

# GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM



The Impact of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity on Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service: A study of selected Metropolitan/Municipal/District Education Directorates in the Greater Accra Region.

By

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(M.A. IN PUBLIC RELATIONS)

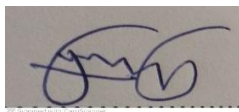
A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Ghana Institute of Journalism  
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Public Relations.

December, 2021

## DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

### STUDENT

I hereby declare that this project work was carried out by me and attributes to reference materials or documents have been duly acknowledged. No part of this study has been presented here or elsewhere for an award.



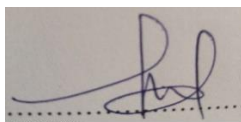
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### SUPERVISOR

I hereby declare that the preparation of this project work has been supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.



DECEMBER 10, 2021

ALBERT ANANI-BOSSMAN (PhD.)

DATE

DEDICATION

This is for you,

**WOEDEM and WOENAM**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THIS, this is the God I adore,  
My faithful, unchangeable Friend;  
Whose love is as great as his power,  
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide me safe home;  
I'll praise him for all that is past,  
And trust him for all that's to come

(Charles Wesley)

I owe the success of this study to my supervisor, Dr. Albert Anani-Bossman. Your constructive criticism, corrections, suggestions, encouragement and above all exceptional human relations gave birth to this study. Thank you.

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Tali, Delali, Edem and Selorm, I did not give up because I had your shoulders. Indeed, Let Love Lead.

Edwin and Dominic, I am humbled by your support.

Thank you to all who contributed in diverse ways towards the success of this study. May God replenish your efforts in thousand folds.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>GES:</b>	Ghana Education Service
<b>MMDs:</b>	Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts
<b>PR:</b>	Public Relations
<b>PRO:</b>	Public Relations Officer
<b>PROs:</b>	Public Relations Officers

## **ABSTRACT**

There are several factors that affect employee performance in a working environment. These factors can have a positive or negative impact on the overall performance of an organisation. The factors may include remuneration, flexible or rigid work arrangement, organisational structure, working conditions and assignment of roles or duties to employees.

This study sought to investigate the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on Public Relations Officers in the Ghana Education Service.

It was guided by three objectives first of which was to identify and examine the roles and functions of Public Relations Officers in the Ghana Education Service. Secondly, to determine whether Public Relations Officers are faced with issues of role conflict and role ambiguity in Ghana Education Service and finally to examine how role conflict and ambiguity affect the work of Public Relations Officers in the Ghana Education Service.

The study was a quantitative research and as such, a survey was conducted. Data was collected from Public Relations Officers of the Ghana Education Service in the Greater Accra Region using a simple random sampling method. The data was treated and analyzed in line with the objectives of the study.

The findings of the study revealed that role conflicts were more prevalent in the PR practice of the Ghana Education Service than role ambiguity. For instance, majority of the PROs indicated that though they have specified roles, these roles are performed in different ways and that there are some rules and policies that have conflicted with the roles they are supposed to perform.

The study recommends that the Ghana Education Service should take necessary steps to ensure uniformity and consistency in the performance of roles of the Public Relations Officers to avert increased incidents of role conflicts.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0. Introduction**

This chapter gives a background to the research problem and lays bare the contending issues in the problem statement. Additionally, it states the research questions, objectives, scope, rationale, hypothesis and organization of the study.

### **1.1. Background to the Study**

The practice of Public Relations has become an important tool used by organizations across the world for the management of communication within an organization and with its publics. Seitel, (2007) defined Public Relations as a “distinctive management function” that is used to establish and maintain mutual communications, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics. Seitel’s definition gives the functions of Public Relations as a communication tool and a mutual activity involving an organization and its publics.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) argued that the relationship between organizations and publics have consequences on each other. The effective use of Public Relations can therefore provide value to an organization by identifying its strategic publics and maintaining a mutual relationship with them. Also, according to Wu and Baah-Boakye (2008) Public Relations is a strategic management function that is essential and can help African corporations respond to economic, social and political changes, changes in information technology and social institutions.

According to Amabile et al. (1996), there are several work environment factors that either enhance or reduce the motivation of employees, thus increasing or decreasing their performance. Increasing emphasis on organizational change, flexible work arrangements, employee empowerment, and autonomous working conditions has led to constantly changing job specifications and role uncertainties. Role conflict and role ambiguity are therefore listed among the antecedents of work stress as cited in research literature (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983), and they remained challenging issues in many western organizations. African organizations are not insulated from these issues. In some organizations in Ghana for instance, Public Relations is not properly placed on the organizational structure. The wrong placement of public relations on such organizational structures creates challenges for the PR practitioners.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Bernays (1952) suggested that, even though Public Relations has been practiced for a long time, it has existed as an industry for “relatively a short length of time”; and ever since, practitioners have tried to establish a professional status comparable to other professions. Gillian Hogg and Denis Doolan (1997) argued that, a principal way of assessing progress and performance towards attaining professional status is by “studying and analyzing how its function is perceived, what practitioners do and what influence they have within organizations”. Role ambiguity and role conflict have significant direct and indirect effects on job performance of employees, (Kazim, 2013). Omondi (2006) observed that, government ministries and departments with defined Public Relations roles help practitioners to deploy effective Public Relations activities that positively impact the image of the ministries and departments.

Flowing from the above arguments and assertions, the wrong placement of Public Relations in an organization could create role conflict and role ambiguity challenges for practitioners. Dhurup and Mahomed (2011) observed same as they claimed significant negative relationships between the measures of role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload and job satisfaction; and argued that, high levels of role ambiguity, role conflict and work overload are predictors of low levels of job satisfaction and performance. Addressing these challenges require empirical evidence. It is therefore worth it to research into how role conflict and role ambiguity manifest itself and affect Public Relations practitioners in Ghana using Education Service.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

- ✓ Identify and examine the roles and functions of Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service.
- ✓ Determine whether Public Relations Officers are faced with issues of role conflict and role ambiguity in Ghana Education Service.
- ✓ Examine how role conflict and ambiguity affect the work of Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

- ✓ What are the roles and functions of Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service?
- ✓ Are Public Relations Officers faced with role conflict and role ambiguity in Ghana Education Service?
- ✓ How does role conflict and role ambiguity affect the work of Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service?

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The study covered incidents of role conflict and role ambiguity as they relate to Public Relations Officers in Ghana Education Service using the case of 29 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Education Directorates in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, and assessed how these phenomena impact the performance of the officers.

### **1.6. Rationale for the Study**

The study contributes to discussions and ongoing debates on the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on the performance of Public Relations practitioners. The findings will provide basis for stakeholders to review roles and functions of practitioners in order that the challenges as will be established by the study will be addressed.

### **1.7. Organization of the Study**

The research report is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides detail information on background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope and organization of the study as well as the limitations of the study. Chapter two reviews existing literature on the subject and also discusses the theoretical frame work within which the research fits. This is done to ensure that the research fills an existing gap rather than duplicating an existing knowledge on the subject. The third chapter discusses the methodology that is used in the study. Under this, the research's design, population, sample and techniques that are used in selecting the sample has thoroughly been discussed. Also in this chapter the sources of data that is used in the research, the procedure(s) that is used to collect the data and how the data is analyzed.

Chapter four presents and analyzes the findings while the last chapter, chapter five discusses the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations on how to address the challenges identified.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

The study was an exploratory one that sought to examine the effect of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service. However, the study suffered from the following limitations;

- i. The first inhibiting factor was the rise in cases of the Covid-19 pandemic, making it a little difficult to reach respondents, hence the use of a smaller sample size.
- ii. The study failed to use a larger sample size due to financial and time constraints. The time frame for the study was the limiting factor to the scope of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO (2)**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on an examination of important literature that are in tune with the assessment of the impact of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance of organizations and individuals. It starts with an analysis of the theoretical framework of the study where the organizational theory and the occupational stress theory are chosen to undergird the study. The literature review focuses its lens on an examination of some concepts in relation to the study such as the concept of role, role ambiguity and role conflict. The review is tailored towards assessing how role ambiguity and role conflicts affects the performance of individuals and organizations with a focus on conceptual, theoretical and empirical implications.

#### **2.1 Theoretical framework of the study.**

The study is guided by the following theories.

- i. Organizational role theory
- ii. The theory of occupational stress

##### **2.1.1 Organizational Role Theory.**

The theory is attributed to Kahn et al (1964). The theory argues that, there are rules regarding how individual employees interrelate and cooperate within organizations. The theory has gained social currency based on its application in business settings and among psychologists and sociologists interested in organizational theory.

The theory argues that, organizations are collections of people who are mandated to fulfil some roles in order to aid in the achievement and realization of the organization's goals. However,

what makes one organization distinctly different from another one is its boundaries that are determined by the patterns of relationships and interactions constantly carried out within the organization resulting in the transformation of input into output (Kahn et al, 1964). The authors refer to an organization as an “open system of roles” where there are sequential sets of activities that are all directed and steered towards the attainment of the organizational goals (Kahn et al, 1964). Therefore, the relationships that exist between the individuals in an organization are determined by the various roles that they perform or play, and that are expected of them. The theory is concerned with the role of formal organizations and how individuals within these organizations contribute by virtue of the roles that they perform.

The characterization of organizations as role systems implies that, the organization is dependent on the interactions between its constituent members. Kahn et al (1964) aver that, these interactions can pave way for the prevalence of role conflict and role ambiguity which have been argued to have some negative effect and consequences on overall organizational performance as well as outcomes.

Behaviours in organizations tend to be guided by the various social interactions that occur due to the embodiment of roles of constituent members as well as the norms that prescribe and at the same time sanction these behaviours, and the values that serves as the foundation within which the norms are embedded (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Rizzo et al (1970) argue that, classical organizational theories have called for a definition of the roles that every member of the organization is expected to play and the communication of these by role senders. Kahn et al (1964) explain that, role senders are the individuals within the organizations that communicate the expectations of specific roles to a focal person, mostly an employee who is supposed to receive the guided expectations from the role sender.

