

Relationship between Employees' Self-efficacy Belief and Role Stress: A Study

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ABSTRACT Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, personal accomplishments, and affect the body's physiological responses to stress. The stronger the self-efficacy belief, the bolder the people are in handling the stressful situations associated with their roles. The present study assessed the level of self-efficacy belief of 80 employees randomly selected working in Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited, Shimla. The differences in level of self-efficacy belief pertaining to the demographic variables of the employees have also been investigated. Further, the study also examined the different factors causing role stress among the employees, thereafter, relationship between self-efficacy belief and dimensions of role stress have been studied. The self-efficacy belief of employees has been noted to be high. However, the levels of self-efficacy belief among the males, unmarried, older and higher experienced employees have been found to be higher as compared to their counterparts. It was also observed that mean difference on self-efficacy belief has been found to be significant only between males and females. The findings have also revealed that the degree of role stress experienced by the employees has been noted to be less. Role erosion was identified as the main stressor while role ambiguity was found to cause least stress. A negative correlation was also found between self-efficacy belief and dimensions of role stress. The implications that arise from the present research findings are that as individual's self-efficacy belief has been correlated with the experience of stress and role adjustments, it becomes important to focus on the methods and interventions such as verbal persuasions, vicarious modelling, etc. that increase the self-efficacy belief among individuals.

INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is self evaluation of one's competence to successfully execute a course of action necessary to reach desired outcomes (Bandura 1982, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy is defined in terms of individuals' perceived capabilities to attain designated types of performances and to achieve specific results (Pajares 1996). It is an undeniable fact that today's organizational life is characterized by stress and strain. Stress is defined as a state of psychological arousal that rises when external demands tax or exceed a person's adaptive abilities (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Employees experience stress at work that has negative consequences both on the individual and the organisation. However, one's beliefs about oneself can help to cope up with stressful situations. Results of various studies

have revealed that stressors have a less negative effect when individuals have more positive self-perceptions (Mossholder et al. 1982). The studies reported that people with high levels of perceived self-efficacy experience less stress (Vivienne et al. 2008). The cognitive model of stress also put forth the role of self-efficacy in evaluating demands from the environment (Lazarus and Folkman 1984).

In his study Bandura (1994) noted that people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided. The stressors have a less negative impact on individuals when these have more positive perceptions about themselves, and more specifically high levels of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997; Bhagat and Allie 1989). A study by Rangriz and Khaksar (2013) noted a negative correlation between mastery experience (component of self efficacy) and job stress. A study on nurses reported that stress (total score) had negative correlation with the perceived self-efficacy (Abraham 2012). Role efficacy of a person has been found to reduce role stress which had impact on performance of organizational members and productivity of organization (Jayashree and Sadri 1999; Randha-

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wa 2004). A study on patterns of self- efficacy and work stress during a critical period in the formation of new teachers revealed a pattern of significantly increasing self-efficacy and significantly decreasing stress (Klassen and Durksen 2014). The findings indicated that the majority of faculty members experience a high level of occupational stress, while they have a low level of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. The occupational stress was negatively related with faculty members' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (El Sayed et al. 2014).

Self-efficacy belief may act as a buffer in the presence of work stressors so that their negative impact is reduced (Salanova et al. 2002). Robins (1986) discovered a significant positive relationship between self-reported masculinity and self-efficacy, whereas perceived femininity was found to be unrelated to self-efficacy. Male prospective teachers were found to have significantly higher level of self-efficacy than female prospective teachers (Attri 2014). Feminine participants have found to bear low self- efficacy as compared to androgynous and masculine people. Results showed that there were no significant gender differences in self-compassion, self-efficacy, and control belief for learning (Iskender 2009). Gender role orientation along with self- efficacy was found to be the strongest predictor of organizational commitment among employees (Arya et al. 2012). Male students were noted to be better than female students in terms of mental health, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (Gupta and Kumar 2010). However, low levels of self-efficacy are related to high levels of occupational stress (Grau et al. 2001). One of the research study noted that a person with low self-efficacy has low self-esteem and may harbour pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development (Schwarzer and Schmitz 2004).

Objectives

1. To assess the level of self-efficacy belief of the employees.
2. To examine the differences in level of self efficacy belief pertaining to the demographic variables of the employees.
3. To study the factors causing role stress.
4. To study the relationship between self-efficacy belief and dimensions of role stress.

Hypotheses

Based on the rationale the following hypotheses have been developed.

