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EFFECT OF ROLE AMBIGUITY ON JOB SATISFACTION AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

Organizations with the determination for market relevance and passion for greatness through prompt achievement of strategic goals tend to have a relative low rate of employees turnover aside the possession of more competent and highly satisfied workforces with added commitment level. This can be made possible through avoidance of role ambiguity in the course of organization's job design with a view to ensuring employees' in-depth understanding of their required duties and also to guarantee their job satisfaction and enhancement of their work performance in the organization. The study is a descriptive research survey. The study population encompassed all the staff of Ministry of Education in Kwara State, Nigeria totaling 375. The sample size for the study was 194 as this was determined by Taro Yamane formula and data collection was through questionnaire administration. The formulated hypotheses were tested with t-test statistical tool. Collected data were analyzed with the utilization of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The findings revealed that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants ($M = 40.30$, $SD 6.43$; $t(180) = 8.92$, $p < .05$). The findings showed further that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service ($M = 12.60$, $SD 5.08$; $t(180) = 6.56$, $p < .05$). The study therefore concludes that role ambiguity and job satisfaction have negative relationship and also that role ambiguity negatively or adversely affects performance of Kwara State Civil Servants in the studied ministry. It was therefore, recommended that there should be creation of a working environment in the Kwara State Ministry of Education so as to encourage communication and employees' feedback and to ensure clear outlines of responsibilities (role clarity) for staff with a view to avoiding the adverse effects or consequences of role ambiguity.

Keywords: Burnout, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, and Role Ambiguity
JEL Classification: M21

study examines the effect of role ambiguity on the afore mentioned twin concepts in the Kwara State Ministry of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction and employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service while specific objectives are to:

- (i) assess the effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants, and
- (ii) ascertain the effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- (i) H_{01} : There is no significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants; and
- (ii) H_{02} : There is no significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is the lack of information available to perform one's responsibilities effectively (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). It is uncertainty about a specific activity that an individual should do or undertake at a particular time. As stated by Hartenian (2011), a role implies expectation over a social behavior and on functions that an employee carries out, or a position that is being occupied by an employee in the workplace. In the organization setting, a role can be seen as the expectations that workers have of each other. However, according to Madera (2013); Amyx, Sharma and Alford (2014), role ambiguity refers the uncertainty about what is expected in worker's job. Also, Onyemah (2008) views role ambiguity as the inability on the part of an employee in the organization to obviously comprehend what he is expected to do with a view to accomplishing his role requirements. Role ambiguity is the results of situations in which the employee's expected roles are at variance to the perceived roles, and role conflict where the perceived roles is different from the real role that is being performed by the employee.

Role ambiguity exists when an employee is not equipped with good understanding about his (her) responsibilities and having little knowledge of what is expected pertaining to his (her) job performance (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). When employees experience lack of role clarity or having role ambiguity, they tend to perform at lower levels (Bhuiyan, Menguc & Borsboom, 2005). This is because role ambiguity is ordinarily linked with employee work performance. Likewise, employees will be able to perform well should they have clear job understanding of what is expected and required from them (Babin & Boles, 1998). According to Kahn (1964), who first studied role ambiguity, role ambiguity experienced in the following concerns (Rogalsky, Doherty & Paradis 2016): what is to be expected from the employees?, how should the individual fulfill the requirements of the role?, whose expectations will be a priority?, how do you assess the performance of the individual?, and what are the

consequences of fulfillment of the responsibilities of the individual or not? Generally, role ambiguity occurs when an employee is unable to really have understanding of what authorities, and responsibilities connected to a job are, and when the method of how to carry out their task is unknown, and when an employee is unable to choose which tasks to perform first and which to carry out last.

Concept of Employees' Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction means an evaluative judgment about the level of delight an employee gets from his or her employment that comprises both emotional and cognitive components (Hulin & Judge, 2003). Job satisfaction denotes how much contentment an employee has over his or her job. This could either be an affective job satisfaction or cognitive job satisfaction. Affective job satisfaction has to do with the level of pleasurable emotional feelings persons have over their jobs generally, and this is different from cognitive job satisfaction that denotes the degree of pleasure that persons derive from specific aspects of their jobs, for example, pay, pension arrangements, working hours, and several other parts of their jobs.

