

ROLE STRESSORS AND EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE IN EDUCATION DISTRICTS IN LAGOS STATE

RABIAT A. ABDULRAUF*¹ & DR. O. A. THOMAS²

^{1,2,3} Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria

*Correspondence Author: rabiah4success@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between role stressors and employees' job performance in Education Districts in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the relationship among role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload on employees' job performance across the six education districts. Survey research design was employed in the study. Data were using structured questionnaires administered to employees. Data were collected from a sample of 238 employees selected from a population of 503 using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson product correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload did not have a significant relationship with employees' job performance in the education districts. These results suggest that employees may sustain their performance levels despite experiencing role-related stressors. The study established that role stressors are not related to employees' job performance in the Education Districts in Lagos State. The study concluded that role stressors and employees' job performance are not significantly related in Education Districts in Lagos State, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that managers of the education districts should not only focus on minimising role stressors, but also strengthen other performance-enhancing factors.

Keywords: Employees, Job Performance, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Role Overload, Role Stressors.

Introduction

Employees are valuable assets in any organisation, playing a major role in the attainment of organisational goals and objectives. Organisations usually focus on aligning the performance of the employee with their strategic goals to ensure overall effectiveness. This is because the success of every organisation depends very much on employees' performance. Improvement of the performance of employees is not only beneficial for the organisation, but also for the employees themselves as with good performance, a greater level of employees' career development can be attained (Siahaan, Gultom & Lumbanraja, 2016). Job performance can be defined as the extent to which output of employees meet general organisational expectations. Job performance reflects the contributions of employees to the organisational goals, and it is often measured using task performance and contextual performance.

Task performance comprises job-specific behaviours that reflect the core responsibilities outlined in a job description. It is largely influenced by employees' ability and prior experience, and includes activities such as goal setting, planning, organising, supervising daily tasks, and motivating subordinates to achieve organisational objectives (Tripathy, 2014).

Task performance refers to how effectively and efficiently employees carry out their responsibilities in achieving organisational goals. Contextual performance, also known as extra role performance is defined as discretionary behaviours on the part of an employee that are believed to directly promote the effective functioning of an organisation without necessarily directly influencing an individual employees' performance. They include activities such as volunteering for extra work, helping others in executing difficult tasks, upholding enthusiasm at work, cooperating with others at the time of need, sharing critical resources and information for development, abiding by the prescribed rules and regulations, and supporting organisational decisions for a better change. These activities are common to most jobs and are less role-prescribed which is in support of the organisational, social and psychological environment where task performance takes place. Employees expect well-defined roles and in the absence of these, they may experience role-related stressors such as role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload.

Role stressor is defined as the degree of incompatibility of expectations associated with the role of the employees, and results from work roles. It is a stress people experience within their roles in an organisation, that is, a condition which happens when employees realise the pressure on them or requirements of the situation are wider than they can handle. These often lead to physical exhaustion or behavioural problems if continued for a long period of time without any interval. Employees experiencing role stressors often face delays in task execution and expend significant time and energy resolving unclear or conflicting responsibilities, which ultimately reduces both the quality and quantity of their job performance (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

Stress that is in the form of vagueness of job responsibilities which is due to little or no clear job descriptions is referred to as role ambiguity. Role ambiguity can be defined as the level of doubt and lack of clarity that employees have about their job responsibilities in the organisation. Role ambiguity occurs when there is insufficient guidance regarding an employee's duties and responsibilities. When roles are unclear, performance outcomes become uncertain, and both task and contextual performance may be negatively affected. Unclear expectations and poorly defined job roles can lead to reduced performance and increased workplace conflict, affecting both the employee and the organisation (Carter & Harper, 2016). Role conflict is a form of role stressor that affects employees in performing their roles and responsibilities. It signifies the degree to which employees experience incompatible or contradictory demands in the performance of their job roles. Employees experience role conflict when they find themselves pulled in various directions as they try to respond to the many statuses they hold in the organisation or when they have contradictory role demands concurrently such that the demands have little or no connection. Role overload is another significant role stressor that creates psychological strain among employees. It occurs when job demands exceed available resources such as time, energy, and individual capabilities. When this imbalance becomes severe, employees experience greater strain and resource depletion, which may negatively affect performance. Supporting this view, Gahlan and Singh (2025) reported that role overload had significant influenced on job performance among IT professionals. In line with statement, Andriani and Disman (2023) reported that the disparity between employees' abilities and job demands determines the level of job outcomes. This implies that excessive workload and role demands can adversely affect employee productivity and effectiveness. It is against this background that this study investigated the

