



# ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS, JOB COMMITMENT AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT OF THE VETERINARIANS OF KERALA\*

Soumya Sankar<sup>1</sup>, P. Reeja George<sup>2</sup>,  
P.J. Raj Kamal<sup>3</sup>, T.S. Rajeev<sup>4</sup> and  
K.A. Mercey<sup>5</sup>

Department of Veterinary and  
Animal Husbandry Extension  
College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences,  
Mannuthy-680 651, Thrissur, Kerala

Received:03.08.2012  
Accepted:12.10.2012

## Abstract

*An empirical study was conducted to understand the influence of organizational role stress on job and social commitment of veterinarians in the Animal Husbandry Department, Kerala. The sample comprised of a total of 155 veterinary surgeons and 45 senior veterinary surgeons. Nearly eighty percent of respondents felt that stress due to organizational roles was medium to high. The role dimensions viz., inter role distance, role stagnation, personal inadequacy, self role distance and role ambiguity were found to be negatively and highly significantly correlated with job commitment.*

**Key words:** Job commitment, organizational role stress, social commitment, veterinarians

Stress is the result of lack of fit between a person in terms of personality, aptitude and ability and his environment where in he is unable to cope with the constraints or demands encountered (Harrison, 1976). Veterinarians of the Department of Animal Husbandry play a major role in carrying out various livestock development activities. They have been involved in the treatment of animals and of late they have the additional responsibility of carrying out project work associated with

implementing livestock development schemes. Consequently, the responsibility and work load of a veterinarian has increased considerably and they are placed in positions where they have to play multiple roles. If the role occupant is unable to balance the different roles it may lead to their inadequate performance which could adversely affect productivity. Thus, it is important to study the nature and type of role stressors of veterinarians and its influence on their job and social commitment.

Numerous studies have been conducted about stress and burnout among other healthcare professionals. However, there are only a few formal studies on stress among the veterinarians (Hansez *et al.*, 2008). A better understanding of the stressors in veterinary practice will help in the formulation of strategies to improve the working conditions of veterinarians.

## Materials and Methods

Two separate lists of 920 veterinary surgeons and 270 senior veterinary surgeons of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Kerala who perform clinical as well as extension project functions were prepared. A simple random sample of 460 veterinary surgeons and 135 senior veterinary surgeons were selected out of this population. A structured schedule was

\*Part of the MVSc thesis submitted by the first author to the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode

1. MVSc. Scholar

2&4. Assistant Professors

3. Professor and Head

5. Professor and Head, Department of Statistics

prepared by consulting veterinarians themselves and was sent to the selected respondents by mail. A total of 170 veterinary surgeons and 47 senior veterinary surgeons returned the filled up questionnaires. Questionnaire data were collated and analysed.

Organizational role stress (ORS) was measured using the ORS scale developed by Pareek (1983). Pareek (1983) observed that roles are any position a person holds in a system or organization as defined by the expectations that various significant persons, including him, have from that position. The organizational role stress scale measured stress due to the component ten dimensions viz:- inter-role distance, role stagnation, role expectation conflict, role erosion, role overload, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy.

Job commitment was operationalised as the extent of involvement of the respondent in the different activities of the department. The scale developed by Joseph (1987) with suitable modifications was adopted for the study.

Social commitment scores were indicative of the extent of interference of an

individual's job with his/her desire to perform certain socially important roles. A scale to measure social commitment of veterinarians was developed for the purpose.

In all three cases, the respondents were classified into three categories viz:- high, medium and low applying the Dalenius-Hodges cumulative root f method.

## Results and Discussion

Results of the study indicate that 45.5 per cent of the respondents perceived organisational role stress to be medium (Table 1). The trend was however from medium to high rather than medium to low level of organizational role stress

Forty nine percent of the respondents fell in the high social commitment category. The trend of social commitment was however medium to high as in the case of job commitment.

Data in table 4 indicate that out of the ten dimensions of organizational role stress, five dimensions viz. inter role distance, role stagnation, personal inadequacy, self role distance and role ambiguity were negatively and highly significantly correlated with job commitment. In order to assess the relative

**Table 1.** Distribution of the respondents based on their perception of organizational role stress

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<47 (Low)	40	20
2.	47-93 ( Medium)	91	45.5
3.	>93 (High)	69	34.5
	Total	200	100

N=200

**Table 2.** Distribution of the respondents based on job commitment

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<28 (Low)	58	29
2.	28-32 (Medium)	74	37
3.	>32(High)	68	34
	Total	200	100

N=200

**Table 3.** Distribution of the respondents based on social commitment

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	10-16 (Medium)	34	17
2.	<10 (Low)	98	49
3.	>16 (High)	68	34
	Total	200	100

N=200

contribution of the dimensions of organizational role stress to job commitment, the data was subjected to multiple regression analysis. It was observed that inter role distance, role stagnation, personal inadequacy, self role distance and role ambiguity were significant in explaining the variation in job commitment.

