

Justice and politics: mechanisms for the underlying relationships of role demands to employees' satisfaction and turnover intentions

By: [Jun Yang](#), Darren C. Treadway, and Lee P. Stepina

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Abstract:

The present study examines the influence of ambiguity and conflict surrounding employees' job specifications on their dissatisfaction and withdrawal intentions in the workplace. A model is proposed, which introduces perceptions of organizational politics and procedural justice as key mediators in the relationship between role ambiguity and conflict, and the resulting supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to quit. The model is tested using a sample of 782 full-time employees of a national retail organization. Results supported the mediating role of procedural justice and perception of politics in the relationship between role ambiguity and conflict and the three outcome measures. Implications of the findings and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: employee turnover | role demands | organizations | procedural justice

Article:

When role clarity isn't ensured, confusion, blame, dissension, antagonism and a lack of productivity often result. (Organizational consultant David G. Janvitch quoted by P. B. Brown [2008])

As organizations become more complex and globalized and yield greater need for flexibility and adaptation, managerial jobs are becoming less clearly defined. The lack of rigid job specifications most often leads to increased role-related ambiguity and conflict (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). As a result, employees are more likely to experience negative attitudes toward

their employers and engage in organizationally detrimental behaviors. These reactions are particularly troubling for the organization because they manifest themselves in decreased work motivation and increased turnover (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). To minimize the negative consequences of role ambiguity and role conflict, organizational scientists must better understand how employees interpret such role demands (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Among the variety of negative consequences resulting from role demands, supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover are the three foci of interest in the current paper because of their critical impact on an organization's survival and development. First, supervisors manage employees on the behalf of the company, and they are the direct agents of the company in employees' eyes. If employees are not satisfied with their supervisors, they are less likely to commit to the company (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004) or fulfill their task responsibilities (Petty, Mcgee, & Cavender, 1984). Second, pay is another critical factor that affects almost every aspect of attitudes and behaviors of employees in the workplace. Employees who are dissatisfied with their salaries usually perform poorly (Petty et al., 1984). Finally, withdrawal intention is a precursor of actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993), which will result in increasing cost for the company to replace the employees who turn over. Therefore, these three outcomes are of particular interest in the current study, and are examined as the consequences of role demands.

Research has demonstrated that role demands negatively impact pay satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, intention to turnover, and organizational commitment (Glazer & Beehr, 2005; Netemeyer, Johnston, & Burton, 1990; Zohar, 1995). Despite ample empirical investigations on role demand–outcomes relationship (see Tubre & Collins, 2000, for a review), the underlying mechanisms that generate these relationships have received far less attention (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008). Given that previous research suggests that the effects of role demands on employee outcomes are diminished when other exogenous variables are taken into consideration (e.g., Harris, James, & Boonthanom, 2005), it is likely that our understanding of role demands–outcomes relationship would benefit from an evaluation of the mediating mechanisms that drive them. The current study attempts to add to the understanding of this mediating mechanism with insights both from the organizational justice studies and organizational politics research.

Two independent streams of research have emerged to interpret role demands and their outcomes: organizational justice and organizational politics. Justice researchers have found that perceived justice and role demands overlapped in their prediction of job satisfaction and intention to turnover. For example, when justice perceptions were added to the prediction of pay satisfaction, the effect of role demands became statistically nonsignificant (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004). From the perspective of organizational politics, research has found that role demands are highly correlated with perceptions of organizational politics and both constructs affect job satisfaction and intention to turnover (Harris, Harris, & Harvey, 2007; Harris et al., 2005). Though both perspectives are impressive in their prediction of role demands–outcome relationships, the literature has only recently begun to develop integrative models that allow for the relative predictive capacity of organizational justice and perception of politics on work-related outcomes.

Organizational justice and politics represent distinctive aspects of an individual's ability to make sense of his/her encounters at work. This has led to a trend of simultaneously adopting these two views to predict organizational phenomena (Aryee, Chen, & Budhwar, 2004). Particularly, Harris, Andrews, and Kacmar (2007) argued that “[t]his is an important topic to study as justice and POPs [Perception of Politics] are ubiquitous in organizations, and rarely occur in isolation from one another. (p. 136)” The current study adopts the perspective that perceptions of justice and politics have integrative effects on role demands, and examines whether procedural justice and the perceptions of organizational politics simultaneously affect the relationships between the role demands and pay satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Background literature

Role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to affect a number of organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, intention to turnover, and organizational commitment (Jackson & Schuler, 1985, for a review). However, previous research has not fully clarified the underlying mechanisms that explain why role ambiguity and role conflict have such detrimental consequences (Gilboa et al., 2008). The current study attempts to provide incremental interpretations for this phenomenon and proposes a theoretical model including justice and politics perspectives. The following sections provide a detailed discussion of the proposed model (Figure 1).

