

# Impact of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity on Emotional Exhaustion among Non-Managerial Employees in Boutique Hotels in Nepal

Gaurav Ojha\*

Article Type: Research Article

Faculty, Mid-Valley International College, HELP University, Malaysia

Received: 06 February 2025;

Revised: 26 March 2025;

Accepted: 05 May 2025

\*Corresponding email: [ojhagaurav84@gmail.com](mailto:ojhagaurav84@gmail.com) ISSN: 2976-1204 (Print), 2976 – 131X (Online)

Copyright © 2025 by the authors, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Innovation in Nepalese Academia, and Star Scholars Press*. The articles in IDJINA are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License.



## Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion experienced by employees working at a non-managerial level in different boutique hotels operating inside the Kathmandu Valley. Non-managerial employees are an essential part of the boutique hotel segment and its overall functioning, efficiency, and effectiveness. This study applies a cross-sectional survey design along with descriptive and multiple-regression analysis. According to data analysis, role conflict among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels is positively and significantly related to emotional exhaustion, while the link between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion is positive but not statistically significant. Importantly, to reduce the stressful experiences germinating from role conflict and role ambiguity, which contribute to the prevalence of emotional exhaustion, this study implies that boutique hotels need to implement efficient HRM policies and practices that provide job descriptions, areas of specialization, job specifications, and performance agreements to their non-managerial employees.*

**Keywords:** Boutique hotels, non-managerial employees, role ambiguity, role conflict

## Introduction

The hospitality industry is inherently people-centric, requiring constant interaction between staff and guests. In boutique hotels, this demand is particularly intense for non-managerial employees such as front desk agents, housekeeping staff, and food and beverage servers, who act as the primary point of contact for guests and are expected to maintain high service standards (Xu et al., 2018; Suryani et al., 2024). These employees often face emotionally taxing situations as they must balance the expectations of both guests and hotel management while delivering personalized experiences under pressure.

Boutique hotels, typically part of the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) segment of hospitality, rely heavily on non-managerial staff due to their leaner management structures and focus on personalized service (Van Nguyen et al., 2021). However, this reliance often leads to overlapping roles and unclear expectations. The absence of clearly defined job roles and the need to perform multiple tasks simultaneously, such as housekeeping and guest services, frequently results in role ambiguity and role conflict, contributing to heightened stress and emotional exhaustion among these employees (DeCenzo et al., 2016; Blešić et al., 2023).

Moreover, in the context of boutique hotels, past research in different hospitality contexts has demonstrated that non-managerial employees often face significant challenges related to role ambiguity and role conflict (DeCenzo et al., 2016; De Silva & Thilakasiri, 2016). Besides due to the personalized consumer-service-oriented job characteristics, roles, and responsibilities for non-managerial positions in boutique hotels, when their job demands and performance expectations are not communicated by their line/middle level managers, this communication gap culminates into manifestations of role conflict and role ambiguities that ultimately influences emotional exhaustion among employees (Mcintosh & Siggs, 2005; Palomino & Frezatti, 2016; Koirala et al., 2024; Ahmad, 2024)

In addition, the boutique hotel industry is a dynamic organization where changes in procedures, attributes, plans, functions, and activities occur quite frequently due to personalized levels of service offered by the hotels to specific consumer segments and hotel guests (Suryani et al., 2024; Ahmad, 2024). As a result, non-managerial employees are performing multiple tasks at the same time in boutique hotels, such as serving guests while performing operational tasks, resulting in conflicting priorities that cannot be easily resolved by employees (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). Likewise, in boutique hotels operating in Kathmandu Valley, non-managerial employees have to juggle many roles and responsibilities such as customer service, housekeeping, wellness, and food service without clear role delineation and job specifications (Xu et al., 2018; Blešić et al., 2023; Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024).

In this respect, with reference job demand-resource (JD-R) model, this study argues that job demands such as role conflict and ambiguity results into experiences of emotional exhaustion when these job demands are not balanced by sufficient job resources such as social support or autonomy (Bakker et al., 2004; Ahmad, 2024) Similarly based on role theory, this study discusses that as non-managerial level employees occupy various roles with specific expectations and

responsibilities in boutique hotels that are unclear and conflicting, hence they experience role ambiguity and role conflict along with emotional exhaustion (Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024). Besides, the interaction between role ambiguity and role conflict substantially contributes to disengagement and emotional exhaustion among non-managerial workers in the boutique hotel segment (Üngüren & Arslan, 2021; Suryani et al., 2024).

