THE IMPACT OF AGE ON ROLE EFFICACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS: BPO WOMEN EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT: *Our study explores the influence of age on role efficacy and organizational role stress and the relationship between role efficacy and stress among women BPO employees in Bangalore. The present study aimed (1) to understand the influence of age on role efficacy (2) to understand the influence of age on organizational role stress and (3) to study the inter relationship between role efficacy and organizational role stress. The study was conducted in Bangalore, India with a sample of 236 women BPO employees. The sample selection was done by simple random sampling technique method. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive one-way analysis of variance and Pearson's correlation test. Results showed that the women BPO employees have high role making among role efficacy dimensions. It also proved that role erosion and role overload dimensions are seen more among stress dimensions. This study also reveals that there is a strong relationship between Role efficacy and organizational role stress.*

Keywords: *Age, Role Efficacy and Organizational Role Stress.*

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a subject which is hard to avoid. The term is discussed not only in our everyday conversations but has become enough of a public issue to attract widespread media attention from different areas like radio, television, newspapers, magazines etc. Different people have different views about it as stress can be experienced from a variety of sources.

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. It is a concept borrowed from the natural sciences. The word Stress is derived from the Latin word 'Stringere', stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction (Pestonjee, 1999). Many Indian Scholars (Pestonjee, 1987a, Singh, 1987) agreed that tolerable stress levels helps the organization to grow and also helps in creating healthy competition.

Today women have joined hands with men as part of the workforce in the organization. By taking up employment, women have to play a dual role as housewife and earner (Hemalatha and Suryanarayana, 1983). The consequent outcome is that modern women live in two systems and need to perform both familial as well as professional roles. The study on stress becomes inevitable in today's modern organization and particularly on women due to their dual roles played by them in home and in organization.

Pareek has defined role as set of functions that an individual performs in response to the expectations of others and his/her own expectations about the role. He has also defined role efficacy as the potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization. Stress in a role is experienced when there are inherent problems in the performance of a role. If a person does not have the potential effectiveness to handle the role he/she is occupying in an organization, will start experiencing problems in handling that role. This study is mainly focused on role efficacy and organizational role stress particularly on women BPO employees in Bangalore.

THE CONCEPTS OF ROLE EFFICACY AND ROLE STRESS:

(a) Role efficacy:

Every person in an organization has got a role and both the organization and the individuals. Organizations have to deal with this situation by keeping the role occupant's plan for his/ her own role. Anirudh (1997) says the process of enriching one's

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role in an organization is called 'Role Efficacy'. In other words role efficacy is the potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization.

There are three main dimensions in role efficacy scale. They are role making (role occupant tries to make his/her role according to their likings), role centering (reeling of centeredness in the role) and role linking (Interrelationship in a role).There are 10 dimensions in role efficacy under these three main dimensions to check the potential effectiveness of a role.

The ten dimensions are: Integration, Pro activity, Creativity, Confrontation, Centrality, Influence, Growth, Inter role linkage, helping relationship, Super ordination etc. Each dimension has two questions and totally there are 20 items in the role efficacy questionnaire. Three options are there for each question and allotted varied scores. Marks like 2 = High, 1 = Medium (-1) = Low is awarded for the answers. Maximum Score will be 20 * 2 = 40 and Minimum Score will be 20 * (-1) = -20. To have role efficacy index, conversion of -20 into 0 and 40 into 100 is done. Hence Maximum Score of Role Efficacy Index is 100 and Minimum Score is 0.

Organizational Role Stress (ORS):

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) were the first to describe organizational stress in general and role stress in particular. Katz and Kahn (1966) continued this research and suggested that an organization can be defined as a system of roles and they used three categories to define role stress: role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Pareek (1976) organizational role stress model expands on and is linked to Kahn's (1973) views of conflict, ambiguity and overload by exploring inter-role relationships.

Pareek (1983a) has defined role as any position a person holds in a system (organization) as defined by the expectations of various significant persons, including himself/herself have from that position. The definition of role indicates that there are multiple problems in the performance of a role and, therefore, stress becomes inevitable. To study this role stress particularly targeting on organization context, organizational role stress (ORS) scale was administered by Pareek in 1983.

ORS scale is a five point Likert scale, indicating how true a particular statement is for the role. Thus, the scores for each role stress range from minimum 0 to a maximum of 20. ORS Scale has 50 items. The score of each role stress may range from 0 to 20, and the total organizational role stress score may range from 0 to 200. A high score close to 20, on a particular dimension indicates that more role stress is being experienced in that area.