The coefficient of determination was found to be 19.2 per cent. This indicate that 19.2 per cent of the total variability in the job commitment could be attributed to the ten dimensions of organizational role stress.

Role stagnation has been reported to be a feeling of being stuck in the same role. Pareek (1993) observed that role stagnation also includes stress related to career progression and obstacles in career. A sense of higher self role distance has been explained by Agrawal and Chahar (2007) in terms of the nature, values and personality of respondents with respect to their chosen field of work. Beehr *et al.*(1976), Ursprung (1986) , Cooper (1991) and Cordes and Dougherty (1993), observed that role ambiguity exists when an individual lacks information about the requirements of his or her role and how those role requirements are to be met and as well as the evaluation procedures available to ensure that the role is being performed successfully. Results of the present study indicate that role ambiguity was significantly and negatively associated with job commitment and this might be due to the fact that role ambiguity led to negative outcomes such as reduced confidence, anxiety, a sense of hopelessness and depression as observed by Jackson and Schuler (1985) and Muchisky

(1997). Kahn *et al.* (1964) also observed that when people suffer from role ambiguity they experience lower job satisfaction, high job related tension, greater futility and lower self esteem. Similar findings were reported by Reijula *et al.*(2003).

Data in table 5 indicate that out of the ten dimensions of organizational role stress studied, two dimensions *viz.* inter role distance and role over load were positively and highly significantly correlated with social commitment, while role stagnation was negatively and highly significantly correlated. In order to assess the relative contribution of organizational role stress to social commitment, the data was subjected to multiple regression analysis. The coefficient of determination was found to be 3.5 per cent which indicated that 3.5 per cent of the total variability in social commitment could be attributed to the ten dimensions of organizational role stress.

Result of the present study indicate that out of the ten dimensions of organizational role stress studied, two dimensions, inter role distance and role overload were positively correlated with social commitment while role stagnation was negatively correlated. Sarantakos (1996) observed that family and work were interrelated and inter dependent to the extent that experiences in one area could affect the quality of life in the other. Lasky (1995) observed that the demands of family could be a major source of extra organisational stress that can complicate or even precipitate work place stress.

The social commitment scores were

**Table. 4.** Multiple regression analysis of the dimensions of organisational role stress with job commitment

Dimensions	Correlation coefficient	Regression coefficient	Standard error	t- value
Inter role distance	-0.067**	0.260	0.084	- 3.090*
Role stagnation	-0.187**	-0.208	0.113	- 1.834
Role expectation conflict	-0.148	0.104	0.119	- 0.874
Role erosion	-0.088	0.001810	0.096	0.019
Role overload	0.005	0.09782	0.089	1.103
Role isolation	-0.084	0.03570	0.109	0.328
Personal inadequacy	-0.271**	-0.194	0.091	- 2.123*
Self role distance	-0.193**	0.06569	0.111	- 0.591
Role ambiguity	-0.286**	-0.241	0.098	- 2.450*
Resource inadequacy	-0.123	0.08617	0.095	0.904

\*( $p < 0.05$ ) \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ) Intercept 31.941 F = 4.495 \* R<sup>2</sup> = 0.192

**Table 5.** Multiple regression analysis of the ten dimensions of organisational role stress with social commitment

Dimensions	Correlation coefficient	Regression coefficient	Standard error	t- value
Inter role distance	0.336**	0.267	0.092	3.155**
Role stagnation	0.193**	0.09996	0.085	0.879
Role expectation conflict	-0.066	-0.161	0.114	-1.347
Role erosion	0.031	0.05396	0.120	-0.562
Role overload	0.302**	0.257	0.096	2.883**
Role isolation	0.123	-0.08471	0.089	0.776
Personal inadequacy	0.121	0.07779	0.109	0.847
Self role distance	0.242	-0.102	0.112	-0.910
Role ambiguity	0.040	-0.8292	0.099	-0.840
Resource inadequacy	0.100	-0.04876	0.096	-0.510

\*( $p < 0.05$ ) \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ) Intercept = 11.707 F = 7.266\* R<sup>2</sup> = 0.035

indicative of the extent of interference of an individual's job with his/her desire to perform certain roles in relation to society. Higher social commitment scores indicated higher perceived interference of the job with other social roles of the respondent.

Inter role distance and role overload were found significant in explaining the variation due to social commitment. In both cases there was a positive correlation with social commitment, in cases where individuals experience role stagnation, it would be accompanied by feelings of erosion of prestige and status coupled with the possibility of disappointment and frustration which could significantly influence their ability to empathize with other elements of their social world (Pareek, 1983) as was evidenced by the results of the present study which showed a negative association between role stagnation and social commitment. Hansez *et al.* (2008) and Meehan and Bradley (2007) found that veterinary working life had more of a negative effect on home life than in other professions. Hansez *et al.* (2008) concluded that the working time of veterinary surgeons did not allow them to fulfill elementary family roles which were perceived as difficult by practitioners and probably even more by their spouses and children.