Although global studies (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; DeCenzo et al., 2016) have widely documented the relationship between role stressors and emotional exhaustion, studies in the Nepalese hospitality sector remain limited. Existing studies on role ambiguity and role conflict in Nepal have primarily focused on the financial sector, particularly commercial banks (Bhandari & Subedi, 2024; Pradhananga, 2024), revealing that role ambiguity increases turnover intentions, while role conflict reduces productivity. However, boutique hotels present unique challenges due to their smaller scale, frequent procedural changes, and the expectation that employees multitask across functions (Ahmad, 2024; Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024). Without adequate job resources, such as managerial support or clear performance expectations, these demands can deplete employees' emotional reserves, leading to burnout (Bakker et al., 2004).

No empirical research to date has explored how these role-based stressors affect non-managerial employees in boutique hotels in Nepal. Given the growing importance of boutique hotels in Nepal's tourism landscape, this study addresses this critical empirical and contextual research gap. Grounded on role theory and the JD-R model, this study aims to examine how role conflict and role ambiguity, as job-related stressors, influence emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels operating within the Kathmandu Valley.

Similarly, this study provides practical recommendations along with effective management practices and interventions for boutique hotel managers, operators and entrepreneurs on how to mitigate the negative impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on employee well-being, by highlighting the importance of investigating the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and emotional exhaustion in the context of non-managerial boutique hotel employees in Nepal.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Theoretical Background***

This study is grounded in two key theoretical perspectives: the JD-R model and Role Theory. These frameworks provide insight into how structural and psychological job characteristics influence employee outcomes, particularly emotional exhaustion, in high-contact service environments such as boutique hotels.

The JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) posits that job demands, defined as physical, psychological, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort, can lead to negative outcomes like burnout when not balanced by adequate job resources in hospitality contexts, job demands such as intense customer interaction, time pressures, and multitasking

are prevalent, especially for non-managerial employees. When these demands exceed employees' coping abilities and resources, the result is often emotional exhaustion, a core component of burnout (Zhang et al., 2023; Anjani et al., 2024; Ahmad, 2024).

Within this framework, role conflict and role ambiguity are considered key job demands. Role conflict arises when employees face incompatible demands from different stakeholders or tasks, while role ambiguity occurs when job responsibilities and expectations are unclear (Rizzo et al., 1970). These conditions are particularly common in boutique hotels, where resource constraints and fluid job descriptions may force employees to navigate multiple overlapping roles with little guidance.

Complementing this, Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) explains how individuals behave based on the roles they occupy within an organization. This theory emphasizes that each role comes with normative expectations, and inconsistency or uncertainty in these expectations can result in psychological stress. In hospitality settings, especially among non-managerial employees, the simultaneous performance of various service-related and operational tasks can lead to confusion and internal conflict, thereby contributing to emotional exhaustion (Palomino & Frezatti, 2016; Matta et al., 2015).

Integrating both perspectives, this study argues that role ambiguity and role conflict are key job demands that contribute to emotional exhaustion among non-managerial staff in Nepalese boutique hotels. The use of both the JD-R model and Role Theory allows for a comprehensive understanding of how contextual job factors and role expectations jointly shape employee well-being.

### ***Empirical Review***

Role conflict and ambiguity have been widely studied as key antecedents of emotional exhaustion in organizational settings. Rizzo et al. (1970) established that these are factorially identifiable, yet interdependent, contributing to job stress and exhaustion of the employees, particularly in complex work environments. Both these constructs refer to the challenges employees endure when their roles are not clearly defined or when they receive conflicting expectations from different stakeholders (Rizzo et al., 1970). In addition, Newton and Keenan (1987) further emphasized that stress and emotional exhaustion experienced by non-managerial employees often stem from role-related factors such as unclear expectations and contradictory demands.

