



Impact of Role Overload on Job Performance among Construction Workers

Manasseh N. Iroegbu^{1}*

¹University of Uyo and Imo State Univeristy, Nigeria

Abstract

This research examined the Impact of Role Overload on Job Performance among construction workers. 103 junior workers selected via simple random sampling were used for the study. They were all males and have a mean age of 31 years. Two instruments were used: Rizo et al (1970) Role conflict scale measured Role Overload while the Annual Performance Ratings of the organization measured workers performance. The results showed that the low performance workers experienced greater role-overload than the moderate and high performance workers. Thus, the hypothesis that role overload affects workers performance negatively was accepted. It is recommended that organizations should reduce work load in line with human capacity, redesign jobs and employ more workers to reduce role overload.

Keywords: Role overload, Role conflict, Job performance.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
Asian Online Journal Publishing Group

Contents

1. Introduction.....	84
2. Statement of the Problem	85
3. Methodology	85
4. Results	85
5. Discussion.....	85
6. Recommendations	86
References.....	86

1. Introduction

In Nigeria today, employees are highly exploited and underpaid due to the high level of unemployment in the economy. Many organizations such as banks, oil companies, private industries and businesses, and even some government organizations place workers on contract and temporary status in order to make maximum use of them as well as overloading them with work beyond human capacity. These they do because the workers have no choice, since they cannot guarantee finding another job if they leave.

Role overload has been defined as a situation in which the various roles, assignments or work required of a role occupier exceed the amount of time and resources and energy available to the individual for their execution (Iroegbu, 1988). This results in stress, dissatisfaction and shoddy/poor work performance.

Furthermore, Rizo *et al.* (1970) while distinguishing the various types of role conflicts conceptualized role overload as a conflict situation in which the directives, demands, instructions, roles communicated to a role occupant exceed the amount of time and resources available for the accomplishment of the entire demands. Kahn *et al.* (1964) concluded by adding that when situations such as this arise, the individual will experience stress, become dissatisfied with the job and perform less effectively.

Several studies have been carried out on the effect of role overload on performance. Salam (2014) investigated the impact of work overload, work-family conflict and family-work conflict on job embeddedness. For the analysis of the study an aggregate of 250 responses were chosen. Analysis was made through simple, multiple and moderating regression. Results showed a substantial influence of work overload and family-work conflict towards job embeddedness.

Vanishree (2014) carried out a research on the impact of work stressors on job stress of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In carrying out the study, random sampling technique was used to select 200 employees who have worked at least 3 years in an SME. The findings showed that work overload, work ambiguity and work conflict brings about job stress among workers resulting in poor concentration, mental block and poor performance/decision making skills.

Karimi (2014) investigated the level of occupational stress and the influence of role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity on occupational stress among Iranian nurses. This study adopted a quantitative correlation study methodology. The study sample comprised of 135 nurses selected randomly from hospitals in south west of Iran. The result also showed that there was a significant, linear and positive relationship between role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity and occupational stress.

Fiona (2013) investigated the effects of polychronicity on job performance and job satisfaction. The sample for the study was drawn from a diverse workers pool consisting of 100,000 users from over 100 different countries. The final sample size was 194 participants who completed the posted survey. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to test for the moderating effects of role overload on the polychronicity-job performance relationship and the polychronicity-job satisfaction relationship. The results indicated that polychronicity was significantly and positively related to job performance, job satisfaction, and role overload.

Aminah (2010) investigated (1) the direct effects of perceived organizational support and role overload on work family conflict and (2) the mediating role of role overload in the relationship between perceived organizational support and work-family conflict using a Turkish sample. The hypotheses were tested with a sample of 344 employees from small and medium-sized enterprises in Turkey. The results demonstrated that perceived organizational support was negatively related to both families to work conflict and work to family conflict of employees. Role overload was also positively related to both families to work conflict and work to family conflict. In addition, the results indicated that role overload did not have a mediating role between perceived organizational support and work-family conflict.

