

Examining The Interplay Of Job Satisfaction, Role Ambiguity And Employee Performance In The Banking Sector Of Bahrain

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempted to investigate the role of job satisfaction in predicting employee performance in the banking sector of Bahrain. The study also tested the moderating role of Role ambiguity on the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. Through using the self-administered questionnaire technique, the present study assessed the association between job satisfaction and role ambiguity towards the performance of technical workers in the Banking sector of Bahrain. The study found that the job satisfaction of technical workers has a significant relationship with employee performance. This suggests the employees who are satisfied with the work can improve their overall performance. Furthermore, the study also found that job role ambiguity negatively moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. The study offers details on the results and discussion to help the banking sector in Bahrain understand how job satisfaction and role ambiguity can be managed for the performance of the technical workers.

Keywords: Technical workers, Job satisfaction, Role ambiguity, Employee performance, Banking.

1. Introduction

Technical staff workers have a great deal of role and responsibility in the current e These employees have major responsibilities on their shoulders in any organi- globally. They cannot be in higher positions regardless of their intelligence and leadership skills. According to Conway (1988), the role identity they possess is a set of hypothetical concepts used to predict how persons perform the tasks or roles given based on certain circumstances. The role identity theory implies that an employee who commits himself or herself to an identity he/she possess achieves high placement in the organization.

Employee performance is always considered as a success indicator of any organization. It is associated with the employee's competency in performing his (her) tasks and disposition towards achieving the organization's set goals. The employee's Performance is usually based on the operating procedures, patterns and standards or benchmarks set by the organization (Bohlander, Snell & Sherman, 2001). It is also stated that Performance refers "to the distinctiveness of a person's achievement in his task." Money, culture, respect, minimal or stress-free, security of the job, rewards, and trust are factors that make employees satisfied working in an organization (Harmer, 2012). Kazemi and Ali (2002) state that Performance can be measured by the level of output produced by the employee; units sold, benchmarks, and or the performance measurement tool/s published by the organization. The actual employee's Performance is often benchmarked using the performance evaluation tools.

Employees perceive Performance as completed activities or tasks at the workplace. However, in the conduct of the tasks, the working environment, nature and scope of works, and the degree of difficulty of the tasks affect the job performance (Ackerman, 1987). The intricacy of the nature of the job and the dynamic business landscape makes it difficult to define job performance.

Many studies revealed a link between job satisfaction and job performance. According to Judge and Hulin (1993), job satisfaction is an "evaluative judgment about the level of delight an employee gets from his or her employment that comprises of both emotional and cognitive components." Specialists and researchers are still enthralled with the relationship of occupational Performance and job satisfaction, particularly that domestic and global businesses evolve so fast. Singh and Slack (2016) conducted a study on the public service employees and found that they are dissatisfied with their works compared to the private sector. However, in job performance, undefined functions, unclear instructions, fast-changing business models, and other factors cause stress to the employees, put less effort into their jobs, and do not put extra effort into what is required in their contracts (Caillier, 2016).

Mañas et al. (2018) confirm that role ambiguity climate on extra-role Performance has negative influence on employee's level of satisfaction. Role ambiguity can arise from the state where multiple expectations stem from a hierarchical order that delegates responsibilities (Kahn, Wolfe, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). Role ambiguity is the direct result of a conflict between the amount of information available to the individual and the amount of information required by the individual for enriched Performance. As stress increases, employee dissatisfaction level also increases, resulting in employees' less commitment to work, being unproductive, and overall, low job performance. With the interplay of these variables, the study intends to delve deeper into how employee performance is affected by job satisfaction and how job ambiguity moderates such (Sangakala et al., 2016).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that the employees' Performance and development is one of the most important practices of human resources management, as it is the administration that is in charge to attract staff, train them, and promote them in their career path, which in turn is reflected in one way or another in the overall performance of employees. The recent of Taylor, Cairns, & Glass (2020) conducted a study of the role perceptions on the health professionals on their expanded pharmacies' role in rural communities. It was found that some medical practitioners perceived they lacked accountability. This perception leads to role conflict and considers as a major contributor to their ability to work collaboratively. This finding on the role ambiguity presents the significance of addressing the role conflict and role identity to ensure the effective delivery of services. The role of the technical staff members as the provider of support services is vital to the operation of the banks, much more than the branch employees. Job satisfaction is one major factor in employee performance. Management focuses on identifying factors that positively affect employees' Performance, and in turn, favorable job attitudes would lead the employees to show the desired behaviors. Undefined functions, unclear instructions, fast-changing business models, and other factors cause stress to the employees. As stress increases, employee dissatisfaction level also increases, resulting in employees' less commitment to work, being unproductive, and overall, low job performance. In any organization, regardless of its nature, employee performance is one of the factors to make the organization succeed.