This theory is relevant to this study because, the communication of the roles, as well as expectations of these roles as well as modes of assessment between the role senders and the focal persons can result in role conflicts and role ambiguity, when not effectively done. Hence, this theory will help explain the relationship between the effective communication of roles and the understood nature and efficient performance of these roles as a means of evaluating the cause of role ambiguity and role conflicts.

### **2.1.2 Theory of Occupational Stress.**

The theory of occupational stress has been attributed to Karasek (1979) who advanced a job demand-control-support model (JDACS) that sought to describe occupational stress. The JDACS model consist of two main dimensions namely demand and control. While the demand dimension refers to the qualities that employees should have in the workplace such as the amount of work and required skills, the control dimension refers to the general expectations that employees should be in the right positions to have an idea as well as make efficient decisions about different aspects of their work such as time, method and location (Brough and Williams, 2007; Panari et al., 2010). Rodwell et al. (2011) portends that, the model was supposed to have a third dimension known as the support system, which is the preserve of the organization or a known supervisor.

Broadly speaking, the theory or organizational stress and the JDACS model postulates that, the strain on employees will be aggravated with an increase in the demands of the job with a corresponding decreased control. Mansell and Brough (2005) argue that employees who perceive of their roles as having high demands while possessing inadequate control of the situation tend to suffer negative outcomes like low performance and general dissatisfaction.

Previous studies that have used the model as a way to understand the causes of occupational stress in organizations such as Rosen et al (2010) have unearthed that, role overload, role

conflicts and role ambiguity are causative factors. Rosen et al. (2010) argues that, role conflicts manifests itself in the form of incompatibility between the requirements and expectations that employees receive from their supervisors while role ambiguity manifests itself when the expectations, objectives and responsibilities in relation to the role are not clearly designed for comprehension by employees. Role conflict and role ambiguity are factors that are likely to lead to work stress.

Based on the above analysis, there is a relationship between role conflict and work stress, as well as between role ambiguity and work stress, making the model best suited for this study. While the organizational theory extends the understanding of role conflicts and role ambiguity, the occupational stress theory helps to gain an insight into the effect of these variables on job performance. It has already been argued that, work stress is dysfunctional to the realization of organizational outcomes. The study would serve as an empirical case to establish a direct linkage between role ambiguity and role conflict and work stress as well as organizational performance.

## **2.2 Defining Roles.**

House and Rizzo (1972) argue that, roles are significant because they are positions within organizational structures in firms that have distinct and specified sets of tasks and responsibilities. Ilge and Hollenbeck (1990) alternatively submit that, roles are socially constructed units of the appropriate expectations of a person who has a particular position within an organization or team. Rogers and Molnar (1976) however contend that, people who occupy specific positions have particular roles are tailored for that position. However, changing organizational and environmental circumstances can cause roles to undergo some mutations and changes that are required to make the organization in tune with the occurring changes. Kahn et al. (1964) argues that, in this regard, the boundaries with regards to roles are not well

defined by both management and employers, resulting in a situation where some of these employees have to define their own roles in the organizations they work in.

Roles are very important parts of an employee's function within organizations as it speaks to the expectations of employees as well as what they expect of each other in tandem with their duties, functions and activities in the organization. Role play a significant function in providing clear distinct definitions with regards to the contributions of individuals within groups. Hollen and Ilgen (1991) argue that roles are behaviours that are expected while Beena (1999) contends that, the concept of roles connotes expectations of a behaviour in relation to a particular position in an organized social structure.

The perspective by Hartenian et al. (2011) is focused on the point of view, where roles are seen as the expectations that employees have of each other in the organization. Following this perspective, roles can be understood in two ways. First, as expectations that one has about their social behaviour and secondly, as functions or positions. Within the organizational context, the first dichotomy of roles refers to the expectations that employees have of each other and may encapsulate expectations from peers, supervisors and managers. The second categorization as portended by Harteniam et al. (2011) refers to the functions that employees perform in an organization by virtue of their positions. This is keenly buttressed by Malik and Waheed (2010), who in addition, stress on the perspective that, roles can also be conceptualized as a combination of different tasks that are assigned to employees who are expected to perform these tasks in a bid to ensure the realization of the organization's expectations, goals and aspirations.

Beena (1999) distinguished between three types of roles, namely the expected roles which refer to the expectations of others from the employee, the perceived role which refers to what the employee believes is expected of him or her, and the actual role which refers to the definitive

role or behaviour of the employee in the organization. Individuals have the propensity to fill these kinds of roles, and for that matter, there is an interdependence that exist between the stated roles, such that, they are all necessary to guarantee the success of the organization. However, a misunderstanding between the expected roles and perceived role can result in role ambiguity, which refers to a lack of clarity of the actual roles that the employee is supposed to perform., while a situation where the perceived role differs from the enacted roles, the employee or individual may suffer from a situation known as role conflict (Hartenian et al., 2011).

Caldwell (2003) argues that, a deficiency in role clarity can be a potential hindrance to the success of organizations. This is because, as established earlier, changes or misunderstandings in roles can result in role conflict and role ambiguity making the management of human resources very difficult.

### **2.3 Understanding Role Conflicts.**

Conflicts are often inevitable products of human interactions and incompatibility. Katz and Kahn (1996:184) refer to role conflicts as the “the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other”. This implies that, role conflict occurs when the responsibilities that have been assigned to a role holder conflict with each other. This could stem from conflicting supervision and guidance for a specific role, or guidance received from several people. Rizzo et al (1970) conceptualizes role conflict as the contradictory roles that are carried by individuals in an organization. Centuran et al. (2017) explained role conflict as a situation where an individual cannot understand what their role is and have mixed interpretations and sentiments due to their inability to meet the expectations of their related role or position.

Omyenah (2008) offers some clarity, arguing that, situationally, role conflicts result in desired results delayed and in worst instances, not achieved, when an individual like a sales person believes that their role expectations from their bosses or supervisors are in contradiction with the expectations from the customers. This implies that, significant differences between role expectations can result in role conflict, where the individual cannot prioritize (Tarrant & Sabo, 2010). Palomino and Frezatti (2016) opine that, situations of role conflict also emanate from instances where employees entertain the perception that the performance of their roles will be examined differently among more than one role expectation, with evaluation coming from different supervisors who have different expectations and requirements.

On discussing the emotional tangent, Cooper et al (2001) refers to role conflict as conflicts that reflects the demands on individuals that are incompatible and results in a negative emotional reaction due to the perceived inability and ineffectiveness in the performance of the job. Johnson (2003) argues that, role conflicts can occur as a result of the individual or employee is expected to undertake duties that he or she considers as not being part of their roles. Johnson (2003) adds that, role conflicts can stem from expectations to perform roles that are incompatible with the personal values, beliefs, or when there is insufficient time allocated for the performance of that role. Beena (1999) offers a somewhat holistic perspective of role conflicts by defining it as the perceived and experienced incompatibility of the expectations of the roles assigned to individuals in organizations, the competing expectations and the demands linked with the role.

In a broad stroke, role conflicts occur in organizations where individuals are required to perform tasks that are incongruent with their expertise, interests, goals, values. It also occurs when there is a considerable mismatch between the expectations of the roles and what the organization demands from the employees or workers. This is in tandem with the intimations of Kahn et al (1964) who argue that, role conflicts are simultaneous occurrence of two or more

sets of pressures that makes it difficult to ensure compliance with one, making it even more difficult to comply with the pressures of the other. Therefore, the absence of factors such as an established differentiation of roles assigned to each worker or employee, congruence of roles with other roles and consistency in the performance of a given set of roles contribute to the creation of role conflicts among employees.

The conceptualizations by Kahn et al (1964) and Pandey and Kumar (1997) results in four broad categorizations of role conflicts.

i. Intra-sender Conflict:

This mostly occurs when role receivers are observed to be performing contradictory and inconsistent roles as instructed by a role sender.

ii. Inter-sender Conflict:

This occurs when a role receiver receives incongruent and inconsistent demands from two different senders.

iii. Inter-role Conflict:

This type of role conflicts stems from a situation where an individual occupies two or more roles with inconsistent expectations.

iv. Intra-role Conflict:

This occurs when what is required of a role occupant are inconsistent and incongruent with the values, attitudes, values and professional behaviour of the role occupant.

## **2.4 Understanding Role Ambiguity.**

Rizzo et al (1970) define role ambiguity as the lack or deficiency of clarity of plans and goals, as well as the uncertainty about the authority or knowledge on how to perform assigned jobs

or roles. This translates into the inability of an individual to have a clear comprehension of expectations in the fulfilment of their role requirements. It also has to do with the feeling of unsupported due to a lack of information considered necessary in the performance of a job or role. Sinha and Subraimanian (2012) intimate that, role ambiguity refers to the degree of uncertainty that is perceived in the performance and the accomplishment of roles, as well as the absence of predictability about the results of the said role. Onyemah (2008) also buttresses that role ambiguity pertains to the uncertainty about what members of a particular role set expects of an employee or individual. Onyemah (2008) emphasizes this by explaining that, hesitance felt by sales persons about the expectations of their executives, customers and friends, there are likely to be confronted with the dilemma of role ambiguity. To Shoemaker (1999), role uncertainty means the direct opposite of role clarity. The encapsulation of role ambiguity as uncertainty regarding the roles of individuals has been trumpeted by several other authors and researchers such as Madera et al. (2013), Amyx et al. (2014) and Karacaoglu and Cetin (2015), among others.

However, Hartenian et al. (2011) aver that, role ambiguity can also be conceptualized to mean the difference between the expected and perceived roles, which also translates into what the aforementioned scholars have described as absence of clarity. Rizzo et al. (1970) conceptualize role clarity to mean the extent to which the individuals or employees know and understand the various expectations associated with their performance of a particular role or function. In this study, role clarity in this context, is a term used to refer to a situation where there is clear communication and subsequent understanding of an individual's roles and responsibilities. Boles et al. (2003), in an examination of the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict and work-family conflict concluded that, lack of clarity on the roles that an individual is expected to perform serves as a precursor for role ambiguity.