- H_1 : Males shall have higher level of self- efficacy belief as compared to females.
- H_2 : Older employees shall have higher level of self- efficacy belief as compared to younger employees.
- H_3 : Employees with more years of experience shall have higher level of self- efficacy belief.
- H_4 : There shall be significant mean differences on level of self- efficacy belief with respect to demographic variables.
- H_5 : There shall be negative correlation between self- efficacy belief and dimensions of role stress.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in the present study were 80 job incumbents working in H.P. Power Corporation Limited, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh (H. P.). Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The gender composition of the participants was 60 (75%) males and 20 (25%) females. The sample comprised majority of married employees, that is, 66 (82.5%) while unmarried employees were 14 (17.5%). Around 55% of sample, that is, 44 employees belonged to urban background while 45% of sample that is 36 employees belonged to rural background. Majority of employees that is 34 constituting 42.5% fall in the age group (31–50 years), whereas, minimum employees that is 7 (8.8%) fall in age group (50 or above years) while age group (21–30 years) and (31–40 years) was found to have 13(16.2%) and 26 (32.5%) employees respectively. The distribution of employees according to experience varied from 5 in (30 or above years) of experience group; 13 in (10–20 years); 30 in (20–30 years) to 32 being maximum in (0–10 years) of experience group.

Instrument

Perceived self efficacy was measured by 'The General Self Efficacy Scale' developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The scale is usually self-administered, as part of a more com-

prehensive questionnaire. Preferably, the 10 items are mixed at random into a larger pool of items that have the same response format. Responses made on a 4-point scale to all 10 items are summed to yield the final composite score. Role stress was examined by 'Organisational Role Stress (ORS) Scale' developed by (Pareek 1983). The ORS scale is used to measure 10 role stressors that is inter-role distance (IRD), role stagnation (RS), role expectation conflict (REC), role erosion (RE), role overload (RO), role conflict (RC), personal inadequacy (PI), self-role distance (SRD), role ambiguity (RA) and resource inadequacy (RIN) with 50 items which were mixed. Responses to all 50 items corresponding to 10 role stressors were obtained on 5- point scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was primarily design to assess the level of self- efficacy belief of employees and examine the relationship of self- efficacy belief with role stress. The results in Table 1 revealed that employees have obtained more than average mean on self efficacy belief ($M=3.16$) showing higher level of self-efficacy among the employees. The findings also indicated that male employees have high level of

self-efficacy belief ($M = 3.23$) as compared to female employees ($M = 2.94$). The effect of gender on mean difference in level of self- efficacy belief ($t = 3.24, p < 0.01$) is found to be significant. This may be attributed to the fact that due to social norms, family restrictions, household responsibilities, inter role conflicts females may have lower expectations than males for success. Higher level of self- efficacy belief among males confirms the findings of (Gupta and Kumar 2010; Shelangoski et al. 2014).

H₁: 'Males shall have higher level of self-efficacy belief as compared to females' is accepted.

It can be observed that the level of self- efficacy belief among unmarried employees is more ($M=3.22$) than that of married employees ($M = 3.15$). However the effect of marital status on mean difference is observed to be insignificant for self- efficacy. It can further be noted that self- efficacy belief ($M = 3.18$) among the employees from urban background is found to be more than those belonging to rural background ($M = 3.15$). However, the results also show that mean difference pertaining to self- efficacy belief between rural and urban employees have been found to be non- significant. It is seen that the age group of (51 years and above) has maximum level of self- efficacy ($M = 3.33$). Besides, age group of (21 - 30 years) has self- efficacy with mean ($M = 3.16$) and age group (31 - 40 years) has been noted to have self- efficacy with mean ($M = 3.15$). The findings show that age has no significance effect on the mean difference on level of self-efficacy of the employees. The older employees have been found to have higher level of self- efficacy than younger employees, thus, hypothesis:

H₂: 'Older employees shall have higher level of self efficacy as compared to younger employees' is accepted.

