

Job demands and personal resources on public servants: The role of the support climate

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In the absence of clarity in the definition of their functions, employees reduce the generation of new structural resources, which in turn will be associated with a reduction of hope for professional success. Organizations must analyze that resources are effective in reducing the negative influence of this demand. This project proposes to delve into the effect of the supportive climate in reducing the negative influence of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources and hope. The sample was 339 employees of services staff in a public university. The results found show a total modulation effect of the support climate that changes the influence of role ambiguity on the ability to develop new structural resources and their hope to be positive. We can conclude that the development of support policies for employees of public administrations will transform the ambiguity in the definition of their functions into a challenge for them.

Keywords: job demands-resources model, role ambiguity, support climate, increasing structural job resources, hope.

Demandas laborales y recursos personales en los servidores públicos: El papel del clima de apoyo

En ausencia de claridad en la definición de sus funciones, los empleados reducen la generación de nuevos recursos estructurales, lo cual, a su vez, se asociará con una disminución de la esperanza de éxito profesional. Las organizaciones deben analizar que los recursos son efectivos para reducir la influencia negativa de esta demanda. Este proyecto propone profundizar en el efecto del clima de apoyo en la reducción de la influencia negativa de la

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ambigüedad del rol sobre el aumento de los recursos estructurales y la esperanza. La muestra fue de 339 empleados del personal de servicios en una universidad pública. Los resultados encontrados muestran un efecto total de modulación del clima de apoyo que cambia la influencia de la ambigüedad del rol sobre la capacidad de desarrollar nuevos recursos estructurales y su esperanza de ser positivos. Podemos concluir que el desarrollo de políticas de apoyo para los empleados de las administraciones públicas transformará la ambigüedad en la definición de sus funciones en un desafío para ellos.

Palabras clave: modelo de demandas-recursos laborales, ambigüedad de rol, clima de apoyo, aumento de recursos estructurales laborales, esperanza.

Demandas de trabalho e recursos pessoais em servidores públicos: O papel do clima de apoio

Na ausência de clareza na definição de suas funções, os funcionários reduzem a geração de novos recursos estruturais, o que, por sua vez, estará associado a uma diminuição da esperança de sucesso profissional. As organizações devem analisar que os recursos são eficazes na redução da influência negativa dessa demanda. Este projeto propõe aprofundar o efeito do clima de apoio na redução da influência negativa da ambigüidade de função no aumento dos recursos estruturais e da esperança. A amostra foi composta por 339 funcionários do pessoal de serviços em uma universidade pública. Os resultados encontrados mostram um efeito total de modulação do clima de apoio que altera a influência da ambigüidade de função na capacidade de desenvolver novos recursos estruturais e sua esperança de serem positivos. Podemos concluir que o desenvolvimento de políticas de apoio para os funcionários das administrações públicas transformará a ambigüidade na definição de suas funções em um desafio para eles.

Palavras-chave: modelo de demandas-recursos do trabalho, ambigüidade de papel, clima de apoio, aumento dos recursos estruturais no trabalho, esperança.

The measures adopted by organizations to continue their activity in the face of the COVID-19 situation are causing major changes in the work context for employees (Plascencia & Castellanos, 2022). The adoption of teleworking, the absence of direct relationships with colleagues, and inexperience in the use of new technologies, cause situations such as increased isolation, family distractions, lack of feedback, or increase workload. All this can lead to a considerable increase in role ambiguity at work, affecting the performance of their duties (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020).

Role ambiguity is one of the main job demands, with negative consequences on the effectiveness and goal achievement at work (Orgambídez-Ramos et al., 2015). In the research studies of the last decades and even those published nowadays, they propose to conceptualize role ambiguity as hindering job demand, with negative consequences both at the organizational and personal level on the employees themselves (Misra et al., 2020; Orgambídez-Ramos et al., 2017; Peiró, 2005; Shin et al., 2020; Silva & Rodrigues, 2024; Zellars et al., 1999). But this conceptualization of ambiguity closes the possibility of finding situations where, in combination with other variables, it can pose a challenge to employees.

