

# **The Effect of Role Overload on Employee Anxiety and Organization Citizenship Behavior**

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## **Abstract**

*The objective of the study was to find out the effect of role overload on employee anxiety and organization citizenship behavior. Close ended questionnaire were distributed among 120 employees of UBL for data collection. Regression analysis was run, showing 74.1 % variations in the Employee anxiety due to role overload and about 71% variation in Organization citizenship behavior by the role overload. Results show that there is a strong positive relationship in Employee anxiety & role overload, and strong negative relationship between organization citizenship behavior (OCB) and role overload as the literature shows. More extensive research needs to be carried out to explore new knowledge in this area.*

**Keywords:** Role overload, Employee anxiety, Organization citizenship behavior.

## **Introduction**

In modern learning organizations employees are increasingly expected to present their effort, motivation and initiative. Employees are the most important asset of any organization. In Organization employees faces many problems such as: lack of resources, leadership, limited time, overloaded work, feeling of stress, frustration, and anxiety. Role overload is a familiar phenomenon that may express itself differently and affect workers differently in different conditions. Due to role overload employee feel anxiety, frustration, job burnout, depression, concentration and attention problems, and reduces self-belief (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). Most of the time role overload is due to the deficiency of mechanism of role integration, in the absence of power of role occupants, in large variation in the expected output of the organization (Kahn & Quinn 1970). Role overload can be classified quantitative as well as qualitative. When an employee has less skill to perform a task, we can say that this phenomenon is qualitative role overload. While when an employee is unable to complete an assign task or target in the given time period, it cause quantitative role overload (Kahn et al., 1994). Role overload

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occurs when expectations of the person are larger than his capacity to perform a task (Spector & Jex, 1998). Thirty years ago Organ and his colleagues (1997) invented the term Organization Citizenship Behavior to refer to employees' behavior that contributes to the organizational, social, and psychological environment in the working environment.

### **Literature Review**

Role overload is a phenomenon which arises from the pressure of extra duties and responsibilities in organization. It occurs when a person is handed over several responsibilities or several roles/tasks at the same time with a short deadline. This results in stress and fatigue (Conley & Woosley, 2000). It happens when an organizational employee is asked to perform various roles/duties, or is directed by several supervisors to perform several tasks at a time, ultimately results in stress and overload because there is too much to be accomplished by individuals (Spector & Jex, 1998). The problem of role overload is commonly observed in commercial and government organizations. The most affected class of employees from role overload are managers of these organizations, managers suffer from quantitative role overload because they are under continuous time pressure. Due to continuous time pressure managers set up their priorities to perform those roles which they consider more important than others. Majority of managers have to deal with this type of role overload by working overtime (Schaubroeck et al., 1989; Conley & Woosley 2000). Due to high expectation from an employee the role overload develops, another factor that can lead to development of role overload is lack of motivation by the higher authorities to perform an assignment (Spector & Jex, 1998). Role uncertainty (Qualitative role overload) can develop when the individual did not have a definite knowledge about the conduction of an assigned task (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980).

Previous research shows that role overload causes anxiety and strain (Posing & Kickul, 2003; Ashforth & Lee, 1996). According to Kickul and Posig (2003), role overload related strain mostly happens because of tired feeling that occurs from pressure to cope with a set of demands. The main reasons of anxiety due to role overload is the pressure to do more work, which decreases the quality of work and the employee is not able to finish his/her work in the given time period (Conley & Woosley, 2000). According to Smith and Lazarus (1990) work overload is not injurious rather the perception of pressure of work load causes anxiety. It shows that the perceptual process plays a pivotal role to conclude among individuals the level of anxiety. Some organizations may unintentionally put workload on their employees to increase productivity, but in the long run, the perceived unbearable load causes the feeling of strain among employees. Literature shows that role

