





“Impact of role conflict and social support on performance of layoff survivors: Evidence from India”

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ARTICLE INFO	Tijo George and Anshuman Mohanty (2025). Impact of role conflict and social support on performance of layoff survivors: Evidence from India. <i>Problems and Perspectives in Management</i> , 23(2), 277-290. doi: 10.21511/ppm.23(2).2025.19
DOI	http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.23(2).2025.19
RELEASED ON	Friday, 11 April 2025
RECEIVED ON	Monday, 02 December 2024
ACCEPTED ON	Friday, 21 March 2025
LICENSE	 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
JOURNAL	"Problems and Perspectives in Management"
ISSN PRINT	1727-7051
ISSN ONLINE	1810-5467
PUBLISHER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”
FOUNDER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”



NUMBER OF REFERENCES

49



NUMBER OF FIGURES

1



NUMBER OF TABLES

8

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BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES



LLC "CPC "Business Perspectives"
Hryhorii Skovoroda lane, 10,
Sumy, 40022, Ukraine
www.businessperspectives.org

Received on: 2nd of December, 2024

Accepted on: 21st of March, 2025

Published on: 11th of April, 2025

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2025

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Conflict of interest statement:

Author(s) reported no conflict of interest

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IMPACT OF ROLE CONFLICT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON PERFORMANCE OF LAYOFF SURVIVORS: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

Abstract

COVID-19 has propelled the tech industry in India into a cycle of extensive downsizing, leaving numerous layoff survivors in a vulnerable state and demanding an urgent need for appropriate strategies to counter this precarious situation. Hence, the objective of the study is to investigate the impact of layoff-induced role conflicts on the task performance of layoff survivors, along with the moderating role of perceived family support and perceived organizational support in Indian tech companies. A descriptive survey method was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. A total of 256 responses were collected from 25 major tech companies that executed layoffs in the recent past. SPSS AMOS and Jamovi 2.4.11 were used for the analysis. The result reveals that layoff-induced role conflicts were significantly associated with the task performance of surviving employees ($p < .026$), though the impact was negative ($\beta = -0.106$). The moderating effect of both perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.647$, [LLCI = 0.505], [ULCI = 0.785], $p < 0.001$) and perceived family support ($\beta = 0.324$, [LLCI = 0.181], [ULCI = 0.459], $p < 0.001$) was significant between role conflict and task performance. The results also demonstrate that the task performance of surviving employees is significantly diminished by role conflicts as it leads to work-related stress. Furthermore, the study also highlights that perceived organizational and family support plays a crucial role in tackling the overall negative impact of layoff-induced role conflicts on the task performance of surviving employees in post-layoff scenarios.

Keywords

downsizing, employee, ambiguity, workload, moderation

JEL Classification

J63, D23

INTRODUCTION

Employees who stay after layoffs and downsizing are crucial for future success owing to their organizational expertise, operational consistency, ability to lead amid layoff crises, and capacity to foster brand loyalty in the market. Layoff announcements frequently lead to diminished trust in management, decreased employee productivity, less organizational commitment, and compromised job quality among the remaining employees (George & Maheshwari, 2024). Experiencing a layoff goes beyond mere job loss, as it invokes emotions of guilt, anxiety, and uncertainty, alongside complex emotions, increased workloads, and ambiguity leading to a disrupted work-life balance (Virick et al., 2007). After layoffs or downsizing, remaining employees frequently face heightened responsibilities and often encounter role conflict stemming from the emotional and practical difficulties encountered after their colleagues' layoffs. This may result in ambiguity over their job roles, heightened job insecurity, diminished productivity, and a deficiency in teamwork, all of which can adversely affect organizational productivity and can result in significant financial repercussions by hindering organizational growth (Kollmann et al., 2020).