relationship among roles stressors and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Education districts are responsible for managing and coordinating educational affairs at the local level and ensuring the effective day-to-day administration of schools within their jurisdictions. However, employees in Education Districts in Lagos State appear to be experiencing challenges related to job performance, largely influenced by job stress arising from role stressors. Specifically, when employees experience high levels of role stress, their task performance which includes meeting deadlines, carrying out technical duties, maintaining accurate records, and ensuring compliance may decline. Similarly, their contextual performance, such as teamwork, voluntary assistance, and proactive problem-solving, may also be negatively affected. Employees with clear and well-defined roles tend to demonstrate higher commitment, motivation, and performance. In contrast, unclear and poorly defined roles often result in low morale and reduced effectiveness. This situation is consistent with empirical findings which show that role stressors such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload negatively affect employees' job performance by increasing stress, reducing clarity, and impairing effective job execution (Tubre & Collins, 2000; Siahaan, Gultom & Lumbanraja, 2016). Despite various interventions aimed at improving Education Districts in Lagos State, challenges relating to role clarity and role expectations appear to persist, thereby affecting employees' ability to perform optimally. If these issues remain unresolved, the overall job performance of employees in the education districts may continue to decline. Consequently, this study investigated the relationship among roles stressors and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among roles stressors and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the relationship between role ambiguity and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State;
2. ascertain the relationship between role conflict and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State; and
3. establish the relationship between role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between role ambiguity and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State?
2. What is the relationship between role conflict and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State?
3. What is the relationship between role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.
2. Role conflict and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State are not significantly related.
3. There is no significant relationship between role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive and correlational survey design to examine the relationship between role stressors and employees' job performance in Lagos State Education Districts, Nigeria. The population comprised 503 senior administrative employees (Grade Levels 8 and above) across the six districts. Using Slovin's formula, a sample of 222 was calculated and increased to 254 for better representation. Proportionate stratified random sampling, with Bowley's proportional allocation, was used to select participants from each district. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Role Stressors and Employees' Job Performance Questionnaire" (RSEJPQ), adapted from validated instruments by (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970; Goodman & Svyantek, 1999). The questionnaire included items on role stressors and employees' job performance, using a four-point Likert scale of 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. Face and content validity were established through expert review, and reliability was confirmed via a pilot study with 30 administrative officers, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. The copies of the questionnaires were administered by six (6) trained research assistants, achieving a 93.7% response rate. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) summarised the data; while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance.

Results

The three research questions raised in this study were converted to hypotheses and tested in this sub-section.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State

Table 1:
Role Ambiguity and Employees' Job Performance

Variables	Mean	S.D	N	df	r	p-value	Remark
Role Ambiguity	18.52	3.61	238	236	.01	.086	H ₀₁ not rejected
Employees' Job Performance	36.58	8.64					

Analysis in Table 1 shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation in determining the significant relationship between role ambiguity and employees' performance. The information in the table shows that $r = .01$; $N = 238$ and a $p\text{-value} = .866 > .05$ level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected. The correlation coefficient indicates a very weak and positive relationship between role ambiguity and employees'

performance. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and employees' performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between role conflict and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State

Table 2:
Role conflict and employees' job performance

Variables	Mean	S.D	N	df	r	p-value	Remark
Role Conflict	14.80	2.89	238	236	-.077	.238	H ₀₂ not rejected
Employees' Job Performance	36.58	8.64					

Analysis in Table 2 shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation in determining the significant relationship between role conflict and employees' performance. The information in the table shows that $r = -.077$; $N = 238$ and a $p\text{-value} = .238 > .05$ level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected. The correlation coefficient indicates a very weak and negative relationship between role conflict and employees' performance. Hence, there is no significant relationship between role conflict and employees' performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State

Table 3:
Role overload and Employees' Job Performance

Variables	Mean	S.D	N	df	R	p-value	Remark
Role Overload	10.50	2.93	238	236	-.105	.105	H ₀₃ accepted
Employees' Job Performance	36.58	8.64					

Analysis in Table 3 shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation in determining the significant relationship between role overload and employees' performance. The information in the table shows $r = -.105$; $N = 238$ and a $p\text{-value of } .105 > .05$ level of significance. This infers that the null hypothesis is not rejected. The correlation coefficient indicates a very weak and negative relationship between role overload and employees' performance. Hence, there is no significant relationship between role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts of Lagos State.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis tested in this study indicated that there was no significant relationship between role ambiguity and employees' job performance. This suggests that unclear job roles do not necessarily hinder employees' effectiveness in the study area, as employees may still perform adequately despite experiencing some level of role uncertainty. This outcome implies that other factors, such as experience, supervision, or organisational support, may play a more dominant role in influencing job performance. This finding is consistent with the study of Amilin (2017), who found that role ambiguity had no significant influence on accountants' performance in public firms in Jakarta, Indonesia. The similarity in findings suggests that in certain work environments, employees may develop coping mechanisms or rely on other personal and organisational resources to maintain performance despite unclear role expectations. This result, however, contrasts with the findings of Adam, Alim, and Maulana (2020), who reported that role ambiguity had a negative and statistically significant effect on employee performance at Pelamonia Hospital in Makassar, Indonesia. Their study showed that unclear job roles and expectations reduce employees' effectiveness.

