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Work Overload and Turnover Intention Among Chain Market Employees: The Effect of Role Ambiguity and Gender

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating role of role ambiguity and the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between work overload and turnover intention. Using a quantitative approach, the study investigated the relationships among work overload, role ambiguity and turnover intention. Data collected from 408 participants working in chain supermarkets in Türkiye were analyzed using SPSS 27 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA), AMOS 24 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) and the PROCESS macro. While work overload was positively related to turnover intention, role ambiguity mediated this relationship. Gender also played a moderating role in these relationships. This study is among the few to examine the role of gender in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention. In addition, it proposes a new analytical framework that incorporates a gender perspective into the model through an examination of the role of role ambiguity in this relationship.

Keywords: work overload; role ambiguity; turnover intention; gender; retail sector; chain markets

JEL: M12, M54, J16, J28

1. Introduction

Today, the business world has a profound impact on employees with constantly changing dynamics and developing technologies. By focusing on cost-reduction strategies, businesses can offer products or services at competitive prices across production, raw materials, the supply chain, and general expenses while maintaining reasonable profit margins. New technologies play an important role in reducing costs and increasing efficiency by normalizing the expectation of 24/7 access. This situation prompts businesses to seek greater success amid global competition and diminishing resources. Increasing globalization and a competitive environment cause businesses in the retail sector to grow rapidly by making new investments. The share of the retail sector in total trade is also increasing in Türkiye. Companies in the sector are turning to service by creating chain markets to provide a more holistic service. Chain markets provide consumers with easy, fast, and lower-priced access to products. Businesses that can provide this opportunity to their customers can increase their profitability and market share (Kara, 2024; Zhang and Devi, 2024). Chain markets that increase their market share are creating a comprehensive workforce network to introduce marketing components and respond quickly to consumer demands. Data on the growth of organized food retailing in Türkiye is included in the news titled “Ortakalan Conferences 2023” published by Dünya newspaper on June 13,

2023. According to the news, the total number of markets increased from 43,659 in 2022 to 48,660 by the end of the year, with 5001 new markets opening; this indicates a growth rate of approximately 12%. In addition, food retail is expected to develop in physical discount and supermarket concepts in the coming period. The share of national markets is expected to increase from 13% to 15% by the end of 2029 (Ortakalan, 2023).

The retail sector in Türkiye has made great progress in recent years. When Türkiye is evaluated in terms of population and consumption, it has significant potential among European countries. For example, Türkiye ranks 5th in Europe in terms of food expenditures within the retail sector. It is one of the most important markets that provide development opportunities compared to other countries in terms of the number of stores per capita. Chain markets constitute one of the most important branches of the retail sector. Chain markets in Türkiye provide service all year round and for an average of 12 hours. Considering the long working hours and intense work tempo, this situation causes workload and various negativities on employees. These negativities include decreased job satisfaction and productivity, increased turnover intentions, burnout, etc. (Günel, 2025).

The relationship between employees’ work overload and turnover intention has been addressed in many studies in the literature (Ahuja et al., 2007; Hakro et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2023; Kingori, 2008; Kinter and Kati,



2022; Sewwandi and Perera, 2016; Türkkan and Soyman, 2023; Utami and Nahartyo, 2013). It has been stated that work overload affects the decision to resign (Hussain et al., 2023). A 2022 study found that increased workloads among healthcare sector employees led to higher job stress, burnout, and turnover intention. The same study examined the effects of work overload during the COVID-19 period and although no statistically significant relationship was found between work overload and turnover intention, it showed that work overload can lead to job stress and burnout (Kinter and Kati, 2022).

This study investigates the mediating role of role ambiguity in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention, using theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources Theory Model (JD-R) to explain it. Within this framework, the mediating effect of role ambiguity is considered as a critical variable in explaining the relationship between work overload and turnover intention. Considering the growth in the retail sector in Türkiye and the heavy working conditions in chain markets, which are the pioneers of the retail sector, it is important to examine the variables in the study. Long working hours and harsh working conditions in the chain markets negatively affect employees. The difficult working conditions of the retail sector led to high rates of turnover in this sector (Booth and Hamer, 2007; Günel, 2025; Pandey et al., 2018). In this context, as emphasized in the Ortakalan Retail Report and in the literature, the proliferation of chain supermarkets across Türkiye is important for understanding the effects of work overload on turnover intention as well as determining the factors affecting employee satisfaction and job performance (Ortakalan, 2023). This understanding can contribute to both academic literature and human resources management practices. Additionally, this study investigates the moderating role of gender in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention, and between role ambiguity and turnover intention. Gender Role Theory is utilized to explain these relationships. Understanding how male and female employees respond to work overload and role ambiguity, and whether these responses differ, could contribute to both the literature and theory.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of role ambiguity and the moderating effect of gender in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention. When work overload and turnover intention are evaluated, especially among women employees, the roles they assume in society, such as spouse and mother, as well as the social pressures they face in the workplace, difficulties in career development, and effects on work-family life balance, should be considered. The limited number of studies in the literature on the role of gender in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention increases the importance of this research. In this context, our study aims to contribute to the fields of human

resource management and gender studies and to help understand the difficulties faced by women in business life. It aims to reveal how gender affects the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Work Overload

Work overload occurs when employees are made to do more work than their job requirements require. Workload refers to the amount of work an employee must do within a given period and to specified standards (Maslach et al., 1997). Work overload can be categorized as qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative overload occurs when work requirements exceed employees' abilities or skill levels, whereas quantitative overload occurs when employees focus on the volume of work they must complete (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Cooper et al., 2001). Tasks related to the requirements of the job increase or decrease in quantity for an employee. In cases where the workload becomes more complex, it is expected to increase. Work overload can reduce employee job satisfaction and performance, increase stress and turnover intention, and negatively affect the overall well-being of employees (Glaser et al., 1999; Radzali et al., 2013). In this context, work overload can be defined as employees being made to do more work than the requirements of the job (Jex, 1998; Kanbur, 2018; Keser, 2005). Setianingsih (2017) defines work overload as "completing a large number of tasks within a certain period of time". In studies on the effects of work overload on employees, negative consequences such as insomnia, fatigue, stress, anxiety, heart disease, and diabetes occur when a work-overload pattern becomes part of your daily life (Virtanen et al., 2010). Therefore, the perception of work overload occurs when employees are made to do more work than the requirements of the job or because of a general evaluation made by the employee about the amount of work that the employee must do in a certain period and at a standard. Work overload indicates the workload on employees and causes stress on them, causing them to leave work (Parvaiz et al., 2015).

Work overload is consistently associated with decreased employee performance. Studies show that performance decreases due to increased stress levels as workload increases (Hakim et al., 2023; Susanto, 2024). According to Taylor et al. (1997), those who work under work overload cause job stress and can lead to poor health and even injuries, compared to those who do not work under work overload. When work does not match job demands, it can lead to job stress, which causes harmful emotional and physical reactions. Research shows that work overload is closely related to burnout syndrome (Liakopoulou et al., 2008). In the Information Technology (IT) sector, work overload negatively impacts task performance and life satisfaction by emphasizing the need for balance (Mosquera and Soares, 2024). The literature generally indicates that

an increase in workload leads to higher levels of employee stress and burnout, which in turn strengthens the intention to leave the job. However, existing studies have mostly examined this relationship within the healthcare and service sectors. Therefore, the effect of workload on turnover intention in the retail sector has not been sufficiently investigated. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a more comprehensive explanation.

2.2 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is a complex concept, influenced by many factors, that refers to employees' tendency to consider leaving their current job or workplace to seek a better job opportunity (Boshoff et al., 2002; Cho et al., 2009; Lestari and Margaretha, 2021). Turnover intention is strongly influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, moral distress, external conditions, pandemic effects, and the extent to which an individual's pre-employment expectations are realized (Kovanci and Atli Özbaş, 2024; Lee, 2024; Maniscalco et al., 2024; Zientara et al., 2024). While this intention represents the final stage of an employee's decision to leave their job (Kakar et al., 2021), it is also seen as an important variable affecting business costs such as job insecurity, recruitment, socialization, and training (Parvaiz et al., 2015; Sasso et al., 2019). There are many studies showing that there is a strong relationship between turnover intention and actual leaving behavior (Knudsen et al., 2006; Saks, 1994; Stumpf and Hartman, 1984; Tekleab et al., 2005; Tett and Meyer, 1993). When reviewing the results in the literature, emphasis has been placed on the negative consequences of turnover intention for organizations. However, these studies have generally focused on the effects of the pandemic, the healthcare sector, or specific occupational groups, while the circumstances of retail workers (heavy workloads, uncertain working conditions, etc.) have been underexplored in literature. This study aims to fill this gap in literature on the intention to leave.

2.3 The Relationship Between Work Overload and Turnover Intention

The relationship between employees' work overload and turnover intention has been examined in many studies. For example, Kingori (2008) and Utami and Nahartyo (2013) stated that work overload is a cause of turnover intention among young auditors. In addition, Turkkan and Soyman (2023) emphasize that work overload has direct and indirect effects on the relationships among job stress, work readiness, and turnover intention. As work overload increases, employees' job stress and turnover intention also increase (Hussain et al., 2023). However, what distinguishes this study from others is its focus on employees in the healthcare sector and its examination of the effects of workload on turnover intention during the COVID-19 period. Ahuja et al. (2007) state that perceived work overload significantly affects work-life balance and turnover inten-

tion among IT professionals. Similarly, Hakro et al. (2022) state that work overload may increase employees' turnover intention in future jobs. This study provides an original contribution to existing literature by specifically examining the effects of COVID-19 on healthcare workers. Another study conducted in 2022 revealed that increased workload in the healthcare sector has negative effects on job stress, burnout, and turnover intention. However, the findings of this study show that although no direct statistically significant relationship was found between work overload and turnover intention, the effects of workload on job stress and burnout play an indirect role on turnover intention (Kinter and Kati, 2022).

When the results of the studies in the literature are examined, it is thought that work overload will increase turnover intention. This idea is in line with the JD-R. According to this theory, factors that physically or psychologically strain employees such as workload, long shifts, and time pressure constitute job demands. Job demands reduce employees' motivation and energy, create job dissatisfaction, lead to burnout, and increase employees' turnover intentions (Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001; Shim et al., 2017). In this context, it is thought that the turnover intentions of employees exposed to work overload will increase. Namely, employees exposed to work overload may lose their motivation and energy and experience job dissatisfaction. This may lead to an increase in turnover intention by increasing work stress and burnout. These findings emphasize that work overload may increase turnover intention, and job stress and burnout may play a mediating role in this relationship. In addition, it is evaluated that addressing the relationships between the variables within the scope of JD-R will contribute to the literature in theoretical understanding. Within the scope of these findings and evaluations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1. A positive and significant relationship is expected between work overload and turnover intention.

2.4 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when employees do not clearly understand their duties and responsibilities. Rizzo et al. (1970) claimed that role ambiguity exists when employees have little knowledge of their responsibilities and job requirements. Kahn et al. (1964) defined role ambiguity as the lack of clear and consistent information about any job-related responsibilities. Role ambiguity arises when employees are uncertain regarding the duties and procedures required in their work (Walker et al., 1975). Role ambiguity refers to a lack of clear, specific information about the requirements of a job role (Quah and Campbell, 1994). Manshor et al. (2003) state that role ambiguity occurs when a person lacks clear information about their job goals, the scope and responsibilities of their job, and the expectations of their colleagues. According to Ammar (2006), role ambiguity refers to individuals' insufficient in-

formation about the organization's authority, responsibilities, rules, and policies, as well as the limits of the performance evaluation methods required for their roles. Madare et al. (2013) state that, with role ambiguity, individuals face uncertainty about what to do in organizations, which causes stress. Role ambiguity occurs when a worker is unclear, unsure, or confused about what their supervisor expects (Ladany and Friedlander, 2016).

Recent studies emphasize that role ambiguity increases stress levels in the workplace and can negatively affect employee performance, creating profound effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Blomberg et al., 2024). There are also findings that role ambiguity is associated with workplace bullying and that leadership support plays an important role in reducing these negative effects (Blomberg et al., 2024). Employees who have limited knowledge about their job, unclear instructions, intense work pace, and variable work schedules can increase role ambiguity among retail workers. However, this topic has not been sufficiently researched specifically in the retail sector. This study aims to fill this important gap in the literature by positioning role ambiguity within the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.

2.5 The Relationship Between Work Overload and Role Ambiguity

Many studies have shown a positive relationship between work overload and role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is defined as the lack of detailed instructions or clear guidance on details about what is expected of employees in their jobs (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). Zellars et al. (2000) stated that employees need a certain level of predictability and clarity to perform their jobs effectively. The current pandemic conditions have made things more complicated, especially for healthcare workers; vague instructions from managers have led to role ambiguity (Alyahya and AboGazalah, 2021; Carbone et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022). Studies show that role ambiguity is negatively related to job satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Cengiz et al., 2021; Déry et al., 2018; Kadir et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2014; Sureda et al., 2018). In this case, employees' feelings of inadequacy and disappointment can increase their intentions to leave their jobs (Cengiz et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Şenol-Durak et al. (2006) in penal institutions in Türkiye, it was stated that psychological problems such as stress awareness, anxiety, and hopelessness emerged in addition to role conflict, role ambiguity, and increased workload. Workload and role ambiguity are linked to negative outcomes such as burnout and disengagement from work, leading to higher stress levels in social services and healthcare systems (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Dasgupta, 2012; Yürür and Sarıkaya, 2012).

Demands for employees, such as workload, can cause uncertainty about their responsibilities or performance. This uncertainty negatively affects employees as stated in

the JD-R (Demerouti et al., 2001; Urien et al., 2017). That is, as employees' workload increases, the number and variety of tasks they must perform increase. This situation may create uncertainty about employees' responsibilities and negatively affect them. This uncertainty may lead to employees being unable to set their work-related goals and not understanding what is expected of them. The workload from the retail sector may lead to role ambiguity among employees. It is considered that examining this relationship among chain market employees will contribute to the literature. The above studies show a strong relationship between workload and role ambiguity. Research shows that as workload increases, role ambiguity may rise, which can negatively affect factors such as job satisfaction, stress levels, and burnout. Within the scope of these findings and evaluations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2. A positive and significant relationship is expected between work overload and role ambiguity.

2.6 The Relationship Between Role Ambiguity and Turnover Intention

Role ambiguity is a demanding work condition that prevents employees from understanding clearly how they can conduct their jobs (Rizzo et al., 1970; Senatra, 1980; Singh et al., 2012), so it creates significant stress (Chen et al., 2011; Fry et al., 1986; Trépanier et al., 2013). Thus, when role ambiguity is high, employees feel uncertain about how to achieve adequate job performance (Schwab RL and Iwanicki EF, 1982; Showail et al., 2013). Previous research indicates that role ambiguity can lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Singh et al., 2012), and even depression (Schmidt et al., 2014). Similarly, the lack of direction due to unclear job expectations may be so upsetting that it fuels negative energy and increases their desire to leave the organization (Zhang et al., 2013). In contrast, when role ambiguity is low, employees are more certain about how to perform their job adequately and hold more positive feelings about their future with the organization, so their propensity to consider alternative employment should diminish. Employees may also interpret a lack of information about their job duties as a sign of disrespect, prompting negative responses to their employment (Kahn et al., 1964). That is, role ambiguity may invoke the belief that the organization is not interested in their well-being or success (O'Driscoll and Beehr, 2000), such that employees start considering the advantages of alternative employment. Severe information deficiencies regarding job responsibilities might even seem like a way for the organization to maintain strict control over them (Ackfeldt and Malhotra, 2013), thereby increasing employees' desire to escape by leaving the organization. In this case, employees may "retaliate" by seeking alternative employment when the organization fails to explain their job duties clearly and does not seem to care about their personal success (Wong et al., 2007).

We utilize the JD-R to examine the impact of role ambiguity on turnover intentions. According to this model, when employees experience unfavorable work conditions, it creates uncertainty for them and causes stress in employees. This reflects employees' negative perceptions of their workplace (Singh et al., 2012). Some of the results of some studies on the negative effects of role ambiguity on employees are given above. It is thought that employees who perceive negativity in the workplace will also increase their intention to quit their jobs. When the above-mentioned studies are examined, it is seen that role ambiguity can increase employees' stress and burnout and reduce job satisfaction. These situations are thought to increase employees' turnover intentions. Within the scope of these findings and evaluations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3. A positive and significant relationship is expected between role ambiguity and turnover intention.

2.7 The Mediating Role of Role Ambiguity

Kahn et al. (1964) defined role ambiguity as the lack of clear and consistent information about any job-related responsibilities. Ariffin et al. (2017) in their research on employees in the Malaysian Automotive Industry, stated that role ambiguity is a domain factor that affects organizational conflict and its impact on job performance. Many studies have proven that role conflict and in turn, impacts job performance. Furthermore, previous research has shown that role conflict and role ambiguity affect employees' attitudes towards organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention (Bettencourt LA and Brown SW, 2003; Harris et al., 2006). Maslach et al. (2001) define work overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity as three factors of organizational stress that cause employees to leave work (Parvaiz et al., 2015). LePine et al. (2016) state that role ambiguity in the workplace can prevent employees from achieving their personal and professional goals, leading to job dissatisfaction, low morale (Chang and Lu, 2009), and employee stress. This stress may ultimately lead to turnover intention (Parvaiz et al., 2015). The general structure of our mediation model is applied to the JD-R model. This model suggests that negative emotions caused by increased job demands will lead to employee turnover (Shin et al., 2020). In this context, role ambiguity is thought to mediate the relationship between turnover intention and work overload. Work overload may cause employees to have difficulty managing their duties and responsibilities, leading to greater uncertainty. Overburdened employees may find it difficult to clearly understand their roles and may experience uncertainty in determining which tasks are prioritized. In this case, as role ambiguity increases, employees will experience greater stress and dissatisfaction with their work. This may ultimately increase turnover intention. Therefore, role ambiguity mediates the relationship between work overload and turnover intention. That is, work overload may trigger employees' turnover intention

by increasing role ambiguity. Furthermore, re-examining the proposed relationship between variables by adding a new mediating variable is considered a contribution to the literature and is said to have improved the theory (Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan, 2007). In this context, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4. Role ambiguity is expected to mediate the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.

2.8 The Moderating Role of Gender

Gender perception involves individuals within the norms of society and culture, particularly in the context of masculinity or femininity (Basow, 1992). Biological sex distinguishes a person as biologically male or female. Gender, on the other hand, reflects the definitions of men and women, hence masculinity and femininity, in social, cultural, behavioral, and psychological aspects (American Psychological Association, 2015). Gender is a human-made concept such as culture and social structure (Ali et al., 2012). Gender roles reflect the expectations, habits, attitudes, and values of society based on an individual's gender (Ersoy, 2009). Gender roles are expressed as concepts that socially define the gender of individuals and beliefs shared by society (Eisenclaus, 2013). The duties, responsibilities, and activities that culture imposes on men and women form the basis of gender roles and sustain them. Important processes and phenomena such as family life, business life, social life, educational life and career options provide diversity in gender roles in social life (Zeyneloğlu and Terzioğlu, 2011).

The most researched factor among personal characteristics is gender. Gender differences are important in many studies on management and marketing. An observation emerging from these studies (Babin and Boles, 1998; Eagly et al., 1995; Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1993; Karatepe et al., 2006; Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991) suggests that men are more task- or goal-oriented, and women are more relationship-oriented. According to other studies (Yavas et al., 2008; Karatepe et al., 2006), women tend to process information in more detail, while men process it with less detail, using simpler methods. In this study, an attempt was made to test whether the negative experiences of employees under challenging working conditions differ by gender. It is expected that the study's application to chain market employees will contribute to the literature.

The idea that gender may have a moderate effect on the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention is based on Gender Role Theory. According to gender role theory, women and men have different gender roles in the social context, and these roles shape individuals' social behaviors. Furthermore, according to this theory, women possess higher collective characteristics than men, reflecting how women's and men's social roles differ (Eagly, 1987). Men and women may develop different

attitudes according to socially accepted norms and expectations, which may change how they respond to workplace challenges (e.g., role ambiguity). In particular, the ways in which men cope with role ambiguity at work may differ from women. Men are socially molded into roles that are associated with power and leadership, whereas women are attributed more to supportive and accommodating roles. These different societal expectations may lead men to react more strongly to work overload and role ambiguity and show a higher increase in turnover intentions, whereas this effect may be weaker for women. The moderating role of gender in this context stems from the relationship between work overload and role ambiguity and its impact on turnover intention. Since men have high social expectations of achievement and leadership, they may experience more stress in the face of work overload and increased role ambiguity, which may strengthen their turnover intentions. Women, on the other hand, may adopt a more adaptive approach in the face of role ambiguity as they assume more socially supportive roles, and this may affect turnover intentions less than men. Higher expectations of leadership and power in men's roles can lead to greater stress among male employees. A study on this topic found that increased job stress had a greater impact on increased turnover intentions among male managers, while this effect was less pronounced among female employees (Roh and Kim, 2021).

Due to men's high expectations regarding work, they may experience greater dissatisfaction than women in similar situations and be more likely to intend to leave their jobs. In addition, given men's high expectations regarding leadership and power roles and their high expectations in general, they may see themselves as more fortunate in finding another job. Consequently, the likelihood of an increase in their turnover intention is higher in the face of adverse working conditions. A study on this topic found a positive relationship between employees perceived external employability and turnover intention. In other words, if employees are confident in their own skills, strengths, and market conditions, their likelihood of leaving may increase (Baranchenko et al., 2020). Considering these findings and assessments, we believe that gender may be a moderating factor in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention, and between role ambiguity and turnover intention. Furthermore, we believe that the primary mechanism driving men's greater turnover intention in the face of adverse working conditions such as work overload and role ambiguity may stem not only from gender roles but also from their leadership roles, expectations, and perceived external employability. The aim is to contribute to the literature and theory by introducing a new moderate variable to the proposed relationships between the variables. Moreover, our main goal in the proposed hypotheses is not to re-validate the paths between the variables. Rather, our primary objective is to integrate role ambiguity, which we included as a mediating variable, and gender, which we

included as a moderating variable, into our research model within the context of the Turkish retail sector. In this framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 5. It is expected that gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention; that is, the effect of role ambiguity on turnover intention is assumed to be stronger for men than for women.

This hypothesis establishes a basis for how gender moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention. Men are expected to show a higher turnover intention in the face of such ambiguity, while women are predicted to be more resilient to these effects.

Hypothesis 6. It is expected that gender moderates the indirect relationship between work overload and turnover intention through role ambiguity, and that this effect is stronger for men than for women.

Here, the moderating role of gender conditionally moderates the indirect effect of work overload on turnover intention by increasing role ambiguity. For men, the indirect effect on turnover intention will be more pronounced because the relationship between work overload and role ambiguity is stronger. For women, this effect may be weaker because women are characterized by flexible and adaptive roles that seek more social support, which may make them more resilient to stressful work conditions.

3. Method

3.1 Sample and Procedure

This study was conducted with the participation of 408 full-time market personnel, market managers and assistant managers working in chain supermarkets across Türkiye. The study was conducted across five supermarket chains, each representing a different type of store. These stores include both discount supermarkets and large retail supermarkets. The participants are evenly distributed across these store types. Before the data collection process, a survey was conducted among 45 personnel working in three different chain markets in Erzincan. The pilot application results showed that participants had no difficulty understanding the survey items.

The surveys were administered to volunteer participants using Google Forms and printed documents, and the confidentiality of the responses was ensured. The participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. During the data collection process, simple random sampling was used to ensure that each unit had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. In the data collection process, convenience sampling was used, given the researcher's access constraints (Etikan et al., 2016; Mertens, 2014).

The demographic distribution of participants is presented in Table 1. The details are as follows: in terms of age ranges, 24.3% are 25 years old and under, 28.4% are

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	167	40.9
	Male	241	59.1
	Total	408	100
Age	25 and under	99	24.3
	26–30	116	28.4
	31–35	84	20.6
	36–40	48	11.7
	41 and over	61	15
	Total	408	100
Education level	Primary Education	22	5.4
	High School	102	25
	Associate Degree	107	26.2
	Bachelor's Degree	159	39
	Postgraduate Degree	18	4.4
	Total	408	100
Marital status	Married	212	52
	Single	196	48
	Total	408	100
Employment duration at current store	Less than 1 year	95	23.3
	1–4 years	148	36.3
	5–8 years	103	25.2
	8 years or more	62	15.2
	Total	408	100
Employment duration in sector	Less than 1 year	95	23.3
	1–4 years	118	28.9
	5–8 years	103	25.2
	8 years or more	92	22.6
	Total	408	100

26–30 years old, 20.6% are 31–35 years old, 11.7% are 36–40 years old, and the remaining 15% are over 41. In terms of gender distribution, 59.1% of the participants are male and 40.9% are female. In terms of education level, 5.4% have secondary education, 25% have high school, 26.2% have an associate degree, 39% have a bachelor's degree, and 4.4% have a postgraduate degree. In terms of marital status, 52% are married and the remaining 48% are single. By employment period, 23.3% have been working in the sector for less than one year, 28.9% for one to four years, 25.2% for five to eight years, and the remaining 22.6% for more than eight years.

This demographic information provides a comprehensive overview of employee profiles in chain supermarkets across Türkiye, thereby increasing the representativeness of the study results. The research model for this study is shown in Fig. 1.

3.2 Measures

To ensure the reliability and validity of the measurements, a questionnaire was adapted from previously tested scales in similar research. The measures were translated

from English into Turkish following the back-translation method (Brislin, 1980), which involved translating the original items into Turkish and then back into English by a separate bilingual translator. Any discrepancies in translation were resolved through discussions among the research team. To ensure cultural accuracy, the wording was reviewed in the context of the retail sector, and minor linguistic corrections were made as needed. Prior to the survey, discussions were held with some employees regarding the clarity and comprehensibility of the items, and some wording was revised to improve clarity based on the feedback received. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. Below is a detailed description of each measurement tool, including example items, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha), and the reference sources.

In this study, age, marital status, education, organizational tenure in the current store and organizational tenure in the chain market sector are considered as control variables. Age and education were measured using a five-point scale. Marital status was coded as single and married.

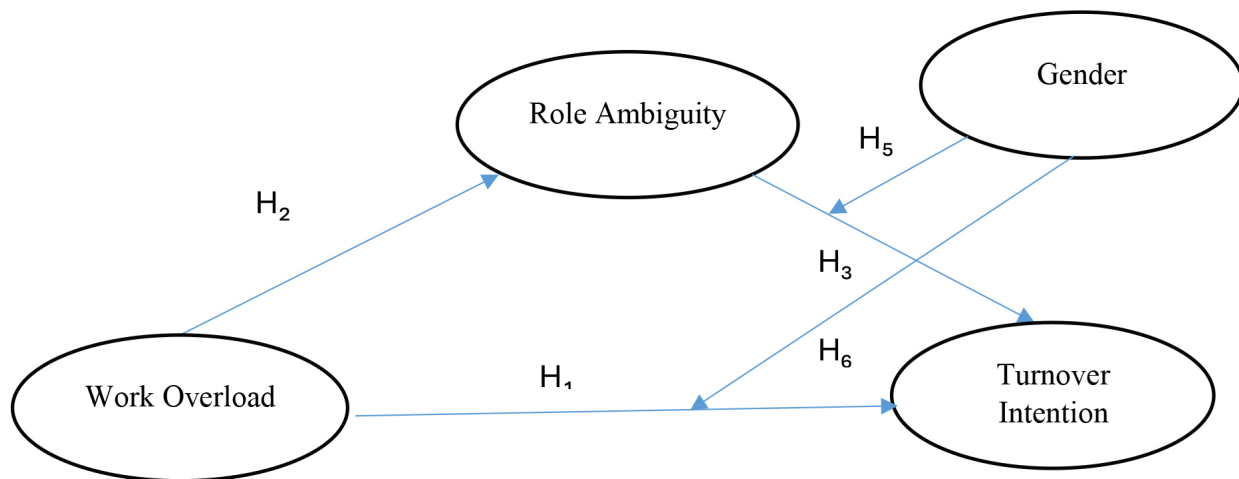


Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual framework.

Table 2. Reliability statistics for the scales used in the research.

Variable	Scale source	Sample item	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items	Reliability analysis
Work overload	Ahuja et al. (2007), Moore (2000)	"I feel that the number of requests, problems, or complaints I deal with is more than expected."	0.905	4	High internal consistency
Role ambiguity	Babakus et al. (2009), Singh et al. (1996)	"Clear goals/objectives exist for my job."	0.843	3	High internal consistency
Turnover intention	Mobley et al. (1978)	"I think a lot about leaving the organization."	0.929	3	High internal consistency

3.3 Analysis

3.3.1 Reliability Analysis

3.3.1.1 Work Overload (WO). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was calculated as 0.905, indicating high internal consistency. The total variance explained by the four items is 77.914%. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.811, and the Bartlett's test is significant (1095.434, $p < 0.001$).

3.3.1.2 Role Ambiguity (RA). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was calculated as 0.843, indicating high internal consistency. The total variance explained by the three items is 76.386%. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.714, and the Bartlett's test is significant (522.462, $p < 0.001$).

3.3.1.3 Turnover Intention (TI). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was calculated as 0.929, indicating high internal consistency. The total variance explained by the three items is 87.550%. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.764, and the Bartlett's test is significant (974.818, $p < 0.001$). The results of the study's reliability analysis are presented in Table 2.

3.3.2 Correlation Analysis

In this study, because the data we used were normally distributed, Pearson's correlation coefficient, a parametric test, was employed to assess correlations. The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship at the 1% significance level between work overload and both turnover intention and role ambiguity. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was identified between turnover intention and role ambiguity. The correlation results are presented in Table 3.

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

In the study, four demographic variables (age, education, organizational tenure, and years of work in this industry) were identified as control variables and included in the models for the hypothesis tests. Control variables were included in the study to ensure the methodological integrity of the research, to test relationships among other variables in the model more reliably, and to control for individual differences in the analysis. In addition, control variables were included in the study as determinants of turnover intention (Yucel, 2017). Because control variables such as gender, age, marital status, and educational status have been shown to be significantly associated with turnover inten-

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and pearson correlations among the study variables in the measurement model.

	Mean	SD	WO	RA	TI	Tolerance	VIF
Age	2.65	1.36					
Marital status	1.48	0.50					
Educational status	3.12	1.01					
Work overload	3.27	1.161	(0.905)			0.60	1.676
Role ambiguity	3.00	1.124	0.635**	(0.843)		0.60	1.686
Turnover intention	3.09	1.301	0.730**	0.618**	(0.929)		

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Values in parentheses along the diagonal are reliability values (Cronbach's alpha).

SD, Standard Deviations; WO, Work Overload; RA, Role Ambiguity; TI, Turnover Intention; VIF, Variance Inflation Factor.

tion in previous studies, these variables were included in the analysis and controlled for. When studies on the relationship between age, marital status, educational status, and gender and turnover intention are examined, it is seen that some studies have found significant relationships between these variables and turnover intention (Blomme et al., 2010; Çankaya, 2020; De Meulenaere et al., 2022; Emiroğlu et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2017; Tschopp et al., 2016; Yüksel and Yüksel, 2014). The studies show that control variables significantly affect the intention to leave the job. Therefore, in the current study, these variables were controlled to investigate their possible effects and to ensure that the model is tested more accurately. Additionally, the moderating effect of gender differences was controlled for. Research hypotheses were tested in two steps. The first step examined a simple mediator model (Hypotheses 1–4). In the second step, the moderator variable (gender) was added to the first-step model, and the moderator effect (Hypothesis 5) and the conditional indirect effect (Hypothesis 6) were examined. Before implementing the analyses, the moderator variable was mean-centered (Aiken and West, 1991). Thus, the multicollinearity problem between these variables in the analysis was reduced (Aiken and West, 1991; Edwards and Lambert, 2007; Frazier et al., 2004). The PROCESS macro developed by Andrew F. Hayes was used to test the research hypotheses (Hayes, 2022). This program is useful because it provides the significance of the mediating variable and of moderated mediation (via bootstrap confidence intervals), as well as the change in moderated mediation across different levels of the moderator variable (Hayes, 2022; Preacher et al., 2007).

3.4.1 Analysis of the Mediator Effect

To determine the indirect effect through the role ambiguity in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention, a model was developed in the research (to test Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4). The validity of the data obtained from the analysis of the mediator effect was evaluated according to the conditions set by Baron and

Kenny (1986), and the significance of the data was examined through the bootstrap (Edwards and Lambert, 2007; Preacher et al., 2007).

3.4.2 Analysis of the Conditional Indirect Effect

In the research, the effect of the moderator variable was tested, and the results showed that gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention (Hypothesis 5). Another hypothesis is that the level of the indirect effect of role ambiguity in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention varies by gender (Hypothesis 6).

3.5 Findings

Table 3 presents the correlations, means, standard deviations, and scale reliabilities of the variables. The mean and standard deviation provide information about the central tendency and variability of the variables. When Table 3 is examined, the standard deviation of work overload is 1.161, and its mean is 3.27, while the standard deviation of role ambiguity is 1.124, and its mean is 3.00. The standard deviation of turnover intention is 1.301, and its mean is 3.09. Pearson correlation coefficients indicate the strength and direction of relationships between variables. There is a positive and significant relationship between work overload, role ambiguity, and turnover intention. Similarly, a positive and significant relationship was found between role ambiguity and turnover intention.

To evaluate multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were examined for all independent variables. Since the tolerance values were greater than 0.10 and the VIF values were less than 10, there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables (Tabachnick et al., 2001). This analysis increased confidence in the relationships between the correlations and strengthened the accuracy of the results. Reliability analysis showed that all scales were reliable, as Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

In a study, before the hypotheses are tested, it should be checked whether there is a widespread method bias problem (Lindell and Whitney, 2001; Malhotra et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). Widespread method bias can cause an unhealthy relationship between variables due to the widespread method used to collect data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The method commonly used by researchers to determine pervasive method bias is Harman's single-factor method (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this method, all factors are simultaneously performed explored using factor analysis. To mention that the basic assumption of this method is that there is a common method bias problem.

(a) The collection of all variables into a single factor as a result of factor analysis, or

(b) It is that a single factor should make up the majority of the variance in the variables (Malhotra et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

As a result of the factor analysis, two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were determined. The first of these factors accounted for 58.7% of the total variance, and the second accounted for 6.7%. According to Harman's one-factor test results, the first factor explains 58.7% of the total variance. This value is above the commonly used threshold of 50% and indicates that common method bias cannot be completely ruled out. However, it is clearly emphasized in the literature that Harman's one-factor test is a limited method for detecting common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, the fact that the HTMT (Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio) results used to assess convergent validity are below the recommended threshold values (Henseler et al., 2015) and that the fit indices of the confirmatory factor analysis are at acceptable levels indicates the robustness of the measurement model and the limited nature of common method bias.

The researchers suggested that confirmatory factor analysis can be used in combination with Harman's single-factor test to assess the presence of common method bias (Malhotra et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the construct validity of the research variables. Whether the default structures of the scales are supported by the obtained data has been tested with the alternative model's strategy. The predicted three-factor measurement model (work overload, role ambiguity and turnover intention) was compared with four alternative models using χ^2 difference tests. Thus, a three-factor measurement model encompassing all structures was tested and compared with alternative models, and it was examined whether there were problems with the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales (Gürbüz, 2019).

The goodness-of-fit values are indicators of whether the proposed models effectively explain the obtained data (Hu and Bentler, 1999). These indices, including the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Normed Fit In-

dex (NFI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI), range between 0 and 1. Values close to 0 suggest poor fit, while values close to 1 indicate excellent fit (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which is the square root of the standardized average residuals, is another crucial measure. An SRMR ≤ 0.08 is considered acceptable fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The goodness of fit values of the measurement model and the four different alternative models developed are given in Table 4. When the values in the table are examined, it is seen that the conformity values of the measurement model are better than the alternative models (CMIN/DF = 3.74, RMSEA = 0.08, GFI = 0.95, AGFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.98, NFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.04).

AMOS 24 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA), diagrams were included to present the structure of the measurement model in a holistic manner, and the relationships within the model are visually shown in Fig. 2. These results indicate that the measurement model has a valid and reliable structure. The standardized factor loadings for each item in the confirmatory factor analysis are presented in Table 5, and all loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60 (Kline, 2023).

The construct validity of the research model was examined, and it was observed that the AMOS diagram and the standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.60 (WO: Work overload, TI: Turnover intention, RA: Role ambiguity). Subsequently, other criteria required for the validity analysis of each construct, namely convergent validity and discriminant validity, were assessed, and the results are presented in Table 6. Convergent validity is established when the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value of each construct is equal to or greater than 0.50 and the CR value is equal to or greater than 0.70. CR values above 0.70 indicate sufficient internal consistency of the scales, while AVE values above 0.50 indicate achieved convergent validity. Additionally, the HTMT analysis was used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the constructions. HTMT ratios below the recommended threshold of 0.85 indicate sufficient differentiation among structures and that the measurement model demonstrates discriminant validity. Values below 0.85 indicate that discriminant validity among the variables is achieved. HTMT analysis was preferred due to its superior performance in assessing discriminant validity and its greater sensitivity in identifying such issues (Henseler et al., 2015). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that both convergent and discriminant validity have been satisfied.

3.5.1 Test of Mediation

Prior to testing the study's hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in AMOS to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model. The goodness-of-fit indices obtained from the analyses and the AMOS diagram have been reported solely for this purpose,

Table 4. Comparison of measurement models.

Model	χ^2	RMSEA	DF	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$
Measurement model, three-factor model	111	0.08	27	3.74	0.95	0.91	0.98	0.97	0.04	-
Model 1, One-factor ^a	720	0.22	35	20.57	0.70	0.53	0.79	0.78	0.09	609
Model 2, Two-factor ^b	484	0.18	34	14.25	0.78	0.65	0.86	0.85	0.08	373
Model 3, Two-factor ^c	512	0.19	34	15.07	0.77	0.62	0.85	0.85	0.07	401
Model 4, Two-factor ^d	455	0.17	34	13.37	0.80	0.67	0.87	0.86	0.07	344

Note. n = 408; All models are significant at $p < 0.05$; χ^2 , chi-square discrepancy; df, degrees of freedom; CMIN/DF, (χ^2 /df) or Chi-Square to Degrees of Freedom Ratio; GFI, Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI, Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; CFI, comparative fit index; NFI, Normed Fit Index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; $\Delta\chi^2$, difference in chi-square; Δdf , difference in degrees of freedom; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

a. One-factor model = Harman's single-factor model, all variables combined into a single factor.

b. Two-factor model = Turnover Intention and Role Ambiguity combined into a single factor.

c. Two-factor model = Work Overload and Turnover Intention combined into a single factor.

d. Two-factor model = Work Overload and Role Ambiguity combined into a single factor.

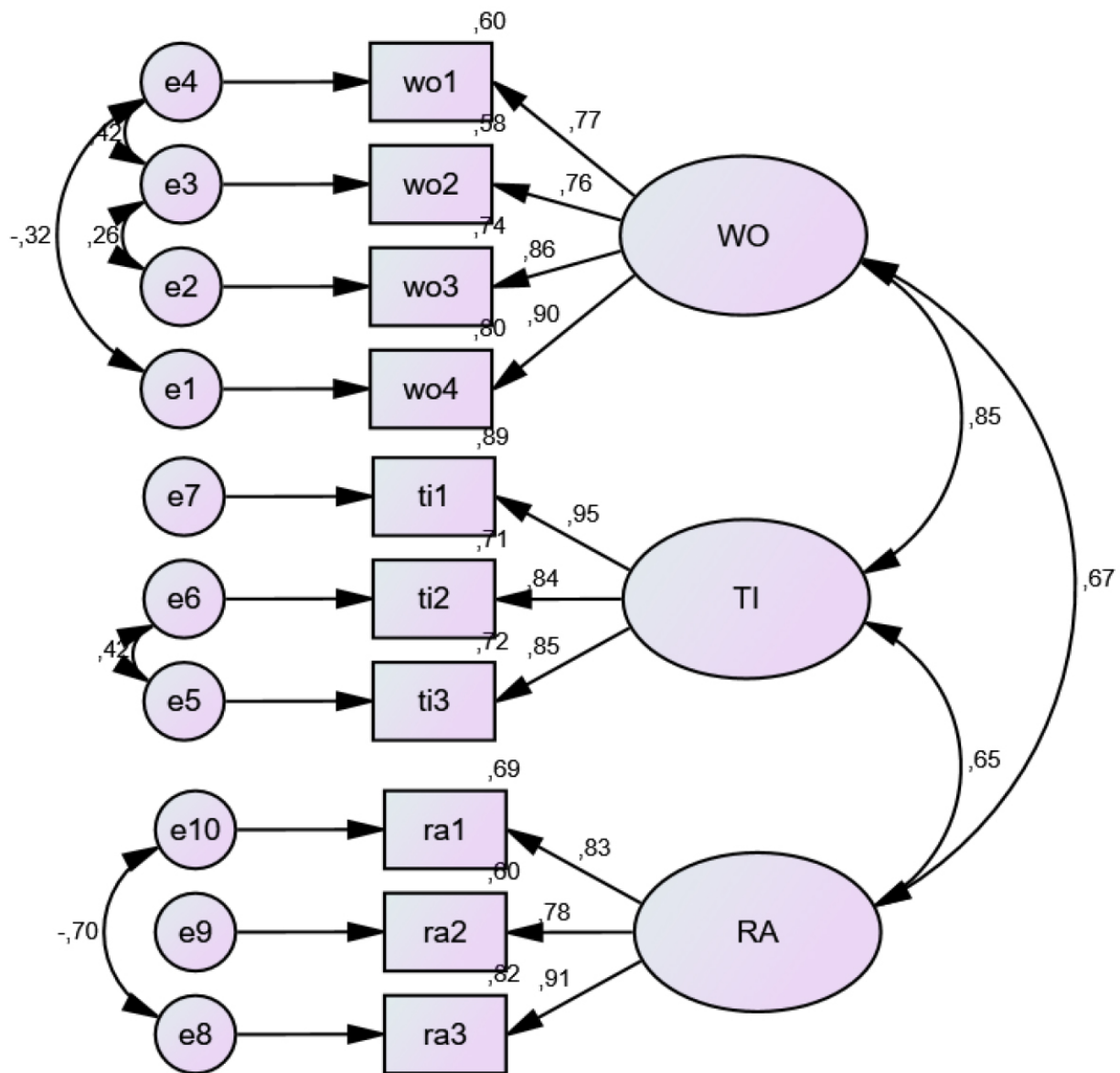


Fig. 2. AMOS path diagram.

Table 5. Standardized factor loadings.

Construct	Item	Factor loading
WO	WO4	0.896
WO	WO3	0.863
WO	WO2	0.762
WO	WO1	0.774
TI	TI3	0.850
TI	TI2	0.845
TI	TI1	0.946
RA	RA3	0.905
RA	RA2	0.777
RA	RA1	0.832

Table 6. Convergent and discriminant validity analysis.

	HTMT analysis			CR	AVE
	WO	RA	TI		
WO	-	0.67	0.80	0.89	0.68
RA	0.67	-	0.64	0.87	0.70
TI	0.80	0.64	-	0.91	0.77

AVE, Average Variance Extracted;
CR, Composite Reliability.

and the findings indicate that construct validity has been achieved at the measurement level. The hypotheses in the study, on the other hand, were tested using regression-based analyses with the PROCESS Macro.

In this study, four hypotheses were developed to test the relationships between workload, role ambiguity and turnover intention. The analysis results in Table 7 present the findings supporting the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The hypothesis that there is a positive and significant relationship between work overload and turnover intention was supported ($B = 0.63$, $t = 13.48$, $p < 0.001$). This result shows that as employees' work overload increases, turnover intention also increases.

Hypothesis 2: The positive and significant relationship between work overload and role ambiguity was also supported ($B = 0.62$, $t = 16.39$, $p < 0.001$). This finding reveals that employees with heavy workloads experience greater uncertainty about their job descriptions and expectations.

Hypothesis 3: The positive and significant relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention was confirmed ($B = 0.32$, $t = 6.50$, $p < 0.001$). This relationship indicates that role ambiguity may increase employees' turnover intention.

Hypothesis 4: Considering the mediation test conditions proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the relationship between the independent variable (work overload) and the dependent variable (turnover intention) is significant, the relationship between the independent variable and the mediating variable (role ambiguity) is significant, and the relationship between the mediating variable and the dependent

variable is significant. These results indicate that Hypothesis 4 is supported and role ambiguity plays a mediating role in the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.

3.5.2 Test of Moderated Mediation

First, to illustrate the practical significance of our model, we present its effect sizes and explanatory power. Examining the effect of work overload on role ambiguity, this effect is found to be quite strong ($B = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$), and the model explains approximately 40% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.40$). These results indicate that work overload has a substantial impact on role ambiguity. The model explaining turnover intention demonstrates high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.58$), while the contribution of the interactions related to the moderating role of gender to the explained variance is relatively low, with R^2 change = 0.0024 for work overload $\times$ gender and R^2 change = 0.0060 for role ambiguity $\times$ gender. These values suggest that the practical significance of the moderating effect is relatively limited. In terms of direct effects, the impact of work overload on turnover intention is strong for both women ($B = 0.71$) and men ($B = 0.56$). Regarding the indirect effect sizes, the effect mediated through role ambiguity is lower for women ($B = 0.11$) and moderate for men ($B = 0.25$).

At this stage of the research, two hypotheses (Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6) were tested for the effect of the moderator variable, and the results are presented in Table 8. For the moderator effect to exist, the interaction between the independent variable (work overload) and the moderator variable (gender) must be significant (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Edwards and Lambert, 2007). When the results were examined, the interaction effect between work overload and gender (WO $\times$ Gender) was not significant ($B = -0.14$, $t = -1.50$, $p = 0.133$). The results are presented graphically in Fig. 3, and upon examination, Hypothesis 6 is not supported. Hypothesis 5, which tested whether the interaction between the mediator variable (role ambiguity) and the moderator variable (gender) was significant, was tested. When the results are examined, the interaction effect (RA $\times$ Gender) between the mediator (role ambiguity) and the moderator (gender) is significant ($B = 0.23$, $t = 2.40$, $p = 0.017$). Accordingly, the results appear to support Hypothesis 5. The results are shown in Fig. 4. When male and female employees are compared here, it is ($B = 0.11$) for female employees and ($B = 0.25$) for male employees. Accordingly, the influence of male employees is stronger than that of female employees.

To test whether gender has a moderating effect in the main model, the index values of the conditional effect (conditional indirect effect) should be significant (Edwards and Lambert, 2007; Preacher et al., 2007). When the results are analyzed, it is seen that these values are significant since the confidence intervals do not include zero (BootLLCI = 0.01, BootULCI = 0.311). As a result, gender has a moderating

Table 7. Regression results for mediation effect.

Variable/Predictor	B	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Section A: Model predicting role ambiguity (RA) (Mediator)				
Control variables				
Gender	−0.17	0.09	−1.86	0.064
Age	0.01	0.04	0.13	0.897
Marital status	−0.16	0.11	−1.47	0.142
Educational status	−0.05	0.04	−1.12	0.265
Independent variable				
Work overload (WO)	0.62	0.04	16.39	0.001
Section B: Model predicting turnover intention (TI) (Dependent)				
Control variables				
Gender	0.07	0.09	0.74	0.459
Age	−0.09	0.04	−2.15	0.032
Marital status	0.11	0.10	1.05	0.296
Educational status	0.08	0.04	1.94	0.054
Main predictors				
Direct effect of WO	0.63	0.05	13.48	<i>p</i> < 0.001
Mediator effect of RA	0.32	0.05	6.50	0.001
Overall effect				
Total effect of WO	0.82	0.04	21.54	<i>p</i> < 0.001

Table 8. Regression results for conditional indirect effect.

Variable/Predictor	B	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Dependent variable: turnover intention				
Control variables				
Age	−0.09	0.04	−2.15	0.032
Marital status	0.11	0.10	1.05	0.296
Educational status	0.08	0.04	1.94	0.054
Independent variables (main effects)				
Work overload (WO)	0.61	0.05	12.82	<i>p</i> < 0.001
Role ambiguity (RA)	0.32	0.05	6.50	0.001
Moderation (Interaction) effects				
Gender (moderator)	0.07	0.09	0.74	0.459
WO × Gender	−0.14	0.10	−1.50	0.133
RA × Gender	0.23	0.10	2.40	0.017
	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Index of moderated mediation (Gender)	0.14	0.09	0.01	0.311
Female	0.11	0.06	−0.02	0.205
Male	0.25	0.05	0.15	0.353

Note: SE = Standard error; Bootstrap sample size = 5.000. LL, lower limit; UL, upper limit; CI, confidence interval.

effect in this model. A summary of the test results for all hypotheses proposed in the study is presented in Table 9.

4. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between work overload and turnover intention and the mediating effect of role ambiguity on this relationship. The study conducted among individuals working in chain supermarkets across Türkiye revealed a positive relationship between work overload and turnover intention. It was determined that employees consider quitting their jobs due to work

overload, and that this has a significant effect on turnover intention. In addition, it was determined that role ambiguity mediates this relationship and increases the effect between employees' work overload and turnover intention. These findings indicate that role ambiguity in the workplace can negatively affect employees' motivation and organizational commitment, thereby increasing turnover intention.

Another finding of the study indicates that the moderated mediating role of gender in the relationship between work overload (through role ambiguity) and turnover intention was not supported. However, the moderating role

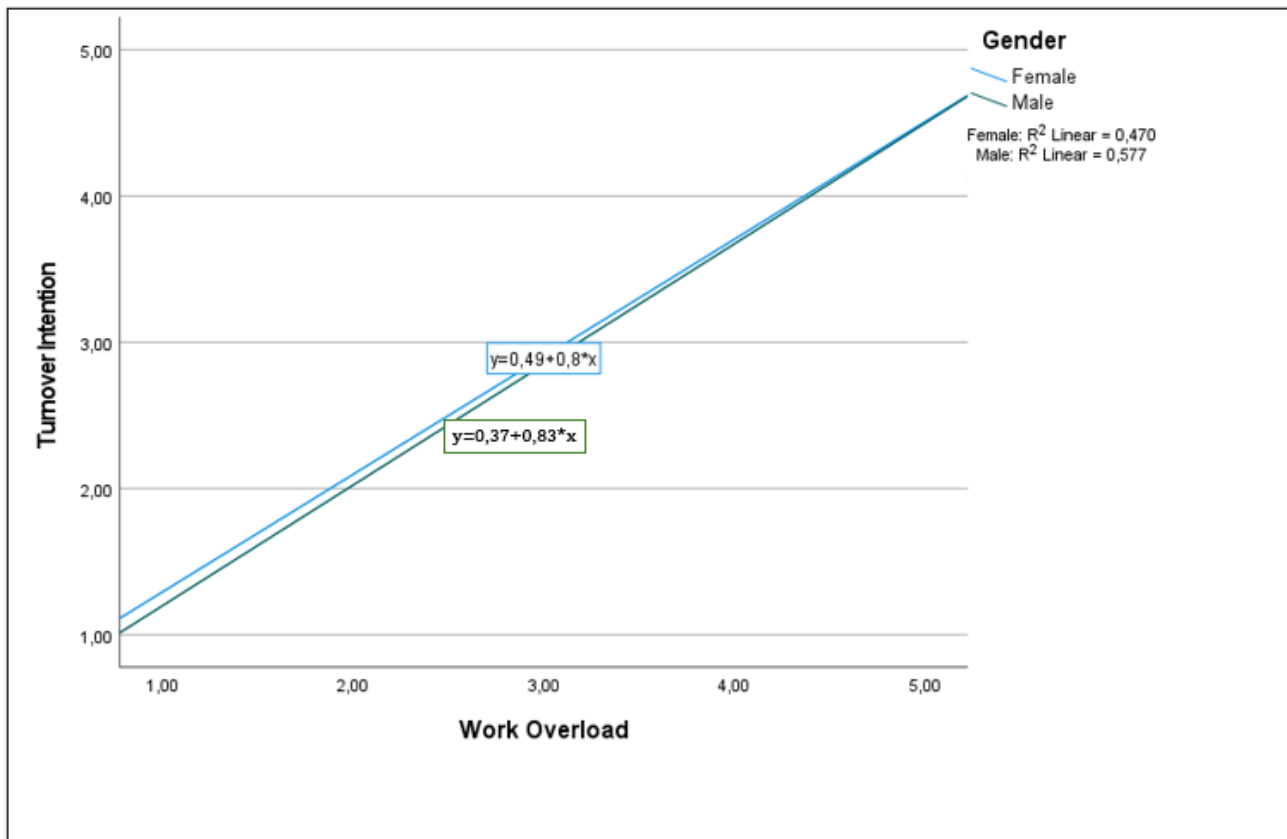


Fig. 3. Gender moderating the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.

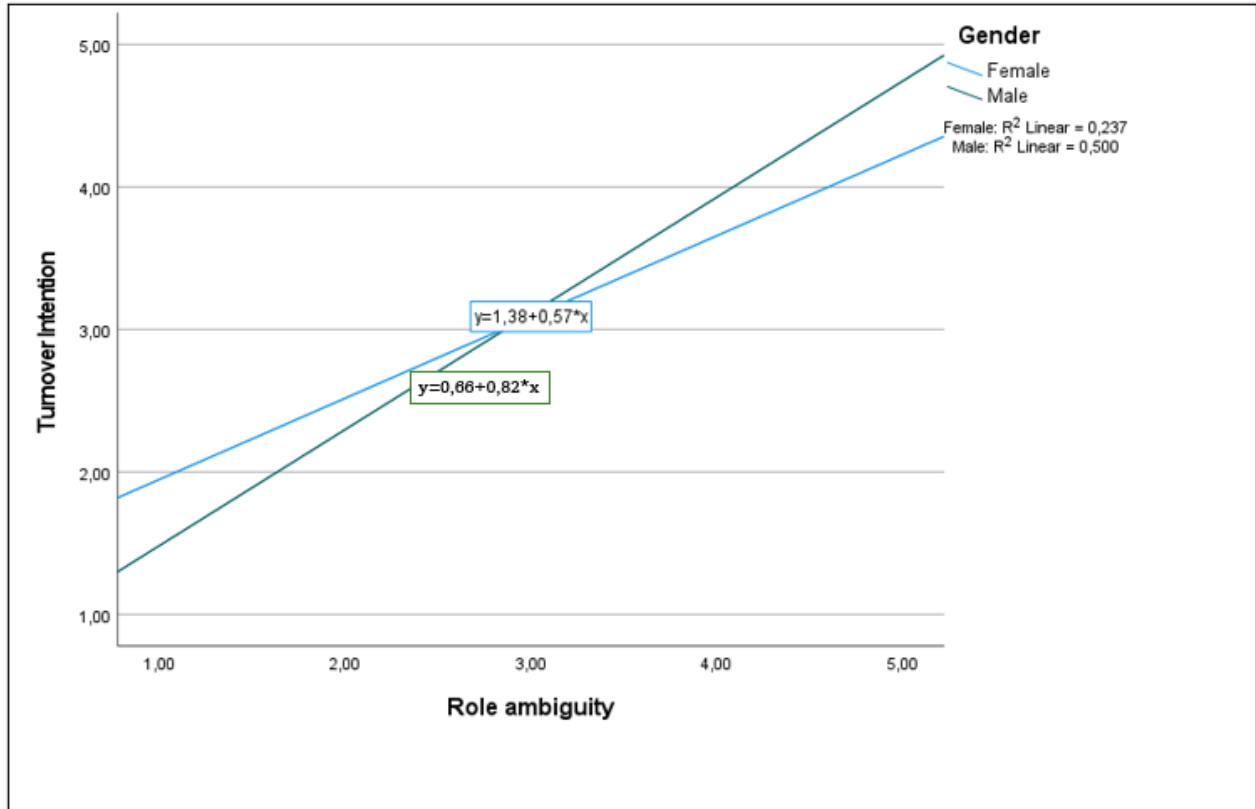


Fig. 4. Gender moderating the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention.

Table 9. Summary of hypothesis test results.

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	A positive and significant relationship is expected between work overload and turnover intention.	Supported
H2	A positive and significant relationship is expected between work overload and role ambiguity.	Supported
H3	A positive and significant relationship is expected between role ambiguity and turnover intention.	Supported
H4	Role ambiguity is expected to mediate the relationship between work overload and turnover intention.	Supported
H5	It is expected that gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention; that is, the effect of role ambiguity on turnover intention is assumed to be stronger for men than for women.	Supported
H6	It is expected that gender moderates the indirect relationship between work overload and turnover intention through role ambiguity, and that this effect is stronger for men than for women.	Not Supported

of gender in the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention was found to be significant, although the effect size was relatively low. This indicates a statistically detectable result, even though it shows that the generalizability of the moderation is more limited. Analyses examining how gender moderates the effect of role ambiguity indicate that men may exhibit higher turnover intentions in response to work overload and role ambiguity compared to women. As a result of gender roles, men are often exposed to more stress and pressure at work, which can lead to a more pronounced tendency to leave their jobs. On the other hand, women may be more resilient under the same conditions of work overload and role ambiguity because they are shaped by roles that are expected to be more socially flexible and adaptable. In this context, considering how gender roles shape employees' attitudes and behaviors at work is important for better understanding how gender governs this relationship.

