Chapter 5

ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role ambiguity is defined as the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding expectations associated with a role. Ambiguity occurs when an individual is unclear regarding his job duties and responsibilities.

The potential degree of clarity or ambiguity in a role can be assessed by investigating the availability of relevant information within the role set. Ambiguity may be aroused regarding various aspects of the role and of the situations surrounding it. The person may be uncertain about who has a legitimate right to influence him or about the limits of his own authority over others. Confusion may center on organizational rules and regulation to his position. The focal person is likely to experience two types of role ambiguity. One, concerning the task and the related activities; the other concerning the feedback regarding his performance of the task.

The relationships of the eight independent variables viz. age, education, experience, span of control, family responsibilities, job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress, with the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives are examined in this chapter in addition to differences that exist with gender, types of organization and nature of work.

Correlations among the three dependent variables, viz. role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload have been computed to verify the existing relationship among these variables. The computed 'r' value between role conflict and role
ambiguity is -0.095 and the correlation between role conflict and role overload is 0.133. The computed results using SPSS package is given in Appendix E.

Hypotheses being tested in this study are:

RA-H1 There is a significant difference between male and female executives in the experienced role ambiguity.

RA-H2 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the public and private sector organizations.

RA-H3 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

RA-H4 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the manufacturing and service oriented organizations.

RA-H5 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the consultancy and service oriented organization.

RA-H6 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.

RA-H7 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience in terms of job tenure i.e. number of years of service of women executives.

RA-H8 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational levels of women executives.
There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and span of control/supervision of women executives.

There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.

There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.

There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.

There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives.

The objective of this study is to examine the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives due to their multiple roles in the work organization and family. How the experienced role ambiguity is associated with socio-biographical factors such as age, education, number of years of experience, family responsibilities and what are the work related outcomes of such ambiguity are also enquired into in this chapter.

Gender difference in role ambiguity

Gender difference in role ambiguity has been reported in various studies. The responses from male and female executives are coded analyzed to verify the gender effect on role ambiguity. Responses obtained from male and female executives in the same age group are used for this analysis to eliminate the effect due to age.
**Hypothesis (RA-H1):** There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives.

**Table 5.1a**

**Gender difference in role ambiguity of experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (35 to 40 years)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>RA score Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Difference between the means</th>
<th>Obtained ‘t’ value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1a shows the gender difference in the role ambiguity of male and female executives. The mean value of role ambiguity of male is 22.1 and that of the female executives is 21.7. The difference of the two means is 0.4. The standard deviation of the male executives is 1.5 and that of the female is 1.3 and the calculated ‘t’ value is 1.29 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level. The obtained t-value is not significant at 0.05 level.

This table indicates that **there is no significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives (age group 35-40).**

There are studies reporting that age is negatively related with role ambiguity, and age is positively related with role ambiguity. Age is one of the major factor
effecting role ambiguity. The negative relationship shows that women executives in the lower age group experience higher role ambiguity due to their multiple roles in the work and family which depleted their energies and often leads question their own physical, psychological abilities. This condition often leads to role ambiguity.

Various studies reported that role ambiguity is maximum at lower age group. It has been established that females at lower age group have more role ambiguity because of the adjustments they have to make at the beginning of their married life and the presence of infants in the house etc. This fact is further enquired into by analysing the data obtained from executives at a lower age group (25-35).

**Table 5.1b**

Gender difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (25-35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of respondents</th>
<th>Number (N)</th>
<th>Mean (x')</th>
<th>Standard deviation (S.D.)</th>
<th>Difference between mean (x1'-x2')</th>
<th>Obtained t-value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1b gives the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the same age group (25-35). The mean value of role conflict experienced by the female executives is 20.3 and that of the male executives is 19.7. The standard deviation of the male executives is 2.6 and that of the female executives is 2.3. The observed difference in the mean values of male and female
executives is 0.6. The calculated 't' value is 1.05 which is not found significant. This result indicates that there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the lower age group.

The data and analysis presented in the table shows that there is no difference in role ambiguity experienced by female and male executives in the lower age group (25-35 years).

Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age. Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship between role ambiguity and age.

Peltit (1973) finds a negative relationship between role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Elsenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981). But this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in similar background.

There is no gender difference in any type of role ambiguity experienced by the executives. It may be due to the fact that in the modern life women are having equal opportunities in the society with men.

The data and analysis presented in the table shows that there is no gender effect in the role ambiguity experienced by executives. It is purely due to the age.
Public and private sector organizations

The women executives working in different types of organizations (viz. public and private sector organizations) may experience different levels of role ambiguity. The following hypothesis is formulated and tested for finding the significance.

*Hypothesis (RA-H2):* There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of private and public sector organizations.