Effectively measuring and improving employee satisfaction is thus a critical function of top management. As the business fields have become more competitive, employees' skills and abilities are needed to obtain competitive advantages. Management can no longer afford to see employees as replaceable inputs. Thus, this research examines the moderating effect of role ambiguity between job satisfaction and employee performance of technical staff employees of the banking sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Research Hypotheses

Given these working assumptions and premises, the following hypotheses are drawn:

- H1. There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee job performance of the technical staff members in the banking sector.
- H2. Role ambiguity moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee job performance of the technical staff members in the banking sector.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study would be beneficial in providing suggestions and recommendations to Bahrain's strategists and policy makers to enhance employee performance specifically for managers in the banking sector. Moreover, this study would clarify the practical but complex linkage and impact of various variables like job satisfaction and role ambiguity on employee performance in the context of technical workers in the Banking sector of

Bahrain. This study would also contribute practically by giving sound recommendations based on empirical findings to improve the overall systems of Bahrain's public and private organizations to enhance employee performance, especially managers. Moreover, the study may be useful for future academic undertakings.

2. Literature Review

It is very important to learn how to motivate employees in an organization. Motivation refers to the set of forces that influence people to choose various behaviors among several alternatives available to them. An employee's Performance is definitely affected by motivation, his capabilities, and the work environment. The management of an organization is constantly under the challenge of motivating the workforce for two purposes. The first reason is to motivate employees to actively and willingly participate in achieving organizational goals. The second is to motivate employees to attain personal goals. This paper explores the behavior-based, need-based, and job-based theories of motivation that can aid management in motivating their employees. Employee performs based on the given responsibility and clear instructions. Ambiguity occurs when one experiences insufficient understanding of one's role, which affects job performance, satisfaction, and motivation. Role ambiguity has an effect to one's person such as psychological stress (Lang et al., 2007), innovation, interests, self-actualization, self-esteem, autonomy, and intention leave (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974), confidence Kalbers and Cenken (2008) and satisfaction (Busch & Bush, 1978).

Many studies define role ambiguity as "the occurrence of insufficient information about powers, authority, and duties to perform one's role". Furthermore, the role theory given by Taylor, Cairns, & Glass (2020) is a hypothetical concept used to determine how the actors perform in each task or in any circumstances. It describes a person's characteristics, behaviours, values, or norms to a given position or function. The study's categories explored were role ambiguity, role conflict, role identity, role overload, and role insufficiency. Role ambiguity describes as "disagreement on the role expectation associated with a lack of clarity of those expectations". Excessive demands require adequate resources. However, in some circumstances, technical staff members experienced role overload.

Role expectations can be a source of role conflict. The perceived current role seems to become mutually exclusive or conflicting. Kahn et al. (1964) used Role theory to explain the relationship of role ambiguity with job requirements. With role ambiguity, employees tend to engage in coping mechanisms to resolve unclear tasks and overcome stress. This event may distort the real job requirements and lead to dissatisfaction, anxiety, and ineffective.

