Stressed by Multiple Roles, Should I Leave? The Effects of Role Stressors on Turnover Intention[*]

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Abstract - To reveal the mechanism between role stressors and employees' turnover intention, more than 900 employees from seven branches in a hi-tech company in China were surveyed by scales of role stressors, turnover intention perceived organizational support, and organizational commitment. The results show that organizational support moderates relationship between all three role stressors and turnover intention, and organizational commitment partially mediates all three role stressors and turnover intention. However, mediated moderation only exists when individual perceives role conflict.

Index Terms - Role stressors, turnover intention, and mediated moderation.

1. Introduction

Stressors, the precedents of job-related stress and/or strain, have been one of the major branches in this research area. While, role stressors are considered as major sources of the stress and/or strain. The research focus of job-related stress and/or strain had been concentrated on physical environment before 1960s, when some researchers turned their attention into role stressors. Role Episode Model was brought forward by Kahn et al. (1964) [1] who argued that there would be some social interactions among employees, organizations, and tasks. During the process of social interactions, some situations, such as unobvious role expectations, conflicts of multiple roles, and deficiency, lead to many role pressures.

There are two major phenomena revealing the modern sources of role stressor. On the one hand, the responsibilities from both work and family are drawing most of people's attention; on the other hand, the scope of social interaction has been extended largely by advance information technology, from real world to virtual world. All those multiple roles above could be considered as the sources of role stressors, and their negative outcomes have been figured out by scholars, including not only deleterious effects on individuals' mental and physical health, but also harmful effects on organizational commitment and turnover intention [2, 3].

However, most of the researches have focused on those negative outcomes, and few of them pay attention to the mechanisms between role stressors and their harmful consequences. Therefore, are there some mediators accounting for the influences of those role stressors, and some moderators representing the boundary conditions affecting the magnitudes or extents of those influences? In this study, we will explore this complicated influence mechanism between role stressors and turnover intention.

2. Hypotheses

Literatures in this field show that if individuals sense conflicts existing between multiple role expectations (role conflict), be unclear about their responsibilities and goals (role ambiguity), or the requirement of job exceeds their time and ability (role overload), they would have turnover intention. It has been demonstrated by many researches that people who perceive more role stressors will have higher turnover intention. For instance, Tang and Xin (2007) [4] figured out that work role among work pressures have the most significant influence on turnover intention.

The process between role stressors and turnover intention has also widely drawn scholars' attention; in other words, researchers are interested in finding the media-tor which can account for this process. For instance, Glazer and Beehr (2005) [3]adopted structural equations modeling to test the predictions of affective and continuance commitment, and anxiety on nurses' intention to leave across 15 hospitals in Hungary, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and they found that affective and continuance commitment played as mediators between role stressors and intention to leave. Therefore, the black box in this process can be explained by organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1. Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between each of role stressors, namely role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, and turnover intention respectively.

In order to lessen the negative effects of role stressors on turnover intention, maladaptive coping, one of the coping behaviors, was found to moderate the relation-ships of several role stressors with felt stress and job satisfaction [5]; avoidant coping was figured as another significant coping strategy to prioritize and balance female faculties' daily role-related workloads [6]. Recently, to stimulate positive coping strategies to the negative effects of role stressors, some organizational supports have been adopted by modern enterprises, such as employee assistant programs, known as EAPs. Some researchers argued that organizational supportive HRM practices, signaling investment in employees and their

development could reduce organizational turnover [7]. In this sense, organizational support may be the moderator between role stressors and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 2. Organizational support moderates the relationship between each of role stressors, namely role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, and turnover intention respectively.

It has also been found that organizational commitment play as a mediator between organizational support and turnover. Shaw, Delery, Jenkins and Gupta (1998) [8] suggested that HR practices that signal investments in human capital (e.g., pay and benefits systems) or are intended to enhance commitment (e.g., procedural fairness, participation) should reduce organizational quit rates. Allen, Shore and Griffeth (2003) [9, 10] argued that supportive human resource practices improved the employees' commitment, and then decreased the voluntary turnover. In this sense, organizational commitment may mediate the moderation of organizational support between role stressors and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 3. Organizational support moderates the overall effects of each role stressors on turnover intention, and that this interaction would due to the effects of role stressors on organizational commitment and the moderation of the mediator effect on turnover intention by organizational support.