**Table 5.2**
Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in private and public sector organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>RA score Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>difference of Means</th>
<th>Obtained ‘t’ value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 gives the mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the private and public sector organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the private sector organization is 22.04 and that of the public sector organization is 21.8. The difference between the means is 0.24 and the standard
deviations are 1.8 and 1.23 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 0.68 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level. So it is not significant even at 0.05 level.

Thus it is inferred that there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the private and public sector organizations.

Manufacturing and consultancy organizations

The following hypothesis was tested to examine the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Hypothesis (RA-H3) There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Table 5.3
Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean score of role ambiguity</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table 5.3 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing sector organization is 20.6 and that of the consultancy sector organization is 20.1. The standard deviation in manufacturing sector organization is 1.42 and that of consultancy sector is 1.04. The calculated 't' value is 1.92 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant.

This results rejects the hypothesis that, there is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in manufacturing and consultancy sector organization.

The present study shows that there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in manufacturing and consultancy sector organization.

There is no adequate literature available discussing the difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the executives in different organizations.

**Manufacturing and service sectors**

In the following table, results of the analysis to examine the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service organizations is given.
**Hypothesis (RA-H4)** There is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of the manufacturing and service sector organization.

**Table 5.4**

Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service sector organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number of executives</th>
<th>RA Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>Obtained ‘t’ value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing sector organization is 20.6 and that of the service sector organization is 20.71. The difference between means is 0.10 and the standard deviation of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing sector organization is 1.42 and that of service sector is 1.00. The calculated ‘t’ value is 0.63 which is lower than the table value, hence it is not significant even at 0.05 level.

This result rejects the hypothesis that, there is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of manufacturing and service sector.
organizations. Adequate literature in this field is not available for a comparative study.

So, it is concluded from the present study that **there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of manufacturing and service sector organizations**

Consultancy and service organizations

The role ambiguity experienced may be different due to the nature of the work the executives are performing. Data obtained from women executives in consultancy and service organizations are analysed to test the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis (RA-H5)** There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of consultancy and service organizations.

Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>RA score Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Difference of means</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20.71</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.5 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the consultancy and service organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the executives in the consultancy sector organization is 20.1 and that of the service sector organization is 20.71, the difference of mean is 0.61 and the standard deviation of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing sector organization is 1.04 and that of service sector is 1.05. The calculated ‘t’ value is 3.3 which is higher than the table value, hence it is significant at 0.01 level.

This result supports the hypothesis that, there is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in consultancy and service organizations. This may be due to the difference in the nature of work and organizational difference.

The conclusion arrived at from the present study is that there is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the consultancy and service sector organization.

Age and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is tested to understand the relationship between age and role ambiguity experienced by women executives.

Hypothesis (RA-H6) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.
Table 5.6

Correlation between role ambiguity and age of women executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity and age</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>-0.149</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Significant at 0.05 level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 shows that the relationship between role ambiguity and age. The 'r' value is -0.149 and the calculated value of 't' is 2.05, which is significant at 0.05 level. This result supports the hypothesis that as age increases the amount of experienced role ambiguity tends to decrease.

Peltit (1973) reported a negative relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Elsenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981) but this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in a similar background.

Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age.

Peltit (1973) finds a negative relationship between role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Elsenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981). But this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in similar background.
Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship with role ambiguity and age.

From the present study, it is found that there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.

Experience and role ambiguity

Number of years of experience may be a major factor affecting the role ambiguity of women executives in organizations. The following hypothesis is tested from data given in the table 5.8.

**Hypothesis (RA-H7)** There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; experience</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>-0.172</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>Significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and experience. The 'r' value is -0.172 and the calculated 't' value is 2.35 which is higher than the table value indicating it is significant at 0.01 level. This means that role ambiguity has
a significant negative relationship with experience. i.e., higher the years of experience lesser will be the role ambiguity.

Schuler (1977) reported that the more experienced employees had lower levels of performance with high role ambiguity, and higher performance levels with low role ambiguity, compared with the employees with less experience. Schuler’s hypothesis that better educated and more experienced employees adapt to role ambiguity is very relevant for relating role ambiguity with experience and job performance levels.

An employee, who just joined in an organization might find his role ambiguous, as it is his initial role. This might also be due to the organizational climate, which is new to him. One who grows old in the organization might not find ambiguity regarding his role as the role becomes “routinized” and he becomes acquainted with the duties and responsibilities. Thus he will be able to tackle the problems with more confidence.

Chonko (1979) found that role ambiguity was negatively related for less experienced sales people because they often find themselves in new situations requiring new information. Experienced sales people tend to have less ambiguity.

Peltit (1973) found that role conflict and role ambiguity were both negatively related to various forms of organizational tenure.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported no significant relationship between role ambiguity and job experience for the technical as well as non-technical supervisors.
Eisenhauer (1987) reported that those with the least amount of academic experience had less role ambiguity than with a moderate amount of such exposure.