Role ambiguity is faced by employees who do not possess the necessary information required for the performance of a job or task mandated them either within the organization or outside of it. As such, employees or individuals who are confronted with the issue of role ambiguity are unable to understand their authority as well as their responsibilities. Katz and Kahn (1978) argue that, the vagueness and imprecision of the expectations regarding a set of roles results in an uncertainty of what is expected of the individuals or employees within that role set. Employees are also likely to experience role ambiguity when they are constantly bombarded with simultaneous and contradictory expectations from their colleagues, because it increases the difficulty with which those tasks or roles are performed and completed to satisfaction (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) highlight the prospects that, role ambiguity can play out between employees themselves where they lack clarity of what is expected of them. These badly defined and specialized roles has the tendency to result in role conflicts as well as role ambiguity.

Kahn et al (1964) argue that, the concept of role ambiguity stems from discrepancies in the information available to the individuals in the role set, which are essential to the performance of their roles. These discrepancies, the authors argue, will result in increased levels of stress, decreased satisfaction and decrease in effective performance of roles due to the inconsistent, confusing and conflicting characterization of the expectations that are imposed on them (Kahn et al., 1964). Fatima and Waliur Rehman (2012) argue that high levels of role conflict and role ambiguity increases stress, anxiety, fear, hostility and results in a reduction of job satisfaction and self-confidence. This perspective is further enhanced by Hsieh and Hsieh (2003) who opined that, the causative factor of role ambiguity lies in the insufficient information regarding the role that an employee is supposed to perform, as well as the employee's unclear comprehension of them. Further clarity is offered by Idris (2011) who sees roles ambiguity as

the lack of clear authority and knowledge on how individuals are supposed to perform a particular role assigned to him or her.

Rogalsky et al. (2016) argue that, role ambiguity is bound to manifest itself in what is expected of the individual, how the role requirements should be fulfilled, whose expectations are supposed to be prioritized, how the performance of the individual will be assessed and the consequences of the fulfilment of the responsibilities on the individuals. While the above could be potential breeding grounds for the manifestation of role ambiguity, it also serves as important touch points to abate the frequency in occurrence of role ambiguity. When individuals or employees have a clear understanding of their roles, its requirements as well as its value, their roles become more meaningful and this impacts positively on the overall organizational performance (Senturan et al, 2017).

## **2.5 Employee and Organizational Performance.**

Organizations, according to Suliman (2001) are social systems that have the utilitarian function of providing for the needs of individuals and societies and as such, there is the need for the maintenance of the existence of effective and efficient team members. There have been arguments with respect to the fact that there is a correlation between the organizational objectives and employee performance. Suliman (2001) for one, argues that, employee performance is central to the realization of organizational outcomes. For Sonnentag and Frese (2002), organizations need to have qualified employees to serve in specialized fields in order to be more competitive. As such, the performance of the human resources of organizations has been one of the most significant responsibilities of organizational leaders.

Performance has been conceptualized differently by different authors, practitioners and researchers. Motowidlo et al. (1997) refer to performance as the assessment and evaluation of the actions of employees taken during a given time period. As such, performance can be

behavioural, incidental, measurable and multifaceted. Babin and Boles (1998) also intimate that, performance refers to the behaviours of employees in certain job roles, particularly, their effectiveness of these behaviours and the outcomes of the behaviour on the realization of organizational goals. Prawirosentono (2008) offers another perspective where performance is viewed as the work that can be accomplished by persons or organizations in accordance with the authority and responsibility assigned to each of them in a bid to aid in the achievement of important organizational goals. However, these roles and works should be legal and ethical.

Haibuan (2006) explains that performance has some indicators or factors such as the workers' ability and interests, acceptance of explanations of delegated tasks or roles and the level of motivation. The performance of employees is considered correlational to the overall organizational performance, such that, good employee performance begets good organizational performance. Nitisemito (2001) argues that, there are a cocktail of factors on which employee performance are contingent, such as the amount and composition of the compensation provided to the employees, appropriateness of the roles and tasks given to the employees, training and promotional activities given to the employees, security, relationships with other colleagues and finally, the relationship between the employees and their leaders. In evaluating the standards of performance, Wirawan (2009) portends that, these refer to the targets, goals, objectives, efforts of employees working within a given time. However, in accomplishing a given set of tasks or roles given an employee, there is the need for that employee to direct all energies, efforts, thoughts, skills knowledge and time.

Performance is affected by diverse factors which may be organizational, environmental or individual. Dicle (1982) avers that, the impact of these factors on organizational and employee performance can either be positive or negative. Job stress has been given a lot of prominence by researchers due to its perceived impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness, but it has mostly been argued to be one of the factors that affects individual

employees directly. The effects of high stress results in low performance and low stress results in higher performance. One of such researchers Jackson and Schuler (1985) consider role conflicts and role ambiguity as the two main components of work stress. In line with this, the next session discusses the effect of role ambiguity and role conflict on employee performance as well as organizational performance.

## **2.6 Effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on organizational performance**

The effect of role conflict and role ambiguity has been a dominant topic in literature and the main focus of organizational research. The investigation of the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity has been tailored towards constructs like stress, job performance, job satisfaction among others, as seen in the works of Tang & Chang (2010), Schulz (2013) among others. Though conceptually different, the concepts of role conflict and role ambiguity have peculiar characteristics based on their similar effects on both individuals and organizations (Kahn et al., 1964). Role ambiguity and role conflict both result in dissatisfaction and decreased confidence in the organization, coupled with tension and overall ineffectiveness of the organization (Kahn et al., 1964). The findings from the study of Gormley and Kennerly (2010) in their analysis of the influence of work role and perceptions of climate on the commitment of the faculty of an educational organization shows that both role conflict and role ambiguity have negative effects on organizational commitment.

In buttressing the findings discussed above, the study by Gillespie et al. (2001) shows that there are implications of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the organizations and employees. The findings show that, role conflict and role ambiguity breeds dissatisfaction and lowers the emotional and physical health which penultimately reduces the efficiency of workers. The inference that can be made from this study is that, role conflict and role ambiguity are associated with role performance espoused in the assumption of the role theory. Employees

that experience high levels of stress suffer from dissatisfaction which ends up affecting the overall performance of their tasks and roles.

In evaluating the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on organizational commitment among faculty in college universities, Vijaya and Hemamalini (2011) argue that the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflicts severely affected the commitment levels of the members of faculty towards their work. In a similar analysis of educational institutions by Duzie (2012), role ambiguity and role conflicts resulted in enmity between professional and academic administrators which contributed to the obstruction in the University's attainment of goals. This validates the findings of Onyemah (2008) who in the analysis of sales persons realized that role ambiguity and role conflict affected their performance.

The analysis of the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict, job stress role overload among middle-level cadres in the Chinese local government, Yongkang et al. (2014) submits that their perception of the sampled participants showed that role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload resulted in the creation of anxiety, reduced confidence, low trust and lowered job satisfaction.

In all the studies done on the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on employee and organizational performance, the findings of Duzie (2012) and Rahim (2011) stands out. The findings from the above authors shows that, role conflicts and role ambiguity have the prospects of degenerating and escalating into interpersonal conflicts. This is in part due to the tendency of some individuals to personalize role conflicts resulting in a friction between the individuals involved.

Tang and Chang (2010) argue that role ambiguity results in a situation where the individual becomes doubtful of their capabilities which consequently results in a reduction of their perceived self-efficacy. This is due to the part of their findings that stressed on the demotivation

that role conflicts have on work. Tang and Cheng (2010) however indicate that, although the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflicts have been noted to have negative effects on individual and organizational performance, their findings show that there are some positives. The authors advance that role ambiguity and role conflicts increases creativity among employees as multiple roles were observed to have exposed employees to different perspectives. These affirm earlier conceptualizations by Fisher (2000) who argues that role conflict and role ambiguity possesses some creative and positive tendencies that can actuate social change. Similarly, the findings support the musings of Yoshioka (1990) that role ambiguity has the tendency to enable employees and individuals become adaptable to changing situations.

Duzie (2012) also argued that role conflicts also have some positive effects to a large extent aside the negative effects that dominated most earlier studies. He argues that, role conflicts result in a potential investigation to understand the flaws with the employee behaviour resulting in enhanced organizational outcomes through the adoption of innovation and creativity.

As can be observed, the findings on the effects of role conflicts and role ambiguity on individual and organizational performance are inconclusive. While some findings show the negative consequences of role conflicts and role ambiguity on individual and organizational performance, other studies have demonstrated that there are some positives to be gleaned from role ambiguity and role conflict. There appears to be a deficiency in literature with specification on the impact of role ambiguity and role conflict on the public relations practice in government institutions. This study will be geared towards filling that void by examining how role conflict and role ambiguity on the public relations practice of the Ministry of Education, Ghana.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the review and assessment of relevant literature on the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict and how these two similar but different concepts have an impact on employee and organizational performance. The organizational theory as well as the theory of occupational stress were discussed as the theoretical framework of the study. In sum, the review shows that, there are inconclusive effects of role ambiguity and role conflict as authors have examined its negative and positive effects on the individual as well as organizational performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter explained the concept of public relations as well as the functions of public relations. The chapter also discussed the concept of roles and provided a scholarly assessment of role ambiguity and role conflict. It also established the theoretical underpinning that will steer the course of the study. This chapter used the review to underpin the research instrument with the intention of probing the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on Public Relations Officers in the Ghana Education Service. The chapter explained the necessary research steps, the instruments used to gather data and the procedures followed in the administration and the coordination of the research instrument.

Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2003). Research methodology is used to describe all the methods involved in the collection of all information for the study (Berg, 2009). This chapter begun by explaining the purpose of the study connecting it with the appropriate research method. It is followed by the research design, population, sampling and sampling techniques as well as the instruments of data collection. The chapter ends with a discussion of how the data was analyzed.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem. The design of a study defines the study type (descriptive, correlational, semi-experiment, experimental, review, meta-analytic) and sub-type (e.g. descriptive-longitudinal case study), research questions, hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, experimental design, and if applicable, data

collection methods and a statistical analysis plan. Research design is the framework that has been created to seek answers to research questions.