However, layoff survivors pursue diverse support systems to manage role conflict. In assuming the duties of dismissed coworkers, they pursue social support, encompassing perceived family support and perceived organizational support, to mitigate intense work pressure (Tu et al., 2021). Despite the increasing prevalence of layoffs, little research has examined the impact of role conflict resulting from layoffs on task performance or how boundary conditions such as perceived organizational support and perceived family support might assist layoff survivors in mitigating the adverse consequences of role conflict. Consequently, it is essential to determine whether employees staying after layoffs are encountering challenges in executing organizational responsibilities due to an excessive workload, which might potentially result in role conflict.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Layoffs and downsizing can have profound repercussions on the laid-off employees and those who remain. There is abundant literature discussing the impact of layoffs on organizations and victims, but researchers have neglected surviving employees (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Understanding the effects on surviving employees is crucial for maintaining morale, productivity, and workplace culture. The literature on layoff survivors pioneered by Brockner et al. (1990) and Appelbaum et al. (1999) mostly focused on empirical findings associated with organizational outcomes such as employee engagement, organizational commitment, and productivity (Noer, 1996). However, recent literature has focused on the emotional and psychological outcomes of surviving employees, such as burnout, depression, or anxiety (Tu et al., 2021). Furthermore, very few studies focused on surviving employees' performance, role conflict, or the impact of social support (Virick et al., 2007).

Role conflict refers to the tension and stress that arise when employees take on multiple, sometimes conflicting, roles simultaneously (Bowling et al., 2017). Role conflict in organizations following layoffs referred to as "post-layoff role conflict" arises from various factors, including heightened workload with constrained resources, ambiguity regarding workplace identity, insufficient notice for multitasking, and lack of clarity concerning responsibilities. These conflicts arise as layoff survivors adapt to the changes in the workplace, both from a personal and professional perspective. Similarly, role conflicts occur when employees face contradictory expectations or demands, and individuals' reactions to these conflicts can vary (Mwakyusa & Mcharo, 2024). Particularly, role conflict in an organization that has undergone layoffs pertains to

the confusion and stress experienced by remaining employees who must assume additional responsibilities or new tasks previously managed by their laid-off colleagues, often resulting in ambiguous role boundaries and potential conflicts within their established job descriptions. The redistribution of tasks in post-layoffs can lead to excessive workload, and job roles may become unclear, creating confusion about priorities and expectations. Additionally, survivors may struggle with guilt, especially if their colleagues were close friends or long-term employees, causing internal conflict (Brockner et al., 1990). After corporate restructuring, employees struggle to reconcile their original job descriptions with post-layoff demands, leading to readjustment problems and influenced role behaviors (Virick et al., 2007). Similarly, added responsibilities lead to cognitive and normative legitimacy issues as employees strive to navigate the discrepancies between the expectations of their own job roles and their customers, colleagues, and superiors, which surges job tension and decreases job satisfaction and self-confidence. Grunberg et al. (2006) highlight how role conflict can escalate when combined with layoffs, additional job responsibilities, and unexpected terminations could affect a survivor even in a managerial position. Therefore, organizations must prioritize effective management of role conflict post-layoffs to bridge the gap between employee expectations and workplace realities. However, traditional literature on layoffs has mostly emphasized financial and operational benefits (Sahdev, 2003), whereas only a few recent studies have explored the human cost, including the survivor's morale and performance (Tu et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2023) making it a fertile ground for research.

Task performance is characterized as the efficiency with which employees execute their designated responsibilities and the competence through

which individuals undertake the fundamental technical or functional tasks essential to their role (Koopmans et al., 2013). Task performance encompasses employees' behaviors that are closely associated with the production of commodities or services for the organization's fundamental processes. Employees utilize their knowledge and technical skills to complete an assigned task, hence engaging in task performance (Koopmans et al., 2014). Task performance behaviors incorporate the quantity and quality of labor, as well as the requisite skills and knowledge (Podsakoff et al., 1997).

However, employees who survive layoffs may experience increased workloads, unclear job expectations, and a decline in organizational commitment, which can impair their ability to perform effectively. There are several factors, like decreased motivation, increased stress, fear of job insecurity, reduced collaboration, and burnout, that might reduce task performance among layoff survivors (Tu et al., 2021). However, studies on role conflicts and their impact on task performance have encountered contradicting findings. On the one hand, there is a negative association between role conflict and task performance (Tubre & Collins, 2000; Tjosvold et al., 2003), whereas another school of thought argues that increased role conflict could lead to increased task performance owing to additional workload and organizational anxiety (Purnomo et al., 2021). Interestingly, in India, surviving employees are more engaged in their jobs and promote their employers' brand (Tiwari & Lenka, 2020), while others reported that layoffs lead to decreased performance due to increased stress and role ambiguity (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998).