The relationship between role ambiguity and the propensity to leave the organization has varied across investigations from positive (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) to non significant (e.g., Hamner & Tosi, 1974). Two such correlational studies have found positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover (Brief & Aldag, 1976; Lyons, 1971).

The conclusion from the present study is that there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.

Education level and role ambiguity

Education is one of the major tools which provides individuals the necessary qualifications to fulfill socioeconomic roles. In the case of women, higher education has much importance as it helps them to find their rightful place in the society. The following hypothesis is tested.

Hypothesis (RA-H8) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.
Table 5.8

Correlation between role ambiguity and education of women executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; education</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>-0.212</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>Significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8 gives the correlation between role ambiguity and education. The 'r' value is -0.212 and the calculated 't' value is equal to 2.95 which is significant at 0.01 level. The inference is that higher the educational level lesser the degree of role ambiguity.

Years of education and years of work experience relevant to the present job, and organizational level were not found to moderate the relationships between satisfaction and performance and role conflict and ambiguity (Schuler, 1977).

When educational qualifications are not suited for one's job, one tends to experience lack of role clarity both in terms of goals as well as responsibilities. Such a situation leads to role ambiguity (Sreelatha, 1991).

Level of the employee also plays an important role. At lower level, one is more likely to find conflicting expectations, as it might be one's initial role. When the employee gets higher positions in the organization, he becomes "routinized" and has better understanding regarding the responsibilities and duties associated with his job.
It is concluded from the present study that there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.

Span of control/supervision and Role ambiguity

Few studies have examined the relationship between role ambiguity and span of control/supervision. I.e. how the number of individuals working under the supervision of one person affects the role ambiguity experienced by him. The following hypothesis is tested to examine the possible relationship between role ambiguity and span of control.

**Hypothesis (RA-H9)** There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and span of control/supervision of women executives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; span of control</th>
<th>Obtained ‘t’ value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9 shows that the ‘r’ value and ‘t’ values of the correlation between role ambiguity and span of control. The ‘r’ value is -0.045 and the ‘t’ value is 0.57
which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level. The finding does not warrant any definite conclusion in the relationship between role ambiguity and span of control though the trend is negative.

There is no relationship between span of control and role ambiguity (Sreelatha 1991).

The researcher could not find adequate literature on the possible relationship between role ambiguity and span of control.

From the present study it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between role ambiguity experienced by women executives and span of control/supervision.

Family responsibility and role ambiguity

A working women also has to look after the family and the family members satisfied. In order to accomplish everything, she must not only budget her time; but she must also be flexible, since she is enacting multiple roles. The following hypothesis is tested to verify this fact.

*Hypothesis (RA-H10):* There is a positive relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.
Table 5.10

Correlation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities. The 'r' value is 0.137 and the calculated 't' value is 1.92 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant. This result rejects the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities, though the trend is positive.

It is concluded from the present study that there is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.

Job satisfaction and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction.
Hypothesis (RA-H11): There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.

Table 5.11
Correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; job satisfaction</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11 shows the 'r' value and the 't' value of the correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction are given. The 'r' value is -0.038 and the 't' value to 0.55 which is lower than the table value and hence not significant. This result rejects the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction.

When "supervision" and instructions given to a person involve contradictory expectations and non clarity of the nature of work, it may result in role ambiguity and dissatisfaction with job. Lack of proper recognition for employee's skills and abilities may also affect the growth of the individual in the organization resulting in job dissatisfaction. (Sreelatha, 1991).

Studies on the effects of role ambiguity reveal that lack of clarity about behavioural expectations causes a greater concern with own (vs. work group)
performance, lower actual and perceived group productivity, less concern or involvement with the group, unfavorable attitudes toward role senders, an increased tension, anxiety, depression, and causally linked to turnover (Johnon & Graen 1973)

Other studies, however, indicate difference in the impact of role ambiguity across occupations. Although the preponderance of the evidence shows role ambiguity to be associated with job dissatisfaction (Beehr et al. 1976; Caplan et al. 1975; Greene 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Johnson & Stinson 1975; Paul 1974; Rizzo et al., 1970) studies among nurse's aides (Brief & Aldag 1976), managers (Tosi, 1971), teachers (Tosi & Tosi, 1970), supervisors and operating employees (Ivancevich & Dobbelly, 1974) found no relationship. Keller (1975) reported that role ambiguity is negatively correlated with satisfaction with work, but is unrelated to satisfaction with pay, co-workers, supervision, and promotion. This finding suggests that a general measure of job satisfaction might not sufficiently discriminate the potential outcomes of role ambiguity. Similarly, most studies report a positive relationship between role ambiguity and tension or anxiety, but two studies report no relationship (Tosi, 1971; Tosi & Tosi, 1970)

There are evidences to the effect that role incumbent with high levels of role ambiguity respond to the situations with anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, a sense of futility or lower self esteem, lower levels of job involvement and organizational commitment, of supervisors and of themselves (Brief & Aldag, 1976: Greene, 1972).