A research method on the other hand involves the specific approach employed by studies for further investigations of a phenomenon. There are three main research methods in scientific research namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Amongst these three, the review of related studies deems it necessary for this study to be done quantitatively. Quantitative research allows a researcher to distance him or herself from the process to avoid bias. A quantitative research refers to the numerical representation and manipulation of observation which are described and explained in numeric terms (Yin, 1993). It assumes that figures provide factual presentation on issues. Also, quantitative is reliable and objective and statistics described can be used to generalize the findings. Qualitative research method on the other hand investigates issues in its natural setting. Qualitative methods help the researcher to evaluate the issues in an in-depth and detailed manner.

The study did not adopt the qualitative approach because it has one of its weaknesses as the fact that findings cannot be generalized because reality is not out there but, in the mind, (construction of reality). Even though it has the advantage of using open ended questions in probing which gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, rich and explanatory in nature (Mack et al., 2005)

Therefore, the study used quantitative approach involving a statistical description of data which is designed to assess the impact of role ambiguity and role conflicts in the duties of public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service. The method used a survey with questionnaires as its primary instrument of data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to

explain the data gathered from the filled questionnaire and presented in a chart format following the research questions which were used to develop subheading to guide the study.

### **3.2 Research Population**

Population refers to the collection of elements about which the researcher wishes to make inference to. According to Wimmer and Domminick (2011), a research population refers to all subjects and variables in the study area. The targeted population from whom the data was collected were Public Relations practitioners within the Ghana Education Service in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

### **3.3 Sampling technique**

A researcher cannot study an entire population; therefore, it is imperative to select a sample of the population for the study. Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g. people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, a generalized result can be given back to the population from which they were chosen.

There are two approaches to sampling namely probability and non-probability sampling. Under probability sampling, all elements in the population have a greater than zero chance of being selected in the sample and the mathematical probability that any of them will be selected can be calculated (Wimmer and Domminick, 2011). Non-probability sampling on the other hand refers to any sampling method where some elements of the population have no chance of selection or where the probability of selection cannot be accurately determined.

A simple random sampling technique under the probability sampling method was used. The researcher's reason for the choice of simple random sampling was to ensure that every relevant and salient information were elicited from the respondents without necessarily making a judgement of who to select for a response. The technique allowed the researcher to give equal

chance to all respondents who can offer essential information in furtherance of the research objective.

### **3.3.1 Sample Size**

The sample is usually the subset of the population. Sampling is selecting a subset of a population to participate in the study, it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in the research project (Brink, 1996; Polit and Hungler, 1999). The concept of sampling comes from the inability of the researchers to test all individuals in a given population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have a good size to warrant statistical analysis. The main function of sampling is to allow the researchers to conduct the study to individuals from the population so that the results of the conclusion can be used to derive conclusions that will apply to the whole population. Sample size represents part of the larger population that will be used to elicit information. About 30 respondents were sampled and selected to respond to the questionnaires.

### **3.4 Data Collection Method.**

#### **3.4.1 Surveys**

There are various quantitative methodologies available. But for the purpose of this study, surveys were used. The reasons for the central position of the quantitative survey as a research strategy are both methodological and substantive. The essence of quantitative research is the study of relationships between variables. For the quantitative researcher, reality is conceptualized as variables which are measured, and the primary objectives are to find how the variables are distributed, and especially how they are related to each other, and why (Punch, 2000).

Survey in research is defined as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.160). This type of research

method allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. It can use either quantitative and qualitative research strategies or both. As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research (Singleton & Straits, 2009).

A survey is a method of collecting data from people about who they are such as educational background, sex and age (demographics), how they think (motivations, beliefs, etc.), and what they do (behaviour). Surveys usually take the form of a questionnaire that a person fills out alone or by interview schedule in person or by telephone. The result of a survey is a variable by case data matrix (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001).

The method broadens the understanding of the problem by serving as a source of data with regards to the impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on the public relations officers in the Ghana Education service.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instrument**

The study employed the use of a questionnaire as the main instrument in the data collection process. The research questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions as well as close ended questions aimed at helping the researcher to elicit relevant information from respondents. The questionnaire was structured into sections in such a way that, the research can capture both bio-data and data relating to the main research questions.

### **3.6 Types and Sources of data**

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources of data included review of journal articles, both published and unpublished materials, textbooks, etc. The primary source of data includes the information that will be gathered through self-developed structured questionnaire.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher distributed the questionnaires randomly based on the sampling technique to the respondents and waited for them to finish completing them for collection. Those who could not finish answering their questionnaire left their details for collection on a later date.

### **3.8 Treatment, Presentation and Analysis of Data.**

The data was categorized into the various themes that was captured in the questionnaires which enabled the researcher to code the data and made entries. Also, the data was presented in the form charts to help give a better understanding to readers about the research results. Moreover, analysis of the data was done with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The chapter has been able to outline the specific methods that was used to gather and interpret data from the field. It has also been able to tell the population and the sampling size of the study and data collection instrument as well as data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The main aim of the study was to assess the impact of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance of the public relations practitioners of the Ghana Education Service. Based on the objectives of the study, the study gleaned towards the quantitative research approach where survey was used in the collection of data. The findings have been presented using statistical tools like charts. The analysis was done in tune with the research questions, and formed the basis for the conclusions that were drawn.

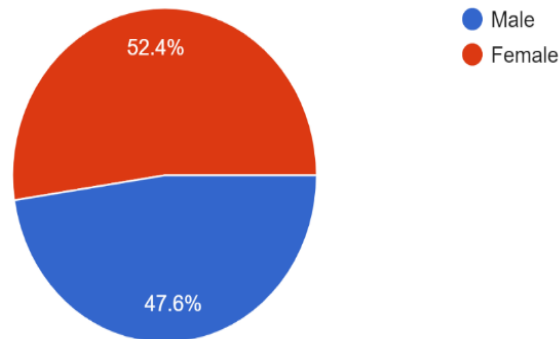
#### **4.1 Demographic details of the respondents.**

This section discusses the demographic details of the respondents. The key demographic details to be discussed are the age of the respondents, their gender, how long they have served in the Ghana Education Service, their educational qualification as well as their understanding of their various roles in the organization.

##### **4.1.1 Gender of the respondents.**

The respondents were made up of 52% males and 48% females. This means that, there was a nearly equal proportion of males to females in the study. This is represented in the chart that follows:

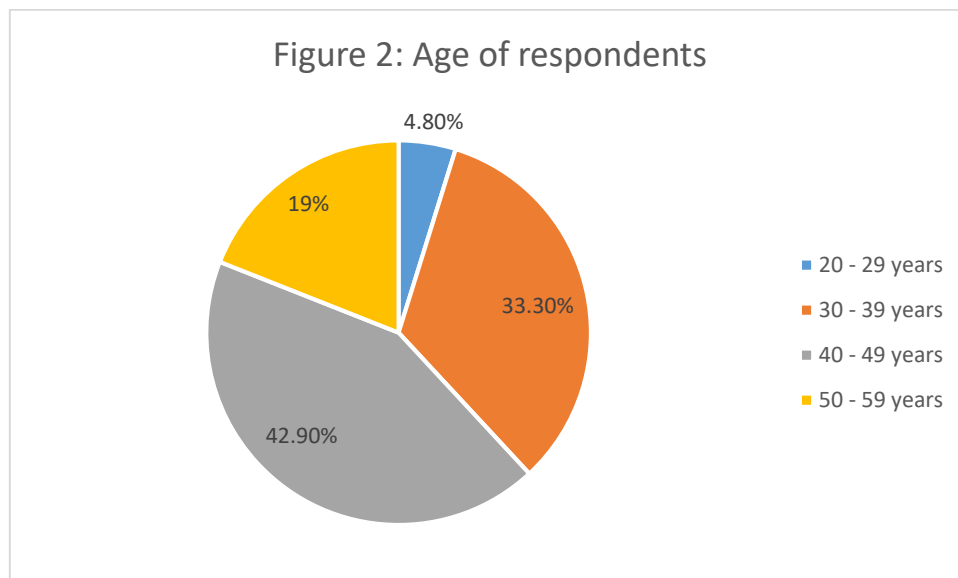
Figure 1: Gender of the respondents



*Source: Field data, 2021.*

#### 4.1.2 Age of respondents.

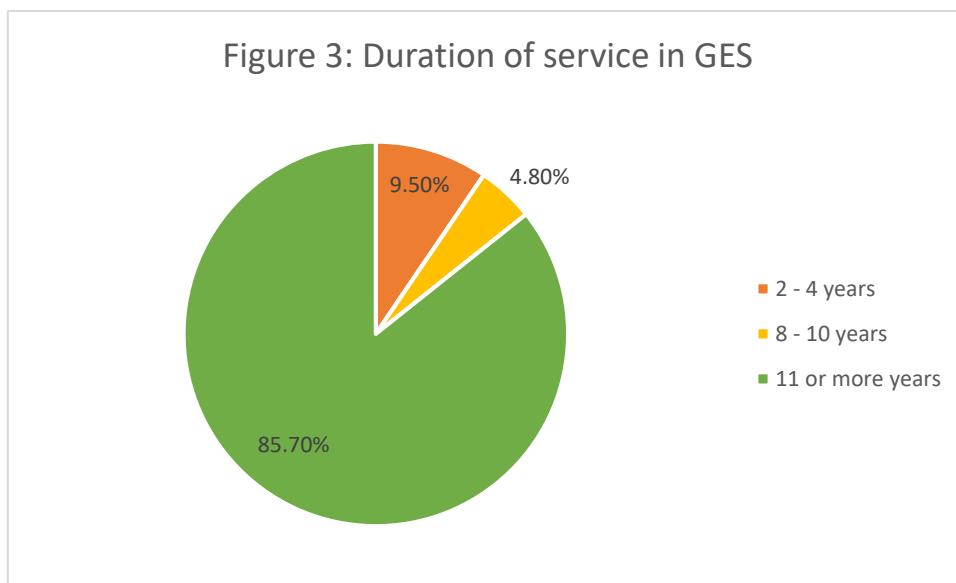
The respondents also indicated their age groups. The findings presented in the pie chart below indicates that the age group 40-49 years was the most represented group with a percentage of 42.9. This implies that, the highest number of the respondents were from the age group 40-49 years.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

### 4.1.3 Duration of service in the Ghana Education Service

The next demographic data assessed was the duration of time that the respondents have worked in the service. This is considered very pivotal to the study since the duration of service speaks to how knowledgeable the respondents are with respect to their duties as public relations practitioners of the Ghana Education Service. The pie chart illustrating the findings from data gathered showed that a majority (85.7%) of the respondents had served in the Ghana Education Service for more than 10 years. However, 9.5% had 2 to 4 years work experience as public relations practitioners, while 4.8% indicated they had 8 to 10 years work experience. This indicates that, an overwhelming number of the respondents had a fair understanding of the roles of public relations practitioners in the Service.