Adoption of stress management interventions specifically for veterinarians will help to improve the well being in the veterinary profession.

Data in table 5 indicate that out of the ten dimensions of organizational role stress

studied, two dimensions viz. inter role distance and role over load were positively and highly significantly correlated with social commitment, while role stagnation was negatively and highly significantly correlated. In order to assess the relative contribution of organizational role stress to social commitment, the data was subjected to multiple regression analysis. The coefficient of determination was found to be 3.5 per cent which indicated that 3.5 per cent of the total variability in social commitment could be attributed to the ten dimensions of organizational role stress.

Result of the present study indicate that out of the ten dimensions of organizational role stress studied, two dimensions, inter role distance and role overload were positively correlated with social commitment while role stagnation was negatively correlated. Sarantakos (1996) observed that family and work were interrelated and inter dependent to the extent that experiences in one area could affect the quality of life in the other. Lasky (1995) observed that the demands of family could be a major source of extra organisational stress that can complicate or even precipitate work place stress.

The social commitment scores were indicative of the extent of interference of an individual's job with his/her desire to perform certain roles in relation to society. Higher social commitment scores indicated higher perceived interference of the job with other social roles of the respondent.

Inter role distance and role overload were found significant in explaining the variation due

to social commitment. In both cases there was a positive correlation with social commitment, in cases where individuals experience role stagnation, it would be accompanied by feelings of erosion of prestige and status coupled with the possibility of disappointment and frustration which could significantly influence their ability to empathize with other elements of their social world (Pareek, 1983) as was evidenced by the results of the present study which showed a negative association between role stagnation and social commitment. Hansez *et al.* (2008) and Meehan and Bradley (2007) found that veterinary working life had more of a negative effect on home life than in other professions. Hansez *et al.* (2008) concluded that the working time of veterinary surgeons did not allow them to fulfill elementary family roles which were perceived as difficult by practitioners and probably even more by their spouses and children.

Adoption of stress management interventions specifically for veterinarians will help to improve the well being in the veterinary profession.

### Acknowledgement

The authors are thankful to the Dean, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy for the facilities provided.

### References

- Beehr, T.A., Walsh, J.T. and Taber, T.D. 1976. Perceived situational moderators of the relationship between subjective role ambiguity and role strain. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **61**: 35-40.
- Cooper, C.L. 1991. Stress in organizations. In: Smith, M. (Ed.), *Analysing Organisational Behaviour*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, MacMillan. 251p.
- Cordes, C.L. and Dougherty, T.W. 1993. A review and integration of research on job burnout. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* **18**: 621-656.
- Harrison, R.V. 1976. Job stress as person-environment misfit. *Annual meeting of the American Psychological association*, Washington. 34p.
- Hansez, I., Schins, F. and Rollin, F. 2008. Occupational stress, work-home interference and burnout among Belgian veterinary practitioners. *Irish Vet. J.* **61**: 233-241.
- Jackson, S. E. and R. S. Schuler. 1985. A meta-analysis and conceptual critique of research on role ambiguity and role conflict in work settings. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.* **36**: 16-78.
- Joseph, J. 1987. A study of factors related to communication effectiveness of village level extension personnel. *MSc(Ag). Thesis*, Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur, 131p.
- Lasky, R.G. 1995. Occupational stress: a disability management perspective. In: D.E. Shrey & M. Lacerete (Eds.), *Principles and Practices of Disability Management in India*. India, pp.370-409.
- Meehan, M.P. and Bradley, L. 2007. Identifying and evaluating job stress within the Australian small animal veterinary profession. *Aust. Vet. Pract.* **37**: 70-83.
- Muchisky, M.M. 1997. Trajectory forms as visual information in bounce events. In M.A. Schmuckler & J.M. Kennedy (Eds.), *Studies in perception and action. Ninth International Conference on perception and action*. pp.43-46.
- Pareek, U. 1983. Organizational role stress. In: Gordstein, L.D. and Pfeiffer, J. W. (Eds.) *The 1983 manual for facilitators, trainers and consultants*. San Diego California University, pp. 115-118.
- Pareek, U. 1993. *Making Organizational Role Effective*. Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Ltd, New Delhi. 256p.
- Reijula, K., Rasanen, K., Hamalainen, M. and Rinta-Jouppi, M. 2003. Work environment and occupational health of Finnish Veterinarians. *American J. Industrial Med.* **44**: 46-57.
- Sarantakos, S. 1996. *Modern Families*, South Yarra, MacMillan Education, Australia, 298p.
- Ursprung, A.W. 1986. Incidence and correlates of burnout in residential service settings. *Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin.* **29**: 239.