Dorota and Annekatrin (2014) carried a study on, a meta-analysis of work demand stressors and job performance: Examining main and moderating effects. They quantitatively integrated 169 samples (N = 35, 265 employees) that were used to investigate the relationships of the following 7 work related stressors with job performance: role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, job insecurity, work-family conflict, environmental uncertainty, and situational constraints. Overall, a negative mean correlation was obtained between each job performance measure and each stressor included in their analyses.

Jex and Bliese (2000) carried out a research on, the relationship among role conflict, role Ambiguity, role overload and job stress of Chinese Middle-level Cadres. Through a questionnaire survey of 220 cadres, the results showed that time pressure was significantly correlated with role conflict and role overload; job anxiety and job stress were significantly and positively correlated with role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload; role ambiguity had a significant and positive effect on job anxiety and job stress; role conflict and role overload had a significantly and positive effect on time stress, job anxiety and job stress.

Osman (2013) carried out a study on the effects of work overload and work-family conflict on job embeddedness and job performance. The study evaluated the aforementioned relationships using LISREL 8.30 through structural equation modeling (SEM) based on data collected from 110 full-time frontline hotel employees and their managers in Romania. The results of SEM suggest that emotional exhaustion functions as a full mediator of the effect of work overload, work-family conflict and family-work conflict on job embeddedness and performance.

Judy Morter (2010) investigated the relationship of role overload to job satisfaction and intent to leave of registered nurses in acute care settings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which included five instruments and the demographic form. Descriptive statistic, correlation analysis, and multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. The research indicated significant correlation between role overload and two job satisfaction facets (job satisfaction with scheduling and job satisfaction with work-family balance), a significant correlation between role overload and intent to leave, and a significant correlation between role overload and level of education.

Martha (2009) in a study used a sample of 159 employees from a pharmaceutical manufacturing facility. Empowerment and informational justice were conceived of as high control and low control, respectively and were examined for their moderating effects on two relationships: 1) the relationship between role overload and job

satisfaction. The data were collected on site from 159 employees of a pharmaceutical manufacturing firm located in the eastern United States. Findings indicate empowerment weakens the positive role overload-burnout relationship and the negative overload-job satisfaction relationship. Informational justice strengthens the positive role overload-burnout and negative role overload-job satisfaction relationships.

2. Statement of the Problem

The problem to be investigated in this research is to find out if role overload i.e. overloading an employee with tasks actually leads to higher efficiency, and better performance or leads to how and poor performance.

2.1. Hypothesis

There would be a statistically significant effect of role overload on job performance with the low performance workers experiencing a higher degree of role overload than the high performance group.

3. Methodology

A. Participants

Subjects used for this study were 103 junior workers drawn from the federal ministry of works of Nigeria. Their work involved road construction and maintenance, having a mean age of 31, and all males.

B. Instruments

Rizo *et al.* (1970) Role conflict scale was used to measure Role overload. It consists of 18 items divided into three parts – Inter sender conflict (items 1-6); Role overload (items 7-12) and person role conflict (items 13-18). Only the section on role overload was administered to the respondents. The scale was designed on a five point Likert form (1 = “very false” to 5 = “very true”). A high score indicated role overload while a low score meant no role overload. The reliability of the scale “r” = .85 Job performance was obtained from the organization’s annual performance ratings of the workers. A score of 80% and above represented high performance, 50%-70%, average performance and scores below 50% low performance.

C. Procedure

The study utilized the stratified random sampling technique. Subjects were first assigned to one of three groups in line with their job performance ratings i.e. low performance group (<50%); average performance group (50% - 70%), and high performance group (≥80%). Then within each of the groups, a simple random sampling procedure was used to select the 103 participants i.e; low performance group (33) average performance group (35), high performance group (35). The instruments administration and subjects selection was carried out in the organization’s offices.