One of the elements that are most affected by contexts of ambiguity is the perceptions that workers have of themselves. In a recent study, CahayaSanthi and Piartrini (2020) argue that hope is one of the aspects most affected by role ambiguity. These authors propose that, due to the lack of information and clarity in the objectives of environments with high ambiguity, positive perception about the future of hope is reduced. Already Rizzo et al. (1970) in their initial studies on role stress, proposed that assuming a role with inadequate requirements and expectations can lead to decreased levels of hope in employees. Other authors, such as Lazarus (2003) and Snyder (2002) have also identified hope as a variable linked to stressful work contexts.

When studying how role ambiguity influences levels of hope, it is essential to analyze the variables that can act as mediators in this process. In this sense, the job-crafting behaviors carried out by employees can be a determining element. Through job-crafting, employees carry out improvement behaviors in their jobs, which increases levels of hope (Vogt et al., 2016). In contexts with role ambiguity, the new job-crafting behaviors performed could be reduced, ultimately affecting employee hope (Cenciotti et al., 2017). For this reason, it is of great interest to analyze what elements organizations can use to reduce the negative effects of ambiguous contexts on employee behavior and hope.

The existence of a supportive climate has been one of the variables with the greatest positive effect on employees in the organizational context, especially when it comes to reducing the consequences of role stress (Díaz-Fúnez et al., 2016). Other studies such as those developed by Pérez and Martín (2004) or Shanock and Eisenberger (2006), have also found in their results the buffering effect of the supportive climate on the influence of job stress on the emotional states of employees. Therefore, it seems that a supportive climate can play a positive role in reducing the negative consequences of demands such as ambiguity.

Therefore, the present research aims to analyze how the work climate modulates the influence of role ambiguity on the increase of structural resources and of the latter on hope. The result of this analysis could be interesting for public administrations, since knowing these results they could formulate certain organizational strategies to improve employee performance.

Theoretical framework

When analyzing the organizational context, one of the most commonly used models is the job demands and resources theory (JD-R) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model is derived from the theoretical integration of several different orientations, such as the demands/control (DC) model (Karasek, 1979), or the efforts/rewards model of Siegrist and Peter (1996). From the JD-R theory, the context is analyzed based on the existing demands and resources, placing

both concepts at the beginning of two different processes: the process of health deterioration and a motivational process. Job demands, as the starting point of the health deterioration process, produce negative influences on employees and hinder the achievement of organizational goals (Orgambidez-Ramos et al., 2014). On the other hand, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) affirm that resources are the beginning of the motivational process, with positive consequences for both employees and organizations in meeting their objectives. Therefore, organizations must adapt the resources available to them and their employees to ensure that the consequences of job demands do not have negative effects on the organizational context.

One of the job demands that has shown most interest in research in recent years has been role ambiguity (Davis & Stazyk, 2015; Díaz-Fúnez et al., 2016; Mohamad et al., 2025; Squires & Peach, 2020). From the first study addressing role ambiguity, it is defined as the lack of clarity in the understanding of the actions to be taken to achieve the proposed individual objectives (Kahn et al., 1964). More recently, authors such as Yun et al. (2007) incorporated to the definition key elements such as the absence of clearly formulated information about performance expectations, goals, duties, authority, responsibilities, obligations, and other working conditions related to role performance. In this way, we could conclude that role ambiguity occurs when employees perceive a lack or lack of clarity in the activities necessary to carry out a correct performance (Rizzo, et al., 1970).

Numerous investigations have addressed the study of role ambiguity at the organizational level. These studies have mostly found negative influences of this dimension on variables such as performance (Eatough et al., 2011) and job satisfaction (Kadir et al., 2017); while it is a trigger for the appearance of burnout at work (Han et al., 2015). However, despite a large number of existing studies, few studies have addressed the effects of ambiguity on the personal resources available to workers.

One of the first studies that talks about personal resources is the work of Lin (1982), who defined them as tangible, social, psychological, or symbolic assets that are valued by a person and that are directly available

to improve their effective functioning in specific domains. Within personal resources, hope is one of the most analyzed in recent years by various researchers (Lee, 2018; Loghman et al., 2025; Luthans et al., 2007; Cohen-Chen & Van Zomeren, 2018). Authors such as Snyder et al. (1991) conceive of hope as a state of positive motivation based on expectations of success and the planning necessary to achieve it. More recently, hope has been included as a dimension of psychological capital and refers to the orientation of goals and their establishment, along with the effort and planning to reach them (Cunha et al. 2007; Luthans et al., 2007).