According to Montgomery (2011), job satisfaction could be understood as the outcome of desired or satisfactory conditions that are formed by an organization, which makes it possible or easy for the employees in the workplace to have optimal performance, and also afford them opportunities for personal welfare. The conditions satisfactory conditions referred to by Montgomery (2011) include: (i) accessibility to essential resources needed by employees for tasks performance; (ii) sustenance of organizational practices capable of simplifying free flow of communication between employees and the superiors; and (iii) ensuring duties and responsibilities clarity for all positions in the organizational structure.

Concept of Employees' Work Performance

Employee job performance refers to what an individual does in the workplace. Job performance as a concept has been described variously by different authors or scholars. For example, Eysenck (1998); Maathis and Jackson (2000) and Bohlander (2001) consider job performance as key factor in employee management which are related to the employees' ability to actualize their personal work goals, fulfilling expectations and achieving job set targets in addition to attainment of firm's predetermined standard. Sarmiento and Beale (2007) define job performance as the outcome of two elements, which are made up of the abilities and naturally gained skills that an individual owns, and has control over to perform a better and greater job. Likewise, Campbell (1990) asserts that performance means what a business firm employs an individual to do, and to do satisfactorily. This is something that individuals engage in which could easily be noticed. These encompass behaviours or actions that are related to the goals set by the organization and that are equally measurable when it comes to making reference to the contributions made to the organization by each employee.

Theoretical Review

Role Theory

Role theory explains the practice known as socialization process which is the activity that makes it possible for a person or an employee to take up a role, position, status, or responsibility required for a particular situation or setting through an interaction with colleagues in the workplace. For instance as given by Monnot (2008), it is possible for a person to take up a role as a supervisor, and at the same time can operate as a subordinate in another region, and subsequently his duties would definitely differ from each one of the statuses. In the organizational context, the study of this theory could be dated back to the era between 1950 and 1960, in which Kahn, Wolfe and Quinn (the first researchers on role ambiguity) made reference to subsistence of organizational tensions being passed through by

employees in the course of carrying out their assigned tasks. According to Fisher (2001), and Fichter (2011), the two different forms of tensions in the workplace which are conflict and role ambiguity could result from the availability of organizational, personal and interpersonal elements, which are capable of impacting on the employees' perceptions in the course of making efforts to carry out his responsibilities.

Empirical Review

Abramis (1994) conducted a research titled "work role ambiguity, job satisfaction, and job performance: meta-analyses and review". The findings of the study established that role ambiguity was significantly and negatively associated with job satisfaction and employees' performance, meaning that role ambiguity is a valid construct in organizational research and is usually related to lower or lack of job satisfaction.

Likewise, Theodorakis and Goulmaris (2004) examined role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among Greek physical education teachers, and the extent to which role conflict and role ambiguity predict job satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis was adopted for the study, and findings indicated that role conflict together with role ambiguity were significant predictors of job satisfaction in the study area.

More also, in Pakistan, Khattak, Nrooj, Khattak, and Iqbal (2011) investigated the relationship between role ambiguity, job stress and job satisfaction. Where a total number of 350 copies of questionnaire were administered, and out of which 305 were returned and analyzed for the study with the use of correlation and regression analyses. The results of the study revealed that role ambiguity had negative relationship with job satisfaction, which pointed out that role ambiguity was one of the job stressors that resulted in job dissatisfaction among employees of the banking sector in the area of study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study examines the effect of role ambiguity on the job satisfaction and employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service, Ilorin, Nigeria with concentration or focus on the State's Ministry of Education. Survey method was utilized through the use of questionnaire to obtain information from the respondents. The method was considered suitable for the study due to the fact that it gave room for the collection of quantitative data which were analyzed quantitatively with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The method also made it possible to have an avenue for more honest and unambiguous responses from the respondents.

Study Population / Sample Size

The population for this study was the entire staff members of Kwara State Ministry of Education, totaling Three Hundred and Seventy Five (375) staff. The figure was based on the supplied information in the course of carrying out this study. The sampling size for the study was One Hundred and Ninety Four (194) employees of the ministry. Taro Yamane's formula was utilized to determine the sample size, where

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

And n = Sample size, N = Population of the study

e = Tolerable error (5%).

One Hundred and Eighty Two (182) copies out of One Hundred and Ninety Four (194) copies of administered questionnaire were suitably filled, returned and analyzed for the study.

Sources of Data

Primary source of data was used for this study. The primary data were through the utilization of questionnaire meant for eliciting needed data from the respondents, while some useful textbooks and journals were as well accessed for this study.

Research Instrument

The study employed questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study with the use of structured questionnaire to obtain information from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of two sections, that is, section A and section B. The section A was characterized by variables containing bio-data and it was for direct gathering of background (personal) information about the respondents. Section B comprised two parts. Part One covered questions intended to ascertain the effect of role ambiguity on employees job satisfaction, while Part Two encompassed questions designed for ascertaining the influence of role ambiguity on employee workperformance in the study area. Some questions were adopted from previous researches with high validity and reliability coefficient which were adapted to be useful to the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study made use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics involved simple percentages and frequency tables, while inferential statistics used was t-test of independence. The simple percentage and tables were for description of the respondents' demographic characteristics, while t-test of independence was data.

Results and Discussion

One Hundred and Eighty Two (182) copies out of One Hundred and Ninety Four (194) copies of administered questionnaire were well filled, returned and analyzed for the study. Therefore, the results shown in the Tables 1-3 were based on this figure.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Variables	Levels	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	45.1
	Female	100	54.9
	Total	182	100.0
		31	17.0
Age (in Years)	21-30	60	33.0
	31-40	64	35.2
	41-50	27	14.8
	51 & Above	100	100.0
	Total	14	7.7
Highest Educational Qualification	SSCE/NECO	14	25.3
	OND	46	30.2
	First Degree/HND	55	28.0
	Masters' Degree	51	8.8
	Ph. D	16	100.0
	Total	100	19.8
Years of Working Experience(in Years)	Below 10	36	36.8
	10-20	67	24.2
	21-30	44	

	31 & above	35	19.2
	Total	100	100.0
Marital Status	Single	58	31.9
	Married	106	58.3
	Divorced	7	3.8
	Widower/Widow	11	6.0
	Total	100	100.0
Cadre	Top Management Cadre	38	20.9
	Senior Cadre	66	36.3
	Intermediate Cadre	25	13.7
	Junior	53	29.1
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic data of the respondents. It is shown that out of 182(100.0%) of the Kwara State civil servants that participated in this study, 82(45.1%) were males while 100(54.9%) were females. It is therefore shown that the majority of the respondents in this study were female civil servants. Age distribution of the respondents indicates that 31(17.0%) were within the age 21-30 years, 60(33.0%) were of age 31-40 years, 60(33.0%) were of age 41-50 while 27(14.8%) of the respondents were of age 51 years and above. Also, 14(7.7%) of the respondents had SSCE/NECO certificate, 46(25.3%) had OND, 55(30.2%) had First Degree/HND, 51(28.0%) had Master Degree, while 16 (8.8%) had Ph. D. On the experience of the respondents in the service, distribution shows that 36(19.8%) had working experience below 10 years, 67(36.8%) had 10-20 years, 44(24.2%) had 21-30 years working experience while 35(19.2%) of the respondents had working experience of 31 years and above in the civil service. Marital status distribution of the respondents reveals that 58(31.9%) were single, 106(58.3%) were married individuals, 7(3.8%) were divorcees, while 11(6.0%) were widower/widow. It was also found that 38(20.9%) of the respondents were in top management cadre, 66(36.3%) were in senior cadre, 25(13.7%) were in intermediate cadre while 53 (29.1%) were junior staff. This implies that Kwara State Ministry of Education under the study has more staff members (in senior cadre) with the knowledge of the practice of job clarity in the ministry.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants.