Similarly, in the hospitality sector, particularly in a high-demand service environment, these role stressors have been found to significantly influence emotional exhaustion. Essawy (2016) found that role ambiguity has a positive influence on emotional exhaustion in the service industry. Additionally, Mwakyusa and Mcharo (2024) revealed that when employees face ambiguous roles within their work environment, they experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, contributing significantly to employee burnout, when clarity about job responsibilities and expectations is lacking.

Regarding role conflict, Asfahani (2022) and Wu et al. (2019) found that conflicting expectations from multiple supervisors or job roles are major predictors of emotional exhaustion. Wu et al. (2019), in a study of Chinese construction managers, reported a significant negative impact of role conflict on emotional well-being, a finding established in service-sector studies.

Several scholars have investigated the joint effects of role ambiguity and role conflict. Karatepe and Uludag (2008) reported that both stressors contribute to emotional exhaustion, though role conflict had an unexpected positive link with performance in managerial employees. Tunc and Kutanis (2009) and Baba et al. (2013) also found that high job demands, coupled with low control or support, exacerbate psychological strain among employees, in line with the Job Demand-Control and JD-R models.

Üngüren and Arslan (2021) explored this further in the hospitality sector, revealing that both role conflict and role ambiguity hurt job performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, Kilroy et al. (2016) examined the impact of perceived high-involvement work practices on employee burnout and found that role conflict and role overload significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of employees.

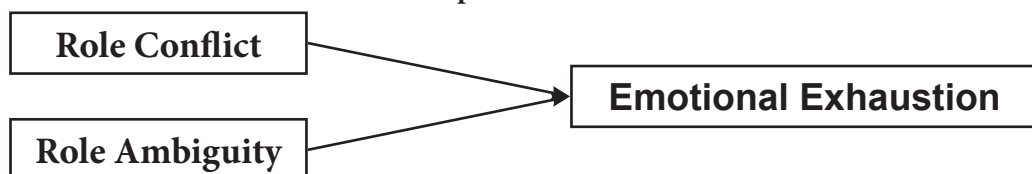
Ahmad et al. (2024) indicate that job resources and personal resources have a significant negative influence on burnout; hence, it is necessary to reduce role conflict and role ambiguity to reduce emotional exhaustion among employees. Likewise, Radic et al. (2020), based on the JD-R model, demonstrate that in the hospitality industry, factors associated with job demands, such as role ambiguity and role conflict have a negative impact on work engagement of employees.

Specifically in Nepal, Gautam et al. (2025) conducted a study on emotional exhaustion among hotel employees and revealed that emotional exhaustion can be reduced by perceived organizational support. This study focused on pandemic-related stressors (i.e., emotional weariness about Occupational Health and Safety, OHS). This demonstrates a contextual knowledge gap in the literature related to role-based antecedents of emotional exhaustion of non-managerial employees in Nepal's boutique hospitality sector.

### ***Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis***

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in prior studies that have explored the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and emotional exhaustion among employees. Particularly, this study focuses on the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels. This model is further informed by the empirical studies and theoretical references from Bakker et al. (2004), Matta et al. (2015), Palomino and Frezatti (2016), Kilroy et al. (2016), Zhang et al. (2023), and Mwakyusa and Mcharo (2024).

**Figure 1**  
**Conceptual Framework**



Role ambiguity occurs when an employee is not given clear instructions for doing his or her duties, either because the job description is vague or the organization's goals are not specified (Yesiltas, 2014). In contrast, role conflict occurs when employees face incompatible demands from multiple sources, leading to confusion and performance difficulties (DeCenzo et al., 2016; Palomino & Frezatti, 2016). Both conditions increase workplace tension and have been shown to significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion is the depletion of psychological and emotional resources caused by the demands of work and is one of the core factors of burnout. This experience hurts an individual's physical and mental health and reduces employee motivation and engagement, psychological withdrawal, avoidance of work, and experiences of emotional exhaustion in the workplace. (Zhang et al., 2023).

Furthermore, building on the work of Rizzo et al. (1970) and Saverly (1988), the study hypothesizes that there are statistically significant differences in role-based stressors, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, between managerial and non-managerial employees.