Most studies that have addressed hope have shown that it generates positive consequences in the emotional state and behavior of workers. When there are high levels of hope, they tend to be creative and resourceful in solving their work tasks (Luthans et al., 2007), achieving more positive results in terms of group effectiveness (Cohen-Chen & Van Zomeren, 2018). Lee (2018) in his study reveals hope not only as an antecedent but also as a positive influence as a mediator between leadership and organizational effectiveness. However, all previous studies have been based on expectation as a predictor variable, not taking into account the effects of the context on it.

Among the few studies that have shown how role ambiguity affects the personal resources available to the individual, Peiró (2005) found that this variable provokes feelings of incompetence, reduced self-esteem, self-confidence, or the quality of decision making and participation. This can lead one to think that in this dimension of the role stress is a variable that could also affect the employee's level of hope. Very recently, the study by CahayaSanthi and Piartrini (2020) has found that role ambiguity negatively affects hope, due to the lack of information and clarity when the worker performs his or her duties. However, this work does not address the process through which role ambiguity negatively influences hope.

One possible way to influence ambiguity about hope is provided by the job demands and resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This model proposes job-crafting as an element that provides feedback to personal resources from the work context, being affected by existing demands and being key in increasing resources. Job-crafting was first

formally defined by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) as those modifications, changes, and actions that employees make to their tasks and through which they redesign their job. Tims et al. (2012) define job-crafting as all those actions carried out by employees to compensate for job demands and resources through their skills and needs. One of the dimensions of job-crafting that is showing the greatest influence on the psychological capital of workers, and therefore on hope, is the increase in structural resources (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015; Vogt et al., 2016).

The increase in structural resources refers to the behavior of the worker whose objective is to develop their capacities, through learning and increasing autonomy in work processes (Kanten, 2014). This variable assumes that workers do not have a role as passive executors in the construction of the meaning of their work, and of themselves, but that they are active participants in both processes (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Job-crafting dimensions have shown positive effects on organizations and workers' perceptions of themselves (Chinelato et al., 2015). However, in environments with high demands, workers' behaviors to improve their jobs may decrease, affecting the generation of job-derived resources (Akkermans & Tims, 2017).

Job-crafting is a positive organizational tool, especially when other job resources are limited or do not allow coping with job demands (Wrzesniewski et al., 2010). Petrou et al. (2012) propose that workers can use job-crafting in three different ways: seeking resources, seeking challenges, or reducing job demands. Although role ambiguity is an obstacle to demand, according to the theory of Schaubroeck et al. (1989), its general structure also allows its inclusion as a challenging demand, when in the organizational context the appropriate conditions exist for it (Podsakoff et al., 2007). Tims and Bakker (2010) propose that employees make use of job-crafting when job demands exceed their capabilities, and the generation of new resources will have positive consequences in the organizational context. Reviewing the above, it could be considered that employees will make use of job-crafting as a tool to try to counteract a job demand such as role ambiguity, as long as they find other support resources in the work context.

From the JD-R model, job resources have a buffer function against job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). A work resource that has been shown to reduce negative employee situations is organizational climate (Örten & Cenkci, 2015; Subirats et al., 1997).

In one of their first conceptualizations, Tagiuri and Litwin (1968) defined organizational climate as the perpetual quality of an organization's work environment experienced by its employees that also influences their behavior, and this can be determined in terms of an organization's values, a certain set of characteristics or attributes of an organization. Closer is the definition of Schneider and Reichers (1983), for whom the climate is understood as the generalized perceptions of workers about the organization's processes, events, and practices. Years later, Van Muijen (1998) updated the term organizational climate as a more individual concept, describing it as a set of perceptions about the values, beliefs, norms, practices, and organizational procedures that each worker has.

Organizational climate has been approached as a critical factor that affects employee behavior and actions (Aarons & Sawitzky, 2006; Hsu & Chen, 2017; Janiukštis et al., 2024; Wallace et al., 2013). Mañas (1998) found that workers' individual perception of organizational climate influenced their perception of role stress, showing the supportive climate dimension as the one that produced the greatest effect. Other authors have continued in this direction, all of them finding that the supportive climate is the dimension that most reduces demands in the work context (Mawritz et al., 2014; Richard et al., 2020).