Table 2: T-test of Significant Effect of Role Ambiguity on Job Satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants

Role Ambiguity	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	p
Staff with no experience of role ambiguity	93	48.30	12.30			
Staff with experience of role ambiguity	89	40.30	6.43	180	8.92	<.05

Source: Authors' Computation, 2019

Table 2 shows the effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants. It can be observed from the table that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction of staff with no experience of role ambiguity ($M = 48.30$, $SD = 12.30$) and those with experience of role ambiguity, $M = 40.30$, $SD = 6.43$; $t(180) = 8.92$, $p < .05$. Staff with no experience of role ambiguity had higher mean score (indicating higher job satisfaction) than

their counterparts with the experience of role ambiguity. Since the p-value is less than .05 thresholds, the stated null hypothesis is rejected. The result concludes that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants.

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service.

Table 3: T-test of Significant Effect of Role Ambiguity on Employees' Work Performance in Kwara State Civil Service.

Role Ambiguity	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	P
Staff with no experience of role ambiguity	93	15.40	3.96	180	6.56	<.05
Staff with experience of role ambiguity	89	12.60	5.08			

Source: Authors' Computation, 2019

Table 3 shows the effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service. It can be observed from the table that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance of staff with no experience of role ambiguity ($M = 15.40$, $SD = 3.96$) and those with experience of role ambiguity, $M = 12.60$, $SD = 5.08$; $t(180) = 6.56$, $p < .05$. Staff with no experience of role ambiguity had higher mean score (indicating higher work performance) than their counterparts with the experience of role ambiguity. Since the p-value is less than .05 thresholds, the stated null hypothesis is rejected. The result concludes that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service.

Discussion of Finding, Conclusion and Recommendations

The analytical result of the study demonstrated that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants ($M = 40.30$, $SD = 6.43$; $t(180) = 8.92$, $p < .05$), which indicates that role ambiguity and job satisfaction have negative relationship, meaning that when role ambiguity increases, the job satisfaction decreases and vice versa. This finding is in line with the finding of Theodorakis and Goulmaris (2004) that indicated that role conflict together with role ambiguity were significant predictors of job satisfaction among Greek physical education teachers. The result of the study is also in conformity with the findings of Khattak, Nrooj, Khattak, and Iqbal (2011) that revealed that role ambiguity had negative relationship with job satisfaction, which was a pointer to the fact that role ambiguity was one of the job stressors that resulted in job dissatisfaction among employees of the banking sector in Pakistan.

The results of the study further established that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service ($M = 12.60$, $SD = 5.08$; $t(180) = 6.56$, $p < .05$), implying that role ambiguity negatively or adversely affects performance of Kwara State Civil Servants in the studied ministry. It means that the higher the impact of role ambiguity, the lower the performance of employees of the Ministry of Education in Kwara State. These findings are consistent with the idea that role ambiguity is often considered as having negative consequences. The finding are in agreement with the findings of Abramis (1994) that found out that role ambiguity was significantly and negatively linked with job satisfaction and employees' performance.

Following the findings of the study, it could therefore be deduced that presence or experience of role ambiguity in the workplace can constitute so much distress or great job dissatisfaction to employees in an attempt to accomplish a definite performance target. The study therefore concludes that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction among Kwara State Civil Servants, and also that there was a significant effect of role ambiguity on employees' work performance in Kwara State Civil Service. Sequel to the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that authority in Kwara State Ministry of Education should:

- i. come to understand that to be effective, the ministry can enhance job satisfaction and consequently employees' performance by redesigning jobs to minimize role ambiguity, or conversely, boredom. The ministry's policies could be modified so as to proffer workers with more inputs opportunity into their work activities.
- ii. ensure that its human resource unit or department regularly creates a working environment where communication and employees' feedback are encouraged and where clear outlines of responsibilities (role clarity) are given to staff in the ministry so as to avoid the adverse effects or consequences of role ambiguity.

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