D. Design

SXT Design (one-way ANOVA Design) was employed in order to compare the three groups on role overload.

E. Statistics

A one way analysis of variance was adopted for data analysis. The F-test was used for result interpretation.

4. Results

Table-1. Summary of Results of one-Way ANOVA Calculated for the High, Moderate and Low Performance Groups’ Responses to Role Overload

SOV	SS	df	,MS	Fo	Fc	P	Comment
Between groups	1200.94	2	600.47	31.88	3.09	<.05	Significant
Within groups	1883.84	100	18.83				
Total	3084.78	102					

Table 1 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA calculated for the high, moderate and low performance groups responses to role overload. This was to discover if there were significant differences among the three groups in the degrees of role overload they variously experienced on their jobs. The table showed that the result is statistically significant [F(2, 100) = 31.88, p < .05], with the low performance workers having the highest degree of role overload compared to the moderate and high performance workers. The hypothesis which stated that there would be a statistically significant effect of role overload on workers performance was therefore accepted.

5. Discussion

In deed and in truth, this research has shown that overloading workers with tasks i.e. role overload will only lead to lower efficiency and poor and shoddy job performance. The desperation of organizations and production managers to meet targets would be fruitless if the end result would be poor job performance as this would lead to bad and substandard products and services. In addition, it will also lead to stress, ill health and lack of job satisfaction and morale. Thoroughness, adequacy and quality are what gives credibility to an organization rather than the quantity of goods and services produced. The finding of this research is in line with the work of Salam (2014) which found

substantial influences of work overload on job performance. It is also in agreement with the findings of Vanishree (2014) that work overload brings about job stress among workers resulting in poor concentration, mental block and poor performance.

6. Recommendations

1. Reduce role overload by assigning tasks commensurate with human energy levels and physiological limitations in line with hath worn studies and ergonomics
2. Re-design jobs to make it less stressful and time saving
3. Employment of more hands is very urgent and cogent to stop over loading employees
4. Government legislation is necessary to curtail the excesses of organizations in abuse of human labour and over exploitation of workers due to the high level of unemployment.

References

- Aminah, A., 2010. Work family conflict among junior physicians: Its mediating role in the relationship between role overload and emotional exhaustion. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2): 265-271.
- Dorota, T. and H. Annekatrin, 2014. Change in affective well-being on change in perceived job characteristic: The mediating role of hope. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87: 3.
- Fiona, L.S., 2013. The effects of polychronicity on job performance and job satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(7): 764-776.
- Iroegbu, O.N., 1988. The relationship of organizational role conflict to employee satisfaction and performance. M.Sc Thesis. University of Lagos. Nigeria.
- Jex, S.M. and P.D. Bliese, 2000. Efficacy beliefs as a moderator of the impact of work-related stressors: A multilevel study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84: 349-361.
- Judy Morter, R., 2010. Relationship of role overload to job satisfaction and intent to leave among acute care nurses. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17(4): 200-207.
- Kahn, R., D. Wolfe, R. Quinn, J. Snock and R. Rosenthal, 1964. *Organisational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Karimi, R., 2014. The Influence of role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity on occupational stress among nurses in selected Iranian hospitals. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 4(1): 34-40.
- Martha, C.A., 2009. Easing employee strain: The interactive effects of empowerment, informational justice, burnout, job satisfaction, role overload. Available from www.ibam.com/pubs/jbam/articles/vol.
- Osman, 2013. The effects of work overload and work-family conflict on job embeddedness and job performance: The mediation of emotional exhaustion. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25(4): 614-634.
- Rizo, J.R., R.J. House and S.L. Litzman, 1970. Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15: 150-153.
- Salam, F., 2014. Work overload, work-family conflict, family-work conflict and their effects on job embeddedness. *Journal of Business and Management*, 16(1): 75-80.
- Vanishree, P., 2014. Impact of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload on job stress in small and medium scale industries. *Journal of Management Science*, 3(1): 10-13.