overload is prevalent in commercial organization as well as in academics (Taris et al., 2001). Role conflict and role uncertainty are closely linked together. Role uncertainty means that there is some lack of clarity in understanding the expectations and prescriptions for a given role. Every organizational member should have the knowledge about his or her role, the routes of achieving the role and outcome of role. Role uncertainty occurs when the information is not transferred properly or the information does not exist (Gmelch et al., 1984). Role uncertainty can be due to the jobs containing many tasks. Role conflict occurs when the individuals experience competition in time and energy, capabilities or defined role behavior (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Role overload affects work and also family commitments. When there is more work demand and responsibilities then the employee might not carry out his family commitments. It is simply impossible for the employee to be in two places doing two different tasks at the same time. So the employee will either stay late at work and miss a family event (work interferes with family) or the employee will go home on time, and make the family function (Schaubroeck, Cotton & Jennings, 1989). Organ (1988) stated that organization citizenship behavior (OCB) can be defined as the flexibility in the individual behavior not recognized by formal reward system openly or directly which helps in the smooth functioning of an organization. Flexibility means that the behavior of the role or job is not enforced; i.e. the terms of person's employment contract with the organization are clear and specific. This flexibility in behavior is unfortunately not recognized and rewarded by the organization (Organ, 1988). The OCBs are in different forms, including altruism (employees help each other with organizational related tasks), politeness (reverence), sportsmanship, civic virtue and conscientiousness. Sportsmanship means that employees have a positive attitude towards each other and are willing to bear the hard situations without complaining. Civic virtue means that staff members participate in the welfare of the company responsibly. Diligence is flexible behavior to fulfill minimum job requirement of the organization as well as taking care of business from home e.g. by making phone calls. The organization justice mechanisms have strong positive effects on OCB (William et al., 2003). The role of OCB in organizational performance is positive, which is widely accepted and quoted in previous studies (Podsakoff et al., 2000) Organizational citizenship behavior refers to those administratively beneficial acts that are rooted neither in the formal roles nor in any contract of reimbursement. It is behavior that is discretionary and voluntary (Organ, 1988). These acts are focused as well as firm and do not need to be treated as random acts of goodwill and kindness. Understanding those conditions, situations and motives that lead to such behaviors, favorably yield an insight into the question of when and how

these acts occur. The direct leader for the subordinate is the illustration of the organization and plays an important role in influencing citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000). OCB is voluntary and flexible individual behavior that is expected to promote overall organizational efficacy (Organ, 1988).

Previous research depicts that organization citizenship behavior that helps to maximize the organization performance; due to maximization of performance its output may also increase (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Goal of every organization is to benefits top management, to understand how some changeable effects organizational citizenship behavior. This understanding can assist management to review that what kind of organizational environment to be provided to their employees (Erturk, 2007). Greenhaus & Beutel (1985) also analyses that how nonworking roles, such as family, affects the life of employees. Work family conflicts are a kind of role conflict where demand at work creates hurdles in way of family demands. When employees give time to work, they will have less time to pay out with their families. It is, therefore, possible that those employees who make contribution in organizational citizenship behavior for their organization are not as much is able to achieve their family obligation of being a good partner or parent (Bolino & Turnley, 2005).

### Research Hypotheses

H<sub>11</sub>; Role overload affects employee anxiety.

H<sub>01</sub>; Role overload does not affect employee anxiety.

H<sub>12</sub>; Role overload affects organization citizenship behavior.

H<sub>02</sub>; Role overload does not affect organization citizenship behavior.

### Data Analysis

The regression analysis was run over the responses of the close ended questionnaires that were filled out by the 70 respondents of the UBL to find out the relationship between the two variables. In which the questionnaire were filled by 15-females and 55-males' employees.

Table 1: Regression analysis of Role overload and Employee anxiety  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861a	.741	.737	.2165

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Overload

The correlation coefficient indicated by R used to show relationship between the dependent and in dependent variables as well as the strength or weakness of this relationship.

R values ranges from -1 to + 1. Or.  $-1 \leq R \leq 1$

Where;

R= -1, shows the perfect negative, R=+1 shows the perfect positive and R=0 indicated no correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

So, as in the above statistics we have R=0.861 and it is close to +1 indicating a strong positive correlation between the Role overload and Employee anxiety.

The coefficient of determination called R square (R<sup>2</sup>) value is 0.741, which shows that there is about 74.1% variations in employee anxiety explained by the role overload, and the rest of 25.9% of the variations are in employee anxiety is because of some other factors.

