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## Is role clarity and workplace autonomy the key dilemma for multinational telecommunication organizations in developing countries?

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**Abstract.** Role clarity and workplace autonomy are always considered a dilemma for employees to perform better to achieve their desired targets, which can affect organizational performance. The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of role clarity and work autonomy on the performance of employees with the mediating influence of organizational commitment. Classical organization theory and role theory constitute the methodological framework of the study. Structural equation modelling and confirmatory factor analysis were used as research methods. Data is gathered from 311 employees of five different multinational telecommunication organizations operating in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Islamabad and Rawalpindi City, Punjab, Pakistan through a convenience sampling. We used AMOS for data analysis. The research results revealed that role clarity and work autonomy have a significant positive effect on the work performance of individuals. Similarly, organizational commitment demonstrated the partial mediation between the association of role clarity and work autonomy with work performance among employees of multinational telecommunication organizations. Employees who are uncertain about their job responsibilities are unable to be engaged and motivated at work. Organizations, therefore, should eradicate role ambiguities and conflicts to boost staff commitment by propping a clear role for the enhancement of work performance. This research extends the role theory, and our findings can give companies insights into how to customize autonomy levels for maximum productivity.

**Keywords:** role clarity; work autonomy; organizational commitment; work performance; telecommunication organizations; Pakistan.

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## Понимание роли и автономия труда работников в международных телекоммуникационных компаниях: опыт развивающихся стран

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**Аннотация.** При выполнении рабочих обязанностей сотрудники компаний постоянно сталкиваются с неопределенностью своей роли в организации и недостаточной автономией труда. Статья посвящена анализу влияния указанных факторов на результативность деятельности работников, а также изучению влияния приверженности работника организации в этом взаимодействии. Методологическую основу работы составили классическая теория организации и теория организационных ролей. Использовались методы моделирования структурными уравнениями и подтверждающего факторного анализа; отбор респондентов осуществлялся методом удобной выборки. Эмпирическая база представлена данными, полученными в ходе анкетирования 311 сотрудников международных телекоммуникационных компаний, расположенных в г. Исламабад и г. Равалпинди (провинция Пенджаб, Пакистан). Анализ данных проведен в статистической программе AMOS. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о значимом положительном влиянии понимания работниками организационных ролей и автономии труда на их эффективность. Подтверждено предположение о том, что приверженность организации имеет частичный медиационный эффект в данной взаимосвязи. Доказано, что работники, не обладающие четким пониманием своих обязанностей, испытывают слабую приверженность организации и недостаточно мотивированы к труду. Поэтому компании должны более четко определять перечень задач для сотрудников и создавать общую атмосферу определенности. Выводы исследования вносят вклад в теорию организационных ролей и могут использоваться компаниями при определении уровня автономии труда для обеспечения максимального уровня производительности работников.

**Ключевые слова:** организационные роли; автономия труда; приверженность организации; производительность труда; телекоммуникационные компании; Пакистан.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, work autonomy as well as an individual global mindset helps employees seek competitive advantage, thereby enhancing work performance and innovative work behaviour [Correia et al., 2023; Pusparini, Aryasa, 2021; van Zyl et al., 2021]. Employees who believe that the outcome is the product of their actions and have good relationships with their leaders are seen to have a considerably greater level of role clarity, which has a substantial influence on work performance and commitment than those who lack all of these aspects [Hegazy et al., 2023; Kauppila, 2014]. When an organization hires people who are overqualified and have an empowering attitude, job clarity increases significantly, which has a considerable impact on work outcomes or work performance but when work autonomy exceeds networking abilities, it has a greater influence on in-role performance [Ma et al., 2020; Nesheim, Olsen, Sandvik, 2017]. If employees are free to perform their tasks transparent with internal communication, collaboration, and flexible work arrangements then they feel at ease at work which enhances work performance, well-being, and motivation but developing networking skills and work autonomy corresponds with positive in-role and extra-role performance [Fincke et al., 2020; Nesheim, Olsen, Sandvik, 2017].

Employees having a high level of intrinsic motivation and work compared to employees having a low level of intrinsic motivation, demonstrate a sense of having perceived work autonomy that consequently enhances the level of work performance [Dysvik, Kuvaas, 2011; Santiago-Torner, 2023]. Employee choices of different socialization tactics, i.e. inquiry, observation, and networking are associated with organizational commitment as well as turnover intention through their linkage with role clarity [Tang et al., 2014]. According to Jong and Ford [2020], supervisors' support and consideration regarding the enhancement of work autonomy among employees are directed towards positive attitudes and high work performance. The positive supervisor-subordinate relationship allows for advantageous job resources such as work autonomy, development opportunities, job crafting, and organizational citizenship behaviour which enhances employees' work performance [Guan, Frenkel, 2019]. A high-performance work system should be implement-

ed with an effective strategy for the improvement of work performance through the intervention of organizational commitment and competencies [Hsu et al., 2007; Jewell, Jewell, Kaufman, 2022]. Employees with a high personal need for structure demonstrated a high level of role clarity during close monitoring which subsequently affected task performance and organizational commitment in the organization [Rietzschel, Slijkhuis, Van Yperen, 2014]. Many managers use work design to motivate first-line employees to exhibit customer-oriented behaviour that influences organizational commitment and role clarity in dealing with customers [Lavelle et al., 2023; Rayburn, Gilliam, 2016].