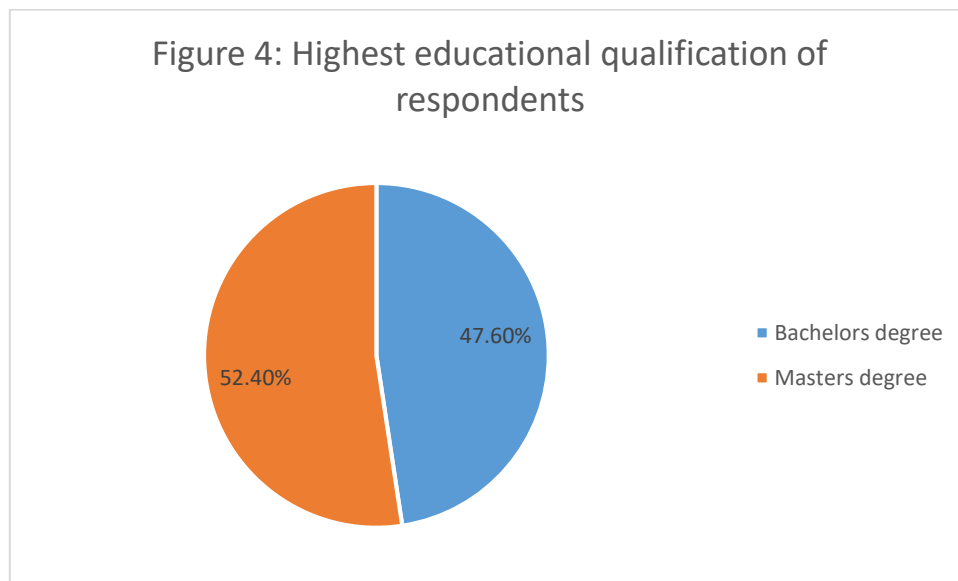


*Source: Field data, 2021.*

### 4.1.4 Highest Educational Qualification

The educational qualification of the respondents was also interrogated. The findings indicate that the respondents have either a Bachelor's Degree or a Master's Degree as educational qualification, with 52.4% indicating they possessed a Master's Degree and 47.6% indicating

they had a Bachelor's Degree. None of the respondents indicated that their highest educational qualification was a Diploma. These are presented in the figure below:

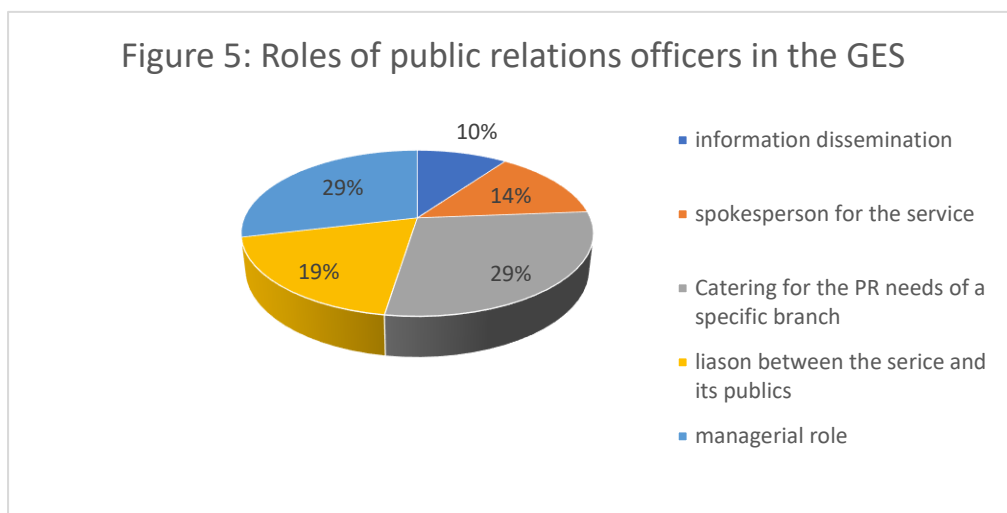


*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.1.5 Roles of public relations officers in the Ghana Education Service.**

The concept of role ambiguity and role conflicts are predicated on the roles that employees perform in an organization. It was incumbent that the respondents understanding of their roles as public relations officers be established before assessing the prevalence of role ambiguity and role conflicts in the daily discharge of their duties. Literature has established that roles are very important parts of an employee's function within organizations as it speaks to the expectations of employees as well as what they expect of each other in tandem with their duties, functions and activities in the organization.

The responses which are indicated in the chart below establishes that the respondents have a fair idea of what their role as public relations officers are. While 29% indicated that the role of public relations is a managerial one, 19% indicated that their role required that they liaise between the Ghana Education Service and their publics. 10% asserted that, their role revolved around information dissemination between the organization and the external publics through the media.



*Source: Field data, 2021.*

## **4.2 Assessment of Role Ambiguity in the duties of public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service**

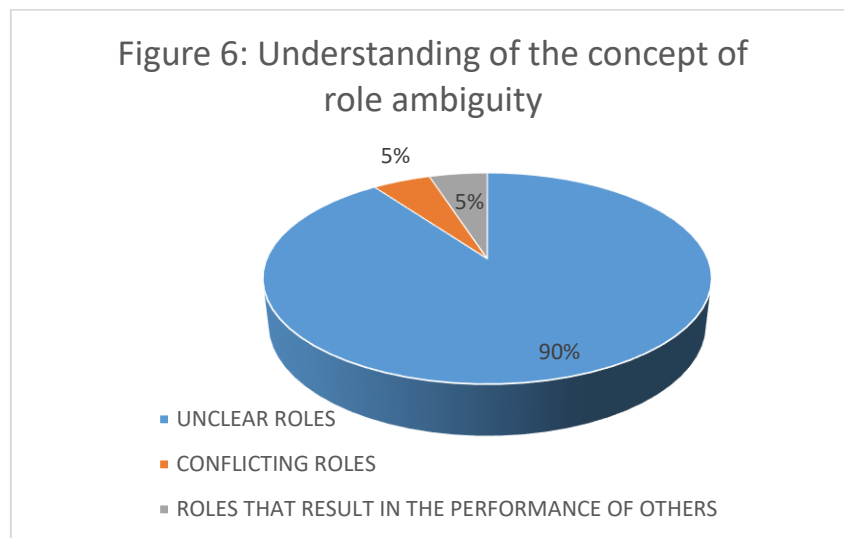
The concept of role ambiguity has received a lot of scholarly attention. This section of the study sought to examine how the concept of role ambiguity was made manifest in the performance of the duties and responsibilities of the public relations officers. The findings discussed in the subsections shows that the respondents have a fair understanding of the concept of role ambiguity and also proves that, role ambiguity features prominently in the day-to-day activities of the roles, duties and responsibilities of the public relations officers in the Ghana Education Service.

### **4.2.1 Understanding of the concept of role ambiguity**

In order to examine the various ways in which the concept of role ambiguity features in the daily activities of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service, the respondents explained how they understood the concept, since that was a prerequisite to answering the questions that followed. Inferring from the findings that are illustrated in the figure below, it is clear that the understanding expressed by the respondents did not deviate significantly from the views expressed by researchers, scholars and theorists. 90% of the respondents indicated

that role ambiguity occurs when the roles given to the employees of an organization are unclear or not well understood, leaving it open to misunderstandings and uncertainties. Five percent however indicated that, role ambiguity are misunderstandings that results in the performance of roles other than what the employee is mandated to perform. The remaining 5% of respondents are of the view that role ambiguity refers to unclarified roles.

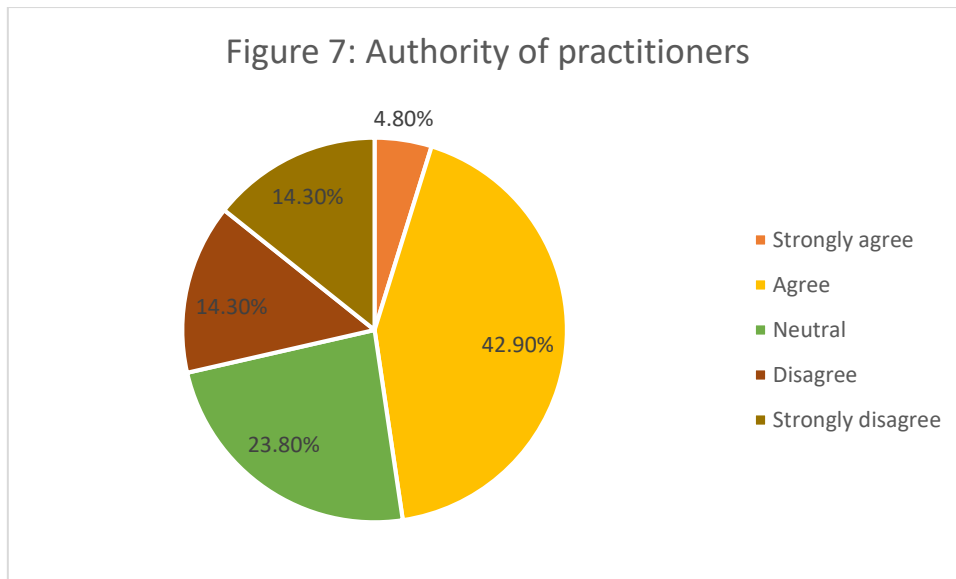
**Figure 6: Understanding of the concept of role ambiguity.**