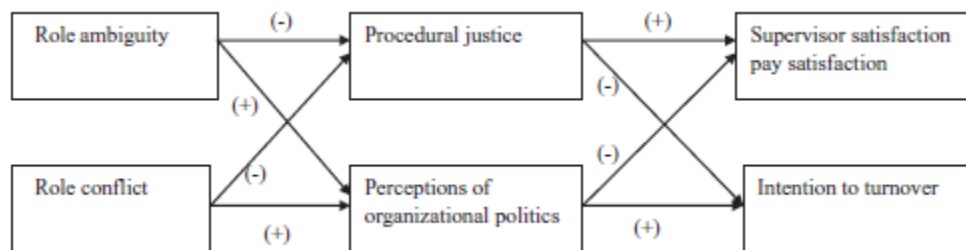


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

Role demands

Role demands are most often conceptualized as either role ambiguity or role conflict (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). According to Rizzo et al. (1970), role ambiguity occurs when employees have deficient or uncertain information regarding their job requirements. Role conflict occurs when employees face simultaneous pressures that are contradictory. The meeting of one set of demands makes the likelihood of success less likely for the focal employees in meeting other set(s). These pressures or expectations may come from a single supervisor or from multiple sources in the organization. Although role ambiguity and role conflict are usually highly correlated with each other (Jackson & Schuler, 1985), research (King & King, 1990) supports the concept that they are separate constructs.

In the organizational context, higher levels of role demands are framed as organizational stressors that have a negative effect on organizational outcomes (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). These demands have been shown across a series of studies to be inversely related to job satisfaction, intention to turnover, and performance (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson &

Schuler, 1985; Tubre & Collins, 2000). Meta-analytic results indicate that the connection between role demands and other organizational outcomes is quite strong. For instance, Jackson & Schuler (1985) meta-analyzed 96 published articles, 29 correlates of role ambiguity and role conflict, and four broad categories of organizational variables: organizational context, individual characteristics, affective reactions, and behavior reactions. They found that role demands are negatively related to supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Indirect effects of role demands

The studies mentioned above establish the significant direct effects of role demands on organizational outcomes (Glazer & Beehr, 2005; Harris, Artis, Walters, & Licata, 2006; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). However, advances in theory suggest the potential for indirect or mediating effects of role demands on these outcomes. For example, Bedeian and Armenakis (1981) found role demands affect job satisfaction and intention to turnover via the mediating role of job tension. Consistent with this research, Netemeyer et al. (1990) indicated that role demands may indirectly relate to organizational commitment and intention to leave, as partially mediated by job tension. A more recent four-country investigation found that role demands do not directly affect employees' intention to leave and organizational commitment but are mediated by anxiety (Glazer & Beehr, 2005). Finally, Harris et al. (2006) found that job resourcefulness mediates the relations between role demands and the intention to leave.

While noteworthy, these studies focused on a limited set of mediators (e.g., job tension and anxiety). As role conflict and role ambiguity are often conceptualized as organizational stressors (Jackson & Schuler, 1985), it is not surprising that stress-related variables, such as tension and anxiety, have most often been used as mediators in role demands—organizational outcomes relations. While acknowledging that role demands represent significant organizational stressors, the literature suggests that the attributions of causality that occur as a result of the cognitive appraisal process are worthy of further investigation.

Using arguments based on the cognitive appraisal theory, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggested that a cognitive appraisal process occurs when employees face role-related demands. Individuals respond to a stressful event or situation by evaluating its impact on them and how they might change it. During this process, two stages of appraisal occur. The primary appraisal involves the mental evaluation by individuals of the potential negative impact of the event or situation and how the outcomes may be determined. If they think the situation is harmful, the secondary appraisal occurs in which individuals seek approaches or reactions to avoid or minimize adverse outcomes.

When stressful role ambiguity and role conflict emerge, the primary appraisal occurs to assess how harmful the situation is (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Simply, employees begin by asking “how did this happen” (Greenberg, 2004)? The answer to this question is often found by evaluating the procedural justice inherent in the situation (Greenberg, 2004). While procedural justice represents how outcomes are determined by formal organizational rules and norms, not every organizational event is clearly predefined by rules and norms. Thus, an alternative appraisal may consider informal actions that can determine the individual encounters and outcomes at work. One such informal mechanism is the pervasiveness of political activity in the

organization (Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002). The current study offers organizational justice and organizational politics as plausible explanations of how an employee's attempts to make sense of the ambiguity and conflict within their environment may affect their subsequent attitudes toward the organization.

