

## Optimism, Role Ambiguity, and Organizational Commitment among Bank Employees

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Recent studies on the banking sector reveal that employees are experiencing significant pressure due to various environmental factors such as heavy workloads, role ambiguity, role conflict, lack of feedback, insufficient supervisor support, rapid technological changes, innovative roles, career development challenges, organizational structure and climate, and recent episodic events. These factors have been identified as contributing to increased stress, which in turn affects employees' commitment levels. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment among bank employees. Data were gathered from employees in both private and public sector banks, with a total of 285 participants (127 from public sector banks and 158 from private sector banks), including both clerical and managerial staff. The study employed role ambiguity, organizational commitment, and optimism scales to collect data. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between these variables. The findings supported the hypothesized relationships among the variables under investigation.

**Keywords:** Role Ambiguity, Optimism, Organizational Commitment, Bank Employees

Job stress has emerged as a significant challenge in contemporary organizations, with widespread occurrences (Aftab & Javeed, 2012). Stress profoundly affects employees' behavior at work. Recognizing the pivotal role employees play in the effective functioning of an organization, it is crucial to acknowledge that employees are not mere machines. Notably, employees who experience lower stress levels are more cooperative and valuable assets to an organization. Conversely, neglecting employees' needs and stress leads to increased absenteeism, costs, reduced productivity, diminished motivation, and potential legal consequences, all of which negatively impact their work behavior (Aftab & Javeed, 2012). Stress contributes to counterproductive work behavior (Aftab & Javeed, 2012).

Given the above context, it is imperative for organizational management to clearly

define employees' roles to prevent them from burdening themselves with unnecessary or excessive workloads, it can lead to stress and tiredness in their daily work. Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) argued that role ambiguity arises when employees lack a clear understanding of their responsibilities and have limited knowledge about what is expected of them in terms of job performance. Role ambiguity significantly affects employee performance, satisfaction, organizational commitment, optimism, and productivity, particularly in the banking sector. Employees tend to underperform when they experience a lack of role clarity or ambiguity (Bhuan, Menguc & Borsboom, 2005). Conversely, employees perform better when they have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and what is expected from them (June & Mahmood, 2011).

Role ambiguity refers to the uncertainty employees face regarding their primary job

responsibilities and behavioral expectations (Baron, 2010). Role ambiguity occurs when a person's understanding of their role is unclear. This lack of clarity can lead to decreased self-confidence, dissatisfaction at work, and a loss of confidence in one's abilities. Role ambiguity also causes individuals to hesitate in their actions. Research on middle management has shown that ambiguity in roles is a significant source of stress and can have a strong impact on individuals' well-being and performance. It leads to a lack of control over one's actions, contributing significantly to work-related stress (Karasek, 1979).

Optimism, as defined by Luthans and Youssef (2004), involves attributing positive events to internal, permanent, and pervasive causes, while negative events are attributed to external, temporary, and situation-specific causes. Optimistic individuals credit themselves for good outcomes, boosting their morale, and distance themselves from negative events.

Organizational commitment, as studied by Mayer and Allen (1991), reflects an emotional connection to the organization, an acknowledgment of the costs associated with leaving, and a moral obligation to stay. Organisational commitment refers to the loyalty and dedication that employees show towards their employers. A crucial aspect of this concept involves understanding the level of responsibility employees feel towards their employer. The fundamental concept is that when employees are genuinely committed to the organization's objectives and plans, they demonstrate this commitment through their strong work ethic, support for organizational goals, and dedication to the long-term achievement of the business. Employee promise is commonly described as the degree of an individual's dedication and allegiance to the organization they are associated with.

Judeh (2011) studied organizational commitment and role ambiguity. A survey was carried out among 300 employees, and 256 returnable questionnaires were obtained. The findings demonstrated the important roles that role ambiguity and role conflict, two proposed mediators, have in mediating the relationship between organizational commitment and employee socialization.

Bhowmik and Sahai (2018) conducted a study to investigate the link between organizational commitment and optimism among employees of private sector. For this purpose two scales were used, the Life Orientation Test given by Scheier (1985) and Organizational Commitment Scale by Upinder Dhar, Prashant Mishra & D.K. Srivastava (2002). The findings show significant association between optimism and organizational commitment.

Parsons M, Tavakoli AS, Murdaugh CL, and Kroposki M. (199) This study explored the connections between clinical team members' experiences with role conflict, role ambiguity, organizational commitment, and work satisfaction in a hospital going through reengineering. There were a total of 278 non-RNs and 409 registered nurses (RNs) in the sample. Individuals with high levels of role ambiguity and conflict showed lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. According to study on role stress and organizational commitment done by Ho, WH., Chang, C.S., Shih, YL., et al. (2009), there is a negative correlation between role stress and organizational commitment.

In their study, Masihabadi et al. (2015) measured the effects of "job stress on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance" using a sample of 170 auditors with at least three years of experience. The research Yousef (2002) results suggest that both role conflict and role ambiguity directly and negatively influence job satisfaction. The study discovered that

job satisfaction intercedes the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on various aspects of organizational commitment, except for commitment related to personal sacrifice. The implications of these findings, potential future research directions, and the limitations of the study are also discussed.

