

Chapter 7

The Effects of Perceived Role, Career, Goal, and Performance Uncertainty on Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to determine the effects of perceived role, career, goal, and performance uncertainty on employee task and contextual performance. The research model was constructed around four independent variables (role, career, goal, and performance uncertainty) and two dependent variables (task and contextual performance). Cronbach alphas for each survey were over 0.85. To determine the validity level of the surveys, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and found that all surveys are between acceptable limits of goodness of fit index. Two hundred thirty-nine employees responded to the surveys. Principal components analysis (PCA) was used to create indices for uncertainty perception. PCA shows that the employees included in the study generally were in role, goal, career, and performance uncertainty. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant effect of role and goal uncertainty on employee task performance. The other main result is that there is a statistically significant effect of role and performance uncertainty on the employees' contextual performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Between the years 1967 and 1973, Hofstede studied on employees who worked for IBM and determined “uncertainty avoidance” as a major cultural dimension in his cultural analysis. Hofstede (2011:10) defines uncertainty avoidance as “the degree to which the members of a society feel threatened with uncertainty and ambiguity”. It is stated that in societies who score high on this dimension, there is a tendency towards more codes, regulations, and formal structures in order to reduce uncertain conditions. On the contrary, in societies with a low score on the uncertainty avoidance, it is observed that business is conducted on a daily basis, rules are disliked, and uncertainty is viewed as acceptable. Within the framework of Hofstede’s cultural classification, the results of the research performed by “*Hofstede Insights*” for Turkey has shown that uncertainty avoidance tendency in Turkey is low. In other words, it is seen that more laws and rules are needed in Turkey (Sıgır and Gürbüz, 2013:528).

With reference to the concerning research performed by *Hofstede Insights*, it can be seen that as an extension of a social culture, also in Turkish businesses, uncertainty avoidance and institutionalization tendency are low and organizations with formal structures and systematical processes are restricted accordingly (Yolaç and Doğan, 2011:106; Cevher, 2014:10; Ak, 2010:240; Çakıcı and Özer, 2007:87). In businesses having no systematic processes and with weak formal construct, uncertain conditions emerge and the concerning uncertainty reflects on employees’ performance in a negative way (Johlke and Iyer, 2013; Downey and Slocum, 1982). Similarly, uncertain conditions may appear due to the lack of systematic conditions in human resources processes as well. Role uncertainties (Rizzo et al., 1970), career planning uncertainties (Ito and Brotheridge, 2001), uncertainties stemming from restricted performance feedback (Bennett et al., 1990) or goal uncertainties (Jung, 2013) can be mentioned to exemplify the uncertainties related to human resources systems.

When literature in Turkish examined, it is possible to come across the studies supporting the main research question of the current research. The findings of the research by Ceylan and Ulutürk (2006:55) investigating the relationships of role uncertainty between job satisfaction and performance showed that role uncertainty affected employees’ job satisfaction and performance negatively. Another study (Sabuncuoğlu, 2008:46) concluded that role uncertainty led to desensitization and accordingly reduced job satisfaction of individuals.

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