Procedural justice

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the decision-making procedures related to the distribution of resources (Folger, 1977). Much research has been devoted to the investigation of its antecedents and consequences (see Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001, for a review). The concept of procedural justice was first introduced by Thibaut and Walker (1975) in their study of simulated courtrooms. They found that when disputants were able to influence the process of decision making and regard the process as fair, they were more likely to accept the verdicts and consider the results as fairer than when they did not perceive influence on the decision. This finding provided initial evidence of the importance of procedural justice in people's judgment of outcome satisfaction.

Expanding on the initial findings of Thibaut and Walker (1975), Leventhal (1980) proposed six rules that characterized procedural justice: (a) allocation procedures should be consistent across individuals and over time; (b) decision makers should be neutral in the allocation process and not be driven by self-interests; (c) sufficient information is available for making any decisions; (d) it allows the corrections of potential unfair decisions; (e) the parties impacted by the decision are able to be heard in the process; (f) the process endorses the fundamental moral and ethical rules. In their entirety, these six rules provided a framework for the study of antecedents to procedural justice, and indicated that procedural justice reflects how the rules are formally established and implemented in the decision-making process in the organizations.

Research has established that procedural justice is positively related to supervisor satisfaction and pay satisfaction, and negatively related to intention to turnover. Previous research has found that procedural justice is an important predictor of an employee's evaluation of supervisors (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). Though earlier studies have found that distributive justice is a slightly more important predictor of pay satisfaction (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992), research does show that procedural justice is a significant predictor of pay satisfaction as well (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Moreover, Dailey and Kirk (1992) also found a consistent effect of procedural justice on intention to turnover. In addition, Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, and Taylor (2000) showed that procedural justice had more of an impact on withdrawal than interactional justice. Following this previous research, the current study will look at these two important facets of job satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, and pay satisfaction, as well as intention to turnover as the outcome variables.

Role demands → procedural justice

There is an emerging trend in organizational research that has assessed role demands from a justice perspective (Zohar, 1995). Consistent with this trend, a number of studies have included justice perceptions in role demands–organizational outcomes models (e.g., DeConinck & Stilwell, 1992; Zohar, 1995). In doing so, results indicate that justice perceptions account for

additional variance in the outcomes beyond role demands. Furthermore, procedural justice sometimes even diminishes the predictive power of role demands on organizational outcomes (DeConinck & Stilwell, 1992; Zohar, 1995).

According to Greenberg (2004), stressful situations are likely to initiate a sense-making process in which employees analyze the degree to which the situations were fairly determined. In Greenberg's study, he framed distributive justice (underpayment inequity) as a stress-inducing event, and employees made a primary appraisal of how the outcomes are determined by evaluating the procedure used to determine salary. Greenberg argued that the perception of procedural justice is part of the primary appraisal for employees to interpret the pay difference. Similar to Greenberg's framework, unclear job expectations and controversial job demands are analogously stressful situations. Thus, the current study argues that role ambiguity (unclear or insufficient information relevant to performing the work) and role conflict (contradictory expectations and requirements from various sources for the work; Rizzo et al., 1970) are likely antecedents for procedural justice. Particularly, the more severe or stressful the situation, the more likely it is that employees will perceive a lower level of procedural justice.

Hypothesis 1a. The higher the role ambiguity an employee experiences, the lower level of procedural justice the employee perceives.

Hypothesis 1b. The higher the role conflict an employee experiences, the lower level of procedural justice the employee perceives.

As procedural justice serves as an immediate sense-making tool for role demands in the primary appraisal stage, it is through this sense making that justice connects role demands with attitudinal outcomes and behavioral turnover. Based on this primary appraisal, individuals will develop the secondary appraisal of the stressful situations. According to cognitive appraisal theory, in the secondary appraisal, individuals seek to decrease the adverse influence of the stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). The typical coping strategies and reactions in the secondary appraisal include withdrawal behavior (e.g., intention to turnover), dissatisfaction, and physiological symptoms (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the current study, supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover are examined as reactions in the secondary appraisal. Given that procedural justice is part of the primary appraisal process, and the attitudinal outcomes and intention to turnover are part of the subsequent secondary appraisal (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Folkman et al., 1986), it is reasonable to argue that the procedural justice is likely to lead to the subsequent secondary appraisal in terms of supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover. Therefore, the current study hypothesizes the following:

Hypothesis 2. The higher the procedural justice an employee perceives, the higher level of supervisor satisfaction and pay satisfaction, and the lower level of intention to turnover the employee reports.