From a lens of corporate restructuring, it is evident that layoff-induced role conflict may demand multiple job tasks and regular job requirements, which might contradict the survivor's personal values or expectations during and after layoffs. Survivors may experience role overload (the demand to take on more tasks than they can manage), which negatively impacts their ability to perform (Virick et al., 2007). Furthermore, the emotional toll of layoffs may often lead to ruining task performance (Sajjadi et al., 2023). Thus, the literature has also highlighted that the need for social support became increasingly evident, especially

during sudden and unexpected crisis-induced layoffs due to the global pandemic and geo-political instability (Tu et al., 2021). When employees perceived support from their managers and colleagues, it resulted in improved well-being, which boosted their performance. Similarly, studies report that immediate supervisors' social support, especially empathy and compassion, enhanced employee well-being and performance (Buruck et al., 2016). Further, Tu et al. (2021) empirically established that perceived family and organizational support improves in-role and extra-role performance while surviving COVID-induced layoffs in the hospitality industry.

Perceived family support refers to an employee's belief that their family is understanding, caring, and willing to provide emotional, instrumental, or informational support during difficult times (Frison & Eggermont, 2015). This can significantly alleviate stress and improve layoff survivors' experience by helping them manage role conflict and maintain task performance. It provides emotional buffering, reassurance, and empathy to manage stress, prevent burnout, and concentrate better on performing tasks efficiently. It also promotes work-life balance by reducing non-work-related stressors and role overload. Perceived family support, including emotional support, instrumental support, and informational support, significantly influences how employees cope with stressors in the workplace, especially after layoffs (Tu et al., 2021). Emotional support includes feelings of care, understanding, and acceptance; instrumental support includes practical help like financial assistance or daily tasks; informational support provides guidance or advice to aid decision-making and coping strategies. High levels of support reduce stress and anxiety by enhancing resilience against conflict and contribute to healthier work-life balance, job satisfaction, and performance. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for developing effective interventions during challenging transitions like layoffs.

Perceived organizational support refers to employees' beliefs that the organization appreciates their contributions, cares about their well-being, and intends to help them manage work challenges (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Perceived organizational support encompasses various dimensions,

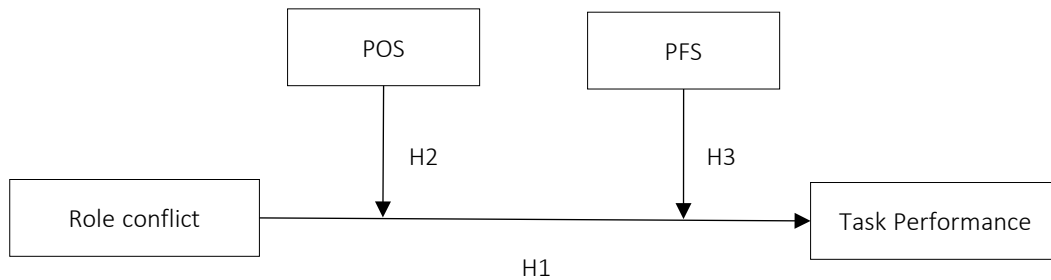
including emotional support, acknowledgment of efforts, and the provision of resources necessary for employees to perform their jobs effectively. Perceived organizational support reduces role conflict and enhances task performance, especially during layoffs and downsizings, by providing clear communication, emotional support from management, resource provision, job security, fairness perception, a stable environment, and workplace flexibility (Tu et al., 2021). Workplace flexibility helps employees balance work and family life, reducing role conflict and improving task performance (Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2024). The survivors who give higher value to their organization post-layoffs could be provided with guidance to reduce role conflict and enhance task performance (Armstrong-Stassen, 2004).