The findings revealed that self- efficacy level of employees having maximum experience is more than employees having experience of (30 - above) years have maximum self efficacy ($M = 3.40$) whereas as employees having experience of (0 - 10) years are having minimum self efficacy ($M = 3.13$). Employees having experience of (11 - 20) years have mean value ($M = 3.14$) and experience of (21 - 30) years have mean value ($M = 3.19$). However, the effect of experience on mean difference on level of self-efficacy has been found to be non significant. Experience may be

Table 1: Mean difference analysis of self efficacy belief with respect to demographic variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	t
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	3.23	.31	3.24**
Female	2.94	.46	
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Married	3.15	.36	-.68
Unmarried	3.22	.42	
<i>Residential Status</i>			
Rural	3.15	.33	-.33
Urban	3.18	.42	
<i>Age in Years</i>			F
(21-30)	3.16	.36	.53
(31-40)	3.15	.45	
(41-50)	3.14	.32	
(Above 51)	3.33	.36	
<i>Experience in Years</i>			
(0-10)	3.13	.42	.84
(11-20)	3.14	.36	
(21-30)	3.19	.27	
(Above 31)	3.40	.34	
<i>Self- efficacy Belief</i>	3.16	.37	

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

a key ingredient in teachers' senses of efficacy (Hoy and Woolfolk 1993). Following above results the hypothesis:

H₃: 'Employees with more years of experience shall have higher level of self- efficacy' is accepted.

The t-values for mean difference analysis of self efficacy belief pertaining to the different demographic variables of the employees have revealed that only gender seem to have significant effect on mean difference. However, with respect to marital status, age, experience, rural/urban background mean difference has been noted to be non significant. Thus, the following hypothesis:

H₄: 'There shall be significant mean differences on level of self- efficacy with respect to demographic variables' is partially accepted.

The results in Table 2 indicated that the mean values on different dimensions of role stress have been less than the average implying lesser degree of role stress among employees. Lower stress can be attributed to the higher level of self efficacy beliefs existent among the employees similar to the findings of (Mossholder et al. 1982; Vivienne et al. 2008). The findings also revealed that among the different dimensions of role stress role erosion has maximum mean value (M = 2.20) followed by inter role distance (M = 2.07), role isolation (M = 2.05), resource inadequacy is found to be (M = 2.05), while role ambiguity has minimum mean value (M = 1.65). The employees may feel slightly stressed due to the feeling that some functions which should properly belong to his / her role are transferred to / or performed by some other employee. Employees may also have a notion that credit for the work done by them goes to someone else. However, such impression or feelings are not that strong

Table 2: Mean values showing the level of role stress among employees

Role stress dimensions	Mean	S.D
Inter role distance	2.07	.70
Role stagnation	1.99	.69
Role expectation conflict	1.81	.55
Role erosion	2.20	.75
Role overload	1.89	.64
Role isolation	2.05	.85
Personal inadequacy	1.83	.64
Self- role distance	1.89	.63
Role ambiguity	1.65	.52
Resource inadequacy	2.05	.70

as revealed by the lower mean values on the respective dimensions.

The correlation values between the self efficacy belief and different dimensions of the role stress in Table 3 revealed that self- efficacy belief has been found to be negatively correlated with role expectation conflict ($r = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$), role isolation ($r = -0.24$, $p < 0.05$), personal inadequacy ($r = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$) and role ambiguity ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$). The results correspond to the findings of (Abraham 2012; Fallah 2012; Rangriz and Khaksar 2013).

Table 3: Correlation values showing relationship between self efficacy belief and role stress

Dimensions of role stress	Self- efficacy belief
Inter role distance	-.05
Role stagnation	-.11
Role expectation conflict	-.31**
Role erosion	.05
Role overload	-.19
Role isolation	-.24*
Personal inadequacy	-.38**
Self- role distance	-.22
Role ambiguity	-.42**
Resource inadequacy	-.20

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

H₅: 'There shall be negative correlation between dimensions of role stress and self- efficacy belief' is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The higher self- efficacy belief of the employees indicated that they believe in their capabilities and competencies and have full confidence that they can handle worse to worse situations with their abilities, skills and knowledge. Such type of individuals always remains motivated and energetic. Excluding gender no other demographic variables have significant association with self efficacy belief. The yielded results of the current study also lead to the conclusion that increasing self-efficacy belief of the individuals tends to have a positive influence on diminishing their stress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When stressful situations are difficult to control by the employees and the effect is apparent in the quality of their work performance, declining efficiency, diminishing energy, lesser

motivation, the organizations are suggested to make use of strategies for improvement of employees' self-efficacy belief. The organizations need to design training programs that make aware employees of their potential and capabilities. The employees can be made to recapitulate their competencies through tailor made exercises and games. Interventions such as counseling, coaching, verbal persuasion, vicarious modeling and enactive mastery can be helpful in increasing employees' self efficacy belief. Further, clear instructions should be given to the role incumbents regarding the expectations from their roles, adequate information and resources should be provided required to carry out the roles, proper interaction and communication should be ensured to facilitate the employees' while performing their roles.

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