



Decision Styles and Role Set Conflict Among Managers

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ABSTRACT

The nature of decisions one makes can determine the quality of outcome. This is true with the perception of ones role also. Hence an attempt was made to study the relationship between the decision making styles and role set conflicts of managers. It is found that the vigilant decision style is not significantly related with any of the Role set conflicts. Hyper Vigilance style is significantly related to Role Expectation Conflict, Role Erosion, Role Overload, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy, Role Ambiguity and Resource Inadequacy. Defensive Avoidance is significantly related to REC, RE, RO, RI, PI, RA and RIN. Procrastination and Rationalization styles are significantly related to all the dimensions of role set conflicts. Buck Passing style is related to RE, RO, RI, PI, RA and RIN. The results have implications for training and managerial counseling.

Introduction

The corporate world is undergoing transformations due to globalization. In order to face the new challenges, the manager has to be equipped with varied skills involving technical, cognitive and interpersonal factors. Hence the manager has to play varied roles. These roles, if properly perceived, are complementary in nature. If they are perceived as contradictory, conflict arises. Thus role set is the complement of role relationships which focal persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status in an organization (Srilatha, 1991). Any conflict among the various roles leads to stress which in turn can affect the performance of managers. As Das (1996), suggested, it is essential that organizations develop a well thought out strategy to promote performance in the form of innovative role behaviour.

The presence of various alternatives for a problem causes conflict. This is true with role set conflict too. One should be able to skillfully choose the most appropriate alternative. It is in such a situation the nature of decision making plays a crucial role in resolving conflict. According to Janis and Mann (1977), one's motives, values etc influence the decision behaviour which makes decision conflicting in nature. In such a situation, one may judiciously use information, generate all possible alternatives and evaluate each for its merits and demerits, ultimately choosing the one alternative with more merits than demerits. This results in an effective decision. Such a tendency is known as Vigilance. This is a healthy style because the person is able to withstand the stress to find a solution which yields long-term benefits. A person who cannot withstand the stress may choose the alternative that gives immediate relief from stress (Hyper Vigilance) or avoids decision making situations (Defensive Avoidance). The person may indulge in avoidance by way of shifting the responsibility to someone else (Buck Passing) or postponing the decision (Procrastination) or justifying his stand (Rationalization). All these styles may yield temporary benefits or escape from the situation. Hence they are ineffective styles.

A study by Radford et al. (1993) shows that there is a negative correlation between decisional stress and choice of Decision style and positive correlation between decisional stress

and Hyper Vigilance, avoidance and complacency styles. Zafar and Suresh (2003) studied the relationship between role space conflict and decision making styles of managers. They found that managers with higher tendency toward Hyper Vigilance style experience higher Inter Role Distance and Self-Role Distance. Managers with higher tendency toward Defensive Avoidance, Experienced Higher Role Stagnation and Self-Role Distance. Managers with higher tendency towards Procrastination, Buck Passing and rationalization styles experienced higher Inter Role Distance, Role Isolation and Self Role Distance. Hence it is clear that the nature of decision behaviour influences one's role conflict.

It is in order to have better understanding of role stress among managers; the present study was taken up.

Hypothesis

It was assumed that vigilance decision style would be negatively related to role set conflicts and the non vigilant styles would be positively related to role set conflicts.

Method

Sample

Totally 90 managers pursuing their MBA though Distance Education formed the sample of the study. The mean age of the subject was 32 years.

Tools

Two tests were used to gather the relevant data. Decision Making Styles were measured using Flinders Decisions Making Questionnaire II developed by Leon Mann (1982) Role set conflicts were measured with Organization Role Stress Scale developed by Udai Pareek (1982).

It is found that managers with higher tendency toward hyper vigilance, defensive avoidance, procrastination and rationalization styles experience higher role expectation conflict.

Results

One way ANOVA was computed to test whether managers differ in the role set conflict on the basis of high and low tendency toward each decision style. These are presented in the table.

Table. : Relationship between Managerial Decision-Making Styles and Role Set Conflict

Role space conflicts		Decision-Making Styles											
		Vigilance (V)		Hyper- Vigilance (H)		Defensive Avoidance (DA)		Procrastination (P)		Buck passing (B)		Rationalization (R)	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
REC	M	6.935	6.955	5.563	8.524	5.774	8.622	5.673	8.463	6.267	7.622	4.949	8.471
	SD	4.040	4.328	3.536	4.307	3.719	4.245	3.738	4.184	4.008	4.255	4.039	3.608
	"t"	0.02		3.58*		3.37*		3.34*		1.56		4.36*	

RE	M	9.705	10.98	8.896	12.02	9.019	12.27	9.102	11.85	9.111	11.60	9.103	11.31
	SD	3.714	4.172	4.122	3.860	4.074	3.856	4.268	3.825	4.318	3.899	3.999	4.273
	"t"	1.42		3.70*		3.84*		3.19*		2.87*		250*	
RO	M	7.659	8.370	6.646	9.595	6.358	10.41	6.265	10.12	6.200	9.844	5.744	9.765
	SD	5.238	5.662	5.101	5.446	5.129	5.025	5.159	5.061	5.136	4.982	4.587	5.435
	"t"	0.62		2.65*		3.71*		3.56*		3.36*		3.72*	
RI	M	7.091	7.978	6.625	8.595	6.755	8.676	6.449	8.854	6.356	8.733	6.077	8.667
	SD	3.784	4.384	4.139	3.845	4.356	3.465	4.159	3.671	4.007	3.887	4.068	3.798
	"t"	1.03		2.33**		2.23**		2.88*		2.86*		3.11*	
PI	M	8.23	7.957	6.396	9.810	6.906	9.541	6.367	9.927	6.486	9.489	5.897	9.588
	SD	4.815	4.163	4.712	3.395	4.439	4.087	4.447	3.690	4.021	4.429	4.376	3.869
	"t"	0.07		3.89*		2.86*		4.08*		3.36*		4.24*	
RA	M	5.705	4.761	4.708	5.810	4.151	6.757	3.959	6.732	4.222	6.222	3.513	6.529
	SD	4.547	5.087	4.658	5.004	4.659	4.705	4.046	5.282	4.577	4.912	3.966	5.049
	"t"	0.93		1.08		2.60*		2.75*		2.00**		3.07*	
RIN	M	6.977	6.652	6.125	7.595	6.453	7.324	5.714	8.122	6.311	7.311	4.846	8.314
	SD	3.903	4.228	4.014	4.000	4.335	3.606	3.808	3.989	3.982	4.106	3.588	3.760
	"t"	0.38		1.74		1.00		2.92*		1.17		4.42*	

\* Significant at 0.01 level.      \*\* Significant at 0.05 level.

### Discussion

The results reveal interesting facts regarding role set conflicts. Managers with higher or lower tendency to use vigilance style do not differ in role set conflict. This indicates that effective decision making alone is not the factor in role stress. Probably there are other factors too. The manager believes that people have expectations of his position; he feels that only he has to play the role. That probably is the reason why these managers do not differ in buck passing style. Since they are not skilled in decision making, they experience more conflict. So when the manager has a tendency to be impulsive in choosing or avoidance, or procrastinate or justify, he experiences conflict regarding the demand made on one's role. Managers with higher tendency in hyper vigilance, defensive avoidance, procrastination, buck passing and rationalization styles experience higher role erosion, role over load, role isolation and personal inadequacy. The lack of decision making skill may be the reason why these managers feel that much challenge is not there or it is too much in one's role that necessary resource is not available or (s) he does not possess the required resources. Managers with higher avoidance decision styles seem to experience difficulty in understanding the expectations of and feedback from others resulting in higher role ambiguity. Resource inadequacy is experienced more in managers with higher tendency to use procrastination and rationalization styles. Postponing decisions and justifying one's decisions only result in the minimum use of information. Hence, the higher feeling that the resources are not sufficient.

### Conclusion

The finding on the one side reveal that effective decision making is not the only factor in dealing with role set conflict. However it becomes clear that defective decision styles certainly play a role in experiencing role set conflicts. Hence training in decision making as well as decisional counseling can add to resources needed to tackle role stress.

### References

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