conflict is constituted by the spill-over influence in the transition between the work role and the family role. As such, work-family conflict indicates the ability of buffering role stress, but when work-family conflict is high it is likely that role stress increases as it is spreading into the focal persons other roles and minimizes the possibilities for recovering. That work-family conflict also has the potential to be an antecedent to role stress has been widely studied and empirically supported (Boles et al., 1997; Chiu, 1998), as well received some attention in studies with implications for entrepreneurship (Folbre and Nelson, 2000; Orser and Hogarth-Scott, 1998; Shelton, 2006).

### **WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, JOB SATISFACTION AND ROLE STRESS**

In addition to role stress, work-family conflict has other well established associations to other constructs in the model we have illustrated. Several studies have examined how work-family conflict influences organizational behaviors (e.g., Bacharach et al., 1991), and empirical support has been found for a relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction (Andrisani and Shapiro, 1978; Pleck et al., 1980; Porter and Steers, 1973). In a meta-analysis of 19 samples conducted by Kossek and Ozeki (1998), the correlation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction was -0.27. This relationship likely extends to the entrepreneurial role, where it has received some attention (see for instance Shelton, 2006).



However, the relationships involving work-family conflict also adds additional complexity (and detail) in our illustration of role stress usability. When work-family conflict is high, high levels of role stress reduce job satisfaction. Thus work-family conflict can moderate the role stress job satisfaction relationship. When work-family conflict is high, high levels of role stress reduce job satisfaction. If low degrees of work-family conflict, the influence of role stress on job satisfaction is likely to be weak or nonexistent. Work-family conflict is a variable that has been considered to have a spill-over relation with role stress (Bacharach et al., 1991). When work-family conflict is high, it is likely that role stress at the work will influence its outcomes to a higher degree (Kabanoff, 1980). It is thus likely that job satisfaction as a commonly studied consequence is further reduced when work-family conflict is high. At the other end of the spectrum, low work-family conflict likely buffers the negative affects of role stress on job performance. This is because the concept of work-family conflict functions to balance the spillover affect of role stress among various roles.

### **EVOLUTION OF ROLE STRESS FRAMEWORK**

Several frameworks have been developed for the measurement of role stress. The concept of role stress was introduced by Kahn, et al. (1964) who identified three role stressors (i.e., role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload). In this framework, role conflict included inter sender conflict, intra sender conflict, inter role conflict, and person role conflict. Based on the framework of Kahn, et al. (1964), a role conflict scale comprising of eight items, and a role ambiguity scale comprising of six items was developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970). These two scales were extensively used for role stress research for a long time in spite of controversies about their validity. McGee, Ferguson and Seers (1989) called for a moratorium on the use of these scales. According to Kelloway and Barling (1990), however, the call for moratorium on the use of these scales was premature.

Only two role stressors were measurable until Beehr, Walsh and Taber (1976) developed a role overload scale comprising three items. This condition existed before the contribution made by Pareek (1982), as until this contribution research on stress in organisational roles was confined to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, even though these three role stressors ill represented the complexities of performance in organisational roles. Pareek (1982) significantly expanded the framework of role stress by identifying eight role stressors which closely represented problems encountered in organisational roles. He developed the



Your Feelings About Your Role (YFAYR) Scale, which comprises 40 items to measure inter role distance, role stagnation, role ambiguity, role erosion, role overload, role isolation, role inadequacy and self role distance. The YFAYR scale was improved by Pareek through factor analysis, which led to splitting role ambiguity into a new version of role ambiguity and role expectation conflict; and role inadequacy into resource inadequacy and personal inadequacy. A comprehensive role stress measurement scale comprising 50 items for the measurement of ten role stressors was thus, realised. The new instrument was called the Organisational Role Stress (ORS) Scale (Pareek 1983).

A new role stressor called Role Underload was identified by Srinivasan and Anantharaman (1988) through factor analysis of the YFAYR scale and by Srivastav and Pareek (2008) through factor analysis of the ORS scale. Srivastav (2009) developed the New Organisational Role Stress (NORS) Scale comprising 71 items for measuring 11 role stressors, which included role Underload. Studies on the use of the NORS scale for role stress research are yet to be reported. The Organisational role stress (ORS) scale developed by Pareek (1983) was selected for this study. The choice of ORS scale was made because Gordon (2004) had branded the ORS scale as a classic inventory for the measurement of role stress in organisations. The scale has been extensively used for research on role stress (Pestonjee 1999), and because the role stressors in ORS framework were found to be relevant for the company under study as reflected by recent studies on role stress (Bhattacharya & Basu 2007, Dasgupta & Kumar 2009).

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this conceptual analysis was to discuss how role stress can be used in entrepreneurship research. The conceptualization herein provides ample support for the study of role stress in entrepreneurial settings as well as the development of future research agendas. Based on these observations, a sufficient body of psychological and sociological literature exists on outcomes to test causal models and pursue deductive research on entrepreneur role stress. Role stress may help resolving unanswered questions in the field of entrepreneurship, and it has potential to further the research on entrepreneurial identity. For example, it may advance understanding of how personality can influence job performance and withdrawal (i.e., failure) – an issue hotly debated in entrepreneurship research and that has produced ambiguous findings (cf. Begley and Boyd, 1987; Johnson,



1990). Further, role stress may be an important mediator and a key construct for researching and introducing more “negative” consequences that have not received much research attention in an entrepreneurship setting.

More conceptual and empirical studies in the development of future research agendas are clearly needed. In context of entrepreneurship, role stress may have a number of direct and indirect negative affects on the creation of sustainable ventures, including the propensity to withdraw and low organizational commitment. Cross-sectional and longitudinal field surveys examining the propositions introduced in this paper would be one direction for future research. Further research is also required to develop new models, expand existing ones, and test the antecedents and consequences identified in the literature review to determine what is contextually important for entrepreneurship. The literature review suggests some guidelines, but deductive work in combination with the real life experiences of entrepreneurs would greatly contribute to the study of entrepreneur role stress.

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