Job performance or employee performance is vital in employee management. An employee does his/her best to attain the task goals and towards attaining the organization's overall goal. Campbell (1996) states that performance components are

determined by declarative knowledge, motivation, and procedural and skills knowledge. Declarative knowledge deals with information about goals, principles, facts, and self-knowledge. These sets of knowledge represent the tasks' requirements given to the employee. To perform the task, employees choose whether to perform the task, the level of effort, and the persistence of the effort. According to Campbell et al. (1996), if combined, these choice behaviors affect motivation. The procedural knowledge and skill consist of self-management skills, cognitive skills, physical skills, interpersonal skills, and psychomotor skills. Campbell et al and other studies define job performance as "what an employee is expected to do concerning the demand of their job as when they are hired and covers only those actions or behaviors that are relevant to the organization's goals and measurable in terms of each individual's proficiency".

2.1 Conceptual Framework

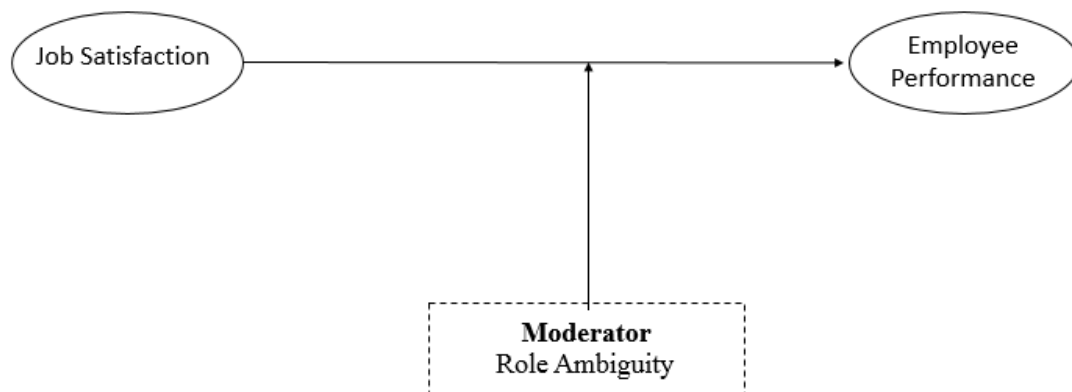


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Job satisfaction is crucial in the human resource management function. Every employee is required to fulfill his/her given tasks or role in the organization. Work fulfillment is portrayed as an employee's mentality regarding his/her occupation. Bhuian and Menguc (2005) state that work fulfillment is the "degree to which one feels absolutely or contrarily about the inborn or outward parts of one's employment."

Abramis (1994) conducted a meta-analysis and review of the relationships among job satisfaction, role ambiguity, and job performance. The study revealed that role ambiguity has a significant negative relationship for both Performance and satisfaction. Furthermore, when worker experiences uncertainty about the tasks to be performed, tension or anxiety tends to reduce job satisfaction. Continuous dissatisfaction leads to the deterioration of job performance.

Wu, Hu, and Zheng (2019) study the role of stress (role ambiguity and role conflict) on job performance and job burnout in the Chinese construction managers and found out that there is a positive relationship between role conflict and job performance but a

career as a negative vocation relationship with role ambiguity. Ezeanwin et al. (2019) study employee performance with employee morale as a proxy. It found out that employees are dissatisfied with their working conditions affected their Performance. It recommends that management should provide better working conditions to improve their morale. Mohammadi (2016) studied the proactive behavior of the employees of the gas refinery on the mediating effect of information seeking on job satisfaction and Performance. The result found out that proactive behavior mediated the effect of role ambiguity in job satisfaction and Performance.

Organizations must develop and nurture their people and must not stifle the creative instincts and energy of their people by discouraging to innovate and risk-taking. In terms of increasing participation in decision-making, leaders need to examine their reluctance to delegate and take on the mindset that increased participation in decision-making will allow for the development of subordinates. They need to understand what is meant by developing a self-development plan (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Employees, particularly the technical workers, experience burnout in the current situation where many are affected by COVID-19. If employees are burned out, their Performance declines.