The supportive climate is defined by the employees' perception of the usefulness of the actions of managers and other employees (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). Jones and James (1979) give a more complex and complete definition of the concept, conceiving it as the degree to which the worker perceives that the leader helps him/her to achieve the objectives through the scheduling of activities, planning, and others, and also includes. The worker's perception of how interpersonal relationships and personal support facilitate their activity in the company. In a recent study, González-Romá and Le Blanc (2019) affirm in their study that work units with low levels of supportive climate cannot satisfy the social

and affiliation needs of their members in the organization, as well as the commitment to their work unit. Peer support influences the manifestation of certain employee behaviors and the scope of the individual results of their tasks (Bommer et al., 2003), so it can be key as a mobilizing element when changing perceptions of the organizational context.

For all these reasons, this work proposes the following study model and hypotheses:

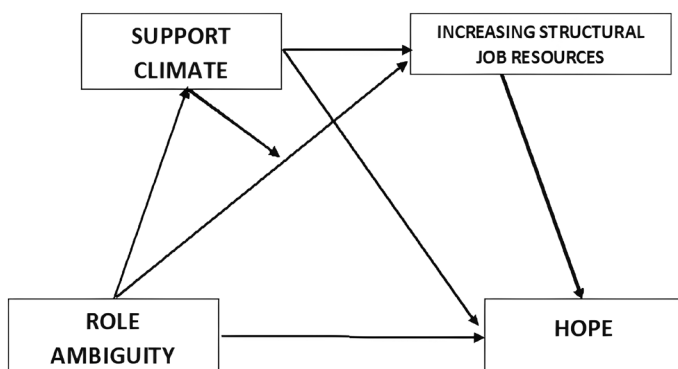


Figure 1. Research model

The hypotheses to be carried out in the following study are:

- H1: Role ambiguity will show a significant sign influence negative on job resources and the increase of job-crafting structural resources.
- H2: The effect of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources is moderated by the supportive climate.
- H3: The degree of role ambiguity will influence hope through the increase in structural resources.

However, by the moderate mediation model (Hayes, 2013), this mediation process may vary depending on the existing supportive climate in the organization.

Method

Sample

In this research, 339 employees of the administration and services staff of a public administration university have been used. Regarding age, the most representative intervals were those from 46 to 50 (31.3%), and from 51 to 55 (32.7%), followed by employees between 56 and 60 years (12.7%), between 41 and 45 years (10%), over 60 years (7.4%), between 36 and 40 years (4.1%), and between 30 and 35 years (1.8%). Regarding gender, there are 51.6% of men compared to 48.4% of women. The legal regime of the sample is 92.9% of career civil servants. Regarding work shifts, 89.1% work in the morning shift and 10.9% in the afternoon shift.

Instruments

Role ambiguity

To determine this variable, the Rizzo et al. (1970) questionnaire was applied, using its Spanish version (Peiró et al., 1986). The questionnaire contains 6 items (e.g., "I know the degree of autonomy of my work well"). Responses were classified on a Likert-type scale, with 5 anchor points, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Increasing structural job resources

This dimension was evaluated with the questionnaire Spanish version of the job-crafting Scale by Bakker et al. (2018). The questionnaire consists of 5 items (an example is: I try to learn new things in my work). The response options are on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always).

Hope

This dimension was measured with the questionnaire with the PCQ-12 Scale, a reduced version (Luthans et al., 2007), in its Spanish

adaptation by Leon-Perez et al. (2016). Four items were considered (eg., Right now I think I am quite successful at work). The response options are on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (a small part) to 6 (a large part).

Supportive climate

This dimension was calculated with the “FOCUS-93” questionnaire (Van Muijen et al., 1999). It is made up of 3 items (e.g., “Interest and support is shown for peers problems”). The answer options are on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (a small part) to 7 (a large part).

Procedure

The Ethics Committee of the University of Almería authorized the development of the study once the topic and line of research had been examined. To carry out this study, the research team needed to communicate and develop the objective of the research to the management and workers of each department. Group meetings were held with the organization’s management team in which all the organization’s personnel were invited to participate. During the working day, the questionnaires were completed electronically, being able at all times to receive the necessary instructions and to answer all the questions they needed because several were available while the research group was resolving doubts.