Pareek in 1993 felt that from the point of view of an individual, two role systems are important: role space and role set. Role space, thus, can be defined as 'the dynamic interrelationship both between the self and the various roles an individual occupies, and amongst these roles'. Inter role distance (IRD), Role stagnation (RS), Self-Role Distance (SRD) dimensions in ORS scale, form Role Space. The individual's role in the organization is defined by the expectations of other significant roles, and those of the individual himself/herself. The Role set is thus 'the pattern of relationship between the role being considered and other roles'. Role ambiguity (RA, Role expectation conflict (REC), Role overload (Ro), Role erosion (RE), Resource inadequacy (RIn), Personal inadequacy (PI), Role isolation (RI) forms Role Set in ORS Scale.

The ten stressors in detail:

- Inter-role distance (IRD): It is experienced when there is a conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles.
- Role stagnation (RS): 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.
- Role expectation conflicts (REC): This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons, i.e. superiors, subordinates and peers to a role occupant.
- Role erosion (RE): This type of role stress increases in a role occupant when he/she feels that some functions which should properly belong to his/her role are transferred to/or performed by some other role.
- Role overload (RO): When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his/her role set, he/she experience role overload.
- Role isolation (RI): This type of role stress refers to the psychological distance between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role set.
- Personal inadequacy (PI): It arises when the role

occupant feels that he/she does not have the necessary skills and training for effective performance of the functions expected from his/her role.

- Self-role distance (SRD): When the role a person occupies goes against his/her self-concept, then he/she feels self-role distance type of stress.
- Role ambiguity (RA): It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations regarding the role which may arise out of lack of information or understanding.
- Resource inadequacy (RIn): 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. RIn occurs when there is a lack of supplies, personnel, information, historical data, and a lack of knowledge, education, or experience among the employees.

Review of literature

a) Role Efficacy:

- Sayeed (1985) found that personal attributes like age, gender and marital status and job demographics like experience and job type were found to have impact on role efficacy.
- Das (1984) found role efficacy as having moderating impact on purposeful job behavior and independent variables, such as organizational climate and role stress. Increased work-related tension was found to have overall negative relationship with role efficacy.
- Pestonjee (1992) said that role efficacy reduces role stress.

b) Role Stress:

- Sen. (1981) studied the background variables in relation to role stress. They were age, sex, education, income, family type, marital status, residence, distance from residence to place of work, work experience etc. Some of the conclusions drawn from the studies were that role stagnation decreases as people advance in age, age is negatively related with role stress. He also pointed out that Women experience more role stress as compared to men, unmarried experienced more stress than married.
- Levinson (1973) and Constandse (1972) stated that many middle-aged, middle-management managers suffer from fear and disappointment and in silent isolation which leads to role stagnation.
- People do not enjoy the feeling of underutilized which is highlighted in role erosion (Beukel & Molleman, 2002).
- Kahn and Quinn (1970) suggested some conditions under which role overload is likely to occur: (i) in the absence of role integration, (ii) in the absence of role power, (ii) when large variations exist in expected output, and (iv) when duties cannot be delegated. Marchall and Cooper (1979) categorized overload into quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative refers to having too much to do, and qualitative refers to work that is too difficult.
- Kahn et al. (1964) and French and Caplan (1970) found that mistrust of coworkers is positively related to high role isolation and low job satisfaction.
- McMurray (1973) identified the executive neurosis: that is, an over-promoted manager who becomes grossly overworked in the attempt to keep the job attempts to hide the sense of insecurity and feelings of personal inadequacy.
- Srivastav (1997) said that ORS was experienced differently cross the age groups, management levels, qualification and functional groups among PSU Employees.
- Achla Pareek and Manju Mehta (1999) said that self role distance is seen more among gazette women officers.
- Sen (1982) studied that there is a negative correlation between role efficacy and Organizational Role Stress.
- Sayeed (1895) said that negative correlation prevails between work load tension and role efficacy.
- Das (1984) proved that there is a negative correlation between role efficacy and some dimensions in ORS.
- Mathur (1997) said that there is a negative correlation between role efficacy and most of the dimensions of ORS.

Research Methodology:

Today women play a vital role in Indian BPO sector. According to survey (Ezine articles about women employees, Dec 22, 2009) out of 400 million of workforce in India, around 30–40 percent is females. They are one of the driving forces behind the success of call center industry in India. But due to their dual career both at home and organization, they experience more stress than men. So women need to understand the importance of understanding the role and role efficacy concept. Less understanding of these concepts leads to a number of stresses among working women.