Prior literature highlights that layoff survivors perceive a high level of breach of psychological contract, which can reduce their citizenship behavior and task performance post-layoffs (López Bohle et al., 2017). However, employees who feel supported by their organization are well-equipped to handle stressors associated with role conflict and are generally more engaged in their work, which leads to improved task performance (Tu et al., 2021). For instance, when organizations provide clear communication about roles and responsibilities, it reduces ambiguity and helps employees focus on tasks. Employees who feel supported adopt positive coping strategies that can mitigate the adverse effects of role conflict, leading to improved employee well-being and productivity. Thus, organizations should enhance communication, provide resources, and demonstrate care for employees' needs to strengthen perceived organizational support during challenging times (Virick et al., 2007). Family and organizational support can significantly reduce the negative impact of role conflict on task performance. Family support addresses emotional well-being, while organizational support minimizes work-related stressors and this combination leads to improved well-being and reduced stress (Bennett et al., 1995). Family and organizational support also enhances the resilience of layoff survivors as they develop adaptive coping strategies to handle role conflict, maintain motivation, reduce stress, and sustain productivity, ultimately enhancing task performance (Tu et al., 2021).

This study invokes the integration of role theory (Rizzo et al., 1970) and the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker et al., 2005) to explain the relationship between role conflict of layoff survivors and its impact on their task performance along with social support such as perceived organizational support and perceived family support. Role theory explains how conflicting job roles can lead to stress, ultimately impairing performance. For layoff survivors, experiencing conflicting demands (e.g., increased workload due to fewer employees, unclear job expectations, and changing responsibilities) can heighten role conflict, leading to stress and a decline in task performance. Role conflict creates uncertainty, cognitive overload, and emotional strain, reducing employees' ability to focus and perform effectively. The JD-R model suggests that employees' job demands (e.g., role conflict) and available resources (e.g., family support) influence their performance and well-being. This model highlights how job demands can lead to burnout, whereas available resources (e.g., perceived organizational support and perceived family support) can mitigate these effects and enhance performance.

Abundant studies exist on layoff survivors and their post-layoff behaviors in the Asian context (Samreen et al., 2022; Begum et al., 2022). However, only a few studies are focused on layoff survivors in the Indian context (Tiwari & Lenka, 2020), specifically on employees who survived layoffs from tech companies, which are deemed to be one of the key contributors to the Indian GDP (Nasscom, 2024). Furthermore, no exclusive research has been conducted based on integrating the role theory and job demands-resources (JD-R) approach.

Hence, this study strives to showcase the impact of role conflict on layoff survivors and its repercussions for more supportive managerial decision-making by opening new pastures in the academic literature. Grounded on above arguments from the literature and theoretical foundations, the goal of the study is to examine the impact of layoff-induced role conflict on task performance among the layoff survivors in Indian tech companies, as well as exploring the moderating role of perceived family and organizational support. Based on the aim of the study, the following hypotheses and the conceptual model (Figure 1) have been proposed:



Note: POS = perceived organizational support; PFS = perceived family support.

Figure 1. Conceptual model

H1: The layoff-induced role conflict has a negative impact on the task performance among layoff surviving employees in Indian tech companies.

H2: Perceived family support moderates the relationship between layoff-induced role conflict and task performance such that when perceived family support is high, the role conflict has less impact on task performance among layoff surviving employees in Indian tech companies.

H3: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between layoff-induced role conflict and task performance such that when perceived organizational support is high, the role conflict has less impact on task performance among layoff surviving employees in Indian tech companies.

announced layoffs in 2023, with the actual numbers likely being higher (TOI Tech Desk, 2024). The tech companies and employees are very crucial to the Indian economy because the revenue is anticipated to grow in the next coming years with an accelerating growth rate and is projected to reach 350 billion US dollars by 2025 (Aeologic Technologies, 2022). Also, as per the IT & BPM Industry Report, the contribution of the Indian IT industry accounted for 7% of India's GDP as of the financial year 2024 (Nasscom, 2024). Thus, considering the sheer impact that tech companies have on the Indian economy, the study focused on them.