Based on theoretical references, a review of the literature, the following hypothesis has been developed for this study:

- H1: *There is a positive and significant relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels within Kathmandu Valley.*
- H2: *There is a positive and significant relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels within Kathmandu Valley.*

## **Research Methods**

This study adopts a quantitative methodological approach grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, which acknowledges the interplay between objective reality and subjective interpretation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). A cross-sectional survey design is applied to examine the causal relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict, and emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels within the Kathmandu valley. Additionally, convenience sampling was used to access participants through four hospitality training institutions located in the Kathmandu Valley. Interns, trainers, and hotel management instructors facilitated the distribution and collection of the printed questionnaires.

The final sample included 173 non-managerial employees, consisting of the front desk, housekeeping, food and beverage staff, spa or wellness staff, and/or concierge or guest service workers. There were approximately 578 non-managerial employees in 17 sampled boutique hotels. A sample size of 173 was considered statistically adequate, ensuring a 95% confidence level with a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: a required demographic questionnaire and 12 scale items related to role ambiguity, role conflict, and emotional exhaustion, anchored on a point Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The scale items were adapted from the validated and well-established prior literature (Rizzo et al., 1970; Palomino & Frezatti, 2016; Zhang et al., 2023; Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024). Each variable was measured using four items, adapted and contextually modified to suit the Nepalese boutique hotel sector. Besides, considering non-managerial-level staff and the complexity of concepts and constructs, the questionnaire was also translated from English to Nepali with the support of Google Translate and verified by a professional translator. A structured questionnaire was administered during the data collection period from November 5 to 26, 2024.

A pilot study with 40 respondents was conducted to assess the instrument's reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for role conflict (.898), role ambiguity (.833), and emotional exhaustion (.821) confirmed internal consistency and reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The statistical package for social sciences software (SPSS) version 21.0 has been used for data analysis. Similarly, multiple regression analyses were used to examine and evaluate the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion, employing the following model:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Whereas:

Y = Emotional Exhaustion

X<sub>1</sub> = Role Conflict

X<sub>2</sub> = Role Ambiguity

ε = Error Term

## Results and Analysis

This section of the study includes the demographic profile, descriptive statistics of the study variables, and multiple regression analysis.

### *Demographic Profile*

The demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1. Among the respondents, 50.3% were male and 47.4% were female. The majority of the respondents (72.8%) are between the ages of 16 and 28. Likewise, most of the respondents (80%) have basic-level and secondary-level education in boutique hotels, whereas 12% had attained an undergraduate degree and above. In terms of departmental roles, the majority of the respondents (61.6%) worked in the food and beverage and housekeeping departments of the sample boutique hotels, and most of them have work experience of 1-5 years.

**Table 1**

<b>Demographic Information of Non-managerial Employees in Boutique Hotels</b>		
<b>Respondent Profile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Non-managerial Employees = 173		
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	82	47.4
Male	87	50.3
Transgender Male/Female	4	2.3
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
16-20	33	19.2
20-24	53	30.4
24-28	40	23.2
28-32	29	16.8
32 and above	18	10.4
<b>Education</b>		
Non-formal education	14	8
Basic Level (Grade 1-8)	66	38
Secondary Level (Grade 9-12)	72	42
Undergraduate and above	21	12
<b>Work Occupancy</b>		
Less than 1 year	39	22.4
1-3years	66	38.4
3-5 years	32	18.4
5 years and above	36	20.8
<b>Department</b>		
Front desk	28	16.2
Housekeeping	49	28.3
Food and beverage	58	33.5
Spa or wellness staff	12	7
Concierge/Guest service workers	26	15

*Note.* Field Survey (2024)



**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Analysis of the Variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>SD Value</b>
<b>Role Ambiguity</b>		
The explanation for what needs to be done is unclear.	2.58	0.64
I receive conflicting information from different supervisors about what is expected of me.	2.44	0.53
I do not know how my performance expectations and my performance. will be evaluated, or what criteria are used.	2.9	0.75
I often feel uncertain about my responsibilities and expectations in my role.	2.62	0.81
<b>Overall Value</b>	<b>2.635</b>	<b>0.68</b>
<b>Role Conflict</b>		
I receive work assignments in the hotel without the necessary. instructions, resources, or materials to adequately complete the task.	4.17	0.97
I receive conflicting instructions from different departments within the hotel.	4.55	0.79
I frequently feel confused between the wants of hotel guests and my supervisor's expectations.	4.32	0.93
I feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks I am expected to complete simultaneously.	4.44	0.76
<b>Overall Value</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.86</b>
<b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>		
I feel emotionally drained from work.	4.18	0.78
I feel fatigued when I think about my work responsibilities.	4.13	0.72
I find it hard to get excited about my job these days.	3.97	0.94
I am stressed by my workload.	4.24	0.87
<b>Overall Value</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.83</b>

*Note.* SD - Standard Deviation

Based on descriptive statistics presented in Table 2, this study indicates that non-managerial level employees in boutique hotels have to deal with a higher degree of role conflict (Overall Mean = 4.37, SD = .86) compared with role ambiguity (Overall Mean = 2.6, SD = 0.68) in their professional context. Besides, role conflict arises when there are incompatible demands placed on a non-managerial level employee from different sources (Palomino & Frezatti, 2016). From the perspectives of SD value, role conflict reflects a moderate level of variability, whereas role ambiguity implies slightly lower variability.

In addition, the overall mean for emotional exhaustion is notably high (i.e., 4.13), indicating that non-managerial staff frequently experience emotional strain, fatigue, and stress associated with their job roles. The overall SD value of 0.83 indicates moderate variability. The SD of 0.83 reflects moderate variability, suggesting that although emotional exhaustion is a common experience, its intensity may vary slightly based on personal or situational factors.

Besides, Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the research variable entails .898 (role ambiguity), .833 (role conflict), and 0.821 (emotional exhaustion) within satisfactory levels of internal consistency reliability.

### ***Multiple Regression Analysis***

Multiple regression analysis has been used to examine whether role ambiguity and role conflict have a significant causal effect on emotional exhaustion of non-managerial level employees working in boutique hotels inside Kathmandu valley.

**Table 3**

**Multicollinearity Table for Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, and Emotional Exhaustion**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Role Ambiguity	0.44	2.27
Role Conflict	0.51	1.96

To assess multicollinearity among the predictor variables, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values have been calculated. The tolerance values for role ambiguity (.44) and role conflict (.51) are above the accepted threshold of  $> .10$  (Hair et al., 2019). The VIF values were 2.27 and 1.96, respectively, both well below the critical threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2019), therefore indicating no multicollinearity issue in the study.

**Table 4**

**Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R-Square</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
1	.536	.423	.317	.5412

*Note (s).* a. Predictors: (Constant): Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict; b. Dependent Variable: Emotional Exhaustion

Table 4 indicates that 42.3% of the variance in emotional exhaustion is collectively accounted for by role conflict and role ambiguity. This suggests a moderate level of explanatory power for these variables in predicting emotional exhaustion among non-managerial level employees in boutique hotels.

Table 5

## Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
		( $\beta$ )	Std. Error	( $\beta$ )		
1	(Constant)	1.84	.236		6.07	.04*
	Role Conflict	.35	.063	.31	3.63	.02*
	Role Ambiguity	.16	.149	.13	1.54	.08

Note (s). F = 31.082; \*Significant at p value <0.05 Level

Table 5 shows the findings of multiple regression analysis of the causal relationship developed in the research model. The following equation can be used to predict emotional exhaustion using the regression model applied in this study:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

**Whereas:**

$$\text{Emotional Exhaustion} = .163 (\text{Role Ambiguity}) + .310 (\text{Role Conflict}) + 1.84$$

The findings revealed that the relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p = .08$ ) was not supported. Hence, H1 was rejected. On the other hand, role conflict was found to have a significant impact on emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .05$ ), supporting H2. The findings imply that among the two role-related stressors, role conflict exerts a stronger and more direct impact on the emotional exhaustion of employees.

**Discussions**

Based on the JD-R model and role theory, this study examined the impact of role conflict and ambiguity on emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels operating within the Kathmandu valley. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion, whereas role ambiguity did not show a statistically significant effect.

The significant influence of role conflict supports the JD-R model's assertion that excessive or contradictory demands without adequate resources can lead to burnout symptoms such as emotional exhaustion. Role conflict, characterized by incompatible expectations from supervisors, managers, and customers, places non-managerial employees in conflicting positions that require simultaneous fulfillment of divergent tasks. This finding aligns with prior research (Karimi et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2019), which suggests that role conflict is a prominent stressor in service-oriented settings. Specifically, in boutique hotels where employees often engage in multitasking across operational and guest service functions, the lack of clearly demarcated responsibilities can exacerbate emotional fatigue.