This study demonstrates that gender moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention, although the magnitude of this effect is small. [Hoda and Fallatah, 2024](#) found that gender moderates the relationship between financial knowledge and financial attitudes. This finding suggests that gender is not always effective in all relationships but plays an important moderating role in certain contexts. In a study of academic staff at Haramaya University in Ethiopia, gender was found to moderate the relationship between role stress and turnover intention ([Hundera, 2014](#)). In a study of the sales staff of a promotional company, gender was found to moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction ([Boles et al., 2003](#)). The findings of this study are consistent with the literature on the moderating role of gender. These findings provide important clues that gender moderates the relationships between factors such as stress, workload, job satisfaction, role ambiguity, role conflict, and motivation at work.

This research is based on JD-R and Gender Role Theory. Work overload which constitutes job demands, causes stress, burnout, etc. on employees ([Bakker et al., 2003](#); [Shim et al., 2017](#)). The findings obtained within the scope of this research are in line with the theory. Within the scope

of this study, examining the relationship between excessive workload and intention to leave in retail sector employees within the framework of the Job Demands and Resources Theory is valuable in terms of contributing to the theory. Finally, this study emphasizes that more effective strategies can be developed to reduce employees' intention to leave by taking gender differences in the workplace into account. In terms of theoretical implications, this study contributes to the literature on Gender Role Theory ([Eagly, 1987](#)) and stress coping strategies. The regulatory role of gender in the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention facilitates understanding of how gender shapes social and psychological structures. This points to an important basis for understanding how workplace stress factors are experienced differently based on gender differences. Considering the regulatory power of gender in this particular study, it seems more appropriate to evaluate gender as a complementary and limited differentiating factor in the aforementioned relationship.

This study supports the basic assumptions of the JD-R Model while also expanding upon it. JD-R posits that job demands (e.g., work overload) lead to burnout and negative outcomes among employees. The findings of this study show that work overload not only increases the intention to leave the job but also strengthens this relationship through role ambiguity. This reveals that within the JD-R framework, role ambiguity should be considered not only as a "job demand", but also as a secondary stress mechanism that increases the impact of job demands. Furthermore, this study supports some of the assumptions of Gender Role Theory while extending the model to a limited extent. Specifically, male employees may perceive work overload and role ambiguity as threats to their success, leading to increased turnover intention. Female employees, on the other hand, are raised to be more socially flexible, conciliatory, and compliant, which may lead them to perceive such demands as more manageable. This situation suggests that gender roles may influence how job demands are perceived.

The theoretical and practical implications of the research are discussed in the next section.

5. Implications and Contributions of the Study

Considering the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research, various recommendations can be made to managers, human resources professionals, and researchers aiming to develop healthier working conditions and strategies to reduce employees' intention to leave their jobs in the business world.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study makes a significant contribution to the examination of resignation plans by integrating multiple variables, including workload, role ambiguity, and gender. The most important theoretical contribution of the study is the distribution of univariate models in the literature that have this freedom, and their more comprehensive examination of the exit view without leaving. This provides opportunities to further expand the separation plan and develop more efficient solutions for the link. In addition, this study provides a new perspective on the interactions among factors such as gender stress, workload, and role ambiguity in jobs within the framework of Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987). Although the moderating role of gender in the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention is statistically significant, its effect size is relatively small. The relatively small effect size and the lack of support for the moderated mediation effect warrant caution in interpreting theoretical implications. Accordingly, rather than extending Gender Role Theory, the present study provides empirical support for its applicability in the context of role ambiguity, workload, and stress.

Another significant contribution of this study is that it not only tests the direct relationship between work overload and turnover intention but also reveals the underlying mechanism and contextual conditions of this relationship. The findings of the study indicate that role ambiguity assumes a mediating role in this relationship. Additionally, gender was found to have a statistically significant but limited moderating effect on the relationship between role ambiguity and turnover intention. The joint examination of mediation and moderation in the context of chain supermarket employees in Türkiye offers a new explanatory framework to the literature and constitutes the fundamental theoretical contribution that distinguishes this study from previous research.

5.2 Practical Implications

This study makes significant contributions to the literature on work psychology, work-life balance, and human resource management, and also provides important information on strategies for leaving a job without turnover intention. The findings of the study have broad practical implications not only for employers and managers, but also for employees, policy makers, and industry stakeholders.

To reduce uncertainty in employees' work relationships, it is crucial for employers to provide clear, understandable job descriptions, establish strong communication channels, and develop training programs that are sensitive to employees' needs. Gender-sensitive support programs and flexible work policies can be effective in reducing turnover intentions. In addition, retail chain managers who clearly define employee job descriptions and accurately plan shifts can help prevent role ambiguity. Furthermore, training store managers in effective communication, conflict management, and role definition can help achieve a more balanced management of workloads. Creating a support team for peak hours at markets can reduce the workload and decrease employees' turnover intention.

Policy makers can develop regulations to reduce workload and role ambiguity in the workplace. Factors such as workload management, role clarity, and clearer job descriptions can inform policy decisions and increase employees' job satisfaction and long-term organizational commitment. In addition, developing more effective policies to address gender inequality can create a more equitable environment and encourage women's participation in the workforce. In this context, training on gender equality in the workplace should be provided, gender discrimination should not be made in promotions, and equal opportunities should be offered to women, especially in appointments to senior positions, and flexible working systems should be offered to women, considering the childcare, etc., of female employees. Employers' development of gender-sensitive policies on gender inequality can increase employee engagement and reduce turnover intentions.

Industry stakeholders can increase employee productivity and commitment by implementing strategies to reduce workload and role ambiguity, especially in human resources. To achieve this, human resources managers can conduct regular interviews with employees to determine their role expectations and ensure a fairer distribution of workload. To reduce role ambiguity and lighten the workload, managers should distribute tasks transparently, analyze employee outputs, and clearly determine shift hours. In this way, employee productivity can be ensured, and employees' organizational commitment can increase. Regular feedback from employees and consideration of work-family records will enable rapid interventions in turnover planning. In addition, developing gender-focused policies that account for sector-wide trends and demographic changes can reduce sector-specific inequalities and foster more sustainable work environments.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study, designed to understand the relationships between work overload, role ambiguity, gender, and turnover intention among employees in chain markets across Türkiye, has the important results mentioned above, it has some limitations and offers various suggestions for future research.

These limitations stem primarily from cross-sectional analysis, which collects data at a single time point, and from the subjective perceptions of the participants. Since this study has a cross-sectional design, inferences of causality between variables are limited, and findings should be interpreted at the correlational level. Future longitudinal or experimental studies may strengthen causal evidence. In this context, future research could be conducted using a more comprehensive dataset that measures longitudinal, prospective, and objective performance.

The application of future research to employees in different sectors and employees in different cultures in sudden developing and dynamic unusual situations, such as a pandemic, to better understand the relationships between work overload, role ambiguity, and turnover intention, can improve the generalizability of the study by providing a better understanding of changes over time and their causal relationships.

In addition, another limitation of the research is that the data were collected only from people living in Türkiye with similar cultural characteristics. It is evaluated that data collected from employees with different geographical, social, economic, and cultural characteristics can also yield important results. In this study, we only included gender in the model as a moderator. In addition to the model we proposed in this study, interesting results can be obtained and contribute to the literature by including with different possible mediator variables and different samples. Future research may focus on developing work-life balance support programs to help employees cope with work overload, role ambiguity, and turnover intention. Conducting technology-oriented research, such as on remote work, that helps prevent work overload and role ambiguity among employees may be important for future working environments.

These recommendations aim to contribute to the development of more effective management and human resources policies of the business world by guiding future research.

Availability of Data and Materials

The authors declare the study data and supporting information are available on request.

Author Contributions

İY, ÖÇ, and YK designed the research. ÖÇ and YK carried out the data collection and/or processing. YK performed the analysis and interpretation tasks. KKÖ and İY contributed to editorial changes and processes. ÖÇ and KKÖ conducted the literature review. KKÖ ensured the revision of the article and the development of the theoretical framework. KKÖ and İY carried out the critical review processes. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. All authors contributed to critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content. All authors have partici-

pated sufficiently in the work and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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