This study followed a descriptive research design focusing on four key variables: role conflict, task performance, perceived family support, and perceived organizational support. Primary data were collected through a structured and validated questionnaire (Appendix A). To generate credible responses that align with the objective of the study, data were collected via an online survey from 25 tech companies where employees were terminated in large volume. The logic behind selecting those companies stemmed from the fact that they had experienced downsizing that started two years prior to data collection and were terminating many employees even without prior notice. Furthermore, to ascertain the fact that the respondents were familiar with the process of layoffs and downsizing, only those employees who survived layoffs in the last year were surveyed. The data were collected after four months (and within 12 months) of layoff because they would have been very sensible to respond (Bui et al., 2019). As the study focused on gaining granular insights on layoff survivors, it was imperative to select this specific set of samples (layoff survivors) as they had

2. METHODOLOGY

The context of the study was confined to layoff surviving employees from the Indian tech companies that were deeply impacted due to layoffs. The practice of layoffs often involves employees being informed that they have 30 days to find a new role; failure to do so results in termination. Here, the most affected employees are the ones who survived the layoffs and are still under the hanging sword of future layoffs. The participants of the study comprise senior, middle, and junior-level employees who survived layoffs, downsizing, or any such phenomenon in tech companies in India. According to reports from the All India IT & ITES Employees' Union (AIITEU), approximately 20,000 tech professionals experienced un-

recent memories of the downsizing experience that they had endured. Snowball and purposive sampling were used to collect data as the study’s sample was very sensitive, and they intended to maintain complete anonymity about them and their company’s identity as agreed upon in the consent (Appendix B). This study was approved by the ethical committee of Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) (RPC 2022/2023).

The data were collected from prominent Indian cities such as Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, and Mumbai between January 2024 to June 2024. During the downsizing, approximately 30 to 40 percent of the employees, including junior, middle, and senior employees, had been terminated, and in some cases, the entire project team members were laid off. The sample size of the study is based upon the recommendation from Hair et al. (2019), who state there should be 10 respondents for each question in a quantitative research design. A total of 308 respondents participated in the study initially. However, the study could consider only 256 respondents for the final analysis due to incomplete responses. Over 60% of the participants were in the age group of 18–25, and males (51.69%) and females (47%) were almost equal in the study. Most (72.45 %) of them were married. The majority of the participants were graduates (57.62%) and postgraduates (41.11%). Most participants were working in the junior positions (55.69%), followed by middle levels (39.89%), and few participants belonged to top executives (4.42%). The respondent’s profile is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Characteristics	Category	Percentage (N = 256)
Age	18–25	60.16
	26–35	24.15
	36–45	8.89
	46–55	5.08
	55 and above	1.69
Gender	Male	51.69
	Female	47.03
	Prefer not to say	1.27
Marital status	Married	72.45
	Single	27.54
Family status	Nuclear	72.88
	Joint	27.11
Experience	Less than 5 years	43.22
	5–10 years	41.11
	10–15 years	11.86
	15 years and above	3.81

Characteristics	Category	Percentage (N = 256)
Educational qualification	Diploma	1.27
	Graduates	57.62
	Postgraduates	41.11
Organizational status	Junior level	55.69
	Middle level	39.89
	Top executives	4.42

Role conflict, task performance, perceived family support, and perceived organizational support were measured by adopting validated scales in prior studies. The results of measurement items show great reliability for all scales in this study (Table 3). The survey questionnaire was drafted in English and included 19 items (Table 2) measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree.” Role conflict scale is adopted from Bowling et al. (2017), which consists of six items. Task performance is measured using five items adopted from Koopmans et al. (2013). Perceived organizational support was measured using a four-item scale adopted from Shanock and Eisenberger (2006). Perceived family support was measured using a scale adopted from Zimet et al. (1988).

Table 2. Measurement scale

Construct	Source	Number of questions
Role conflict	Bowling et al. (2017)	6
Task performance	Koopmans et al. (2013)	5
Perceived family support	Zimet et al. (1988)	4
Perceived organizational support	Shanock and Eisenberger (2006)	4

3. RESULTS

The study assessed 256 responses to ensure satisfactory normality of distribution, multicollinearity, case of missing value, and outliers. IBM SPSS was used for preliminary analysis, AMOS was used for validity of the measurement model, and Jamovi 2.4.11 was used for hypotheses testing. To check for the common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2024), the Harman single-factor test was conducted. The test revealed a 27.55% variance for a single factor, which ensures that the study is free of bias. Table 3 presents the reliability and validity of the constructs. As shown in Table 3, convergent validity, represented by the average variance ex-

tracted (AVE) values, was above the threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020). Alpha value and composite reliability were also well within the limits.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