While this new adaptive work is going on, it is expected that achievement scores to rise linearly, and any external assessment scheme that demanded 'annual yearly progress' would be barking up the wrong tree. Job performance is positively related to personal factors, job satisfaction, and commitment (Shah et al., 2021; AlZgool et al., 2020; Darwish, Shah & Ahmed, 2021; Khalid et al., 2019).

Tang and Chang (2010) conducted a study related to the impact of role ambiguity and role conflict on employee creativity; the study results show that self-efficacy and job satisfaction serve as partial mediators on role conflict and creativity. Further, the result of the study showed that between job satisfaction and self-efficacy, it is job satisfaction that partially mediates role ambiguity and creativity. The study was conducted among company employees to determine possible links between role conflict and creativity. Concerning the study, it stresses that job satisfaction can have a factor in role conflict, whereas in the study, conflict can result from unresolved role ambiguity.

This was further validated in the study conducted by Yousef (2000) on The Interactive Effects of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity on Job Satisfaction and Attitudes Toward Organizational Change: A Moderated Multiple Regression Approach where the study involves the effects of both role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction among dimension that the researcher has seen relevant among several manufacturing and service organizations in the United Arab Emirates. The results showed that role conflict and role ambiguity have no interactive effects on job satisfaction and the dimensions. Moreover, role conflict and role ambiguity independently and negatively affect job satisfaction.

Communication is essential in any organization to be functioning. Communication occurs as a social process of people interacting with each other. In the interaction process, glitches occur in the form of miscommunication that could eventually lead to communication breakdown. Whether it be for personal or career life, communication is essential as miscommunication could lead to a disaster in organizations and life. Although the least attention is given in the communication process, the messages may be blocked or distorted. Upward and downward communication is essential to ensure that the members and stakeholders reach information in the communication process.

Employees play an important role in attaining the organization's success and are considered the valuable assets of any organization. The Performance of the employees is vital in the company's operation. An employee's positive attitude towards the job would likely result in high job satisfaction. The dissatisfied employee may have low morale and be less motivated, which affects his/her job performance. Moreover, the employee's Performance is assessed based on the preset standards. It can be based on complete, accurate, timely and the cost of delivering the outputs. Further, management evaluates the employee's accomplishment and matches it with the organization's objectives. It determines how the accomplishment contributes to the overall goals of the organization.

Job satisfaction and job performance intertwined to each other. If employees are satisfied with their working environment, remuneration and interaction with and among peers increase job performance. Furthermore, the performance evaluation result presents the gaps between actual Performance and the preset standards and discusses them for their betterment.

By reviewing the existing literature on job performance, employee performance role ambiguity as well as moderator, it was found that none of the prior studies has examined the relationship of the expressed variables of the study. The chapter contains the concepts of the expressed variables, the relevant theories to this study and the cause of low employee performance. In addition, it is observed that this chapter is not only concerned with the concepts of job satisfaction and employee performance, but it also examines their relationship with other moderating variables (neutralizers) such as role ambiguity. It can be said that by the addition of empirical data in the extant literature research gap can be filled, for which the study was intended.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population of the Study

This refers to the records of all the units in the population from which the sample was obtained. This enables the researcher to pick out specific members from the target

population to be employed in the research. The current study approached technical support team employees in the banking sector of Bahrain. Top 10 major banks were targeted for the study. Since the majority of the banks requested not to disclose their names, the current study respected their concern to ensure they were willing to participate in the study.

3.2 Sampling Size

Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the minimum sample with the margin error of 0.5% and confidence level of 95%, 144 is the minimum required sample for the study. Table 1 provides details on the number of respondents from the banks and the frequency of respondents from each branch. We targeted a total of 230 employees working in the technical support units of the targeted banks, out of which 185 responses were received. Therefore, the response rate for the study was 80.4%. Table 1 provides details on this matter.