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.2.2 Certainty about how much authority the public relations personnel in the service have**

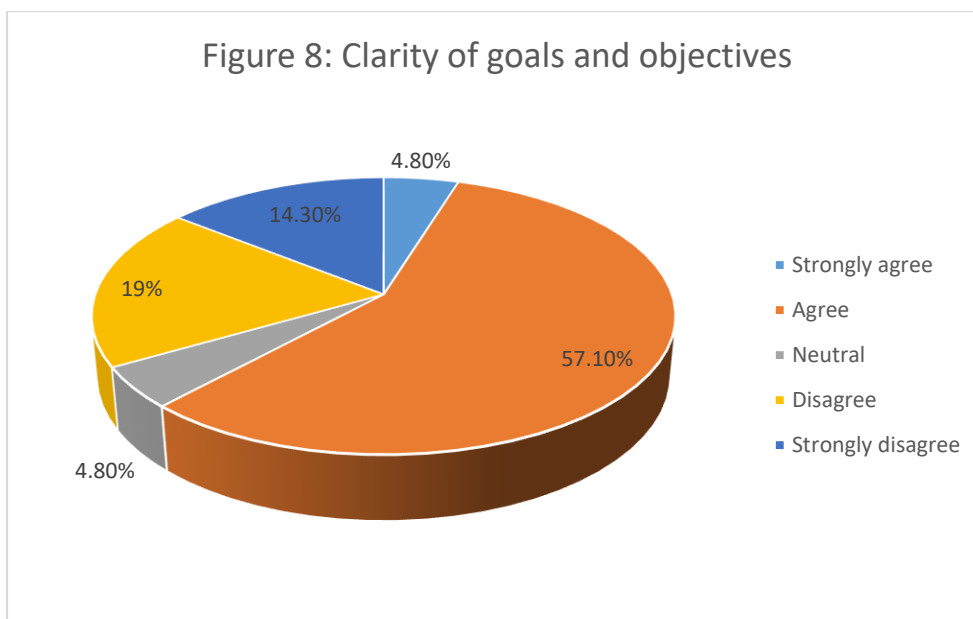
The first issue with regards to the assessment of role ambiguity was to understand whether the public relations officers in the Ghana Education Service are certain about the authority they possess. The findings from the survey suggests that whereas 42.9% of the respondents agreed and 4.8% strongly agreed that they have authority over their roles in the organization, 14.3% are in strong disagreement. 14.3% respondents also stated that they had no authority over the roles that they perform. However, 23.8% respondents indicated that they had no idea of the certainty of their authority as public relations officers in the Ghana Education Service.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.2.3 PR roles have planned goals and objectives**

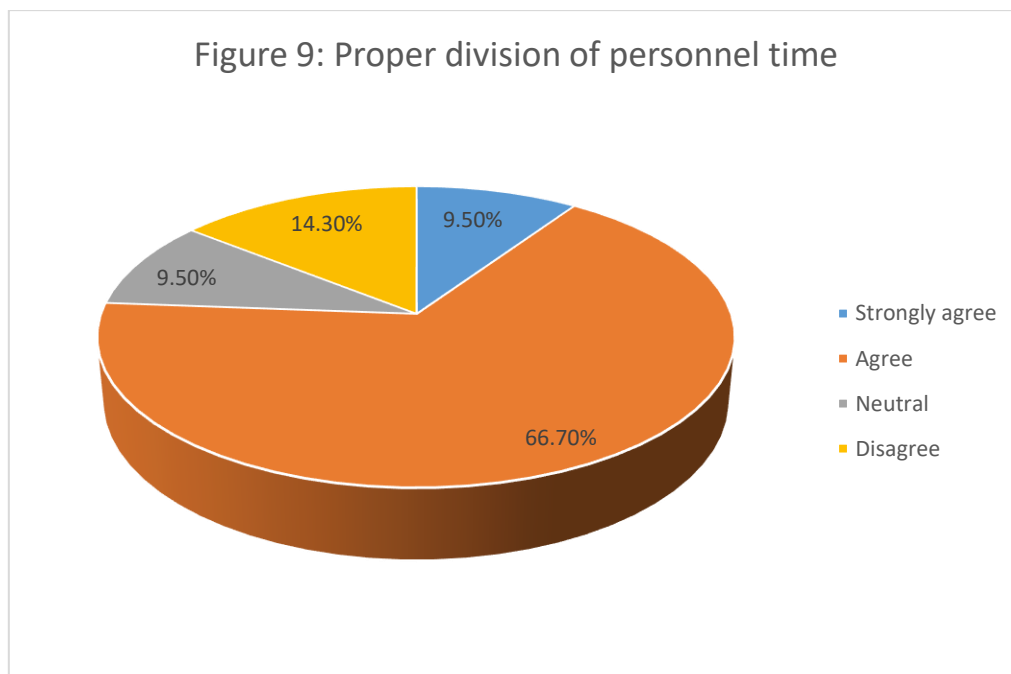
Concerning the roles of the public relations personnel at the Ghana Education Service, the survey assessed whether their roles had planned goals and objectives that was clear to the personnel. The findings which are presented statistically in the figure that follows shows that, 57.1% of the respondents indicated that they had a clear understanding and certainty of the expectations of their roles in terms of the goals and objectives, with 4.8% indicating that they did not know what was expected of them.



*Source: Field Data, 2021*

#### **4.2.4 Ability of personnel to divide their time properly**

One indicator for assessing whether the employees in the public relations capacity have a good understanding of their roles is determining whether they are able to divide their time properly in the performance of the various duties and responsibilities assigned to them. The findings reveal that majority of the respondents, thus 66.7% have a clear understanding of the roles such that, they are able to divide their time and execute the roles required of them.

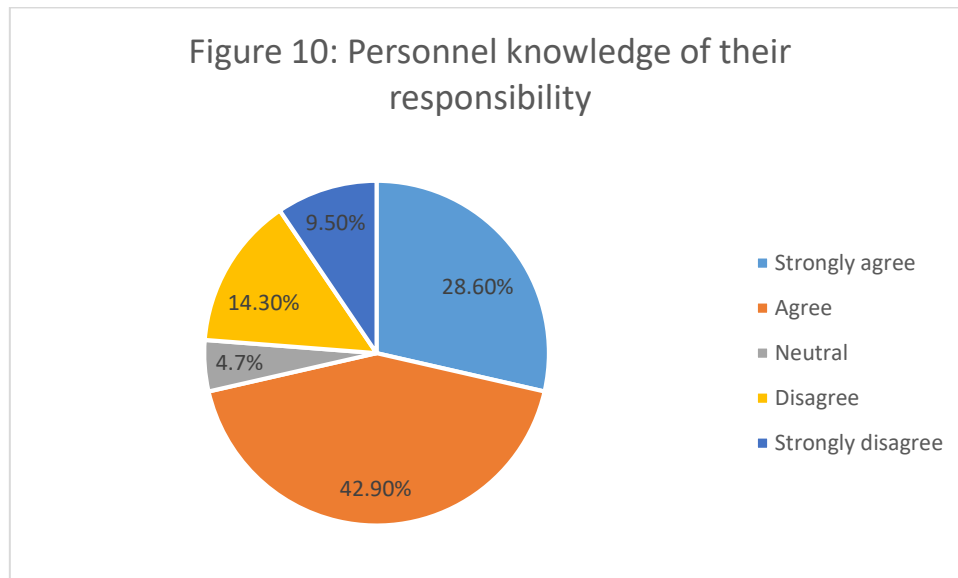


*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.2.5 Knowledgeability of public relations personnel regarding what their responsibilities are.**

The survey also established whether the respondents had an understanding and knowledge of what their roles and responsibilities are. Concerning this, the findings indicate that the public relations personnel in the Ghana Education Service have a good knowledge of what their responsibilities are. This is indicated by 71.5% (42.9% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed) of the respondents who said they agreed when asked whether they had the needed knowledge for

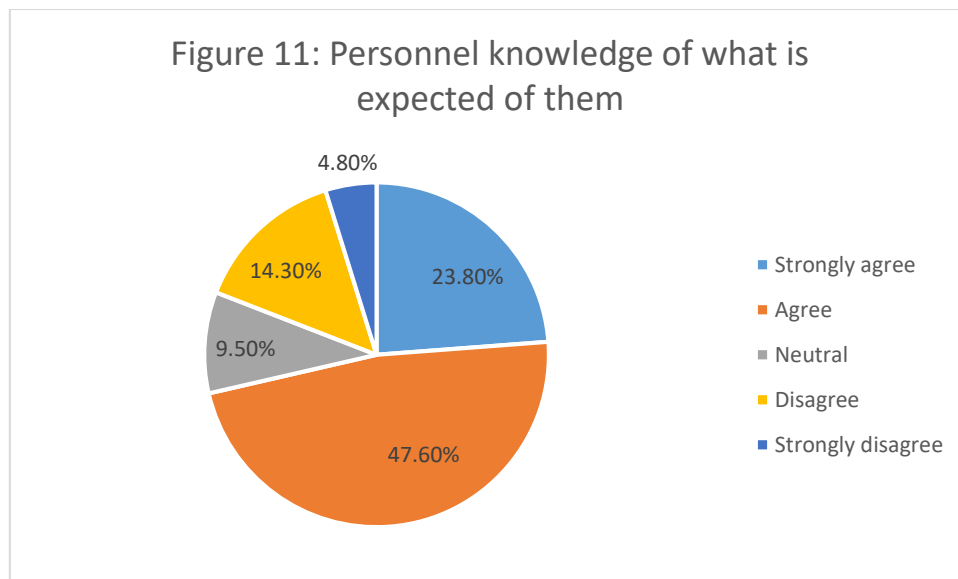
the performance of their responsibilities. However, 23.8% thus (14.3% disagree and 9.5% strongly disagree) stated that they did not have the knowledge of what their responsibilities are. 4.7% of respondents are however, indifferent.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.2.6 Assessment of the knowledge of what is expected of the public relations personnel**