The result of the second tested hypothesis showed that role conflict and employees' job performance are not significantly related. This implies that the presence of conflicting job demands does not meaningfully influence how employees perform their duties. In other words, employees may still maintain their level of performance despite experiencing role conflict, suggesting that they are able to cope with or manage conflicting expectations in the workplace. This finding is consistent with the study by Saranani (2021), which reported that role conflict had an insignificant positive effect on employees' performance, indicating that role conflict did not significantly influence performance outcomes. The similarity in findings suggests that role conflict may not always be a strong predictor of employee performance, particularly in certain organisational contexts. The study further revealed that work stress had a significant negative effect on performance, highlighting that not all role-related stressors behave the same way. While role conflict may be manageable and less impactful, excessive work stress appears to have a more detrimental effect on employees' effectiveness. However, this finding is not consistent with the study by Rahayu and Hidayat (2021), which found that role conflict had a negative effect on employee performance. Their study further showed that job stress mediated the relationship between role conflict and performance, suggesting that role conflict may indirectly influence performance through increased stress levels. The difference in the findings may be attributed to the presence of mediating variables such as job stress, which were not considered in the present study. This implies that while role conflict may not directly affect job performance, it could have an indirect effect when combined.

The test of the third hypothesis showed that there was no significant relationship between role overload and employees' job performance, suggesting that excessive workload does not significantly influence how employees perform their duties in the study context. This implies that employees may be able to cope with high workload demands without a noticeable decline in their performance, possibly due to adaptive strategies or organisational support mechanisms. However, this finding is not consistent with the study by Iroegbu (2021) which found that role overload negatively affected job performance, as employees with higher levels of workload tended to perform less effectively. Similarly, Gahlan and Singh (2025) reported that role overload significantly influenced job performance among IT professionals, indicating that excessive workload and role demands can adversely affect employee productivity and

effectiveness. The disparity in findings may be attributed to differences in organisational context, nature of work, and individual coping capacities. It is also possible that moderating factors such as job design, availability of support systems, and employees' resilience play a role in determining whether role overload translates into reduced performance. Therefore, while role overload may not have shown a direct significant effect in this study, its impact on employees' job performance may vary depending on situational and organisational factors.

Conclusion

Role stressors have the tendency to affect the employees' job performance in any organisation, including schools. The indices of role stressors which may influence employees' job performance include role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. However, the role stressors may not affect employees' job performance if the employees are able to perform despite experiencing potential role-related pressures. This indicates that other organisational or personal factors, such as experience, supervision, motivation, or human capital management practices, may play a more decisive role in determining employees' performance in Education Districts. However, based on the findings of this study, it is pertinent to conclude that role stressors: role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and employees' job performance in Education Districts in Lagos State are not significantly related.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Permanent secretaries in each of the Education Districts should ensure that roles, responsibilities, and expectations for staff are clearly defined and communicated, including regular updates and standard operating procedures.
2. Management of each of the Education Districts should ensure that mechanisms for resolving conflicting responsibilities are implemented, such as clear reporting lines, priority-setting meetings, and conflict-resolution procedures.
3. Permanent secretaries in each of the Education Districts should ensure that workloads are monitored and tasks are allocated appropriately, with additional support or redistribution of duties provided to prevent employee overburdening.

References

- Adam, A., Alim, A., & Maulana, D. (2020). Effect of role ambiguity and fatigue on employee performance in Pelamonia Hospital, Makassar, Indonesia. *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 49(1), 203–205.
- Amilin, A. (2017). The impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on accountants' performance: The moderating effect of emotional quotient. *European Research Studies Journal*, 20(2A), 237-249.
- Andriani, D., & Disman, D. (2023). Effects of work overload and job stress on employee performance: Categorical moderation from polychronicity and work environment. *Journal of Indonesia Educational Research*, 9(4), 378–387.
- Carter, S., & Harper, G. (2016). Role clarity and employee performance in organisational settings. *Journal of Workplace Behaviour*, 11(3), 45–60.
- Gahlan, V. S., & Singh, K. (2014). The effect of role overload and role ambiguity on job performance of IT professionals in India. *IUP Journal of Management Research*, 13(3), 123-133.

- Goodman, S. A. & Svyantek, D. J. (1999). Person-organisation fit and contextual performance: Do shared values matter? *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 55(2), 254-275.
- Iroegbu, M. N. (2014). Impact of role overload on job performance among construction workers. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, 1(3), 83–86.
- Rahayu, M. K. P., & Hidayat, B. N. (2021). The job stress as a mediation between role conflict and employee performance. In *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2020–Accounting and Management (ICoSIAMS 2020)* (pp. 121–127). Atlantis Press.
- Rizzo, J., House, R. & Lirtzman, S. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organisations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15(2), 150-163.
- Saranani, F. (2015). Role conflict and stress effect on the performance of employees working in public works department. *The International Journal of Engineering and Science*, 4(6), 1–10.
- Siahaan, E., Gultom, P., & Lumbanraja, P. (2016). Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload on employee performance. *International Journal of Economic Research*, 13(2), 629–642.
- Tripathy, M. (2014). Task performance and its determinants in organizational settings. *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy*, 3(1), 112–118.
- Tubre, T. C., & Collins, J. M. (2000). Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload: A 21-year review of the consequences, antecedents, and moderators. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, 75(2), 150–178.