Concha (2009) the role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment were analysed as variables that should mediate between role ambiguity and conflict and employees' behaviour. The analysis revealed that role stressors negatively affected affective commitment, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. Research on the banking sector demonstrated that commitment has been interconnected with hope, optimism, and resilience (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Sinha, Talwar & Rajpal (2002) studied the connection between self-efficacy and commitment, results indicate that organizational commitment is positively related with self-efficacy.

The study aims to address specific conditions and issues within the banking sector, focusing on both private and public sector employees and their experiences with work overload. It explores the association between work surplus and organizational commitment among bank employees. The objective is to explore the connection between role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment in private and public sector bank employees.

### **Objectives**

To assess the perceived level of role ambiguity, optimism and organizational commitment of private and public sector bank employees.

- To investigate the nature of association between role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment of public and private sector bank employees.

### **Hypotheses**

- Perceived level of role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment of the bank employees would differ in public and private sector banks.
- Role ambiguity would be negatively correlated with organizational commitment of public and private sector bank employees.
- Optimism would be positively linked with organizational commitment of public and private sector bank employees.

### **Method**

#### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 285 banking personnel including (Public=127, Private=158), sector banking employees. The data were collected through questionnaire from the respondents.

#### **Measures**

*Role Ambiguity Scale:* It is developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). The Role Ambiguity Scale consists of six items designed to assess the degree of uncertainty and lack of clarity individuals perceive about their job roles.

*Optimism Scale:* It is developed by Luthans, Avolio, et al., (2007) and psychometrically analyzed by Luthans, Youssef, et al., (2007). It has a 24-item instrument designed to measure psychological capital, comprising four components: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. For this study, six items specifically measuring optimism were used.

*Organizational Commitment Scale:* It is created by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). This scale measures three components of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

## Results

To examine the differences between employees in public and private sector banks, t-values were computed for the mean scores of the variables under study. Table 1 shows the significance of differences between the two types of banking sectors concerning the demographic characteristics of the participants, role ambiguity, optimism, and the three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. The results indicated that all three dimensions of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, and normative—were significantly higher in public sector banks. Conversely, role ambiguity was significantly higher amongst private sector bank employees compared to those in public sector banks.

Table 1. Demonstrating significance of the difference between the means of variables in public and private sector banks

	PUBLIC		PRIVATE		t	Sig.
Organizational commitment						
Affective	21.27	3.22	19.73	3.51	.866*	.019
Continuance	20.61	3.29	18.96	3.79	-2.09*	.038
Normative	20.47	3.42	17.68	3.39	1.26**	.009
Predictor variable						
Role ambiguity	10.74	4.36	12.77	3.62	-.034*	.011
Optimism	15.41	2.73	12.58	2.71	1.46	.145

Note: \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

The findings supported hypothesis (1), showing that levels of role ambiguity significantly differed between public and private sector banks. The dimensions of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, and normative—were significantly higher among public sector bank employees compared to those in private sector banks. Additionally, the t-test results indicated that optimism was significantly

higher among public sector bank employees than their private sector counterparts.

Table 2. Correlations between the organizational commitment and predictor variables

Criterion	Role ambiguity	Optimism
Affective commitment	-.265*	.432*
Continuance commitment	-.317	.471*
Normative commitment	-.329*	.443**
Total commitment	-.232*	.451*

Note: \*Significant at .05 level,

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01

It is evident from correlation table 2, affective commitment was observed significantly negatively correlated with role ambiguity and significantly positively correlated with optimism.

Among the dimensions of organizational commitment, continuance commitment was evident significantly positively correlated with optimism and negatively but not significantly correlated with role ambiguity.

Normative commitment was reported significantly negatively correlated with role ambiguity and significantly positively correlated with optimism.

## Discussion

The present study was conducted with the aim of examining the nature of the association between role ambiguity, resilience and organizational commitment of public and private sector bank employees.

Results largely supported hypothesis 1 and 2. Findings showed that Role ambiguity was reported significantly negatively correlated with resilience of both public and private sector bank employees.

Secondly finding also revealed that resilience was found significantly positively correlated with all dimensions of

organizational commitment in both public and private sector bank employees.

Role ambiguity is the vagueness that employees face in their workplaces. Role ambiguity occurs when a person is not clear about the role and responsibility related to profession. This lack of transparency can lead to decreased motivation, and self-confidence in the workplace, and in this scenario, employees feel dissatisfaction and low morale which affect the performance of the employee. Optimism is an attitude which indicates that certain efforts will lead to positive outcomes. Optimistic employees have high self-confidence and believe that they will be successful in life. Organizational commitment is considered as the loyalty and dedication that employees show towards their employers. Employees having organizational commitment will work in the company for long years with full dedication. So overall, role ambiguity, optimism and organizational commitment are the essential variables which affect the performance of the employee. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to compare the perceived levels of role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment between private and public sector bank employees. Additionally, the study aims to explore the nature of the relationships between role ambiguity, optimism, and organizational commitment within both public and private sector bank employees.

The statistical analysis indicates that affective commitment a dimension of organisational commitment significantly negatively correlated with role ambiguity which shows that if affective commitment increases than role ambiguity decreases but it is significantly positively correlated with optimism. It means that affective commitment is positively associated with optimism. Continuance commitment has significantly positive connection with optimism but negatively correlated with role ambiguity.

Which indicates that continuance commitment enhances optimism in employees. Normative commitment is significantly negatively associated with role ambiguity but positively associated with optimism. It describes that when normative commitment increases the role ambiguity decreases but it facilitates optimism in a positive way.

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