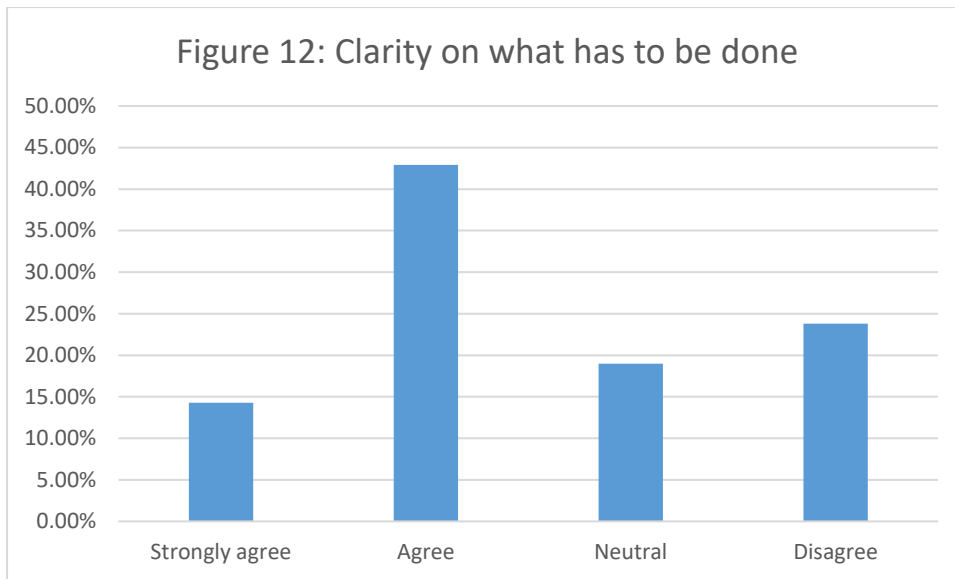
Buttressed by notions expressed about role ambiguity being relative to the inability of the individuals or employees to tell or understand what the expectations of them are, the survey investigated whether the public relations personnel of the Ghana Education Service knew what was expected of them as long as their roles were concerned. 71.4% (23.8% strongly agree and 46.7% agree) of the respondents indicated that they knew what their superiors expected of them while 19.1% (4.8% strongly disagree and 14.3% disagree) indicated that they did not. 9.5% respondents are neither in agreement nor disagreement.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.2.7 Respondents' assessment of the clarity of explanations on what they are expected to do**

A key indicator of the role ambiguity lies in whether the individuals or employees have clarity in terms of explanations of what they are expected to do, as far as their roles in the Ghana Education Service is concerned. Majority of respondents (57.2% - made up of 42.9% agree and 14.3% strongly agree) indicated that they had clear explanations about their various roles in the Service. However, 23.8% indicated that they did not have clear explanations of their duties whereas 19% are indifferent.



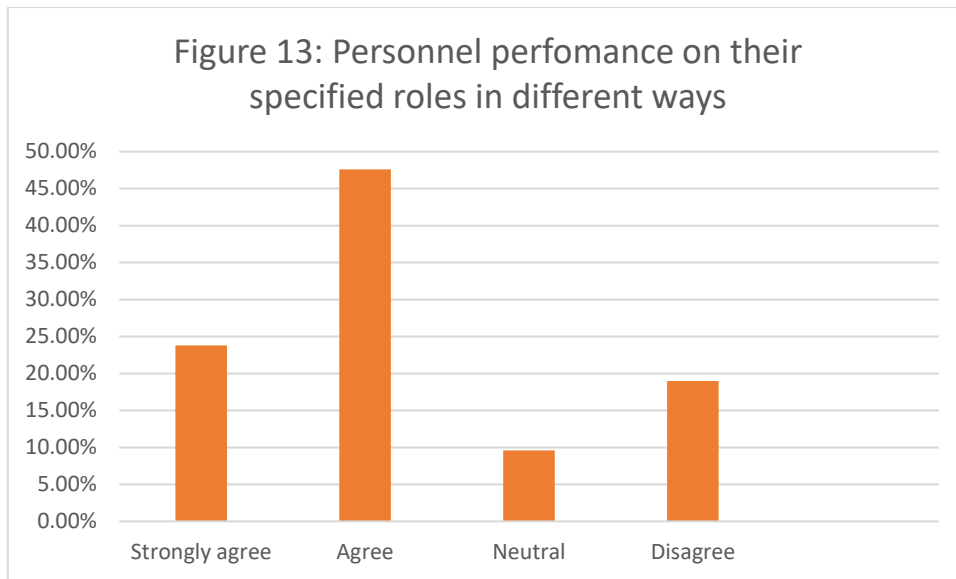
*Source: Field Data, 2021*

### **4.3 Assessment of Role Conflict in the role of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service.**

The study also examined the phenomenon of role conflict in the duties of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service. The findings from the assessment of the prevalence of role conflict in the performance of the duties of the public relations officers are discussed in the subsections that follow.

#### **4.3.1 Public relations roles that are performed in different ways.**

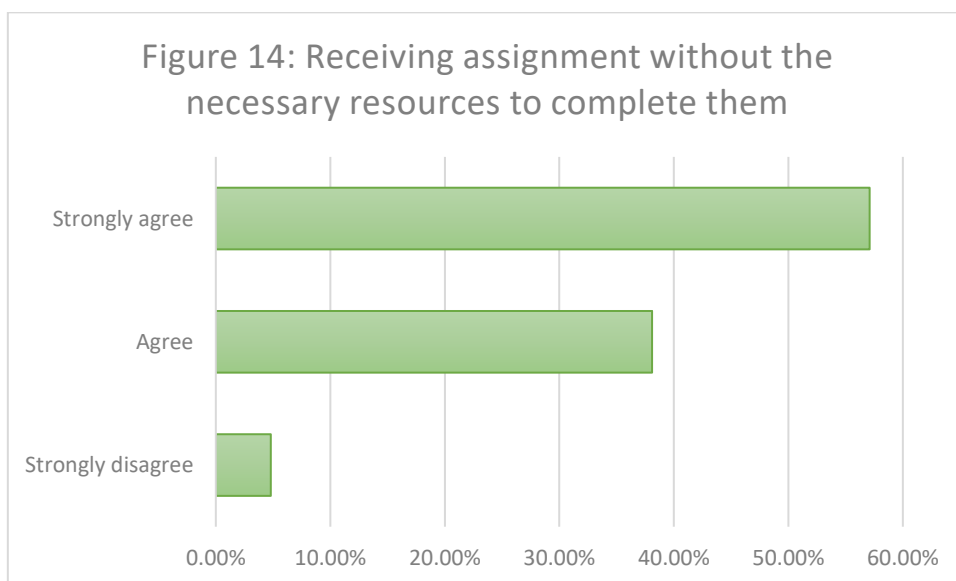
Role conflicts can emanate from situations where similar roles are performed in different ways. The findings from the survey relating to this indicator shows that Majority thus 71.4% made up of 47.6% agreed and 23.8 strongly agreed respondents stated that they have specified roles that are performed in different ways. 9.6% respondents were not sure whereas 19% respondents indicated that, their roles were not performed in different ways.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.3.2 Reception of PR assignments without the necessary resources to complete them**

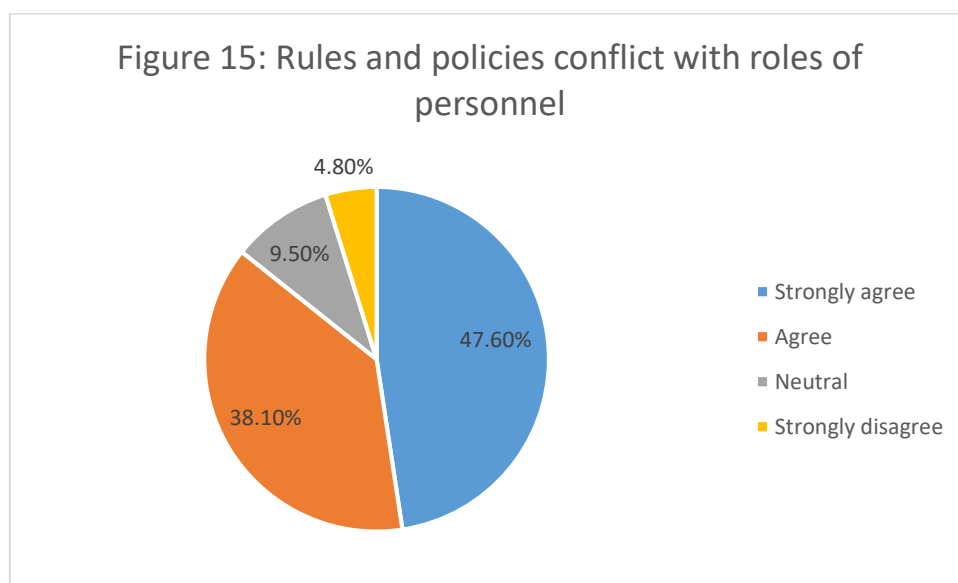
The successful completion of roles is incumbent on the availability of the needed resources to the individuals or employees and a determinant of role conflict. The findings from the assessment indicated that 38.1% and 57.1% constituting 95.2% receive assignments without the necessary resources to complete it. It must be noted however that 4.8% indicated otherwise thus they receive the necessary resources they need to perform an assignment.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

### 4.3.3 Public relations personnel encountering rules and policies that conflict their roles in the discharge of their duties

Role conflicts also occur when the individuals encounter encumbrances that affect their ability to effectively and efficiently perform their roles to the expectations of their superiors. These can be in the form of policies and rules of the organization in which the employee works. The findings from the study shows that 47.6% and 38.1% making up 85.7% of the respondents indicated that there are some rules that they have encountered, as well as policies that have conflicted with the roles they are supposed to perform. 4.8% strongly disagreed while 9.5% were undecided. The findings are illustrated in the diagram below