3. Methods

A. Respondents

Respondents came from seven branches of a Hi-tech company in China. 900 questionnaires were distributed out, and 640 were collected at last. After deleting those with too much blank or reacted fiercely, 592 of which were valid (92.5%). The respondents included 310 men (52.4%), 282 women (47.6%); 421 (71.1%) of them were from 20 to 30, 156 (26.4%) of them were from 31 to 40, 12 (2.0%) of them were from 41 to 50, and 3 (0.5%) of them were above 50; 10 (1.7%) are high level managers, 38 (6.4%) are middle level managers, 90 (15.2%) are low level managers, and 452 (76.4%) are common employees.

B. Measurements

13-item scale was taken from Peterson, Smith and Akande's [11]role stressor scale, confirmed by Li and Zhang (2009) in China [12]. Three dimensions are included in this scale: role conflict (3 items), role ambiguity (5 items), and role overload (5 items). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to testify the structure of role stressor scale, and 3-factor model was supported by data (x2/df=3.77, GFI=0.94, NFI=0.92, IFI=0.94, TLI=0.93, CFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.07).

5-item turnover intention scale was taken from Kuang, Gao and Li's (2009) [13], 6-item affective commitment scale was taken from Allen and Meyer's (1990) [14], and 8-item perceived organizational support scale was taken from Eisenberger et al. (1986) [15]. According to the result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), turnover intention, affective commitment and organizational support are all confirmed as single-dimension constructs, and total variances explained are up to 76.02%, 52.33% and 39.79% respectively.

Respondents were assembled by HR staffs in each branch, and filled out the survey during whole period of time and returned the questionnaire after finishing. During the survey, any question relevant to the questionnaire was answered. Respondents were assured that their answers would be kept confidential and used only for re-search purpose.

4. Results

A. Analysis Strategies

Statistical analyses were completed by SPSS 16.0 and AMOS17.0. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Cronbach's Alpha of every scale, descriptive analyses including means, standard deviation and correlations, and hierarchical regression analyses including mediation, moderation and mediated moderation were figured out by SPSS 16.0. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was completed by AMOS 17.0.

B. Descriptive Analysis

According to table 1, the alpha coefficients range from 0.72 to 0.92, higher than the recommended value 0.70.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations (n=584).

Variable	M	SD	X1	X2	X3	TI	Me	Mo
X1	3.09	0.75	0.74					
X2	2.41	0.63	0.16	0.78				
X3	2.97	0.76	0.30	0.11	0.87			
TI	2.74	0.94	0.44	0.37	0.32	0.92		
Me	3.36	0.72	-0.29	-0.36	-0.15	-0.64	0.81	
Mo	2.96	0.54	-0.27	-0.29	-0.24	-0.50	0.54	0.72

Note: Correlations with absolute values ≥0.15 were significant at the p<0.001; Correlations with absolute values ≥0.11 were significant at the p<0.01; X1=role conflict, X2=role ambiguity, X3=role overload, TI=turnover intention, Me=organizational commitment and Mo=organizational support .

Table 1 show that all role stressors are negatively related to organizational commitment and organizational support, positively related to turnover intention; both organizational commitment and organizational support are negatively related to turnover intention.

C. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hypothesis 1, revealing the mediation effects of organizational commitment on relationships between each of role stressors, namely role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, and turnover intention respectively, can be demonstrated by Eq. 1-3. Y represents dependent variable turnover intention; X1, X2 and X3 are independent variables, representing role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload; Me means mediator- organizational commitment.

$$Y = a_0 + a_1 X_1 + a_2 X_2 + a_3 X_3 + 1 \tag{1}$$

$$Me = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + 2 \tag{2}$$

$$Y = c_0 + c_1X_1 + c_2X_2 + c_3X_3 + c_eMe \quad 3 \qquad (3)$$

Hypothesis 2, revealing the moderation effects of organizational support on relationships between each of role stressors, namely role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, and turnover intention respectively, can be demonstrated by Eq.4. Mo means moderator-organizational support; XMo is interaction term.

$$Y = d_0 + d_1X_1 + d_2X_2 + d_3X_3 + d_oMo + d_{xo}XMo + \quad 4 \qquad (4)$$

Hypothesis 3, expressing the mediated moderation, can be demonstrated by Eq.5-6.

$$Me = e_0 + e_1X_1 + e_2X_2 + e_3X_3 + e_oMo + e_{xo}XMo + \quad 5 \qquad (5)$$

$$Y = f_0 + f_1X_1 + f_2X_2 + f_3X_3 + f_oMo + f_{xo}XMo + f_eMe + f_{oe}MoMe + \quad 6 \qquad (6)$$

According to Muller, Judd and Yzerbyt (2005), in order to test the mediation, we would expect all a1, a2 and a3 to be significant in Eq., all b1, b2 and b3 to be significant in Eq., and ce to be significant, but the abso-lute values of c1, c2 and c3 should be smaller in Eq.than a1, a2 and a3 in Eq.1 [16].