Table 1. Frequency of the Respondents per Bank

Banks	Technical Workers	Response Frequency
Bank A	20	16
Bank B	15	10
Bank C	19	13
Bank D	22	18
Bank E	18	17
Bank F	19	16
Bank G	34	26
Bank H	25	18
Bank I	23	19
Bank J	19	11
Bank K	16	21
Total	230	185

3.3 Demographic Profile

70 percent (160) of the respondents reported being male and remaining female. Majority (184) mentioned working in the sector for more than 5 years whereas the

remaining (46) worked for 5 years or above. In terms of qualifications, the majority (217) reported having a bachelor's degree and remaining with a Technical Diploma or a high school certificate.

4. Data Analysis

Structural equation modelling using Smart PLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015) was used for the purpose of data analysis. The study examined the significance of the path coefficients for the two hypotheses. The results in table 2 and Figure 2 show that job satisfaction positively correlates with employee performance among technical workers of the banking sector in the kingdom of Bahrain.

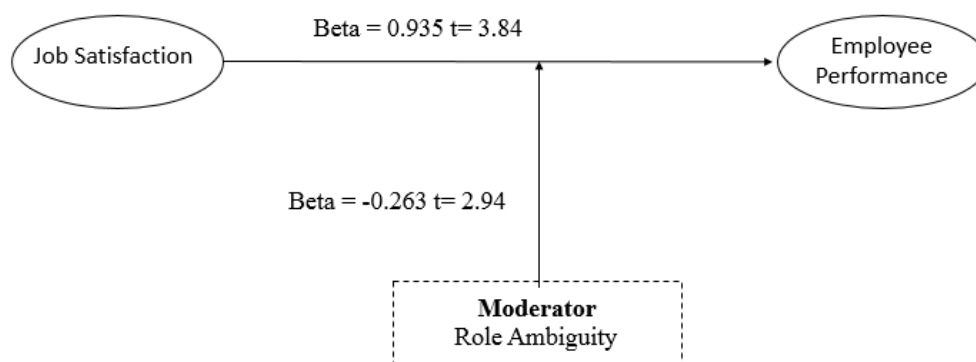


Figure 2. Data Analysis Results

Table 2: Results:

Hypothesis	Beta	T=Value	Results
H1	0.935	3.84	Accepted
H2	-0.263	2.94	Accepted

5. Discussion and Implications

Job satisfaction has a significant influence on employee performance as per study results. Job satisfaction is pivotal in the human resource management function and every employee has a role to fulfill in the organization. The result of the study confirms the findings of Ezeanwin (2019) that there is a linear relationship between satisfaction and employee performance (B= 0.935; t= 3.84). Job performance is a function of the ability of the employee coupled with his effort and skills to accomplish the tasks given. It can be implied that employees who are satisfied with their work tend to perform well. On the other hand, employees who are dissatisfied with their job, have low morale, and are less motivated may perform less than expected.

Continuous dissatisfaction leads to the deterioration of job performance. Similarly, the study's findings also showed that role ambiguity negatively moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance (B= -0.263; t= 2.94). Thus, when

workers experience uncertainty about the task/s to be performed, tension or anxiety reduces job satisfaction. The study aimed to examine the moderating effect of role ambiguity between job satisfaction and technical workers' employee performance in Bahrain's banking sector. It analysed the significant association between job satisfaction, role ambiguity and job performance. The study used questionnaires to obtain the data required from a sample of technical workers across 10 major banks in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

The study took great efforts to ascertain that the study is conducted with minimal errors and valid conclusions. However, certain scopes and limitations were identified prior to its conduct. First, the sample size is based on the number of technical workers in the banking sector of Bahrain. Thus, findings may not apply to companies in other commercial sectors. Secondly, there might be some limitations linked with the adapted questionnaire, which may be modified and changed as previous and original research has stated, leading to varied modifications that suit the respondents. Third, employee performance may also be tested through remuneration, working conditions, and teamwork elements.

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