The relationship between role ambiguity and performance is also unclear. Negative correlations have been found between role ambiguity and measure of
performance for nurses' aides (Brief & Aldag, 1976) and managers (Greene, 1972) but no relationship was found for paramedical workers (Szilagyi & Sims, 1975) and managers (Tosi, 1971). Beehr et al. (1976) found that role ambiguity is negatively related to effort towards quality but unrelated to effort towards quantity. Role ambiguity was found negatively related to supervisory evaluation of performance but unrelated to self perceptions of work quality (Rief & Aldag, 1976). Another study established a negative relationship between role ambiguity and compliance (Greene, 1972). Greene suggests that the role incumbents are ambiguous about the behaviour required of them by supervisors and that they may be working at the wrong things and are probably unaware that they are doing so.

The present study shows that there is no relationship between job satisfaction and role ambiguity.

Job Involvement and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role ambiguity on job involvement.

**Hypothesis (RA-H12):** There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.
Table 5.12

Correlation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; job involvement</th>
<th>Obtained ‘t’ value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement. The ‘r’ value is -0.052 and the ‘t’ value to 0.73 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant. The negative trend in relationship means that when higher role ambiguity results in lower job involvement. The result obtained does not support the hypothesis (RA-H12) that there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement though the trend is in a negative direction.

The conclusion arrived at from the present study is that there is no relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement.

Job stress and role ambiguity

Various studies established a positive relation between role overload job stress. The following hypothesis formulated from these studies, is tested by the data given in table 6.13.

*Hypothesis*(RA-H13): There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives
Table 5.13

**Correlation between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women executives</th>
<th>Correlation between role ambiguity &amp; job stress</th>
<th>Obtained 't' value</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13 indicates the 'r' value and the 't' value of role ambiguity and job stress of women executives. The 'r' value is 0.123. The 't' value is 1.72 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence is not significant. The observed positive correlation shows that higher role ambiguity may lead to job stress. However, this result rejects the hypothesis (RA-H13) that there is a positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress.

Lyons (1971) reports that the need for clarity moderates ambiguity turnover, satisfaction and propensity to leave relations, but has no effect on the association between ambiguity and tension. Miles and Petty on other hand, found that the need for clarity moderates the ambiguity-tension relation but does effect the correlation between role ambiguity and satisfaction.
Personality characteristics particularly individual differences in perception and adaptability can moderate the association between objective and experienced levels of conflict and ambiguity (Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981).

Rosenheim (1976) found that anxiety is directly related to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

"Ego strength" is found to moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and company satisfaction. A low ego strength subject in terms of his low emotional maturity and neurotic behaviour may view the job, the organization and the role stress with dissatisfaction (Harigopal, 1980).

Flora (1977) in her study found that role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload correlated positively with anxiety. Parasuraman (1978) demonstrated that stress and ambiguity were positively and significantly related to employee turnover.

Lamble (1980) found role ambiguity adversely related to perceived personal ineffectiveness. Lyon (1971) found in his study a negative relationship exists between role clarity and employee turnover.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) in their study on male executives found role ambiguity negatively related with job performance and role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance.

Singh (1990) observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater
lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Flora (1977) found that greater amounts of role conflict and role ambiguity might cause lower job performance. Peltit (1973) reported job related tension to be positively related to ambiguity and conflict.

The present study gives the conclusion that there is no relationship between job stress and role ambiguity experienced by women executives.

**Summary of findings on Role Ambiguity**

The findings obtained in the present study are summarised as follows:

The comparative study of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in different types of organizations lead to the conclusion that a significant difference in role ambiguity exists only in the case of consultancy and service organizations.

Role ambiguity holds a negative relationship with age, experience, educational level, job satisfaction and job involvement. It is positively related to family responsibilities and job stress.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA-H1</td>
<td>There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Difference not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H2</td>
<td>There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of private and public sector organization.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Difference not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H3</td>
<td>There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of manufacturing and consultancy sector organizations.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Difference not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H4</td>
<td>There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of manufacturing and service sector organizations.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Difference not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H5</td>
<td>There is significant difference role ambiguity experienced by women executives of consultancy and service sector organizations.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Difference not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H6</td>
<td>There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and age of women executives.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>'r' is significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H7</td>
<td>There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>'r' not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H8</td>
<td>There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>'r' not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H9</td>
<td>There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>'r' is significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H10</td>
<td>There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>'r' not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H11</td>
<td>There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>'r' is significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H12</td>
<td>There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>'r' is significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-H13</td>
<td>There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>'r' is significant at 0.01 level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>