This research mainly focuses on role efficacy and different role stresses experienced by women employees. Though the available research covers various issues concerning stress, role efficacy and coping among employees in general, there is lack of evidence on role efficacy relationship with stress particularly on women employees in BPO industry. Based on these factors, our study was aimed (1) to understand the influence of age on role efficacy (2) to understand the influence of age on organizational role stress (3) to study the inter relationship between role efficacy and organizational role stress.

The hypotheses of the study are:

1) There is a significant variation between age and role efficacy dimensions.

2) There is a significant variation between Age and Organizational Role Stress dimensions.

3) There is a negative correlation between Role efficacy and Organizational role stress.

Research Design: The main study was carried out at IT/ITES hub located at Bangalore. BPO Companies list was obtained from the sites BPOINDIA and BPOWATCH. Totally 162 companies was considered and by simple random sampling method, 35 BPO Companies were targeted. Women employees who have 2 years and above experience in the industry were screened to issue the questionnaires from the selected 35 companies. Though the questionnaires were issued to more than 400 women employees, the researcher received only 239 at the end. 3 questionnaires were not completed and thus the researcher arrived to 236 as sample.

The purpose of the study and the need of the study were explained to these women employees and were given enough time periods to fill up the questionnaire. The primary data (the respondent's opinion about their role efficacy and role stress) were collected by two methods: (1) Through Internet and (2) Through personal interview method. The tools used were role efficacy scale and organizational role stress scale developed by Dr. Udai Pareek. Statistical Package SPSS was used to interpret the data. ANOVA, Correlation and Mean Scores were used to analyse the data.

Results & Discussions:

Results are discussed in two parts. First part explains the influence of age on role efficacy with both mean scores and ANOVA and the second part explains about the influence of age on organizational role stress.

Part 1: Age and role efficacy (Mean score, ANOVA results)

Objective 1: To understand the influence of age on role efficacy

Descriptive statistics of Age and Role Efficacy are given in the table 1. 68% of women employees fall in the cadre 20-25 years and remaining 32% of women employees are in the age group 26-30 years and above. Role making is high in the age group 26-30 &above years with mean score value of 8.44 in comparison with the group 20-25 years (mean score value- 8.10). Role Centering is high in the age group 26-30 years & above 30 years with mean score value of 5.28 and comparatively low at 20-25 years with mean value of 4.16. Role linking is seen more again in the age group 26-30 years & above. On the whole, total mean score wise, role making is high (8.21) among role efficacy dimensions and role efficacy index score wise 26-30 years and above BPO women employees have role efficacy comparatively well than others with respect to age.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant variation between age and Role Efficacy dimensions.

The result of ANOVA Test revealed that there is a significant variation in role centering experienced by women BPO Employees based on age since the P-Value (0.00) is significant at 1% level. F Value is 8.21.

The result also reveals that there is no significant variation with respect to role making and role linking. Role efficacy Index reveals that there is no significant variation across age groups with respect to role efficacy. Table 3 shows the result obtained. The above said results and analysis is similar to the findings of Sayeed (1985). He found that personal attributes like age have impact on role efficacy.

Summarization of result:

Role Efficacy and Persona l variable (age)				
Variables (Personal/RE)	**Role Efficacy Index**	**Role Making**	**Role Centering**	**Role Linking**
Age	Not Proved (F value: 2.83, Sig: 0.55)	Not Proved (F value: 0.36, Sig: 0.55)	Fully Proved (F value: 8.21, Sig: 0.00)	Not Proved (F value: 0.25, Sig: 0.62)

Part 2: Age and organizational role stress (Mean score, ANOVA results)

Objective 2: To understand the influence of age on organizational role stress dimensions.

Role erosion and role overload is high in mean score (10.06) among 20-25 years age groups. Role Stagnation is seen more among 26-30 years and above group of employees (mean score-8.97). Total score wise, again role erosion ranks high with mean score 9.68 and ORS_Mean score total is 8.98 for all the variables and corresponding row score wise 20-25 years have more organizational role stress (mean score- 9.22) than 26 years and above (mean score-8.51). Table 4 shows the result of mean scores.

Role erosion stressor is ranked high among all the age groups. This result negatively correlates with role centeredness feeling variations among different age group. Role erosion happens when employees do not feel the importance in their role. This result clearly highlights the point that BPO women employees in Bangalore have the role erosion feeling in them which in turn is affecting their role centeredness' efficacy level.

The total role stress mean score ranks role overload as the second stressor among women BPO employees in Bangalore. Kahn and Quinn (1970) suggested conditions under which role overload is likely to occur. One of the conditions is the absence of role integration. According to the role efficacy result most of the employees are marching themselves towards their role they have occupied in the organization. It means that they are trying to integrate themselves with their organizational role. In the process of integration, role overload stress increases. This is proven in the above results.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant variation between Age and Organizational Role Stress dimensions.