Variable name	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Role conflict	0.916	0.920	0.660
Task performance	0.878	0.840	0.520
Perceived family support	0.805	0.800	0.500
Perceived organizational support	0.723	0.830	0.540

The study conducted measurement model testing through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In comparison to all other combinations, the proposed model, consisting of four constructs, namely role conflict, task performance, perceived organizational support, and perceived family support, demonstrated a good fit for the data: $t(\chi^2 38.606 = 2, p < 0.01)$. In addition, other goodness of fit indices such as CFI (0.925), NFI (0.898), TLI (.979), SRMR (.0477), AGFI (.899), GFI (0.809), as well as RMSEA (0.048) are within acceptable limits, indicating a good fit (Hair et al., 2020). Once the measurement model fit was confirmed, the discriminant validity was examined, and all the values were within the acceptable limits (represented in Table 4).

Table 5 exhibits the correlation matrix, standard deviation, and mean, which shows a significant correlation between all constructs.

Table 4. Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio matrix

Variable name	Role conflict	Task performance	PFS	POS
Role conflict	0.81	–	–	–
Task performance	–0.106	0.722	–	–
Perceived family support (PFS)	0.389	0.554	0.705	–
Perceived organizational support (POS)	0.373	0.302	0.315	0.736

Table 5. Descriptives and correlation among variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
Role conflict	3.1476	1.04925	0.81	–	–	–
Task performance	3.8593	0.798	–	0.722	–	–
Perceived family support	3.4735	0.78557	–	–	0.705	–
Perceived organizational support	3.232	0.81537	–	–	–	0.736

Table 6. Testing hypothesis 1

	Direct effect				Result
	B	SE	t	P	
RC → TP	–0.106	0.159	–2.237	0.026	Accepted

Note: RC = role conflict; TP = task performance.

A linear regression was performed to investigate the impact of role conflict on the task performance of employees. The outcomes indicated that role conflict significantly and negatively impacted employees' task performance ($\beta = -0.106; p < .026$). Table 6 shows that although layoff-induced role conflict is negatively associated with task performance among the layoff surviving employees, the relationship is significant. Thus, H1 is accepted.

Table 7 highlights the moderation effect of perceived organizational support between role conflict and task performance. To investigate the moderating effect, a 'medmod' function is performed using Jamovi 2.4.11 which is commonly used in recent literature (Kmieciak, 2024). The moderating effect of perceived organizational support between role conflict and task performance is found to be significant ($\beta = 0.647, [LLCI=0.505], [ULCI = 0.785], p < 0.001$). Hence, H2 is accepted. The results indicate that with increased organizational support, the layoff-surviving employees experience a better clarity of the additional responsibilities and duties post-layoff, and this leads to better task performance.

Similarly, there is a significant moderating impact of perceived family support between role conflict and task performance ($\beta = 0.324, [LLCI = 0.181], [ULCI = 0.459], p < 0.001$). Table 8 exhibits the

Table 7. Moderation effect of RC*POS

	Interaction effect RC*POS						Result
	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Z	P	
RC*POS	0.647	0.069	0.505	0.785	9.28	< 0.001	Accepted

Note: RC = role conflict; POS = perceived organizational support.

Table 8. Moderation effect of RC*PFS

	Interaction effect RC*PFS						Result
	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Z	P	
RC*PFS	0.324	0.067	0.181	0.459	4.851	< 0.001	Accepted

Note: RC = role conflict; PFS = perceived family support.

moderation results and it supports the proposed hypotheses. Hence, H3 is accepted. The results reveal that as layoff surviving employees receive more support from their family members, the association between role conflict and task performance is becoming weaker. Hence, it shows that the impact of layoff-induced role conflict on their task performance is less associated if there is family support.