Role theory further explains this outcome by positing that when individuals are confronted with competing role expectations that cannot be reconciled, it impedes their role performance and leads to psychological strain (Fisher, 2001). The present study reinforces this theoretical perspective, showing that non-managerial employees are particularly vulnerable to such strain due to their limited autonomy and exposure to multiple stakeholders.

In contrast, the relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion was not statistically significant. This finding contradicts earlier studies (Ram et al., 2011; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008), which documented a strong positive association between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion. A plausible explanation may lie in the hierarchical and task-specific structure of boutique hotels in Nepal, where even non-managerial roles might be governed by implicit routines or informal communication practices that compensate for formal role clarity. Additionally, lower expectations or limited variability in decision-making responsibilities among non-managerial employees might buffer the emotional toll of ambiguous roles.

The lack of support for the role ambiguity emotional exhaustion link also nuances the understanding of role-related stressors by suggesting that not all forms of role stress equally impact emotional outcomes. While role ambiguity may affect performance or job satisfaction, its influence on emotional exhaustion might be contingent on other factors such as perceived organizational support, role tenure, or employee coping strategies (Matta et al., 2015).

## **Conclusion and Implications**

This study investigated the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels in Kathmandu Valley. The findings revealed that role conflict significantly contributes to emotional exhaustion, while role ambiguity does not exert a significant influence.

This study emphasizes that among role stressors, role conflict exerts a more immediate and detrimental impact on emotional exhaustion in non-managerial hospitality workers. It offers empirical support for focusing on conflict management, task delineation, and communication clarity as key organizational interventions in Nepalese boutique hotels. While both constructs have been broadly associated with emotional exhaustion in previous literature, this study highlights that role conflict, rather than role ambiguity, is the more salient stressor among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels in Nepal. These highlight the pressing need to address conflicting demands faced by non-managerial staff in the hospitality sector.

By distinguishing the differential impacts of role conflict and role ambiguity, this study enriches the JD-R model by showing that not all job demands uniformly lead to emotional exhaustion. Role conflict appears to act as a more acute demand depleting emotional resources. The findings extend role theory by emphasizing that role conflict is more emotionally taxing than ambiguity for non-managerial employees in service-driven, high-contact work environments like boutique hotels. The non-significant relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion challenges prior assumptions and invites further investigation into mediating or moderating factors.

Practically, hotel management should implement strategies to reduce role conflict among non-managerial staff by clarifying expectations, streamlining communication channels, and aligning task assignments across departments. In addition, human resource managers in boutique hotels should re-evaluate job roles to minimize overlapping responsibilities and competing demands. This may include developing detailed job descriptions and offering pre-shift briefings to align responsibilities. Additionally, managers of boutique hotels need to encourage and facilitate open communication with non-managerial level employees to reduce uncertainty regarding their organizational roles and performance expectations.

Similarly, the hospitality industry is typified by fast-paced, high-pressure work environments where customer satisfaction is key and employee performance is kept under scrutiny. In the hospitality industry, non-managerial employees have to work for long hours, including during weekends and holidays, to meet customer needs, wants, and demand. Hence, this study recommends that boutique hotels conduct training sessions to enhance the skills and confidence of their staff in their roles so that they don't feel a sense of inadequacy when they have to perform and fulfill multiple tasks, expectations, and roles.

## **Limitations and Further Research**

The sample frame used in this study was drawn from a small number of boutique hotels using a cross-sectional research design and convenience sampling method. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be applied to non-managerial work that is not included in the sample. This study also recognizes that qualitative research approaches, such as narrative exploration and in-depth interviews, would offer reflective understandings of the individual experiences of non-managerial-level staff members on role conflict, role ambiguity, and emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, to better understand how employees cope with role-related stressors and create personal coping mechanisms to address the emotional weariness brought on by role conflict and ambiguity, additional research can incorporate moderating variables like social support or coping mechanisms. Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, the current study advances business and management studies by looking at how non-managerial staff members acknowledged that their experiences in companies differed from those of managerial staff. Thus, this study establishes the groundwork for future research that can examine and explore opinions, responses, perceptions, and attitudes of non-managerial employees and staff members in various organizational and professional contexts.

## Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this research article.

## Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of a conflict of interest in the publication of the paper.

## Funding

There was no external source of funding for the research.

## ORCID iD

Gaurav Ojha  : <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8439-1915>

## References

- Ahmad Nizam, S. N. E. S., Mohamad-Saber, J., Salim, A., Zaidi, N. A., & Bahari, K. A. (2024). Examining the impact of job demand resource theory variables on burnout among hotel employees in Kuala Lumpur. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts*, 16(1), 489-513.
- Anjani, P. K., Padmanaban, G., & Koirala, P. (2024). People, planet, and profits - HR's role in fostering innovative sustainable development in management. *3rd International Conference on Optimization Techniques in the Field of Engineering (ICOFE-2024)*. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5075867>
- Asfahani, A. M. (2022). The impact of role conflict on turnover intention among faculty members:  
A moderated mediation model of emotional exhaustion and workplace relational conflict. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1087947.
- Baba, V. V., Tourigny, L., Wang, X., Lituchy, T., & Ines Monserrat, S. (2013). Stress among nurses: A multi-nation test of the demand-control-support model. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 20(3), 301-320.
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Verbeke, W. (2004). Using the job demands-resources model to predict burnout and performance. *Human Resource Management*, 43(1), 83-104. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20004>
- Bhandari, D. R., & Subedi, D. P. (2024). Organizational stress and employee productivity in Nepalese Commercial Banks: The mediating role of employee welfare. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 11(4), 119-125.
- Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent developments in role theory. *Annual review of sociology*, 12(1), 67-92.

- Blešić, I., Tepavčević, J., & Bradić, M. (2023). Occupational stress indicators in the hotel industry: The case of housekeeping and front office employees. *Bizinfo (Blace)*, 14(1), 1-7.
- Bougie, R., & Sekaran, U. (2019). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. John Wiley & Sons
- DeCenzo, D. A., Robbins, S. P., & Verhulst, S. L. (2016). *Fundamentals of human resources management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499.
- De Silva, R. D., & Thilakasiri, K. K. (2016). Factors influencing employee motivation among non-managerial staff in hotel sector, Sri Lanka. *Kelaniya Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(1).
- Elshaer, I. A. (2023). Front-line hotel employees mental health and quality of life post COVID-19 pandemic: The role of coping strategies. *Heliyon*, 9(6).
- Essawy, M. (2016). Job stressors, emotional exhaustion and service recovery in independent quick service restaurants in Egypt: An empirical investigation. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)*, 4(1), 1-16.
- Fisher, R. T. (2001). Role stress, the type A behavior pattern, and external auditor job satisfaction and performance. *Behavioral Research in Accounting*, 13(1), 143-170.
- Gautam, D. K., Sthapit, A., & Gautam, P. K. (2025). Impact of occupational health and safety practices in COVID-19 on emotional exhaustion of hotel employees. *Intangible Capital*, 21(1), 62-77.
- House, R. J., & Rizzo, J. R. (1972). Role conflict and ambiguity as critical variables in a model of organizational behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 7(3), 467-505.
- Karatepe, O. M., & Uludag, O. (2008). Role stress, burnout and their effects on frontline hotel employees' job performance: Evidence from Northern Cyprus. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10(2), 111-126.
- Karimi, R., Omar, Z. B., Alipour, F., & Karimi, Z. (2014). The influence of role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity on occupational stress among nurses in selected Iranian hospitals. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 4(1), 34-40.
- Kilroy, S., Flood, P. C., Bosak, J., & Chênevert, D. (2016). Perceptions of high-involvement work practices and burnout: The mediating role of job demands. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26(4), 408-424.
- Koirala, P., Balami, S., Munankarmi, K., Koirala, D., Chudal, J., & Timilsina, B. (2024). Charismatic and transactional leadership and employee engagement: Moderating effect of level of education. *International Journal of Innovative Business Strategies*, 10(2), 745-757. <https://doi.org/10.20533/ijibs.2046.3626.2024.0091>
- Matta, F. K., Scott, B. A., Koopman, J., & Conlon, D. E. (2015). Does seeing “eye to eye” affect work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior? A role theory perspective on LMX agreement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(6), 1686-1708.