The result of ANOVA reveals that both role erosion and role overload have significant variation (P= 0.03) at 5% significance level among various age. The result of ANOVA reveals that both role erosion and role overload have significant variation (p = 0.03) at 5% significance level among age groups. F Value is 4.90 and 4.69 respectively. There is no significant variation in overall organizational role stress mean score (Reference Table 5).

The result also reveals that there is no significant variation with respect to other dimensions of ORS. This shows that different age group employees have different experience towards role erosion stress and role overload stress which has a major impact on overall organizational role stress.

The above said result goes hand-in-hand with the findings obtained by Srivastav in 1999 on PSU Employees, India. He said that ORS was experienced differently cross the age groups, among PSU Employees.

Summarization of result:

Variables	Inter Role Distance	Role Stagnation	Role Expectation Conflict	Role Erosion	Role overload	
Age	Not Proved	Not Proved	Not Proved	Partially proved (F value: 4.90, Sig: 0.03)	Partially proved (F value: 4.69, Sig: 0.03)	
	Role Isolation	Personal Inadequacy	Self Role Distance	Role Ambiguity	Resource Inadequacy	ORS-Mean Score
	Not Proved	Not Proved	Not Proved	Not Proved	Not Proved	Not Proved

Objective 3: To study the inter relationship between role efficacy and Organizational role stress:

Hypothesis 3: There is a negative correlation between Role efficacy and Organizational role stress.

All the dimensions of role efficacy have negative correlation with Role stress dimensions. Role efficacy index has significant negative correlation with the role stress dimension particularly in role overload (-14.8%) and role ambiguity (- 13.3%) at 5% significance dimensions level. The result shown in the table 06 clearly proves that once the role efficacy decreases among the women BPO Employees, their organizational role stress increases. Particularly their stress dimensions role overload and role ambiguity increases when they are experiencing less role efficacy. As these women employees are in the process of making their role according to their likings, they need to learn more and need to get clear knowledge about various work related aspects. This makes them to feel they are overloaded and less ambiguity in their roles.

Conclusion:

Role efficacy is seen more among 26-30 years and above age group employees. Particularly role making is seen more among this group. In case of role stress 20-25 years experience more role stress than 26-30 years and above. Particularly role erosion stress is seen more among this age group. There is a significant variation in role erosion which means indirectly role stress experienced by age group 20-25 years is very significant compared with other age groups. This might have inversely affected the efficacy level of employees in this age group (it is evident from the role efficacy results that efficacy level is less in this age group).

Training has to be given to the employees to identify the strengths and challenges in their role. This positive approach enriches an individual and reduces the role erosion as role erosion is very prominent in the age group 20-25 years. Organizations can also enrich the roles of the age group by identifying the best employees in this age group and assigning the tasks similar to the functions performed by the experienced employees. This can eradicate role erosion stress in this age group.

Thus we conclude that women BPO employees in Bangalore experience considerable level of role efficacy and role stress. Implementations of the above said suggestions can surely be helpful for the BPO companies in their productivity. The findings

also reveals that if these employees feel low role efficacy then it has got high impact on their stress level which is very alarming for the sustenance of any company.

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Tables:

Table 1: Age- wise respondent's distribution. (N= 236)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25 yrs	160	67.8
26-30 yrs and above	76	32.2

Table 2: Age and Role Efficacy (Mean Score). N= 236.

Dimensions of RE	Age								
	20-25 yrs			26-30 yrs & above			Total		
	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD
REI	160	64.27	10.89	76	**67.00**	12.65	236	65.17	11.54
Role Making	160	8.10	3.85	76	**8.44**	4.16	236	**8.21**	3.95
Role centering	160	4.16	2.71	76	**5.28**	2.88	236	4.53	2.81
Role Linking	160	6.27	3.20	76	**6.51**	3.43	236	6.35	3.27

SD: Standard Deviation

REI: Role Efficacy Index

Table 3: Age and Role Efficacy (ANOVA)

One Way ANOVA on Role Efficacy Index by Age

Dependent Variables	Level	Statistics							
	Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Test of Homogeneity of Variances	F Value	Sig.	Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Assumptions on Variance
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Role Making	20-25 yrs	153	8.10	3.85	0.52	0.36	0.55	0.56	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.44	4.16					
Role Centering	20-25 yrs	153	4.16	2.71	0.44	8.21	0.00	0.01	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	5.28	2.88					
Role Linking	20-25 yrs	153	6.27	3.20	0.25	0.25	0.62	0.62	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	6.51	3.43					
Role Efficacy Index	20-25 yrs	153	64.27	10.89	0.02	2.83	0.09	0.11	Unequal
	26-30 yrs	75	67.00	12.65					

Sig. Test @ Level	
0.001	Sig <1%
0.04	Sig <5%
0.06	>5% Non Sig (NS)

Table 4: Age and Organizational Role stress (Mean Score). N= 236.