4. DISCUSSION

The study enhances the existing literature concerning the experiences of surviving employees following layoffs and downsizing. The findings indicate that employees who remain following layoffs in the Indian tech industry encounter role conflict, which significantly undermines their task performance. Layoff survivors experience role conflict stemming from various factors, including emotional turmoil, increased workload, anxiety regarding potential future layoffs, diminished trust in management, and a decline in organizational citizenship behavior and commitment (Virick et al., 2007; Adiguzel & Kucukoglu, 2019). Although layoff survivors experience role conflict, which is significantly associated with having a detrimental effect on their performance, perceived family and organizational support could moderate the impact of role conflict on the task performance of surviving employees in post-layoffs. The results reconfirm that genuine and quality support from workplace colleagues and close associates significantly enhances the performance of surviving em-

ployees following layoffs (Tu et al., 2021; Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2024).

The results align with prior studies indicating that layoff survivors encounter multiple forms of organizational role conflict, which significantly influences workplace behavior in post-layoff contexts (Virick et al., 2007; Maden-Eyiusta, 2021; Basu et al., 2024). As existing literature suggested, the layoff survivors in this study experienced role conflict which might have arisen from various sources, including unclear job expectations, interpersonal dynamics (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), and competing demands from different roles, leading to stress and confusion about priorities (Tu et al., 2021). Existing research indicates a negative correlation between role conflict and team performance, implying that employees' ability to perform effectively diminishes when they encounter conflicting job demands and responsibilities (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Similarly, during organizational crises such as layoffs and downsizing, employees experience several severe role conflicts, inducing scenarios that significantly impact their organizational performance both during and after the crisis (Lee et al., 2023). Similarly, many factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, led to an economic downturn in numerous tech companies in India, necessitating the implementation of layoffs. The employees faced persistent work pressure and stress due to fear of unexpected layoffs. Thus, consistent with the existing literature, it was proposed that the role conflict of layoff survivors would have a nega-

tive impact on task performance, and hypothesis 1 was supported. In line with JD-R theory, employees leverage job resources to fulfill a given task; however, when faced with excessive workload and organizational pressure, it leads to reduced task performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022). Additionally, surviving employees undergo stressful role conflict in post-layoffs or downsizing, which has a detrimental effect on organizational performance and thereby contradicts the intended goal of implementing layoffs to improve organizational competency (Alnahedh & Alrashdan, 2021).

The moderating results of the study also found support for the literature. Most layoff survivors reported moderate role conflict post-layoff, which was attributed to the support they received from their family members, peers, and managers. Managers showing empathy toward their employees during layoffs or downsizing (Yue et al., 2023) aid layoff survivors in overcoming and coping with role conflict within their organizations. The findings also align with earlier literature on role conflict and task performance, indicating that employees who personally experience role conflict are more likely to engage in reduced task performance (Maden-Eyiusta, 2021).

Similarly, layoff survivors who received support from family and the organization felt reduced role conflict and showcased better task performance, despite encountering layoff threats. In alignment with past scholarly works (Maden-Eyiusta, 2021), the study reveals that surviving employees who perceived high levels of family support over the work-related role conflict were able to achieve the given task at any level of organizational pressure. Furthermore, employees receiving frequent and regular support from managers, work colleagues, and fellow team members led to high levels of employee engagement in the form of task performance (Tu et al., 2021). When surviving employees actively participated in organizational engagements, they experienced emotional connections with their peers, engaged in personal and professional communication, and reported reduced feelings of role conflict, even in the face of layoffs or downsizing. Therefore, these aspects of perceived family support and organizational support mitigated

the impact of role conflict on task performance among the layoff-surviving employees.

This is one of the first studies that contribute to examining the impact of role conflict among layoff survivors on their task performance in layoff-induced organizations in the Indian tech industry and paves the path for several future research directions. First, the study reveals that layoff survivors face increased job responsibilities, fear of job loss, decreased job satisfaction, etc., which directly leads to greater role conflict and decreased task performance. However, as this study employed a survey-based approach to explore the objective, future researchers could adopt a mixed-method approach to test the proposed model in different organizational settings to gain more granular insights. Second, when the surviving employees receive organizational and family support, they tend to improve their daily job-related task performance and cope with role conflicts. Future researchers are suggested to empirically test similar relationships under different boundary conditions (e.g., age, gender, and work experience) and compare their findings with the present study. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore the work redesign and allocation strategy of organizations during or post downsizing and layoffs. Existing research suggests focusing on work redesign during downsizing and layoffs that should reduce employee stress (Chadwick et al., 2004) and that “organization redesign must result in process simplification and not process complication in order to avoid survivors feeling overwhelmed by the aftermath of downsizing” (Sahdev, 2003, p. 193).