- Mcintosh, A. J., & Siggs, A. (2005). An exploration of the experiential nature of boutique accommodation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(1), 74-81.
- Mwakyusa, J. R., & Mcharo, E. W. (2024). Role ambiguity and role conflict effects on employees' emotional exhaustion in healthcare services in Tanzania. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2326237.
- Newton, T. J., & Keenan, A. (1987). Role stress reexamined: An investigation of role stress predictors. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 40(3), 346-368.
- Palomino, M. N., & Frezatti, F. (2016). Role conflict, role ambiguity and job satisfaction: Perceptions of the Brazilian controllers. *Revista de Administração (São Paulo)*, 51(2), 165-181.
- Pradhananga, S. (2024). Cause and management of stress at workplace: A case of Nepalese commercial banks. *Nepalese Journal of Finance*, 11(2), 206-223.
- Ram, N., Khoso, I., Shah, A. A., Chandio, F. R., & Shaikih, F. M. (2011). Role conflict and role ambiguity as factors in work stress among managers: A case study of manufacturing sector in Pakistan. *Asian Social Science*, 7(2), 113-118.
- Radic, A., Arjona-Fuentes, J. M., Ariza-Montes, A., Han, H., & Law, R. (2020). Job demands–job resources (JD-R) model, work engagement, and well-being of cruise ship employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88, 102518.
- Rizzo John, R., House Robert, J., & Lirtzman Sidney, I. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15(2), 150-163.
- Savery, L. K. (1988). 'Comparison of managerial and non-managerial employees' desired and perceived motivators and job satisfaction levels. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 9, 17–22.
- Suryani, N. K., Usmany, P., Wibowo, T. S., Salabi, A., Kune, D., & Wendikasari, L. A. C. S. (2024). The influence of role ambiguity on employee creativity through role conflict as an intervening variable. *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal*, 6(3), 2325-2332.
- Tunc, T., & Kutanis, R. O. (2009). Role conflict, role ambiguity, and burnout in nurses and physicians at a university hospital in Turkey. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 11(4), 410-416.
- Üngüren, E., & Arslan, S. (2021). The effect of role ambiguity and role conflict on job performance in the hotel industry: The mediating effect of job satisfaction. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 17(1), 45-58.
- Van Nguyen, L. T., Nguyen, P. N. D., Nguyen, T. Q., & Nguyen, K. T. (2021). Employee engagement in brand value co-creation: An empirical study of Vietnamese boutique hotels. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 48, 88-98.
- Wu, G., Hu, Z., & Zheng, J. (2019). Role stress, job burnout, and job performance in construction project managers: The moderating role of career calling. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(13), 2394.



- Xu, S., Martinez, L. R., Van Hoof, H., Estrella Duran, M., Maldonado Perez, G., & Gavilanes, J. (2018). Emotional exhaustion among hotel employees: The interactive effects of affective dispositions and positive work reflection. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 59(3), 285-295.
- Yeşiltaş, M. (2014). The effects of role ambiguity and role conflicts experienced by employees of the hotels on their customer oriented pro-social service behaviors. *The Macrotheme Review*, 3(7), 34-45.
- Zhang, H. L., Wu, C., Yan, J. R., Liu, J. H., Wang, P., Hu, M. Y., ... & Lang, H. J. (2023). The relationship between role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion and work alienation among chinese nurses two years after COVID-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *Bmc Psychiatry*, 23(1), 516.

## Bio

---

**Gaurav Ojha** is a faculty member of business research at Mid-Valley International College (MVIC). Apart from academic research, Mr. Ojha, as a public intellectual, regularly publishes opinion posts, editorials, blogs, and non-fiction articles on a wide range of contemporary topics and socio-economic issues.

Email: [ojhagaurav84@gmail.com](mailto:ojhagaurav84@gmail.com)

---

---

**Cite as:** Ojha, G. (2025). Impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion among non-managerial employees in boutique hotels in Nepal. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Innovation in Nepalese Academia*, 4(1), 164-180. <https://doi.org/10.32674/bb74eg50>

---