Data analysis

Once the descriptive data, Cronbach’s alpha and zero-order relationships between all the constructions had been calculated, a mediation and moderator analysis were carried out. In Figure 1 show the conceptual model proposed in this study. As in the Cristea et al. (2013) study, a multi-step mediation analysis is observed where the effect of role ambiguity on hope is mediated by the increase in structural resources. Likewise, the model encompasses supportive climate as a mediator of the relationship between role ambiguity and increased structural resources. The mediation and moderation analysis were performed with the non-parametric starting behavior to assess the direct

and indirect effects of applying the PROCESS package (Hayes, 2013). Because this specific conceptual model is not covered in the PROCESS, we followed up on Hayes's suggestion and first developed the multi-step mediation analysis of the effect of role ambiguity on hope, with supportive climate and increased resources. Structural mediators 1 and 2, respectively (Model 6 in the process). Then, a simple moderation analysis was performed to examine the effect of supportive climate as a moderator of the relationship between role ambiguity, hope, and the increase in structural resources (Model 7 in the process).

Indirect and conditional effects were considered significant if the 95% corrected start-up expectancy intervals (CI) for effects based on 10,000 start-up samples did not include zero. The mediation effects were calculated using the completely standardized indirect effect (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) and supplying 95% expectation start intervals. This effect size measure is based on the product of betas for trajectories and can be interpreted as the expected change in the dependent variable (e.g., Hope) per unit change in the predictor variables (e.g., Role ambiguity) that occurs indirectly through the mediator (for example, increased structural resources). Finally, the Johnson-Neyman technique (Hayes & Matthes, 2009) has been followed to derive the moderator value (that is, supportive climate scores) in which the effect of the predictor variable (that is a score of role ambiguity) transitions between statistically significant and non-significant at an alpha level of 05.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive data, the internal consistencies obtained for each scale, and the correlations between the measures in the current study. Participants' mean scores on the supportive climate, increased structural resources, and study hope variables were above the midpoint of the scale; however, the role ambiguity variable was below the midpoint of the scale. The internal consistencies of the scales

ranged from .831 (hope) to .90 (role ambiguity) and were similar to previous evidence using these instruments. As expected, all constructions were strongly correlated.

Table 1

Descriptive data, internal consistencies and correlations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	2	3	4
1. Role ambiguity	1.95	.8176	.905	-.416**	-.438**	-.486**
2. Support climate	5.59	1.297	.896		.236**	.313**
3. Increasing structural job resources	5.623	1.069	.920			.556**
4. Hope	4.2662	.85599	.831			

Note. ** $p < .001$; * $p \leq .05$

Test of the mediation model. A multi-step mediation analysis of the relationship between role ambiguity and hope was performed with the climate of support as Mediator 1 and increased structural resources as Mediator 2 (see Figure 1). Table 2 shows the results of the models demonstrated in this mediation analysis. As a first model, we find that role ambiguity is a significant predictor of the supportive climate. In the second model, it presents that role ambiguity and supportive climate are significant predictors of model 2 (increased structural resources). However, the third model shows that the total effect of role ambiguity on hope is significant ($TE = -.5084$, $SE = .0499$, $p < .001$). Finally, in the fourth model it appears that all the predictive variables have had significant value on hope, all of which are included in the regression model. It is necessary to take into account, concerning the previous model, that the role ambiguity coefficient has decreased to $-.2674$.

Table 2

Results of the regression analyzes that examine the mediator model of the effect of role ambiguity (X) on hope (Y) through the supportive climate (M1) and the increasing structural job resources

Regression Model	Coefficient	SE	p
Model 1 (support climate)			
X (role ambiguity)	-.6201	.0796	<.001
Constant	6.8074	.1685	<.001
$R^2 = .1527$			
$F = 60.7353, 138, p < .001$			
Model 2 (increasing structural job resources)			
X (role ambiguity)	-.5328	.0688	<.001
M1 (support climate)	.0559	.0434	.1982
Constant	6.4395	.3244	<.001
$R^2 = .1959$			
$F = 40.9218, p < .001$			
Model 3 (hope) Total Effect			
X (role ambiguity)	-.5084	.0499	<.001
Constant	5.2595	.1056	<.001
$R^2 = .2358$			
$F = 103.9904, p < .001$			
Model 4 (hope)			
X (role ambiguity)	-.2674	.0525	<.001
M1 (support climate)	.0809	.0306	<.001
M2 (increasing structural job resources)	.3362	.0383	.0085
Constant	2.4158	.3359	<.001
$R^2 = .3943$			
$F = 72.6998, p < .001$			

Table 3 shows the general and specific indirect effects (IE). The results have revealed a significant measurement, with a total EI of $-.2410$ ($SE = .0512$, 95% CI BC of $-.3480$ to $-.1482$) also having a large effect size ($abcs = -.2302$, 95% CI BC $-.3236$ to $-.1455$). All specific indirect effects have also been significant (IE1: $TE = -.0502$, $SE = .0232$, 95% CI BC $-.0992$ to $-.0072$, $abcs = -.0479$; IE2: $TE = -.1791$, $SE = .0390$, 95% CI CI $-.2632$ to $-.1099$, $abcs = -.1711$; IE3: $TE = -.0117$, $SE = .0108$, 95% CI CI $-.0341$ to $-.0093$, $abcs = -.0111$).