In order to test the moderation, in Eq.4, we would expect dxo to be significant, indicating the overall mod-eration; in order to test the mediated moderation, in Eq.5 and 6, we would expect both exo and fe or all e1, e2, e3 and foe to be significant, but the absolute value of fxo should be smaller in equation 6 than dxo in Eq.4.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Table2 shows that coefficients of all role stressors decreased after entering mediator but still significant, which means that organizational commitment partially mediates relationships between role conflict, role ambi-guity and role overload, and turnover intention. Table3 shows that coefficients of role conflict, role ambiguity and organizational support in equation 5 are significant and coefficients of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload, organizational support, interaction of role con-flict and organizational support, and organizational commitment in equation 6 are significant, which means that there is a mediated moderation when individual perceives role conflict. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported, and hypothesis1 and 3 are partially supported by data in this study.

Harman's One-factor Test was conducted to figure out whether our results would be threatened by common method variance or same source bias since our data of all variables were from same subjects. According to results of principle factor analysis, the first factor's variance is 27.32%, not exceeding 40%. Therefore, common method variance or same source bias is not serious in this study.

There are several managerial implications. First, since organizational commitment is an important media-tor to explain the overall negative effects of role stressors on turnover intention, more attention should be paid on the indicator to decrease employees' voluntary turnover. Second, increasing organizational support, such as supportive HRM practices, can be considered as an important tool to decrease

negative effects of role stressors on turnover intention. Third, when organizational commitment is controlled, organizational support significantly moderates the negative effect of role conflict, which means that only when employee feels role conflict, organizational support can be an effective approach to decrease the turnover intention caused by role conflict.

TABLE II Main Effects and Mediation (n=584)

Predictors	Equation1		Equation2		Equation3	
	TI		OC		TI	
	b	t	b	t	b	t
C1	0.01	0.38	0.08	1.98	0.05	1.76
C2	-0.03	-0.78	0.09	2.42	0.02	0.66
C3	0.03	0.83	-0.07	-1.8	-0.01	-0.2
X1	0.33	8.97	-0.22	-5.44	0.22	6.97
X2	0.29	8.3	-0.31	-8.21	0.13	4.27
X3	0.2	5.37	-0.06	-1.41	0.17	5.5
Me					-0.51	-15.92
F	45.1		24.16		91.78	
R2	0.32		0.2		0.53	

Note: C1= sex, C2= age, C3= class, X1=role conflict, X2=role ambiguity, X3=role overload, Me= organizational commitment; The absolute value of b ≥0.06 means the significance at the p<0.10; the absolute value of b ≥0.07 means the significance at the p<0.05; the absolute value of b ≥0.10 means the significance at the p<0.01. C1, C2 and C3 are control variables; X1, X2 and X3 are independent variables; Mo means moderator; Me means mediation; X1*Mo, X2*Mo and X3*Mo are interaction terms.

TABLE III Moderation and Mediated Moderation (n=584)

predictors	equation4		equation5		equation6	
	TI		OC		TI	
	b	t	b	t	b	t
C1	0.05	1.36	0.04	1.15	0.07	2.15
C2	-0.03	-1.01	0.1	3.01	0.01	0.4
C3	-0.01	-0.36	-0.02	-0.5	-0.02	-0.65
X1	0.27	7.92	-0.15	-4.01	0.21	6.68
X2	0.22	6.25	-0.2	-5.55	0.12	3.81
X3	0.15	4.32	0	0.11	0.15	4.92
Mo	-0.33	-9.03	0.45	11.8	-0.13	-3.57
X1*Mo	-0.06	-1.67	-0.02	-0.41	-0.08	-2.2
X2*Mo	0.06	1.61	-0.02	-0.45	0.04	1.23
X3*Mo	0.07	1.93	-0.04	-1.22	0.04	1.32
Me					-0.45	-12.18
Mo * Me					-0.03	-0.67
F	41.31		32.95		57.06	
R2	0.42		0.37		0.55	

Note: C1= sex, C2= age, C3= class, X1=role conflict, X2=role ambiguity, X3=role overload, Me= organizational commitment and Mo= organizational support; The absolute value of b ≥0.06 means the significance at the p<0.10; the absolute value of b ≥0.07 means the significance at the p<0.05; the absolute value of b ≥0.10 means the significance at the p<0.01. C1, C2 and C3 are control variables; X1, X2 and X3 are independent variables; Mo means moderator; Me means mediation; X1*Mo, X2*Mo and X3*Mo are interaction terms.

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