Therefore, this study recommends organizations to carefully consider the work experiences of layoff survivors, as excessive workload and job-related role conflict can lead to depression and other adverse emotional and psychological outcomes, which could negatively impact the organization’s brand image. Hence, managers in post-layoff situations must focus on the efficient redistribution of job responsibilities among layoff survivors, which may be critical in ensuring that the increased responsibilities and workload do not lead to ambiguity and role conflict, resulting in reduced task performance.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of layoff-induced role conflicts on task performance among layoff survivors and analyzes the moderating role of perceived family and organizational support in Indian tech companies, which are grappling with significant downsizing challenges. Data were collected through a structured survey from layoff survivors in tech companies that underwent downsizing. The findings reaffirm that role conflict negatively affects task performance, particularly in the context of layoffs. The study extends role theory and job demands-resources (JD-R) theory to explain how layoffs create role conflicts and affect task performance. Regression and moderation analyses highlight the importance of family and organizational support in addressing role conflict during sudden layoffs.

To address the role conflict among the layoff survivors effectively, this study has a significant contribution to HR managers in layoff-implemented organizations and suggests that they should prioritize improving open communication with surviving employees, provide them with training and development initiatives, and demonstrate empathy toward the layoff survivors. The study concludes that layoffs have a detrimental impact on surviving employees and emphasizes the causes of role conflict, such as unexpected layoff announcements. Organizations can improve citizenship behavior and performance by addressing these conflicts. HR managers in layoff-affected organizations should prioritize open communication, provide training and development, and show empathy toward survivors. Furthermore, layoffs should not be the primary cost-cutting measure, and transparency in the process is crucial to preserving employee well-being. By aligning with JD-R theory, tech companies can use these strategies to motivate layoff survivors, enhance productivity, and retain a skilled workforce post-layoff. Thus, organizations must adopt a multifaceted approach and sustainable practices that focus on communication, role clarity, emotional support, and conflict resolution in layoffs executed by tech companies in India.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Tijo George.

Data collection: Tijo George.

Formal analysis: Tijo George.

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Methodology: Tijo George, Anshuman Mohanty.

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender:

- Male
 Female
 Others

Age:

- 21–30
 31–40
 41–50
 50+

Marital status:

- Single
 Married
 Other

Mode of work:

- Hybrid mode
 Remote mode
 Work from office

Working hours per day:

- Less than 8
 8–12 hours
 More than 8 hours

Total years of work experience (in years):

- Less than 5
 5–10
 11–15
 16–20
 Above 20

PART B: STUDY ITEMS

Instructions: You are requested to go through each statement carefully and record your responses for each statement by checking (✓) one of the responses from among the five responses given for each statement, namely Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree(D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Kindly respond to every item.

Sl.No	Items	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
		1	2	3	4	5
1	In my job, I often feel like different people are “pulling me in different directions”					
2	I have to deal with competing demands at work					
3	My superiors often tell me to do two different things that cannot both be done					
4	The tasks I am assigned at work rarely come into conflict with each other (R)					
5	The things I am told to do at work do not conflict with each other (R)					
6	In my job, I am seldom placed in a situation where one job duty conflicts with other job duties (R)					

Sl.No	Items	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
		1	2	3	4	5
7	I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time					
8	My planning was optimal					
9	I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work					
10	I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort					
11	I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work					
12	My organization takes great pride in accomplishments					
13	My organization really cares about my well-being					
14	My organization strongly considers my goals and values					
15	My organization is willing to help me if I need help					
16	My family really tries to help me					
17	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family					
18	I can talk about my problems with my family					
19	My family is willing to help me make decisions					

Note: (R) - reverse coding.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I understand the filled questionnaire will be used strictly only for research purpose or part of academic fulfilments as per university rules and regulations. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary, and I can withdraw from the study at any point of time.

I also understand that the responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for this study without revealing your personal information. My participation is completely voluntary, and I can withdraw from the study at any point in time.

Participant's Signature.....

Date: