

Mediating Role of Burnout on the Relationship Between Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict and the Performance of Vice Principals

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Abstract

Studies in the literature have shown that the number of analyses on the effects of role ambiguity, role conflict, and burnout on employee job performance has been inconsistent and limited. Therefore, this study examines the mediating role of burnout on the relationship between role ambiguities, role conflict and vice principals performance. The population of the study were all vice principals serving in public schools of Niger North Senatorial District. Using a census sampling, 188 vice principals were considered the sample of the study. The study employed PLS-SEM 3 to run and analyze the data collected. The results showed that four out of five hypotheses were rejected. The direct effect of role conflict increases vice principal's performance while role ambiguity was found to decrease performance, and overall burnout increases their performance through its sub-dimensions, especially, EE and DP. Meanwhile, a significant mediating role of burnout was established in all the indirect relationship. It is concluded that vice principals faced competing demands both directly and indirectly; their responsibilities are clearly spelt out to them directly but due to certain interferences in the environment make their performances low. The Niger State Secondary Schools Board and Ministry of Education in general should note that the absence of ambiguity in secondary schools is a key element in achieving success; role ambiguity should be minimized through the establishment of procedures that will increase the effectiveness and well-being of vice principals.

Keywords: Burnout, Job performance, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict

Introduction

Job performance has become a matter of great concern among academicians, researchers, practitioners, and governments across the globe. The concept of employee job performance has been regarded as one of the most important and widely researched variables within the domain of work and organizational studies (Omar, Hussein, & Azli, 2016; Chiaburu, Oh, Wang, & Stoverink, 2017), this can be attributed to the role of employees as being imperative to the success of any organizational establishment (Steffens et al., 2014; Worlu

et al., 2016; Inuwa, 2016; Alessandri, Borgogni, & Latham, 2017). The desire of every organization is to get the best out of their employees because of the crucial role employee's play in the overall success of the organization (Ojokuku, 2013; Inuwa, 2016). As a dependent variable of this study, it is conceptualized as the level of commitment and effort of an employee in carrying out his responsibilities effectively and productively in order to fulfill the organization's stated goals.

In the literature, job performance has been categorized into task performance and contextual performance: task performance comprises of the behaviours that are directly or specifically related to the job tasks which can either contribute directly or indirectly to the core of an organization (Hararia *et al.*, 2016). For example, task performance for a vice principal includes assessing lesson notes, teaching, marking of examination scripts, conducting student's assessment, attending teachers meeting, and giving students feedbacks. Contextual performance is that aspect of an employee's performance that involves activities which are not directly or formally related to job tasks, but which solely contribute to the social and psychological core of an organization (Li, Sandvers, & Frankel, 2012). Examples of contextual performance within the context of secondary education includes re-writing a colleague's lesson notes and opening or using social media platform (whatsapp) to ease communication.

However, organizational, individuals, and environmental factors affect performance in schools. These factors influence performance levels in either positive or negative ways (Ericson & Lehmann, 2016). Job stress is considered one of these factors that impacts individuals directly; individuals display low performance under high stress or high performance under sufficient stress. Role ambiguity and role conflict are considered the two main components of role stress (Jackson & Schuller, 2017). Role ambiguity refers to a situation where there is a lack of necessary information for an organizational position, resulting in role dissatisfaction, anxiety, fear and hostility and lower performance. The existence of ambiguity with respect to objectives and poor communication of information affects employees' understanding of what they are expected to do, generates doubts about how to achieve their own performance objectives,

and creates uncertainty as to how their performance will be assessed, and what the consequences will be for completing or failing to complete their objectives (Rogalsky *et al.*, 2016; Urien *et al.*, 2017; Buil, Martinez, & Matute, 2019). Role conflict is the existence of two or more roles such that to manage one would make it difficult to manage the other (Kahn *et al.*, 1964). Role conflict occurs when employees are required to meet incompatible demands and expectations. In line with Karimi (2014) this study operationalized role conflict as a situation where an employee is placed on competing demands relating to their job or position at the same time.

Researchers have extensively investigated burnout to the effect that organizations globally are increasingly showing great concern. The World Health Organization (WHO) formalized researchers' conclusions that burnout is an occupational phenomenon caused by persistent stress in the workplace (Jone-Schenk, 2019). In the literature, stress is anything related to work that presents a threat to employees at the workplace; Bozkus (2018) affirmed that burnout is experienced more in professions that have intensive human relations. Kadiri & Akinmayowa (2015) posited that job stress would arise when there is a mismatch between the expectations or requirements of the job and resources available to meet these requirements or expectations. In a similar study, Jex (2017) posits that job stress arises when work demands threaten the well-being of employees. Celik (2013) argued that it is difficult to differentiate between burnout and stress since burnout is a multidimensional construct: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion occurs when individuals feel tense and frustrated due to their fears about meeting previous work performance.

Depersonalization arises when individuals do not want to work because they perceive interactions with tasks, clients, or co-workers as dehumanizing. Feelings of reduced personal accomplishment are the result of failures to meet one's desired goals (Albritton, 2020).

Quite a number of studies have confirmed that teaching is a stressful profession, for example, studies like Van der Maal, Oolbekkink-Marchand, Schaap, & Meijer (2019) and Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2015) noted that teaching was consistently identified as a highly stressful profession. When teachers experience high stress levels, the outcomes include lower quality instruction, negative teacher well-being and health, and eventually teacher attrition and burnout (Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, & van Veen, 2018). Moreover, teacher stress and poor well-being negatively affect student achievement (Arens & Morin, 2016; Collie & Martin, 2017; Klusmann, Richter, & Lüdtke, 2016).

In the light of the foregoing, role ambiguity and role conflict are considered issues that affect performance; since vice principals are expected to carry out a variety of responsibilities as principals and educators, it is predicted that they frequently experience role ambiguity and role conflict. For example, vice principals are expected to monitor teachers' movement, they experience shortage of teachers especially concerning English and Mathematics, they experience unnecessary interference from parent teachers associations, they have lingering poor relationship between them and other teachers as well as principals, they are challenged by inadequate instructional materials, and general financial resources to carry out their responsibilities amongst others.

Yurur and Keser, 2015; Leiter and Maslach (2009); found that burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between behavioural and psychological outcomes such as role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict), job satisfaction, and performance. Burnout is expected to transmit the effect of both role ambiguity and role conflict to an outcome variable (employee job performance), such that role ambiguity and role conflict causes burnout, and burnout causes vice principals performance. There have been a methodological gap in literatures which this study will address; however, there is also a dearth in studies researching how vice principals in secondary schools in Niger North Senatorial District are affected by this situation.

Review of Literature and Hypotheses Development

Employee Job Performance

The concept of employee job performance has been regarded as one of the most important and widely researched variables within the domain of work and organizational studies (Chao *et al.*, 2015; Díaz-Vilela *et al.*, 2015; Omar *et al.*, 2016; Chiaburu, 2017), this can be attributed to the role of employees as being imperative to the success of any organizational establishment (Steffens *et al.*, 2014; Worlu *et al.*, 2016; Inuwa, 2016; Alessandri *et al.*, 2017). The desire of every organization is to get the best out of their employees because of the crucial role employee's play in the overall success of the organization (Ojokuku, 2013; Inuwa, 2016). Job performance is also said to be behavioral, incidental, measurable and multi-dimensional concept (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015) and "very subjective depending on how, why and for whom it's being measured" (Shields *et al.*, 2016). This implies that it can be evaluated across the

sum of actions that employees have taken during a given time period.

Performance has been defined differently in different contexts. In management science, quite a number of studies have described job performance as the achievement of many results that employees want to achieve through a series of behaviours within a certain period of time under the guidelines of corporate goals (Ye, Lou & Tobias, 2023; Mengistu & Jinxing, 2020). In another study, job performance is viewed as the extent to which employees carry out their job obligations, responsibilities and expectations effectively and efficiently (Ericsson & Lehmann, 2016). As a dependent variable of this study, it is conceptualized as the level of commitment and effort of an employee in carrying out his responsibilities effectively and productively in order to fulfill the organization's stated goals.

A model of job performance was developed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) which categorises employee job performance into task performance and contextual performance: Task performance is also sometimes referred to as in-role performance. Task performance comprises of the behaviours that are directly or specifically related to the job tasks which can either contribute directly or indirectly to the core of an organization (Hararia *et al.*, 2016). For example, task performance for an academic employee includes planning and preparing lesson notes, teaching, marking of examination scripts, conducting student's assessment, attending teachers meeting, and giving students feedbacks. Contextual performance can also be referred to as extra role performance (De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2017). In other words, it refers to an employee simply going the extra-mile for their organization that is, voluntarily carrying out tasks outside their

formal job requirements but known to be beneficial to their organization. Examples of this include an employee working extra hours, making useful suggestions to improve one's school, relating with others courteously, offering help to colleagues when necessary (Bauwens *et al.*, 2017). This study focuses on task performance of vice principals as the work they had to perform that directly contribute to their schools' activities.

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is broadly considered to include uncertainties about role definition, expectations, responsibilities, tasks, and behaviors involved in one or more facets of the task environment (Schmidt, Kusserow & Rau, 2014; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Kahn *et al.* 1964). Role ambiguity is of two dimensions: objective and subjective components — Objective role ambiguity refers to external conditions in the individual's workplace environment, whereas subjective role ambiguity relates to the amount of ambiguity that the individual perceives in their workplace owing to the information gap that they face (Kahn *et al.* 1964).

Most studies in the 21st century, have explicitly described role ambiguity in an easy to understand ways. Role ambiguity, according to Rizwan *et al.* (2014) and Zhao & Rashid (2010) as a situation when someone does not have clarity on the authority and information about how to do or complete the work that has been assigned to them. In the same vein, Karimi (2014) states that role ambiguity is a factor that causes work stress, and so it occurs when expectations, goals, responsibilities have not been clearly designed for employees. Similarly, the research of Khuong and Yen (2016) and Baker and Demerouti (2017) supported Karimi (2014) to the effect that role ambiguity is one of the factors that

causes job demands; and this means stress. Role ambiguity refers to a situation where there is a lack of necessary information for an organizational position, resulting in role dissatisfaction, anxiety, fear and hostility and lower performance. The existence of ambiguity with respect to objectives and poor communication of information affects employees' understanding of what they are expected to do, generates doubts about how to achieve their own performance objectives, and creates uncertainty as to how their performance will be assessed, and what the consequences will be for completing or failing to complete their objectives (Rogalsky et al., 2016; Urien et al., 2017; Buil, Martinez, & Matute, 2019). In this paper, Karimi (2014) was adapted, hence, conceptualized as a situation where an employee is unclear about his role in the organization and lacks proper direction and information to perform his job adequately.

Statistical evidence has provided mixed results over a decade; Manas et al. (2018) noted that performance of employees is affected by role ambiguity. While substantial number of studies (such as Yesiltas, 2014; Davis & Stazyk, 2016; Merida-Lopez et al. 2017; Manas et al. 2018) reported negative and significant effect of role ambiguity on employee performance, other studies (e.g., Srikanth & Jomon, 2013; Diaz et al. 2020; Pervez et al. 2022) have found positive and significant relationship between role ambiguity and employee job performance. Hence the study formulated the following hypothesis based on these variations:

H0₁ Role ambiguity does not have significant effect on Employee job performance.

Role Conflict

Individuals in complex organizations are constantly exposed to a variety of expectations from both themselves and others as they carry out their organizational roles. Role conflict is a demonstration of the situation of a person's crisis. Role conflict is also called role stress by (Srivastav, 2010) and role strain by (Goode, 1960) caused by the role that individuals need to internalize in an organization.

There exists many definition of role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970; Rosse & Rosse, 1981; Drafte, 1998; Schafer, 1998; Rosen et al., 2010); the definition of role conflict was pioneered by Kahn et al. (1964); role conflict is the existence of two or more roles such that to manage one would make it difficult to manage the other. However, this study conceptualizes role conflict as the incompatibility between two or more job roles or responsibilities; this is in line with Bowling et al., (2017).

Kahn et al. (1964) and Hellriegel and Slocum, (1979) specified the concept of role conflict as divided into four (4) dimensions namely inter-role conflict, intra-role conflict, inter-sender conflict and intra-sender conflict. Inter-role conflict is a conflict between several roles for the same person and required different needs or behavioural incompatibilities or changes in behaviour as necessary in the situation (Kahn et al., 1964). This conflict occurred against incumbent because he felt he had to perform more than one task in the role system which caused role overload. Intra-role conflict is an incompatibility between anticipated expectations of incumbent and expectations related to his position (Gross et al., 1958). It was a conflict between standards or personal values of incumbent with himself alone in fulfilling his responsibility for a position or

role. Inter-sender conflict occurred when expectations and requests differs between role senders (Kahn et al., 1964). Some authors interpreted inter-sender conflict as situational conflict which happened when individual expectations and needs did not correlate with organizational needs (Gross et al. (1958). In the case of intra-sender conflict, it materialized when demands or directives from the top leaders for something to be executed within limited time or sources were not able to be implemented by middle leaders (Kahn et al., 1964).

Role conflict has also been examined by past studies in relation to employee job performance; it has been both negative and positive over time. Previous studies (e.g.Yeboah-Kordee et al. 2018; Ehsan & Ali, 2019; Kalyar et al. 2019; Pervez et al. 2022) have found negative relationship between role conflict and employee job performance. In negation to this, studies such as Al-Khasawnen and Futa (2013); Ali (2014) reported significant positive relationship between role conflict and employee job performance. This inconsistency has led to the formulation of this hypothesis:

H0₂: Role conflict does not have significant effect on Employee job performance.

Burnout

The term *burnout* was first coined by Freudenberger (1974) to explain a situation experienced by professionals, who appear to be exhausted or in a state of inability to perform tasks effectively or sometimes even to care for their clients. There exists series of definitions of burnout in the last three decades; for example, Freudenberger (1975) opine that burnout is a feeling of exhaustion due to excessive demands on energy; which manifests in different ways depending on the person. In 2019, World Health Organization

criticized the foregoing definition to the effect that it argued that burnout is a distinct syndrome, rather than a form of exhaustion. In a priori view, Maslach & Jackson (1981) described burnout as the physical and psychological reaction to overwhelming job stressors that occur when an employee cannot effectively deal with stress. Furthermore, burnout describes an individual employee's negative and extreme response to job stress (Maslach et al. 2001). Decades of research has indicated that if burnout is not addressed, it can result in serious psychological and physiological problems, such as, low job performance, increased absenteeism, depression, and high blood pressure (Traunmuller, Stefitz, Gaisbachgrabner, Hofmann, Roessler & Schwerdtfeger, 2019). In tight labor markets, burnout can also create increased turnover, as individuals seek out opportunities with other organizations to find relief from burnout in their current jobs (Chan, Wan, & Kuok, 2015). In addition to the consequences of burnout; it can negatively affect the output and productivity of individuals, teams, and entire organizations (Barkhuizen, Rothmann, & Van de Vijver, 2014) and in the same vein, it can impede performance at all organizational levels (Nazari, Jariani, Beiranvand, Saki, Aghajefi, & Ebrahimzadeh, 2016).

Celik (2013) argued that it is difficult to differentiate between burnout and stress since burnout is a multidimensional construct. In addition, Essiam, Mensah, Kudu, & Gyamfi (2015) explained that stress is the body's response to any change in the environment that needs mental or physical adjustments in order to work properly and productively. In a more recent study, Ahmad, Zahid, Wahid & Ali (2021) found out that stress arises as a result of economic growth, increase in employee's responsibilities at work, increase in advance

information technology. Quite a number of studies have indicated that burnout in teachers consists of three separate, yet related dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment (Jones-Schenk, 2019; Traunmüller et al., 2019; Dyrbye et al., 2018; Maslach, 2017).

Emotional exhaustion is the fundamental individual stress dimension of burnout, characterized by feelings of emotional and physical depletion, and overextension. In other words, a prolonged workplace stress caused by several actors can lead to emotional exhaustion (Maslach, 2017). In addition, exhaustion is the most reported and studied component of burnout, characterized by a sense of physical or emotional weariness (Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Depersonalization describes detachment from one's work and co-workers, along with a sense of cynicism and disconnect. It also results in cognitive distancing when workers become indifferent or cynical because of emotional exhaustion; and distancing is often a direct reaction to exhaustion, indicating a clear relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach et al., 2001). Lack of personal accomplishment, or inefficacy, characterizes the self-appraisal dimension of burnout, described as feelings of ineptitude, lack of achievement, and low levels of productivity on the job. The inefficacy component of burnout manifests in feelings of lacking the ability to complete job tasks or experiencing a lack of fulfillment from one's work. A reduced sense of personal accomplishment can impede job effectiveness and motivation, hindering individuals' work performance (Maslach et al., 2001).

Sa'ad, Daud, and Mohamad (2018) investigated the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction among school teachers in secondary schools. 125 teachers

were used as sample and regression was employed for the analysis; the result found a moderate significant relationship between the level of role conflict and job satisfaction among the school teachers. In the study of Ahmad, Zahid, Walid and Ali (2021), 200 questionnaire was distributed and 175 was analyzed using statistical correlation and regression; the findings indicated that role ambiguity has a negative relationship with job satisfaction as well as Islamic work ethics has a negative impact on job stress. Empirical studies concerning mediating effect of burnout on the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict and performance was inconsistent. Celik (2013) found that when the three sub-dimensions of burnout were analyzed; they were insufficiently influential. Emotional exhaustion (EE) fully mediates performance while personal accomplishment (PA) partially mediates performance and Depersonalization was excluded for lack of correlation. Some studies have found out that RA and RC affects the sub-dimensions of burnout negatively. Karatepe and Uludag, (2008), Hsieh and Hsieh, (2003) indicated that RC and RA increased EE and DP. Similarly, Sabuncuoglu (2008) stated that RA affects three dimensions of burnout. Hence, the study formulated the following hypothesis:

H0₃: Burnout does not have significant effect on Employee job performance

H0₄: Burnout does not mediate the relationship between RA and Employee job performance

H0₅: Burnout does not mediate the relationship between RC and Employee job performance.

Organizational Role Theory (ORT)

Organizational Role Theory (ORT), developed in the 1960s, offers a foundational understanding of how roles

within organizations impact the physical and emotional states of individuals, influencing their workplace behaviour and, consequently, their performance (Kahn et al., 1964). Despite its historical roots, ORT remains relevant in contemporary organizational contexts, where the complexity of roles has evolved. Organizational Role Theory offers a comprehensive framework for studying roles within organizations. By exploring individual behaviours, organizational context, and interactions between defined roles; ORT provides a basis for examining how roles can be a source of stress and how they interact. Concepts such as role integration, conflict, and ambiguity further contribute to explaining the dynamics of roles within organizations. This theoretical framework serves as the underpinning theory for investigating role ambiguity, role conflict, and burnout in predicting performance in this study.

Additionally, concepts like role conflict and role ambiguity contribute to understanding role interaction, providing insights into how individuals experience stress and dissatisfaction when facing competing or unclear expectations (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). This study is closely aligned with ORT as it provides a basis for examining how roles of vice principals can be a source of stress and how they can interact.

Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey design; a cross sectional study is a one-off study that gathers data just once upon a time (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Besides, a survey method is employed when a researcher is intending to evaluate opinions and thoughts on a given phenomenon by gathering quantitative data

from the respondents who are representative of the target population (Odoh & Ihedigbo, 2014). Data was collected from a population of 188 vice principals by census method because the population is small and who are working in Niger North Senatorial District of Niger State using self-administered questionnaire. Vice principals are assumed to practically carry out most functions academically and administratively. So also, census method is employed because all the vice principals form the population and were used for analysis. The district is composed of two Emirate Councils and eight local government areas. The main reason for choosing the senatorial district was not by priority but rather because of accessibility, convenience, and homogeneity.

Instruments

The instrument for measuring Employee Job Performance (EJP) was adapted from Koopmans (2015) with 5 items; Role Ambiguity (RA) and Role Conflict (RC) from Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, (1970) with 5 items and in measuring burnout, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson, (1981) was adapted. The questionnaire consisted of 15 statements measuring three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment; each with 5 items. All questions were in close ended form and responses were on a 5 point likert scale, thus: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) as recommended by (Joshi, Kale & Pal, 2015).

Technique of Data Analysis

This study employed the use of Smart PLS 3 in order to compute the two primary model

of PLS path modeling: measurement model and structural model based on the recommendation of (Hair et al., 2017, Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The main objectives for the use of PLS are: it places a very stretchy control in respect of distribution and population of the study (Benitez, Henseler, Castillo, & Schuberth, 2020). It also has the possibility of providing further reliable and accurate calculations of mediating roles because its accounts for error that is capable of lessening the possible relationship as well as the increase of the validation of the theory as stated in (Chin, Cheah, Liu, Ting, Lim, & Cham, 2020).

Results and Discussion of Findings:

PLS Path Model Assessment

Prior to the analysis, normality and multicollinearity assumptions were met based on (Hair et al., 2017) recommendations. Subsequently, after satisfying all criteria, the data collected were further evaluated using SmartPLS3 software for partial least squares path modeling; a statistical process designed to estimate the causative network between two or more constructs and is defined in terms of a

theoretical framework as stated in (Vinzi et al., 2010). To confirm and evaluate the model adopted for this study, Hair et al., (2017) recommended a two-stage assessment: measurement models (external assessment models) and structural models (internal assessment models) respectively.

Assessment of Measurement Model (Outer model)

This section assessed the reliability and validity of the model; as presented in Table 4.1, the reliability analysis has been achieved for all constructs as represented by Composite Reliability, Cronbach's alpha, are all above the threshold of 0.70 for all variables as recommended in (Henseler et al., 2009). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) that represents the convergent validity of the constructs is also achieved. This is also evident in Table 4.1 which indicated values above the threshold of 0.50 as recommended in (Hair et al. (2017) and thus indicates that each of these constructs explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators (Hair et al., 2017). On the other hand, to ascertain the discriminant validity of all the constructs, the square root of AVE of each variable should be higher than its correlations with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.1: Measurement Model (Reliability and Convergent Validity)

Constructs	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Employee job performance	EJP	0.905	0.930	0.725
Role Ambiguity	RA	0.857	0.898	0.689
Role Conflict	RC	0.879	0.912	0.674
Burnout	BT	0.796	0.905	0.701

Source: Smart PLS version 3.2.8

Finally, all constructs were reliable because their respective composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values were above the

threshold of .70. In addition, all constructs had indicator reliability and convergence

validity because the AVE level of each construct is higher than .50.

Likewise all the constructs of this study have discriminant validity as the square roots of their respective AVEs are above their correlation with any other construct. In essence, each of the latent constructs of this study is distinctively different from one another as none of them is highly correlated

with the other. More importantly, each of the said constructs are unique and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. As shown in Table 4.2, the diagonal bolded values represent the square root of AVE, which is above the correlation of any reflective variable with one another. This clearly indicates the distinctiveness of each of these constructs.

Table 4.2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant validity

Constructs	EJP	RA	RC
Employee job performance	0.85		
Role Ambiguity	0.34	0.83	
Role Conflict	0.72	0.19	0.82

Source: SmartPLS version 3.2.8

Note: Diagonal elements (**figure in bold**) are the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) shared between the constructs and their measures. Off diagonal elements are the correlations among the construct.

Assessment of Structural Model (Inner model)

Haven achieved the assessment of measurement model conditions; the next is structural model assessment. The first part of the structural model evaluation involved

the analysis of theoretical relationships. Precisely, standard bootstrap was adopted on a sampled case of 188 using 5,000 bootstrap samples to assess the importance of path coefficients for the relationships in line with the recommendation of (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4.3: Results of Structural Model

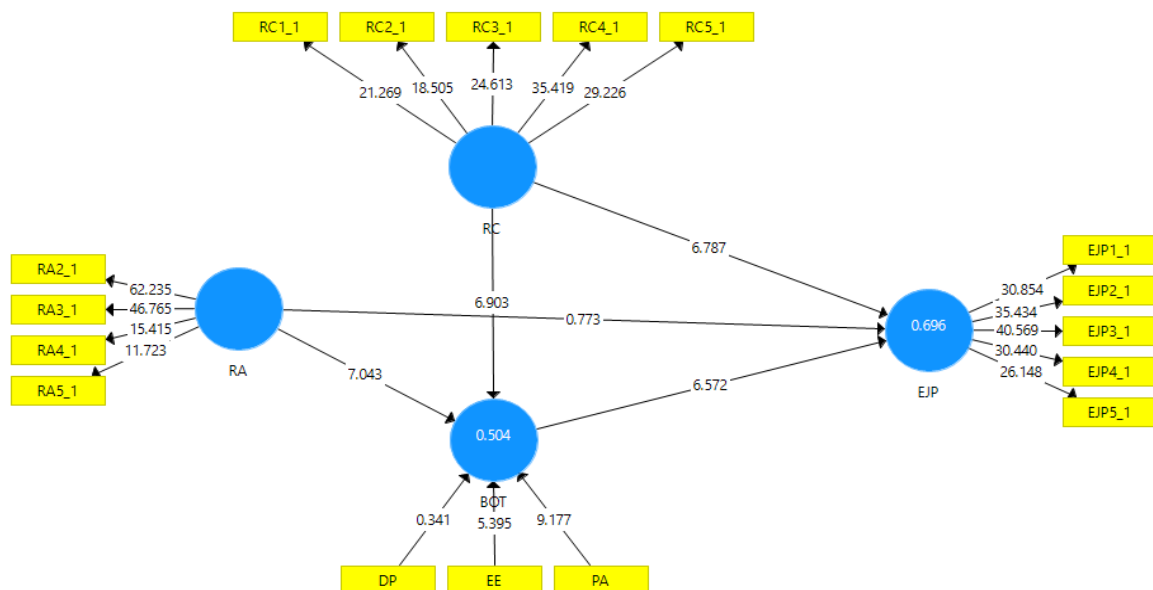
Relationship	β Values	Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
BOT -> EJP	0.53	0.52	0.08	6.76	0.00	Rejected H0 ₃
RA -> EJP	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.80	0.43	Fail to reject H0₁
RC -> EJP	0.46	0.46	0.07	6.65	0.00	Rejected H0 ₂
RA -> BOT -> EJP	0.27	0.26	0.05	5.74	0.00	Rejected H0 ₄
RC -> BOT -> EJP	0.22	0.22	0.04	4.97	0.00	Rejected H0 ₅

**p < 0.05, Hypotheses 1-3: IV-DV relationships, Hypotheses 4&5: Mediating relationships, SE: Standard error

The bootstrapping result in Table 4.3 shows that all the direct and indirect relationships were significant except RA → EJP. Precisely, BOT → EJP was significantly related ($t = 6.76$, $p < .05$), RC was also significantly related with EJP ($t = 6.65$, $p < .05$). In addition, results also shows mediating relationship of BOT; where RA → BOT → EJP ($t = 5.74$, $p < .05$),

furthermore, RC → BOT → EJP ($t = 4.97$, $p < .05$). However, an insignificant but positive relationship was found between RA → EJP ($t = 0.80$, $p = 0.43 > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. Table 4.3 results are represented graphically in Figure 1, where the T-values are expressed on the lines between the independent variables and dependent variable.

Figure 1: Structural model



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Table 4.4: Bootstrapped Confidence Interval

Relationship	Bêta value	Sample Mean (M)	Lower Limit (2.5%)	Upper Limit (97.5%)
RA -> BOT -> EJP	0.266	0.259	0.175	0.348
RC -> BOT -> EJP	0.220	0.224	0.139	0.315

Hypothesis is Rejected, when there is no zero between lower and upper limits, LL: Lower limit, UL: Upper limit, SE: Standard error

On the mediating relationships, all the mediation relationships are significant based on path coefficients (Beta), T-statistics (t-value), and their respective p-values. Nevertheless, the hypotheses may only be rejected when there is no zero between Lower Limit (LL) and Upper Limit (UL) of the confidence interval, which relies on bootstrapping standard error in accordance with (Hair et al., 2017). However, as shown in Table 4.4, there is no zero (i.e., when the lower limit has a negative and the upper bound have a positive sign) between any of the confidence intervals of each of the relationships. Hence, all hypothesized relationships on the mediating effect of BOT on the relationship between independent variables (i.e., RA and RC) and vice principal's performance are therefore rejected empirically. In addition, indices such as effect size, model fit, predictive power, IPMA, etc have met acceptable limits.

Discussion of findings

This study investigated the mediating role of burnout on the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict and the performance of vice principals in North Central Senatorial District of Niger State. The study was underpinned by organizational role theory (ORT) developed by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964).

However, the statistical analysis of this study established the practical validation of the effects of role ambiguity on employee job performance, and role conflict, burnout and vice principals performance. The direct relationship did not provide evidence of empirical relationship between role ambiguity and vice principals performance; this means role ambiguity decreases performance directly.

In the indirect relationship, the effect of role ambiguity and role conflict was transmitted by burnout; hence, it increases performance indirectly. This was not contrary to our expectation that Burnout mediated the relationship between Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict with the performance of vice principals.

Nevertheless, the results is not surprising as some number of preceding studies found that Role conflict is significantly related to Employee job performance (e.g. Yeboah-Kordee et al. 2018; Ehsan & Ali, 2019; Kalyar et al. 2019; Pervez et al. 2022) among others . Additionally studies have also provided evidence that Role ambiguity is not positively connected to employee job performance (e.g., Srikanth & Jomon, 2013; Diaz et al. 2020; Pervez et al. 2022) among others. Even though the mediating role of Burnout is linking Role conflict and Role conflict with vice principals performance is

rare in the extant literatures, studies have provided a good evidence that the Burnout dimensions significantly relate to vice principal's performance (Celik, 2013; Sabuncuoglu, 2008) among others.

Conclusion and recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, it is concluded that Role conflict significantly affect the performance of vice principals directly and indirectly through Burnout dimensions; however, Role ambiguity does not significantly affect their performance directly but indirectly related to their performance through the burnout dimensions. Even though some of the relationship was not previously established, the results support previous research about the relationships in our model. For example, direct relationships between RC and EJP, BOT and EJP, were established previously by (Ehsan & Ali, 2019; Kalyar et al. 2019; Pervez et al. 2022) among others. It also shows that apart from having direct relationship, Burnout mediates the relationship between RA and RC with EJP. This indicates that the association between RA and RC with performance of vice principals is best understood through Burnout dimensions (Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment). Hence the study answers the questions and proves that if vice principals are affected by role ambiguity and role conflict; their performance will be low. However with regards to role ambiguity relationship with vice principal's performance; this study failed to provide substantial answer to the question, this may perhaps be due to the environment in which vice principals experience role ambiguity

creates uncertainty in decision making, and vice principals spend more effort and time gaining approval from principals and others. This might decrease performance.

Therefore, it can be recommended that role ambiguity should be minimized through the establishment of procedures that will increase the effectiveness and well-being of vice principals. It is equally necessary to determine the roles, mission, authority, and responsibilities of vice principals more exactly, as this might prevent them from experiencing role conflict i.e. increasing performance.

Implication of the Study

Theoretically, the study made a fundamental contribution by examining the mediating role of burnout on the relationship between role ambiguities, role conflict and vice principals performance. Though; this study provides no evidence of direct relationship between Role ambiguity with vice principals performance, however study provides evidences of indirect relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict, and vice principals performance through burnout dimensions. Hence, we recommend the use of longitudinal research to investigate organizational stressors such as role ambiguity and role conflict using a moderator for a more robust result.

Practically, the study confirms the relative importance of each component of role ambiguity and role conflict in the performance model; since vice principals are expected to carry out multifaceted responsibilities as principals and educators, it is predicted that they frequently experience role ambiguity and role

conflict. The study further confirmed that burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between behavioural and psychological outcomes such as role ambiguity and role conflict. This study recommended that other researchers should employ these hypotheses with other antecedents of employee job performance for further proof. The Niger State Secondary Schools Board and Ministry of Education in general should note that the absence of ambiguity in secondary schools is a key element in achieving success.

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