Based on the previous argument, the current study established two links: role demands to procedural justice, and procedural justice to outcomes. Therefore, it is indicated in the logic that procedural justice is likely to mediate the relationship between role demands and the three

outcomes of interest. In addition, previous studies have also indicated that role demands are more likely to indirectly impact organizational outcomes than directly impact (Glazer & Beehr, 2005; Harris et al., 2006). Taken together with the previous discussion of procedural justice as a primary appraisal of role ambiguity and role conflict, and using these three outcomes as reactions in the secondary appraisal, this relationship can be hypothesized as

Hypothesis 3a. Procedural justice mediates the association between role ambiguity and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Hypothesis 3b. Procedural justice mediates the association between role conflict and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Perceptions of organizational politics

Mintzberg (1983) defined organizational politics as “individual or group behaviors that is informal, ostensibly parochial typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, *illegitimate*—sanctioned neither by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (although it may exploit any one of those)” (p. 172). As such, organizational politics is a product of informal activities and is subjective in nature. Therefore, political activity consists of our perceptions of reality rather than the reality *per se* (Ferris et al., 1989). This has led researchers to emphasize employees' perceptions of organizational politics as a driving force behind their behavior (Ferris et al., 2002).

Ferris et al. (1989) provided a conceptual model of organizational politics with three sources of antecedents: organization influence, job/work environmental influences, and personal influences. Ferris et al. (2002) summarized the empirical studies related to these antecedents and indicated that all three types of antecedents: organization influences, job/work environmental influence, and personal influence have received considerable empirical support. In relation to the current study, Parker, Dipboye, and Jackson (1995) found that clarity of roles and responsibility is an antecedent of employees' perception of politics. Consistent with this previous finding, the current study argues that role ambiguity and role conflict are likely to affect the perception of politics.

Role demands–perceptions of politics relationship

The role demands–perceptions of politics relationship operates in much the same fashion as the role demands–procedural justice relationship. Consistent with Ferris et al.'s (2002) conceptualization of the perceptions of organizational politics as an attribution process, lack of clear organizational rules and role definitions increases the likelihood for employees to attribute workplace occurrences as politics because they have no concrete regulations to use as an explanation.

The perceptions of politics are likely to serve as an interpretation in the primary appraisal stage similar to procedural justice. Indeed, Ferris, Harrell-Cook, and Dulebohn (2000) postulated that the perceptions of organizational politics involve an attribution process of work situations and others' behaviors and, in fact, represent “an individual's subjective evaluation about the extent to which the work environment is characterized by co-workers and supervisors who demonstrate

such self-serving behavior” (p. 90). In the primary appraisal process, individuals attempt to figure out how the stressful situation has happened (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and since the perceptions of politics are an “attribution” of organizational events, it is likely to act as an interpretation for the employees of how the stressful situation happened. Therefore, it is reasonable to posit that role demands are likely to affect perceptions of organizational politics.

Hypothesis 4a. The higher the role ambiguity an employee experiences, the higher the level of organizational politics the employee perceives.

Hypothesis 4b. The higher the role conflict an employee experiences, the higher level of perception of politics the employee perceives.

Perceptions of organizational politics have been shown to affect a number of important organizational outcomes (Ferris et al., 2002). Specific consequences of these perceptions are included in Ferris et al.'s (1989) model, such as job satisfaction, job anxiety/stress, organizational withdrawal, and job involvement. In the later review on the empirical supports of this model, Ferris et al. (2002) found extensive empirical evidence for the original model. Particularly, Zhou and Ferris (1995) found negative effects of perceptions of politics on multiple facets of satisfactions including satisfaction with supervision, pay, promotion, and coworkers. Several studies indicated that perceptions of politics are positively related to the employee's intention to turnover (e.g., Hochwarter, Perrewé, Ferris, & Brymer, 1999; Valle & Perrewé, 2000). For example, Valle and Perrewé (2000) used a sample of 260 employees and found that the perceptions of politics affected the subjects' reported job satisfaction, job anxiety, and intention to turnover. They argue that employees view the perceptions of politics as threats, which, in turn, lead to subsequent negative reactions to them. Ferris et al. (1996) also examined supervisor satisfaction as the outcome of the perceptions of organizational politics. Consistent with previous studies (Ferris et al., 1996, 2002; Zhou & Ferris, 1995), the current study will examine supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover as outcome variables. Therefore, the current study proposes the following:

Hypothesis 5. The higher level of organizational politics an employee perceives, the lower level of supervisor satisfaction and pay satisfaction, and higher level of intention to turnover the experience reports.