Table 3

Indirect effects of the serial multiple mediator model of the effect of role ambiguity (X) on hope (Y) through the supportive climate (M1) and the increase of structural resources (M2)

	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
			LL	LU
Overall indirect effect	-.2410	.0512	-.3480	-.1482
IE1: X=>M1=>Y	-.0502	.0232	-.0992	-.0072
IE2: X=>M2=>Y	-.1791	.0390	-.2632	-.1099
IE3: :X=>M1=>M2=>Y	-.0117	.0108	-.0341	-.0093

In table 4 we have found how the moderation analysis has shown that the effect of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources is a function of the supportive climate (interaction coefficient: Role ambiguity x Supportive climate = $.0843$, $SE = .0402$, $p < 0.05$). Specifically, in Table 4 we also find the Johnson-Neyman technique, which shows us how the conditional effect of role ambiguity in the perception of the increase in structural resources is significant in all the support climate scores, being the smallest level of error in the range 4.6-4.9.

Table 4

Regression analysis examining the moderation of the influence of role ambiguity in the increase in structural resources by the supportive climate and the conditional influence of the supportive climate based on the Johnson-Neyman technique.

Antecedent	Coefficient	SE	p
X (role ambiguity)	-.9816	.2249	<.001
W (support climate)	-.1360	.1013	.1803
XxW	.0843	.0402	.0369
Constant	7.5034	.6017	<.001
$R^2 = .2063$			
$F = 29.0193$			
$p = .000$			
Johnson-Neyman Technique			
Support climate	Coefficient	SE	p
1.0000	-.8973	.1870	-4.7988**
1.3000	-.8720	.1758	-4.9600**
1.6000	-.8467	.1648	-5.1392**
1.9000	-.8214	.1539	-5.3388**
2.2000	-.7961	.1432	-5.5614**
2.5000	-.7708	.1327	-5.8099**
2.8000	-.7455	.1225	-6.0862**
3.1000	-.7203	.1127	-6.3913**
3.4000	-.6950	.1034	-6.7232**
3.7000	-.6697	.0947	-7.0740**
4.0000	-.6444	.0868	-7.4258**
4.3000	-.6191	.0799	-7.7448**
4.6000	-.5938	.0744	-7.9772**
4.9000	-.5685	.0706	-8.0533**
5.2000	-.5432	.0687	-7.9091**
5.5000	-.5180	.0689	-7.5207**
5.8000	-.4927	.0711	-6.9259**
6.1000	-.4674	.0753	-6.2079**
6.4000	-.4421	.0810	-5.4550**
6.7000	-.4168	.0881	-4.7318**
7.0000	-.3915	.0961	-4.0726**

Note. ** $p < .001$; * $p \leq .05$

Discussion

The main objective of the research study has been to analyze the modulating effect of the supportive climate on the negative influence that role ambiguity has on hope through the increase of structural resources. Given the results obtained, we can conclude that our hypotheses have been supported. The results of the first hypothesis, in which we proposed that role ambiguity would show a significant negative influence on job resources and the increase in job-crafting structural resources, have shown that there is a negative influence of role ambiguity on the increase in job-crafting structural resources ($TE = -.5328$, $SE = .0688$, $P < .001$), and on the supportive climate ($TE = -.6201$, $SE = .0796$, $P < .001$). In the second hypothesis, we posited that the effect of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources is moderated by the supportive climate, and the analyses confirm that the effect of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources is modulated by the supportive climate ($TE = .0843$, $SE = .0402$, $P < .05$). The degree of role ambiguity will influence hope, through the increase in structural resources.

Finally, regarding the third hypothesis, we confirm that role ambiguity influences the level of hope through the increase of job-crafting structural resources, and that this entire process is influenced by the supportive climate existing in the organization ($TE = -.2410$, $SE = .0512$, BC 95% CI from $-.3480$ to $-.1482$). Therefore, we can confirm the importance of a supportive climate in the organization, since it provides a tool to the workers so that they can meet job demands and increase their personal and structural resources.

These results reinforce the findings of previous research such as those developed by Peiró (2005) and CahayaSanthi and Piartrini (2020), which state that, in organizations where there are perceptions of role ambiguity in employees, these negatively affect their levels of hope. The analyzes show that the effect of role ambiguity on the increase in structural resources is moderated by the supportive climate, which supports the results of previous studies such as Mañas (1998),

Mawritz et al. (2014) or Richard et al. (2020). These results are also in line with the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which proposes job-crafting as an element that provides feedback to personal resources, generating benefit spirals.

Theoretical implications

The present study has two main theoretical implications, both related to the deepening of the demands and resources approach in the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The first theoretical implication focuses on job demands and their role as challenges or obstacles. So far, numerous studies highlight role ambiguity as a job demand that produces negative effects within an organization, acting as an obstacle demand (Davis & Stazyk, 2015; Díaz-Funez et al., 2016; Yun et al. 2007). However, the results shown in this manuscript suggest that the role played by ambiguity will gradually change depending on the different contextual factors that occur at the same time in the work context. A very recent study by Martínez-Díaz et al. (2020), already postulated the possible challenging role of role ambiguity, although in this work leadership is proposed as the variable that changes the role of ambiguity, and only analyzes its effects on the emotional state of the worker. Therefore, we see how a negative element, such as role ambiguity (obstacle demand), can become a positive element in the organization or can become a challenging demand when the right conditions are met in the work context.

The second theoretical implication directly affects the benefits spiral proposed by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). From this model, the benefits spiral is considered a process where demands exert a negative influence. The results shown in the present research indicate that transformation an obstacle demand into a challenge not only has consequences on the individual's work and emotional outcome but also improves the perception they have of their abilities, increasing their resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Practical implications

The results of this research also reveal important practical implications. The first refers to the need for an organization to generate supportive contexts for their workers. In this way, the perception of support by the organization in situations of impeding demands will be key to perceiving these demands as challenges. That is, if the implements policies that increase the worker's perception of support in contexts of demands, will be positive for both the organization and the worker.

The second practical implication indicates that, by achieving this change in the perception of impeding demands as challenges, an environment of gain will be generated that will cause the generation of new structural and personal resources in the organization. This will derive, following the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), from a positive spiral where workers will have more and more resources and will be able to face new job demands or a higher level of existing ones.

Limitations and future research

As with several studies, this work has limitations that must be reported and also invite development for future research. For example, the method used to collect information, which has been collected through online questionnaires (self-reports), may be affected by the variance of the common method (McGonagle, 2017; Simmering et al., 2014). For future research it would be advisable to grant the method of measures more variables estimated as inter-subjective responses at the team level and the use of complementary instruments for data collection that provide more validity such as direct observation, conducting interviews with employees and superiors, or also selecting objective data to know the productivity and performance. Another limitation to highlight would be the sample since it is very specific and limited to the public employee in Spain, which makes it difficult to compare it with other types of different

organizations. Therefore, it would be curious for future research to contrast with samples of public and private administrations (Costantini et al., 2017; Mañas et al., 2018) or to extend the number of organizations from different public bodies (state, regional and local), it would also be important to conduct cross-cultural studies. Finally, it should be noted that the research design is cross-sectional in nature and provides more scarcity of information than other types of studies, so it would be of vital importance to develop multilevel and longitudinal studies that allow examining the effects of group membership. In this way, the evolution of the variables studied will improve the attitudes, behaviors, and group performances of work teams or check how these variables harm performance and productivity and indirectly to organizational behaviors such as cordiality or citizenship attitudes.

This study offers a challenge for further research since it marks a possible line of work in the search for job resources that can show the greatest capacity by transforming existing demands in the work context. In the same way, it opens the door to longitudinal studies where the positive effects of gain spirals can be corroborated over time.

Conclusion

This work allows us to conclude that organizations must be aware of the importance of resources, such as a supportive climate when employees face situations where there are obstacle demands. This will cause the role ambiguity to become a challenging demand, which will generate a positive effect on the worker's hope through the increase of job-crafting behaviors to increase structural resources.

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