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> unlike the R<sup>2</sup> increases, if a new factor improves the model more than expected by chance. Its value is always less than or equal to the R<sup>2</sup>. In the above table its value is .737, which is somehow less than the exact R<sup>2</sup> value.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	9.099	1	9.099	194.17	.000a
Residual	3.187	68	.047		
Total	12.286	69			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Overload

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Anxiety

The above table of ANOVA shows the overall goodness of fit as well as it determines the significance of the model. The value of significance less than or equal to 0.05 means that it is significant and the above table shows the significances, the significant value 0.000 or 1% confident interval which means that the null hypothesis shall be rejected now. Otherwise the model will be insignificant if the value of significance is greater than 5%.

Table 3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Un-standardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.472	.177	.861	2.667	.010
Role Overload	.841	.060		13.935	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Anxiety

As the value of significance is 1% confidence interval which is less than 5%, so it will results in the rejection of Null and acceptance of alternate hypothesis.

Furthermore the regression equation can be derived from the above table as below

$$\text{Employee Anxiety} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 * (\text{Role Overload})$$

$$\text{Employee Anxiety} = .472 + .841 * (\text{Role Overload})$$

It can be described as if the role overload is not present then there will be .472 employee anxiety, and if role overload is increased by 1 point, then the employee anxiety will be increased by 0.841, and that the role overload has a positive relationship with the employee anxiety.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Role Overload and Organization Citizenship Behavior

Model Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.842a	.709	.705	.1930

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Overload

In the above model the value of R (correlation coefficient) 0.842, this is closer to +1 and thus indicates a strong relationship between the variables. The value of R square as shown in the above table is 0.709, which means that there are about 71% variations in OCB explained by role overload, and the rest of about 29% variations are due to other factors. The explanatory power is indicated in explaining the variations occurred in dependent variable.

Table 5: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	6.170	1	6.170	165.607	.000a
Residual	2.533	68	.037		
Total	8.703	69			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Overload

b. Dependent Variable: Organization Citizenship Behavior

In the above table ANOVA shows the overall goodness of fit as well as it shows the acceptance of model. The significance value equals' to or less than 0.05 means that it is accepted. Significant value 0.000 or 1% confident interval means that null hypothesis shall be rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. If the value is greater than 5%, then the model will be insignificant.

Table 6: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.048	.158	-.842	31.960	.000
Role Overload	-.693	.054		-12.869	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Citizenship Behavior

In the above table value of significance is 1% confidence interval which is less than 5%, so it will results in the rejection of Null and acceptance of alternate hypothesis.

Furthermore the regression equation can be derived from the above table as below:

$$\text{Organization citizenship Behavior} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 * (\text{Role Overload})$$

$$\text{Organization citizenship Behavior} = 5.048 - .693 * (\text{Role Overload})$$

It can be described as if the role overload is Absent then there will be 5.048 OCB, and if role overload is increased by 1 point, then the OCB will be decreased by -.693, and that the role overload has a negative relationship with the OCB. This is already stated in the literature.

### Conclusion

The aim of my paper was to find out relationship between role overload (independent variable) with employee anxiety (dependent variable) and organization citizenship behavior (dependent variable).

Analysis of data from this study reveal a strong positive relationship was found between role overload and employee anxiety, these findings are in agreements with literature which also show similar positive relationship between role overload and anxiety. Furthermore it is also observed from the analysis that this model was statistically significant between these two variables and as a result the null hypotheses are rejected.

However, when looking at relationship between role overload and organization citizenship behavior, a strong negative relationship was observed between these two variables. Again our findings are in agreement with literature, which reveal a negative correlation between these variables. Further, the analysis concluded the significance of the model and in this case null hypothesis is rejected. So we can conclude that by increasing the level of role overload the employees of UBL feels increasing level of anxiety and by increasing level of role overload there is less competence to organization citizenship behavior.

In Summary this study provides strong relationships either positive or negative in both cases and the literature gives full support to

the conclusion of the research, in defining the importance between the stated variables, but there is still a lot of work needed to be carried out to have an enhanced and thorough analysis of this study.

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