This study aims to investigate the concerns of employees working in multinational telecommunication companies operating in developing nations. Employees of the telecom industry face numerous issues, including clarification of roles while performing their duties, autonomy and flexible work arrangements, dedication, and commitment towards tasks. Overall, less research has been conducted on role clarity, commitment, and autonomy of staff within the context of the telecom industry. Therefore, we propose a model to enhance the performance of telecommunication employees. The upcoming part of the paper is structured as follows: the second section represents theory and hypotheses development with a research model based on an extensive literature review of variables associations, i.e., perceived work stress, organization commitment, turnover intention, and gender perspective. Similarly, the third section represents material and methods with sample characteristics, i.e., gender, age group, qualification, and experience. Moreover, the fourth section shows results with measurement and validity through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), mean, standard deviation (SD), reliability, and Pearson correlation. Furthermore, the fifth section discusses the model fitness index, direct effect, indirect effect with a mediator, total effect, and gender differences. Finally, the last section is dedicated to implications limitations, and conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**Theoretical background.** The term "role" is used by some authors to describe defining behaviours [Leifer, Burt,

1985; Petit, 2012], while other authors use it to describe social roles to be played [Winship, Mandel, 1983], and still other authors provide definitions that centre on social conduct scripts [Hilbert, Zurcher, 1984; Turner, Bates, Harvey, 1976]. Role theorists differ in their presumptions and incorporate them into fundamental ideas, but they are often similar in their philosophic perspective and employment of research techniques. Role theorists continue to concur that the fundamental issues of orientation are defining behaviours, roles to be played, and behaviour scripts. The basic principle of role theory is that people perform a variety of roles in daily life [Biddle, 1986]. Roles can be roughly characterized as a collection of behavioural expectations that are imposed on people based on their position in a social system [Biddle, 1986; Rizzo, House, Lirtzman, 2016; Tubre, Collins, 2000]. Clarity assists in lowering uncertainty about what is expected of employees by the organization but role clarity makes the organization's beliefs, objectives, and requirements easier to understand [Saks, Uggerlev, Fassina, 2007]. Role ambiguity, which exists on a continuum with role clarity, happens when people are unclear about their roles' boundaries [Ebbers, Wijnberg, 2017; Rizzo, House, Lirtzman, 2016; Tubre, Collins, 2000]. According to classical organization theory, role ambiguity in complex organizations is affected by the chain of command and the principle of unity of command and direction. Role conflicts have been discovered in formal organizations, and studies imply that stress is linked to role conflicts [Fisher, Gitelson, 1983; Stryker, Macke, 1978; Van Sell, Brief, Schuler, 1981]. Role theory provides an effective lens through which one can examine the effects of role clarity and work autonomy on productivity and organizational commitment. Role conflicts have also been linked to several indicators of personal malintegration at work, including poor work performance, lower organizational commitment, and increased turnover. Role clarity can serve as a significant predicate of individual organizational commitment [Panaccio, Vandenberghe, 2011].

**Role clarity and work performance.** Role clarity and feedback to the employees appear as a strong predictor of various types of performance in the organization but the relationship between role clarity and managerial work performance is substantial if relevant job information is provided [Tisu et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2021]. Role clarity is influenced effectively in those organizations, where performance feedback and participation in decision-making are practiced for outstanding staff performance [Teas et al., 1979]. Clarity about roles and tasks with the interactive role of job security enhances the work performance of employees and understanding of what is expected from them, whereas, supervisor support with customer participation generates role clarity, ability, and intrinsic motivation, which further facilitate the relationship between employee's service innovation

engagement and work performance in the organization [Fried et al., 2003; Cadwallader et al., 2010]. Constructive and supportive coaching provided from the managerial side directly influences employee work satisfaction and role clarity but affects work performance and organizational commitment indirectly [Kim et al., 2013]. Organizations have a high turnover rate due to a lack of training activities but high performance can be achieved by the implementation of an organizational development model and role clarity [Kennett, 2013]. Therefore, based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1. Role clarity has a significant positive influence on work performance.*

**Work autonomy and work performance.** High levels of work autonomy tend to exhibit higher levels of performance as compared to low levels of autonomy, but work autonomy with supervisor support increased the work performance [Kuvaas, 2009; Niessen, Volmer, 2010]. When work group autonomy and identity are increased in the organizational working environment then staff exhibit good mental health, high work motivation, performance, and job satisfaction which lead to the attainment of the organizational goal [Wall, Clegg, 1981]. Proactive behaviour plays an essential role in the association of emotional competence with a high level of work performance organizations can achieve desired results with the presence of a high level of autonomy, but work autonomy can intervene in the relation between job status (full-time or part-time) and work performance [Gottman et al., 1998; Marchese, Ryan, 2001]. Work autonomy provides the opportunity for employees to work with freedom and make desirable changes to the present and future working conditions, thus increasing their interest in work that instantaneously leads to higher work performance. Employees who prioritize meeting perceived performance goals exclusively, without considering situational or external factors, may experience negative performance outcomes with intervention of work autonomy [Brockner et al., 2006; Niessen, Volmer, 2010]. Older employees have to make themselves sustained in daily work pressure and job crafting, therefore, a high level of autonomy can make them much more satisfied, motivated, and engaged in their work that is directed towards a high level of work performance [Kooij et al., 2020]. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested on based of literature review:

*H2. Work autonomy has a significant positive influence on work performance.*

**Role clarity and organizational commitment.** In an organization, where role ambiguity exists, the job and organizational tenure of employees becomes limited, whereas role clarity and job involvement positively influence job satisfaction, which in turn enhances organizational commitment [Sakires, Doherty, Misener, 2009; ul-Hassan et al., 2021]. Autonomy and role clarity have

a higher influence on organizational commitment and work involvement among males compared to females [Kokubun, Yasui, 2020]. Role clarity is improved by clearly defining employee responsibilities, delivering feedback, encouraging involvement, and providing solid team support that is directed towards the enhancement of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, but changes in role clarity, work overload, and job satisfaction trigger changes in organizational commitment as well as turnover over intention of employees [Mukherjee, Malhotra, 2006; Tammy et al., 2001]. Individual attributes and job characteristics have high or more influence on aspects of work motivation aspects, i.e. job satisfaction, role clarity, organizational commitment, and job involvement [Moynihan, Pandey, 2007]. Similarly, greater role ambiguity leads to lower levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and efforts as when employees are not clear regarding their prescribed roles it becomes less valuable to them [Sakires, Doherty, Misener, 2009]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is derived based on the literature review:

*H3. Role clarity has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment.*

#### **Work autonomy and organizational commitment.**

Work autonomy, organizational commitment, and citizenship behaviour also lead to greater life satisfaction, but when employees participate in organizational activities actively their freedom to perform task, job satisfaction, and work commitment is enhanced [Lambert et al., 2006; Roney, Soicher, 2021]. The presence of functional support and organizational-level decision-making in the working environment is directed towards well-being and organizational commitment, but those who work virtually have different levels of autonomy depending on working conditions among IT professionals [Dhondt, Pot, Kraan, 2014; Ahuja et al., 2007]. According to Pandu, Balu and Poorani [2011], work autonomy refers to the level of employee control over time and tasks, and commitment refers to the level of employee dedication towards work; therefore, work autonomy and work commitment enhance the work-life balance. Working conditions, turnover factors, and commitment are related to the decision to quit, but an employee with full organizational support increases the level of commitment towards work [Aubé, Rousseau, Morin, 2007; Ahuja et al., 2007]. Job autonomy is positively related to organizational commitment, however, clear self-concepts lead to greater life satisfaction and commitment [Dhondt, Pot, Kraan, 2014; Roney, Soicher, 2021]. Thus, the below hypothesis is developed based on a literature review:

*H4. Work autonomy has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment.*

#### **Organizational commitment and work performance.**

In this era of technological advancement and globalization, organizations are required to provide technological facility for the enhancement of work commitment and

satisfaction which further boost their work performance [Martin, Omrani, 2015; Zaheer et al., 2022]. Employees may exhibit unfavourable actions and attitudes when a corporation breaches its contract resulting in decreased loyalty, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and increased workplace deviant behaviour that ultimately declines productivity and performance; therefore, organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction should be given top priority [Anisa, 2012; Hussain, 2014]. Well-implemented HR practices enhance work satisfaction and further influence employee's organizational commitment, this emphasis makes it possible for human resource management to perform operational work in the most productive form to boost work performance [Aisyah, Wolor, Usman, 2021; Jawaad et al., 2019]. Various dimensions of professionalism have a favourable influence on attitudes, such as job satisfaction, dedication, and intrinsic motivation, which leads to increased work performance [Dinger et al., 2015]. Employee's organizational commitment significantly impacts organizational citizenship behaviour, thereby increasing work performance and enhancing productivity [Anisa, 2012]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated based on the literature:

*H5. Organizational commitment has a significant positive influence on work performance.*

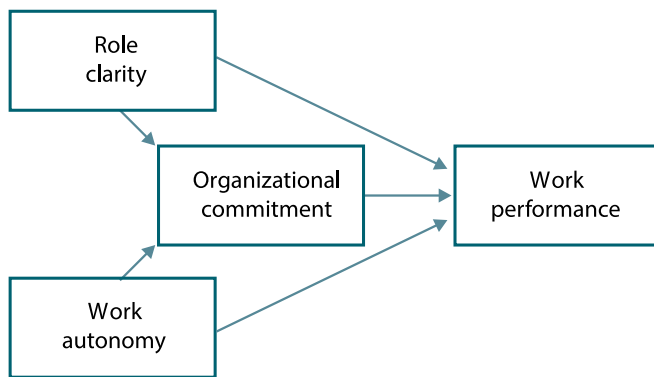
**Organizational commitment as a mediator.** Role clarity facilitates the relationship of feedback seeking with task performance and organizational commitment, whereas effective managerial coaching increases employees' understanding of their roles in the organization and leads to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, both resulting in a significant effect on work performance [Reio, Ghosh, 2009; Whitaker, Levy, 2012]. The organizational development model is utilized in areas of the organization where there is a lack of organizational commitment and role clarity so that each individual's work performance can be improved and ultimately beneficial for the organization [Kennett, 2013]. Proper training, empowerment, open internal communication, and equitable rewards, all contribute to the high level of organizational performance and work commitment but the presence of transformational leadership immediately affects organizational commitment and role clarity, which improves task performance in considerable ways [Macky, Boxall, 2008; Viator, 2001]. The laissez-faire leadership style is the most effective and appropriate leadership style because it gives employees the autonomy to make decisions and makes them feel empowered and committed to their jobs, consequently improving performance [Khan, Saleem, 2021]. Similarly, the two-way interaction between organizational-level decision latitude, job autonomy, and organizational commitment enhances work performance [Dhondt, Pot, Kraan, 2014]. Effective managerial coaching has an indirect influence on organizational commitment and work performance but has

a direct influence on job satisfaction and role clarity; however, flexible work arrangements allowing autonomy in work duration and location combined with efficient cooperation and communication enhance job performance [Fincke et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2013]. Work autonomy has a positive and significant relationship with job involvement, organizational commitment, and work performance [Sekhar, 2011]. Subsequently, two hypotheses were formulated:

*H6a. Organizational commitment mediates the relationship of role clarity with work performance.*

*H6b. Organizational commitment mediates the relationship of work autonomy with work performance.*

Figure 1 presents the research model of the study.



*Fig. 1. Research model*

*Рис. 1. Модель исследования*

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study focused on employees of multinational telecommunication companies operating in the two cities of Pakistan, namely Islamabad and Rawalpindi. We collected data from different telecom companies using a self-administered questionnaire and convenience sampling. As shown in Table 1, the final sample consisted of 311 respondents, of which 46.6% were female and 53.4% were male. Similarly, 64.6% of participants were undergraduates and 35.4% were postgraduates. In addition, Table 1 illustrates the experience levels of employees: 37.0% had 1 to 4 years of experience, 13.8% had 5 to 8 years of experience, 38.0% had less than 1 year of experience, and 11.3% had more than 8 years of experience. In addition, 46.0% were between the ages of 26 and 40, 50.8% were under the age of 25, and 3.2% were over the age of 40.

This study used reliable metrics that were state-of-the-art at the time. Role clarity is assessed using 6 items from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman [1970], 9 items from Breaugh [1985] used to evaluate work autonomy, 15 items of organizational commitment were taken from Mowday, Steers and Porter [1979] and 10 items of work performance were taken from Kuvaas and Dysvik [2009]. Furthermore, all items of role clarity, work autonomy, organizational commitment and work performance were

*Table 1 – Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents*  
*Таблица 1 – Социально-демографические характеристики респондентов*

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	145	46.6
Male	166	53.4
Age group		
25 years or under	158	50.8
26–40 years	143	46.0
Above 40 years	10	3.2
Qualification		
Undergraduate	201	64.6
Graduate	128	35.4
Experience		
Less than 1 year	118	38.0
1 to 4 years	115	37.0
5 to 8 years	43	13.8
Above 8 years	35	11.3

followed by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Measurement and validity.** The technique of structural equation modelling (SEM) is commonly used to analyse data. In this investigation, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the reliability of the measuring instrument, and the factor loadings are displayed in the path analysis below. According to Cua, McKone and Schroeder [2001], validity was determined by a factor loading of each item that was greater than or equal to 0.50. In Fig. 2, the path diagram, all items of role clarity, work autonomy, organizational commitment, and work performance have factor loadings greater than 0.5. Six items of organizational commitment were excluded due to low factor loading. As proposed by Fornell and Larcker [1981], the validity of the instrument is indicated by an average variance extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.50.

**Descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlation analysis.** Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2, including the correlation, mean, and standard deviation of all variables. These data exhibited the mean values of role clarity, work autonomy, and organizational commitment, which are critical factors in determining an individual's work performance. The correlational analysis revealed a positive relationship between all variables. Table 2 contains the values of Cronbach's Alpha reliability for all variables. These coefficients lie within the recommended range of 0.70 to 0.90, indicating the reliability of the results [Hair et al., 2019].