Age Groups	20-25 yrs			26-30 yrs & above			Total		
Dimensions of ORS	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD
INTER ROLE DISTANCE	160	8.87	3.80	76	8.29	3.86	236	8.68	3.82
ROLE STAGNATION	160	9.66	3.65	76	**8.97**	3.88	236	9.43	3.73
ROLE EXPECTATION CONFLICT	160	8.82	4.16	76	8.28	3.97	236	8.64	4.10
ROLE EROSION	160	**10.06**	3.68	76	8.91	3.72	236	**9.68**	3.72
ROLE OVERLOAD	160	**10.06**	4.02	76	8.79	4.47	236	9.64	4.20
ROLE ISOLATION	160	9.12	3.89	76	8.11	4.12	236	8.79	3.99
PERSONAL INADEQUACY	160	9.30	4.12	76	8.57	4.11	236	9.06	4.12
SELF ROLE DISTANCE	160	9.41	3.92	76	8.80	4.23	236	9.21	4.02
ROLE AMBIGUITY	160	8.61	4.57	76	7.99	4.35	236	8.41	4.50
RESOURCE INADEQUACY	160	8.51	4.06	76	8.32	4.33	236	8.44	4.14
ORS_Mean Score	160	**9.22**	3.40	76	8.51	3.62	236	8.98	3.48

Table 5: Age and Organizational role stress (ANOVA)

One Way ANOVA on ORS by Age									
Dependent Variables	Level / Age	Statistics: N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Test of Homogeneity of Variances	F Value	Sig.	Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Assumptions on Variance
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Inter Role Distance	20-25 yrs	153	8.87	3.60	0.39	1.15	0.29	0.29	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.29	3.86					
Role Stagnation	20-25 yrs	152	9.66	3.65	0.26	1.69	0.19	0.20	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.97	3.88					
Role Expectation	20-25 yrs	153	8.82	4.16	0.64	0.86	0.35	0.35	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.28	3.97					
Role Erosion	20-25 yrs	152	10.06	3.68	0.38	4.90	0.03	0.03	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.91	3.72					
Role Overload	20-25 yrs	153	10.06	4.02	0.19	4.69	0.03	0.04	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.79	4.47					
Role Isolation	20-25 yrs	153	9.12	3.89	0.68	3.31	0.07	0.08	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.11	4.12					
Role Inadequacy	20-25 yrs	152	9.30	4.12	0.57	1.55	0.22	0.22	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.57	4.11					
Self Role Distance	20-25 yrs	151	9.41	3.92	0.22	1.15	0.28	0.30	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.80	4.23					
Role Ambiguity	20-25 yrs	148	8.61	4.57	0.67	0.94	0.33	0.33	Equal
	26-30 yrs	71	7.99	4.35					
Resource Inadequacy	20-25 yrs	152	8.51	4.06	0.34	0.10	0.75	0.76	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.32	4.33					
ORS_Mean Score	20-25 yrs	153	9.22	3.40	0.22	2.07	0.15	0.16	Equal
	26-30 yrs	75	8.51	3.62					

Sig. Test @ Level	
0.001	Sig. @ 1%
0.04	Sig. @ 5%
0.06	@ 6% Non Sig (NS)

Table 06: Correlation analysis - Role efficacy and Organizational role stress.

Dimensions (Organizational Role Stress)	Role Efficacy Index	Significance
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (1-tailed)
INTER ROLE DISTANCE	-0.092	0.165
ROLE STAGNATION	-0.013	0.848
ROLE EXPECTATION CONFLICT	-0.124	0.060*
ROLE EROSION	-0.119	0.070*
ROLE OVERLOAD	-0.148	0.02**
ROLE ISOLATION	-0.074	0.262
ROLE INADEQUACY	-0.124	0.060*
SELF ROLE DISTANCE	-0.123	0.06*
ROLE AMBIGUITY	-0.133	0.04**
RESOURCE INADEQUACY	-0.088	0.185
ORS_Mean Score	-0.123	0.06*

Note: * -> 10% significance level ; **-> 5% significance level