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Organizational and Personal Characteristics that Influence Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity in the Safety Professional

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ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE ROLE
CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY IN THE SAFETY PROFESSIONAL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine whether organizational characteristics and personal characteristics were significant predictor variables of role conflict and role ambiguity in the safety professional. Empirical examination of existing role conflict and role ambiguity levels in safety professionals and the potential sources of those levels were examined through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Organizational characteristics included perceived organizational ethics, perceived organizational support, formalization, reporting structure, autonomy, and number of roles. Personal characteristics examined included years of experience as a safety professional and gender. In addition, aspects of the job safety professionals would like to see changed and the type of roles they were performing in addition to their role as a safety professional was investigated.

Results indicated that average role conflict and role ambiguity scores were significantly higher for respondents from de-centralized organizations. In addition, average role conflict and role ambiguity scores were significantly higher from respondents in non-formalized roles. Role ambiguity significantly decreased as years of experience increased, whereas role conflict scores did not significantly differ with years of experience. Average role conflict scores increased as the number of roles a safety professional performs increased. The prediction equations accounted for 25% of the variability in role conflict and 54% of the variability in role ambiguity. Those respondents that listed power and management support as aspects of the job they would like see

changed had significantly higher role conflict scores than those respondents who did not list it as an aspect.

The study was significant due to a dearth of empirical research specific to role conflict and role ambiguity in the safety professional. This study will serve as a baseline measurement of existing levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and the antecedents that predict those levels, thereby providing an empirical foundation on which future research may expound.

Organizations that incorporate strategies to minimize the sources (antecedents) of role conflict and role ambiguity will reduce the associated consequences to both the organization and the individual.