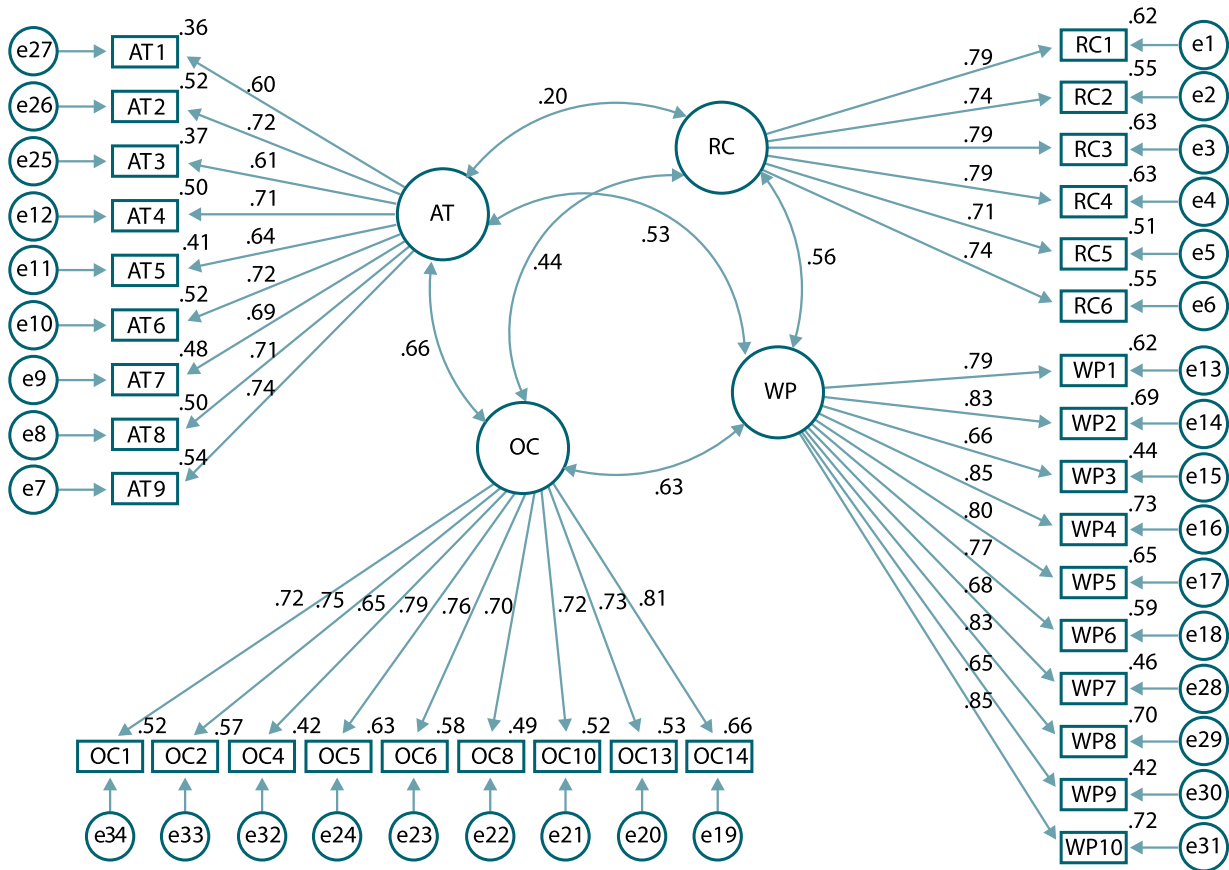


Fig. 2. Path diagram after excluding invalid items

Рис. 2. Логика исследования после исключения значимых факторов

Table 2 – Descriptive statistics, reliability, and Pearson correlation analysis

Таблица 2 – Описательная статистика, надежность и коэффициент корреляции Пирсона

Variable	Mean	SD	RC	AT	OC	WP
RC	3.0118	0.84637	–0.892			
AT	3.1068	0.75326	0.181**	–0.887		
OC	3.1819	0.7951	0.394**	0.598**	–0.914	
WP	3.2338	0.90642	0.508**	0.495**	0.591**	–0.936

Note: n = 311. RC is role clarity, AT is autonomy, OC is organizational commitment, and WP is work performance. \*\*p < 0.001. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.

**RESULTS**

**Structural equation modelling.** Steenkamp and Baumgartner [2000] evaluate the effectiveness of latent variables by identifying their strengths and limitations using the CFA method. Psychometric qualities typically include several statistical measures, such as Chi-Square, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (CMIN/DF), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI). If the RMSEA value is equal to or less than 0.08, the model is considered to be sufficiently

fitting. In addition, it is crucial to observe that the CFI, AGFI, GFI, and TLI values should ideally be closer to or greater than 0.95. Doll, Xia and Torkzadeh [1994] state that AGFI and GFI values of 0.8 or higher indicate a reasonable match. In addition, as suggested by Bentler and Bonett [1980] and Hu and Bentler [1999], the ratio of Chi-Square to Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF) should lie between 3.0 and 5.0. Table 3 displays the direct and indirect effects of the model fitness index.

**Model fitness index.** The present study employed structural equation modelling to investigate the direct and indirect effects including intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Table 3 presents the details of the model fitness index.

Table 3 – Research model fit index

Таблица 3 – Индекс соответствия в модели исследования

Indexes of fit factors	Direct effects	Indirect effects values
Chi-square/df	2.419	2.142
AGFI	0.830	0.808
TLI	0.908	0.901
RMSEA	0.068	0.061
GFI	0.858	0.832
CFI	0.917	0.908
NFI	0.867	0.842

**Direct effects.** Figure 3 presents the direct influence of role clarity and autonomy on work performance of employees.

Individuals' role clarity has a significant positive impact on their work performance ( $\beta = 0.476, p < 0.001$ ), and work autonomy has a significant positive impact on work performance ( $\beta = 0.438, p < 0.001$ ), as shown in Table 4 and Fig. 3. Consequently, the evidence supports hypotheses H1 and H2, so they are accepted.

**Indirect effects.** Likewise, Figure 4 presents the indirect effect of role clarity and autonomy on the work performance of employees with organizational commitment as a mediator.

Organizational commitment partially mediated the relationship between role clarity and work performance, as well as the relationship between work autonomy and work performance. Role clarity positively influences organizational commitment significantly ( $\beta = 0.317, p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, work autonomy has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.598, p < 0.001$ ), and organizational commitment also has a significant positive influence on individual work performance ( $\beta = 0.289, p < 0.001$ ), as shown in Table 5 and Fig. 4. Work autonomy and task interdependence increase the work performance of employees and intrinsic motivation partially mediates this relationship [Kuvaas, 2009]. Therefore, H3, H4, and H5 are supported.

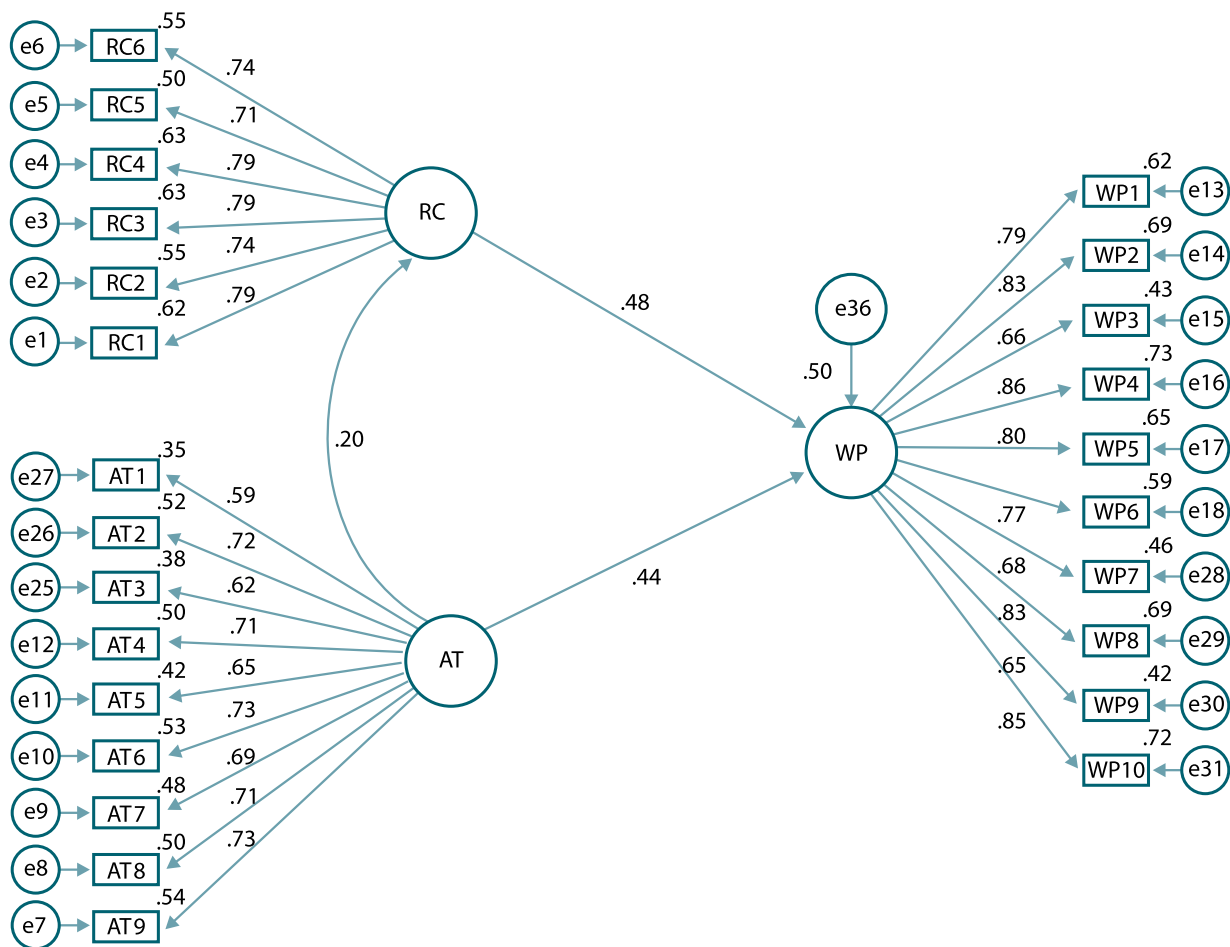


Fig. 3. Direct effects without a mediator

Рис. 3. Прямой эффект без учета медиатора

Table 4 – Direct effects of variables  
Таблица 4 – Прямые эффекты в переменных

Relationship	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P value	Hypothesis support	Multicollinearity diagnostics	
						Tolerance	VIF
RC → WP	0.476	0.065	8.462	0.000	H1 supported	0.967	1.034
AT → WP	0.438	0.065	7.72	0.000	H2 supported	0.967	1.034

Note: RC is role clarity, AT is autonomy, and WP is work performance.

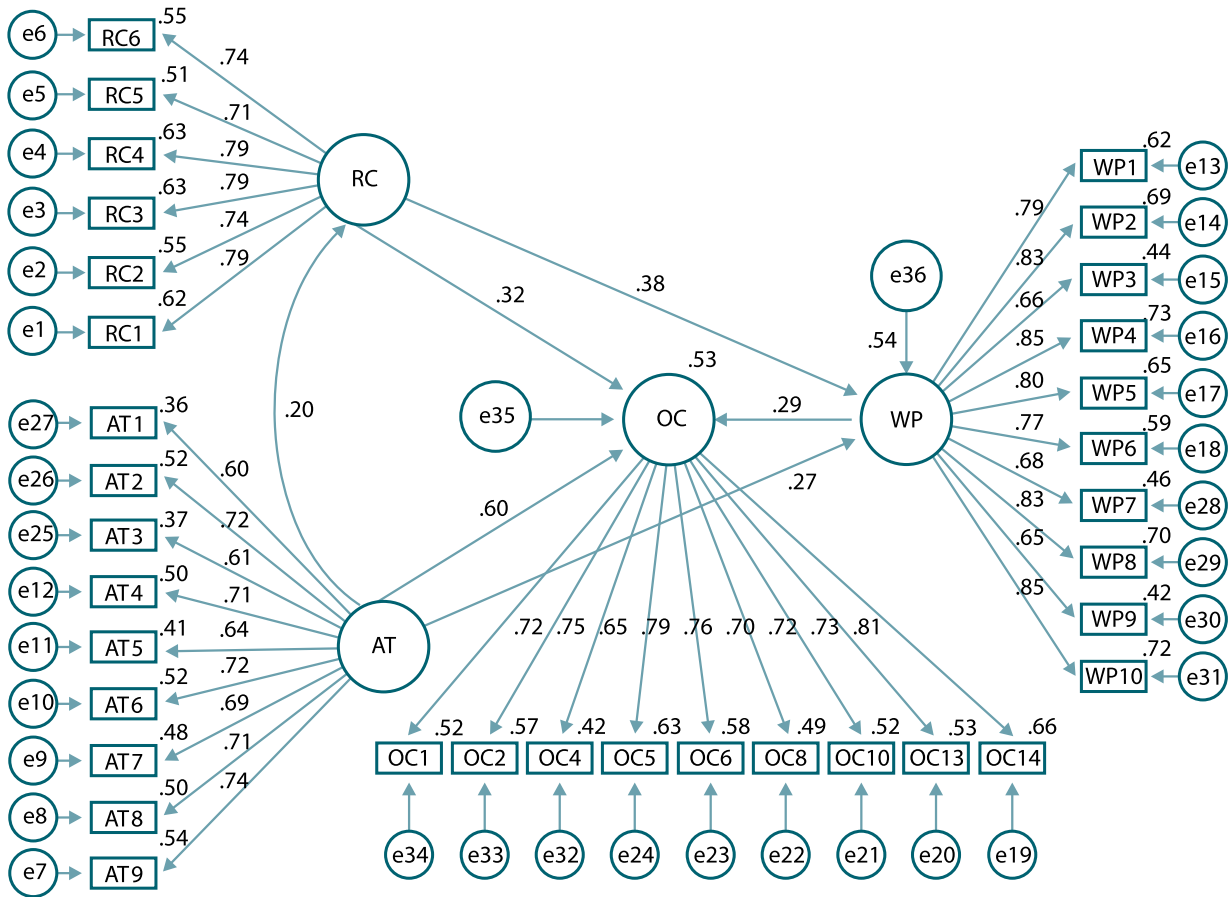


Fig. 4. Indirect effects with a mediator (intrinsic motivation)

Рис. 4. Опосредованный эффект с учетом медиатора (внутренняя мотивация сотрудников)

Table 5 – Indirect effects of variables

Таблица 5 – Косвенные эффекты в переменных

Relationship	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P Value	Hypothesis support	Multi collinearity diagnostics	
						Tolerance	VIF
RC → OC	0.317	0.05	6.137	0.000	H3 Supported	0.841	1.19
AT → OC	0.598	0.059	9.604	0.000	H4 Supported	0.639	1.565
OC → WP	0.289	0.088	3.977	0.000	H5 Supported	0.558	1.791

Note: RC is role clarity, AT is autonomy, OC is organizational commitment, and WP is work performance.

**Comparison of direct and indirect effects.** Similarly, the inclusion of organizational commitment decreased the  $\beta$  coefficient value in both relationships between role clarity and work autonomy with employee work performance. Consequently, it was determined that or-

ganizational commitment partially mediates the relationships of role clarity and work autonomy with work performance. Therefore, H6 and H7 are accepted, and Table 6 presents the comparison of direct and indirect effects.

Table 6 – Comparison of direct and indirect effects

Таблица 6 – Сравнительный анализ прямых и косвенных эффектов

Relationship	Direct estimate	P value	Indirect estimate	P value	Hypothesis support
RC → WP	0.476	0.000	0.384	0.000	H6 supported
AT → WP	0.438	0.000	0.267	0.000	H7 supported

Note: RC is role clarity, AT is autonomy, and WP is work performance.



## DISCUSSION

Organizations that encourage open communication in their working environment can solve work-related problems easily with the involvement of employees in discussions because every individual has different views and ideas that automatically promote job satisfaction, high work performance, and role clarity among employees [Rogers, 1987]. Our first hypothesis was supported and revealed that role clarity is a strong predictor of individual work performance in the telecommunication industry. The result of the second hypothesis revealed that work autonomy has constructive effects on employee work performance. Similarly, work autonomy has a positive and significant relation with job involvement, organizational commitment, and work performance [Sekhar, 2011]. Therefore, the third hypothesis exhibited that role clarity is an essential predictor of organizational commitment. Role clarity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction are significantly influenced by transformational leadership in organizations because transformational leaders alter and make the roles clear to employees, which enhances organizational commitment and satisfaction [Viator, 2001]. When a performance measurement system is implemented, its characteristics have a considerable influence on employee's work motivation and perceived autonomy at work [De Souza, Beuren, 2018].

In an organization, telecommuting has a constructive effect on job satisfaction, role stress, commitment, and performance which is partially mediated by perceived autonomy [Gajendran, Harrison, 2007]. Similarly, work autonomy and organizational commitment are found to be significantly related to each other [Pandu, Balu, Poo-rani, 2011]. Moreover, the fourth hypothesis was also supported and observed that work autonomy increases the organizational commitment among employees of telecom companies. Work autonomy and locus of control strengthen the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment, whereas the sense of possession of the working environment enhances job satisfaction with the essence of work commitment [Aubé, Rousseau, Morin, 2007; Mayhew et al., 2007]. Expanding individual adjustment indicators is crucial for improving organizational results and integrating research with management issues and this extension should include factors like work commitment, job satisfaction, and performance [Nelson, 1990]. According to the fifth hypothesis, organizational commitment enhances individual performance. Performance feedback, relationship development, and networking have a direct link with role clarity and organizational commitment, which further enhance work performance [Menguc, Han, Auh, 2007]. Managers handling the marketing department can help employees cross-sell more effectively by offering consistent training and incentives because this strategy simultaneously enhances role clarity, organizational commitment, and task performance [Zboja, Hartline, 2010].

When organizations use proactive socialization tactics like information seeking, relationship building, and networking, it leads to a significant impact on newcomers' perceptions of role clarity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction during their adjustment to a new work environment [Menguc, Han, Auh, 2007]. Similarly, the sixth and seventh hypotheses exhibited that the relationship between role clarity and work autonomy with the work performance of employees is mediated by organizational commitment to some extent. Moreover, performance feedback is related to lower-order needs fulfilment whereas role clarity and participation are related with high order needs fulfilment, but organizations should maintain in-role and extra-role performance to achieve high ends networking ability and work autonomy [Nesheim, Olsen, Sandvik, 2017; Teas, Wacker, Hughes, 1979]. Furthermore, if work autonomy is greater than networking ability it has a stronger impact on role performance [Nesheim, Olsen, Sandvik, 2017]. Employees of large organizations have long tenure and experience a high level of autonomy, which enhances work performance in case of better compensation and benefits [Macky, Boxall, 2008]. Leader-member exchange and job performance have significant relations with each other along with role clarity, commitment, and competence [Day, Gerstner, 1997]. While considering lean production or formulation of assembly line, job characteristics like work autonomy, organizational commitment and participation in decision-making intervene between lean production and employee outcome [Parker, 2003].

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

**Theoretical implications.** By investigating the complicated links between job clarity, work autonomy, organizational commitment, and work performance, this study contributes to the subject of organizational psychology and management through the lens of role theory with the unique environment of the telecom industry. Role theory offers a conceptual framework for comprehending how people's interactions, behaviours, and expectations are influenced and how they see their roles within an organization [Biddle, 1986]. When employees are clear about their roles, their alignment with the organization's objectives improves [Mukherjee, Malhotra, 2006]. The autonomy given to individuals in the telecommunication industry is consistent with the role theory's premise of role fulfilment. Understanding how work performance influences role satisfaction and consequently work performance can give telecom companies insights into how to customize autonomy levels for maximum productivity. Autonomy is regarded as a crucial variable and a crucial motivational job trait that affects job design and aids in increasing service quality by offering role clarity [Mukherjee, Malhotra, 2006; Hackman & Oldham, 1976]. When roles are clearly defined, employees at telecom companies are more likely to strengthen their commitment, which improves job

output. In the context of role theory, this study advances knowledge of mediation mechanisms. The study extends the premise of the role theory, which holds that people's views of their roles and commitments affect their behaviour and outcomes [Kaplan, Kaplan, 2018].

**Practical implications.** According to the study's findings, perceived role clarity has more constructive effects on employee outcomes. Organizations should foster an atmosphere that increases employees' perceptions of their roles as being clear. Employees who are uncertain about their job responsibilities are unable to be engaged and motivated at work. By constantly defining job objectives and role expectations, management can help people to better understand their roles [Hassan, 2013]. Nansubuga and Munene [2013] urged managers to clarify the necessary competencies for employees when workers encounter any role ambiguity. Companies should use caution when choosing and hiring new personnel. Recruiters must be clear about the new hires' expected role at the time of hiring and should adequately explain it to them [Kundu, Kumar, Lata, 2020]. Understanding the role and autonomy enables telecom companies to build tactics that strengthen commitment. The staff's commitment must be strengthened to align with the organization's aims and, ultimately, improve the work performance [Mukherjee, Malhotra, 2006].

**Conclusion and future recommendations.** Nowadays, organizations should have to take precautionary measures to sustain their performance in comparison to their competitors. Role clarity and autonomy together can act as a catalyst in the creative working environment and

may enhance the commitment of employees to utilize their potential and effort with full dedication. Role clarity and work autonomy are needed in multinational organizations operating in developing countries because they enhance the commitment of individuals and the basic requirement of an innovative environment and sustainability of the organizations in the long run. It is concluded that both role clarity and work autonomy influence the work performance of employees and increase the staff's dedication towards their work commitment. Therefore, those employees who are mentally satisfied and committed can perform their duties well to get the desired results. Moreover, organization is partially mediated in both cases, i.e., the association of role clarity and work autonomy with employee work performance.

Finally, organizations should facilitate their employees by role clarity and autonomy to be internally satisfied. Therefore, the commitment of staff towards their organization will be enhanced and they will work independently and exert their full efforts to meet their targets. This research was limited to Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan, and confined to multinational telecommunication companies operating in these two cities. Researchers can focus on role clarity with perceived organizational support, employee creativity, different leadership styles, and training and development of employees. Additionally, for future research, these variables might be highlighted with different locations and jurisdictions in the context of various industries in the context of underdeveloped, developing, and developed countries. ■

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