Perceptions of organizational politics are likely to mediate the relationship between role demands and organizational outcomes as an interpretation of role demands. As argued earlier, role ambiguity and role conflict are possible antecedents for the perceptions of organizational politics and the perceptions of organizational politics are likely to lead to three outcomes. Therefore, it is likely that these perceptions will mediate the relationship between role demands and the outcomes, which are hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 6a. The perceptions of politics mediate the association between role ambiguity and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Hypothesis 6b. The perceptions of politics mediate the association between role conflict and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover.

Integration of justice and politics

As two consequent reactions to role demands, the perception of organizational politics and procedural justice are concerned with the clarity of organizational rules and procedures. Perceptions of organizational politics are derived from the individuals' subjective interpretations of informal behaviors and occurrences surrounding them at work, and procedural justice is based on how the rules and regulations at work are formalized and clarified. The current study examines the perceptions of politics and procedural justice at the same time as the mediators between role demands and organizational outcomes in order to fully reveal the distinctive effects of both paths.

Methods

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to all full-time employees of a national, retail organization. The surveys were accompanied by a letter of introduction from the research team and an endorsement letter from the organization, both ensuring complete confidentiality. Participation in the survey was voluntary. All responses were directed to the research team.

Participants

A total of 2,898 surveys were mailed to the employees, which in turn yielded 890 usable responses (30.7% response rate). The sample consisted of 653 females (79.5%) and 168 males (20.5%). The respondents averaged 33 years of age ($SD = 10.13$). We removed those participants who had missing data in the target variables, and this procedure reduced the final sample to 782 people.

Measures

Supervisor satisfaction and pay satisfaction

These two scales were adopted from the Job Diagnostic Survey, developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975). It is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “*extremely dissatisfied*” to “*extremely satisfied*.” The sample item for supervisor satisfaction reads, “The amount of support and guidance I receive from my supervisor.” The sample item for pay satisfaction reads, “The overall compensation package in this organization.” The reliability of the satisfaction scale is .94, and the reliability of the pay satisfaction scale is .89.

Intention to turnover

The intention to turnover is measured by a 5-item scale that uses a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). The sample item is like “I intend to quit my job.” The reliability of the scale is .87.

Procedural justice

Procedural justice was measured as a latent construct using a 16-item, 7-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always” (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). It includes two dimensions: planning and feedback. The feedback subscale consists of ten items, and the sample item reads, “Is honest and ethical in dealing with you”; the planning consists of six items, and the sample item reads, “Obtains accurate information about your performance.” The reliability of this scale is .97.

Role ambiguity and role conflict

The role ambiguity and conflict scales were adapted from Rizzo et al. (1970). The role ambiguity scale was a 6-item measure while the role conflict measure consisted of eight items. These constructs were measured with 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). The role ambiguity scale yields a reliability of .81 and the role conflict scale has a reliability of .85.

Perceptions of politics

The perceptions of organizational politics are measured by a 12-item perceptions of politics scale (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). A representative item reads, “People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.” The scale uses a 7-point scale anchored by “*strongly disagree*” and “*strongly agree*.” The reliability of this scale is .59.

Control variables

Gender and age are the control variables, measured by demographic questions. Gender was coded “0” for females and “1” for males.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Variables in the Study

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	32.63	10.13	823	—								
2. Gender	0.80	0.40	821	-0.10**	—							
3. Role ambiguity	1.81	0.79	871	-0.10**	-0.02	—						
4. Role conflict	4.10	1.83	855	0.040	-0.10**	0.46**	—					
5. Procedural justice	5.27	1.41	870	0.04	0.01	-0.59**	-0.49**	—				
6. Perceptions of organizational politics	3.43	1.00	823	-0.07	0.00	0.45**	0.49**	-0.621*	—			
7. Supervisor satisfaction	6.65	1.92	875	0.05	0.03	-0.54**	-0.44**	0.80**	-0.57**	—		
8. Pay satisfaction	3.37	1.12	870	0.12**	0.10**	-0.40**	-0.34**	0.52**	-0.48**	0.50**	—	
9. Intention to turnover	2.80	1.99	878	-0.18**	-0.07*	0.37**	0.38**	-0.45**	0.38**	-0.47**	-0.49**	—

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Descriptive statistics and correlations of variables

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and zero-order correlations for all the constructs in this study. Role ambiguity and role conflicts were

significantly correlated with mediator variables (procedural justice and perception of politics), and the mediator variables were significantly correlated with the outcome variables, which suggests the potential mechanism of a mediation effect (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Structural equation modeling

In order to access all the hypotheses simultaneously, the present study conducted a two-step analyses using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) via Amos 16.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In the first step, we conducted a CFA to examine the measurement of procedural justice, perceptions of politics, role ambiguity and role conflicts, and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction and intention to turnover. The covariance between these variables was freely estimated for the CFA model. In the second step, the hypothesized model is tested with SEM using Amos 16.0. In particular, role ambiguity and role conflicts were linked to both mediators (procedural justice and perceptions of politics) and the outcome variables (supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover). In addition, the two mediators were linked to the three outcome variables at the same time. As suggested by previous study (Hu & Bentler, 1999), it is beneficial to use multiple fit indices simultaneously to evaluate the model fit. The following indices of goodness of fit were provided:

1. Normed fit index (NFI). To examine the proportion of total variance accounted for by a model, the NFI is used (Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994). An acceptable value for the NFI is .90 (Medsker et al., 1994).
2. Comparative fit index (CFI). The CFI is similar to the NFI, except that it overcomes the difficulties associated with sample size, and as with NFI, the acceptable value for CFI is .90 (Medsker et al., 1994).
3. Tucker–Lewis index (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973). TLI is similar to NFI, but penalizes for model complexity. Marsh, Balla, and McDonald (1988) and Marsh and Hau (1996) found TLI to be relatively independent of the sample size.
4. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). RMSEA computes the average lack of fit per degree of freedom, therefore, it does not require comparison with a null model, and, as a result, it is not much affected by the sample size. For RMSEA, a value of .06 or less is recommended as a cutoff value for acceptable model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).
5. Ratio of chi-square relative to the degree of freedom. The chi-square test is a measure of the overall fit of the model to the data. A value of more than 2 for the chi-square to the degree of freedom ratio is acceptable for model fit.

Due to the missing data issue, the goodness-of-fit index and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index are not provided. A mean and intercept approach is conducted to deal with the missing data in the current study.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis

The results of the CFA indicated that the measurement for these variables in the models was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 4,239.04$, $df = 1,356$, $p < .001$). The fit indices provided further support for the

good model fit of the CFA model (TLI = .91, CFI = .91, NFI = .88, RMSEA = .049). Chi-square to *df* ratio equals 3.13, and it is greater than 2. Table 2 presents the values of chi-square, *df*, CFI, NFI, TLI, and RMSEA in the CFA model.

Table 2. CFA and SEM Model Fit Indices and Chi-Square

Models	χ^2	<i>df</i>	χ^2/df	χ^2 change	CFI	NFI	TLI	RMSEA
CFA model	4239.04*	1356	3.13		.91	.88	.91	.049
SEM model	4511.27*	1360	3.31	272.23 (4)*	.90	.87	.90	.051

* $p < .05$.

Test of hypotheses

Figure 2 presents the SEM results that examined the mediational effects of procedural justice and politics on the relationships between role demands (role ambiguity and role conflict) and supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover. As shown in Figure 2, the solid lines represent significant relationships, and standardized parameters were provided. Role ambiguity was positively related to procedural justice ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) and negatively related to the perception of politics ($\beta = .52, p < .001$). Role conflict was negatively related to procedural justice ($\beta = -.35, p < .01$) and positively related to the perceptions of politics ($\beta = .52, p < .001$). Procedural justice was positively related to supervisor satisfaction ($\beta = .73, p < .001$), positively related to pay satisfaction ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and negatively related to the intention to turnover ($\beta = -.22, p < .001$). The perceptions of politics were negatively related to supervisor satisfaction ($\beta = -.16, p < .001$), negatively related to pay satisfaction ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$) and positively related to the intention to turnover ($\beta = .28, p < .001$). The χ^2 value of 4,511.27 ($df = 1,360$) and the fit indices (CFI = .90; NFI = .87; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .051) indicate an adequate fit of the model to the data (see Table 2). The χ^2 change from the SEM model to the CFA model is significant ($\chi^2 = 272.23, df = 4$), which indicates that the SEM model has provided an incremental model fit from the CFA model. Therefore, all hypotheses are supported. In addition, we also estimated the paths between the role demands and the outcome variables; however, these direct effects are not significant when the mediational paths exist.

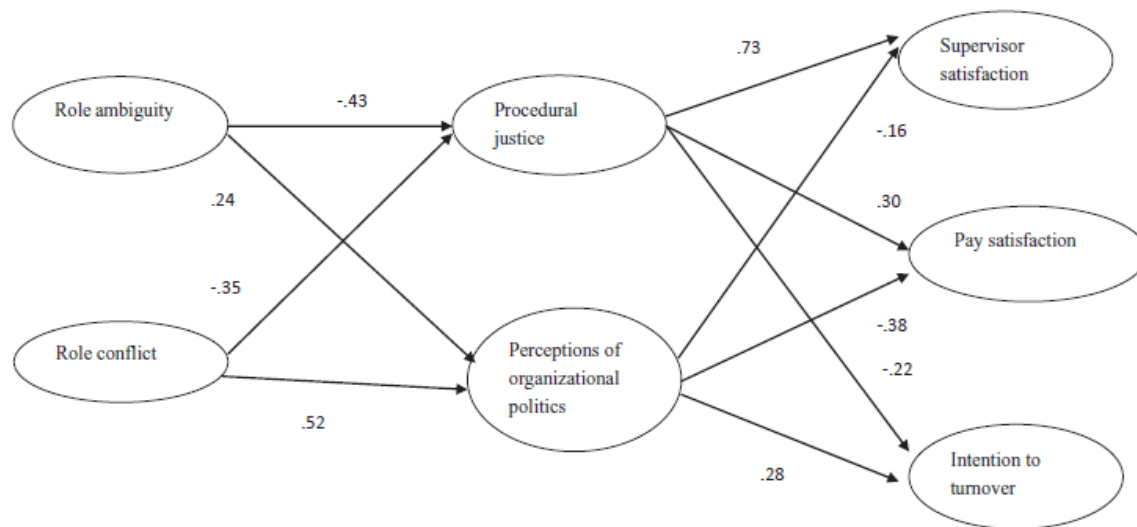


Figure 2. Structural equation modeling results.

Note. $\chi^2 = 4511.27, df = 1360$ ($p < .01$); TLI = .90, CFI = .90, and RMSEA = .051.

Discussion

Findings indicate that procedural justice and the perception of politics mediate the relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity and the outcomes of supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and intention to turnover. As predicted, role ambiguity and conflict decreased the perceptions of procedural justice. Higher levels of procedural justice were positively related to higher levels of pay and supervisor satisfaction and a lower intention to turnover. Also as predicted, role ambiguity and conflict increased perceptions of politics, which, in turn, reduced pay and supervisor satisfaction and increased the intention to turnover.

The implications of these results support the importance of the perceptions of politics and perceived procedural justice as important aspects of an individual's assessment and interpretation of stressful situations. Consistent with the previous research on cognitive appraisal theory, the current research supports the important role of the primary appraisal stage in shaping reactions to role demands. Future research is needed to explore the subprocesses in the primary appraisal stage in addition to or instead of justice and politics that influence individuals encountering stressful situations. For example, the relationship with a supervisor may contribute to the employees' interpretation of demands as well.

The present study contributes to the justice literature by relating justice to the stress context. The stress perspective in the study of justice has recently been promoted in the field. Judge and Colquitt (2004) stated that “the stress mechanism appears (at least implicitly) in many of the models in the justice domain” (p. 396); however, they also said that “[a]lthough the theoretical grounding for a justice–stress relationship seems sound; there are few tests of this linkage” (p. 396). Greenberg's (2004) conceptual framework of justice and stress proposed that distributive and procedural justice are part of the primary appraisal process, while interactive justice is involved in the secondary appraisal process. The current study, consistent with Greenberg's work, posits procedural justice as one sense-making tool for the stressful situations and provides empirical support for such relationship. Future studies exploring the relationship of interactive and distributive justice to stress are needed.

Third, the current study contributes to the organizational politics research by using the perceptions of politics as a sense-making tool in stressful situations. Beyond acting as a source of stress, the perceptions of politics carries information to employees concerning how and why things happen in organizations (Ferris et al., 1989). Future studies may explore this sense-making role of the perceptions of politics in some other demands–outcome relationships.

Fourth, future researchers should consider a more sophisticated model that recognizes the varied influence of procedural justice in organizations. Procedural justice is a set of practices, either strategically planned or accidental, that are utilized by the organization to manage human resource decision making based on an effort to manage their employees effectively and fairly. Although beyond this study's scope, procedural justice has been shown to increase organizational commitment, trust in management, and the intention to turnover. Huselid and Becker (1996), for example, included a number of procedural justice factors (merit pay, formal performance appraisal, decisions based on performance appraisals) in their list of “high performance work

practice” used by the more profitable firms. Effective procedural justice should decrease role conflict and role ambiguity through fair processes for assigning role-required behaviors. Therefore, future models should consider procedural justice as an antecedent variable in an expanded version of the current model.

Finally, questions remain about the modeling of the relationship between politics and justice in future models. Research on organizational factors that increase political behavior include a number of variables whose occurrence is related to procedural justice. As discussed below, the intercorrelation between the variables is high. While this may be due to methodological shortcomings, prior research on the relationship between the variables used suggested that the limited scope of the current model may play a role. For example, reallocation of resources, promotional opportunities, low trust, and unclear performance evaluations systems have been related to increased political behavior (Ferris et al., 2002). In the former two examples, high levels of procedural justice mediate the effects of their occurrence on increased political behavior. For the latter two examples, procedural justice is an antecedent to increased politics. Thus, procedural justice, as well as other types of justice as noted above, influences the relationship between the employees' experience *and* their understanding and reaction to their perceived experience.

Limitations

The current study used a cross-sectional survey methodology; therefore, it is open to the criticism of the common methods bias. Indeed, high correlations among some of the variables in the current model might be due to this bias. A Harman's single-factor test was conducted to assess whether or not a single factor contributed to the variance in the study variables. The results of this test yielded eight factors with eigenvalues ranging from 19.26 to 1.01. The percentages of variance for the factors ranged from 39% to 2% and accounted for 65% of the total variance. These results suggest that the common methods bias is not a serious concern in the current study. In addition, the measurement model in the structural equation modeling analysis showed satisfactory indices for model fit ($\chi^2 = 4,239.04$, $df = 1,356$, $p < .001$). The fit indices provided further support for the good model fit of the measurement model (TLI = .91, CFI = .91, NFI = .88, RMSEA = .049, see Table 2). Chi-square to df ratio equals 3.13, and it is greater than 2. Though the current study cannot rule out the potential of the common methods variance bias, the Harman's single-factor test and the measurement model in SEM indicate it is not a serious concern for the present study. Moreover, organizational researchers have suggested that though the correlations between variables measured with the same method may be inflated, the seriousness of this issue may be overstated (Spector, 2006). In order to diminish such effects, future research might need to use data from various sources and via various data collection methods. In addition, qualitative methods might also be useful to validate the relationship in the current study because the nature of underlying mechanisms might be better captured with individualized qualitative data collection.

Practical implications

Managers need to keep in mind that employees interpret role demands they experience and the present study suggests that there are reasons for these interpretations. First, these interpretations

may occur because unfair organizational rules and norms of resource allocations lead to the uncertainty of the role and conflicting expectations on the employees' roles. Second, these findings suggest that employees attribute their role demands to unfair procedure in the organization or informal political behaviors of others, and in turn, these attributions affect their satisfaction with the supervisor and pay, as well as their intention to quit.

For example, in the performance appraisal context, employees who experience contradicting or unclear role demands may attribute such demands to their supervisor's attempt to take their credit or to the unfair performance evaluation procedures, and in turn, are likely to experience reduced supervisor satisfaction and increased withdrawal intentions. However, when the manager explains to employees how the performance appraisal systems function, they may be able to prevent employees from attributing their role demands to procedures and political behaviors at work. Therefore, employees' satisfaction with supervisors and intention to turnover are less likely to be affected. In another common situation in the workplace, when the adjustment of salary is made, employees who experience role demands may attribute this stressor to unjust decision-making procedures and decrease their satisfaction level toward pay and supervisors involved in the decision-making process. This, in turn, leaves them more likely to consider quitting their organization. Therefore, it is important for managers to clarify such situations, and discourage employees' injustice and politics attribution.

Conclusion

Justice and politics are inherent in the nature of organizations, and members of organizations utilize both in their attempts to understand their experience at work. The current study examined the employees' role demands in terms of role ambiguity and role conflicts as predictors for three organizational outcomes: supervisor satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and the intention to turnover. By utilizing justice and politics as mediators to better understand the demands–outcome relationship, results indicated support for the proposed mediation model. Procedural justice and the perception of politics account for the effects of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the three outcome variables, adding to our understanding of the underlying mechanism of role demands. We hope the findings in the present research provide a strong case for the further exploration of justice–politics perspectives on interpreting organizational phenomena.

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