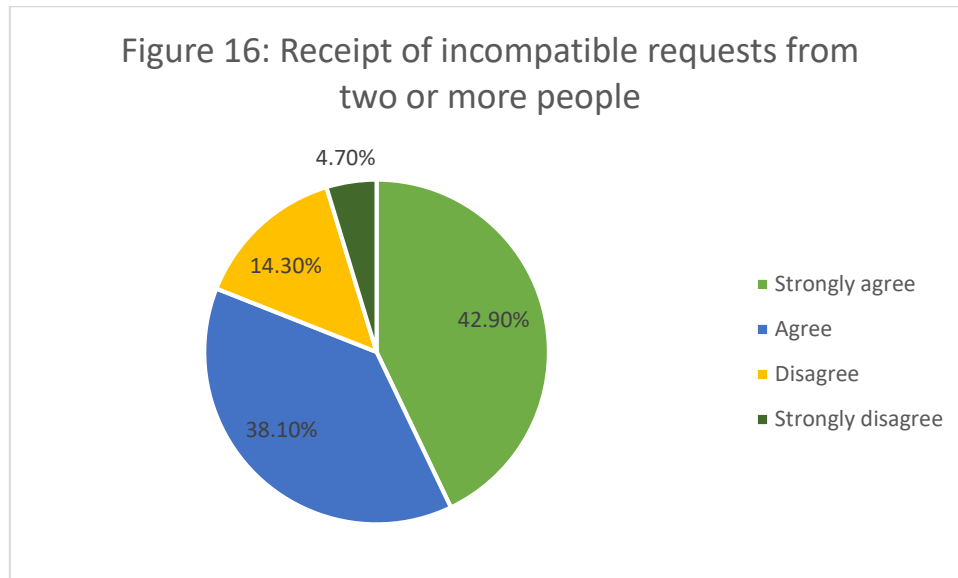


Source: Field Data, 2021.

### 4.3.4 Public relations personnel receiving incompatible requests from two or more people.

The study assessed whether the public relations practitioners receive requests from superiors that are incompatible in nature. The findings from the survey indicate that, majority (42.9%

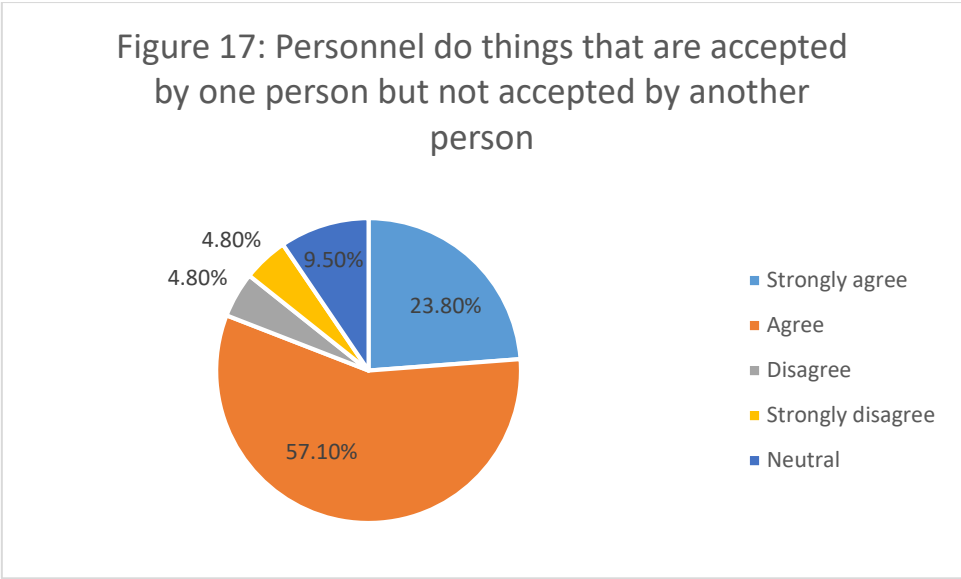
strongly agree and 38.1% agree) thus 81% of the respondents receive requests from two or more superiors that are incompatible with each other and hence results in a conflicted situation, while 19% made up of 14.3% disagree and 4.7% strongly disagree indicated otherwise.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.3.5 Performance of Public Relations roles that are accepted by one person but not accepted by another**

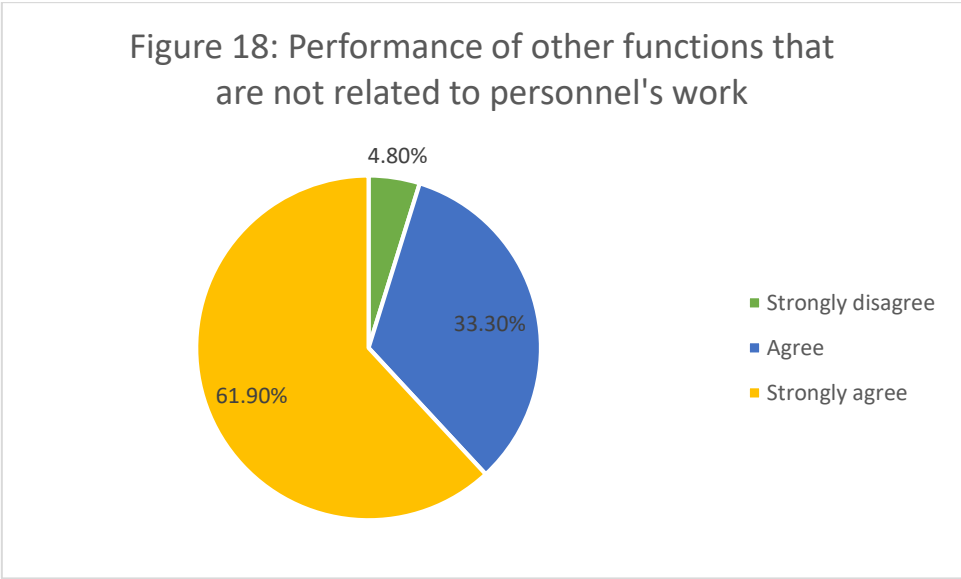
Conflicting supervision and guidance from superiors can be a potent source of role conflict. In that regard, majority (80.9%) made up of 23.8% strongly agreed respondents and 57.1% of agreed respondents indicated that the situation of having two or more incompatible requests from two or more superiors result in a situation where things are considered good enough and accepted by one person but rejected by the other superior. But 9.6% (4.5% disagree and 4.5% strongly disagree) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion whereas 9.5% were undecisive.



Source: Field Data, 2021.

**4.3.6 Performance of other functions that are not related to their public relations work**

One of the important indicators of role conflict is the incidence of individuals being given roles that have no correlation with their functions, duties and responsibilities. Majority (95.2%) made up of 33.3% agreed and 61.9% strongly agreed respondents indicated that they sometimes perform other functions that are not related to their work, with 4.8% disagreeing to that assertion. The findings are presented in the figure that follows.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

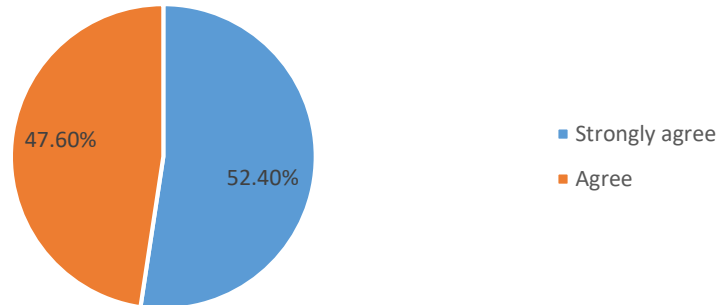
#### **4.4 Effects of Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict on the performance of the PR personnel at the Ghana Education Service**

Organizational performance has been known by researchers to be the correlation between the organizational objectives and employee performance. This means that, one of the key indicators of organizational success and competitiveness is the performance of the employees who serve in specialized fields. There are studies that are abundant on the effects of role ambiguity and role conflict on organizational and employee performance. Bearing in mind that organizational performance is affected by the performance of the employees, the study also investigated how the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict affect the performance of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service. This is done in the subsections that follow.

##### **4.4.1 Role conflicts and role ambiguity resulting in stress associated with the performance of responsibilities.**

The study interrogated the likely association between occupational stress, role ambiguity and role conflicts where the respondents were asked to indicate whether they suffered some kind of stress due to the conflicts and ambiguity of their roles in the organization. The findings presented in the diagram that follows indicated that, all the employees thus 47.6% agreed and 52.4% strongly agreed that they went through occupational stress that was necessitated by role ambiguity and role conflicts.

Figure 19: The situation of role conflict and role ambiguity results in stress associated with the performance of personnel responsibilities

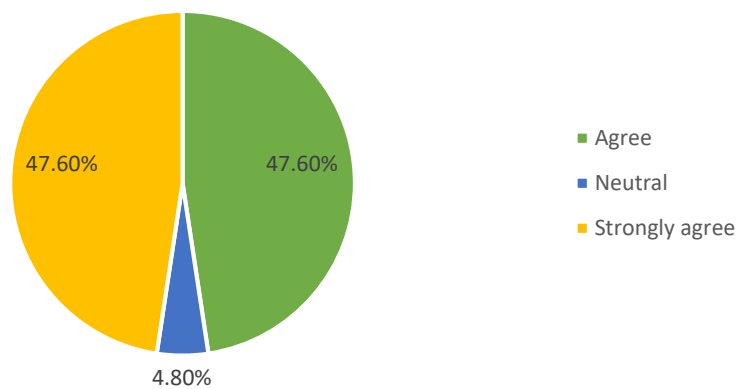


*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### 4.4.2 The potential of role ambiguity and role conflict leading to work anxiety

The study also examined the potential of the instances of role ambiguity and role conflicts to cause work anxiety. The findings indicated that 47.6% strongly agreed and 47.6% agreed constituting a majority of 95.2% of the respondents experienced anxiety in the performance of their responsibilities. A minimal of 4.8% of the respondents however were indifferent. The findings from the survey are highlighted in the figure below.

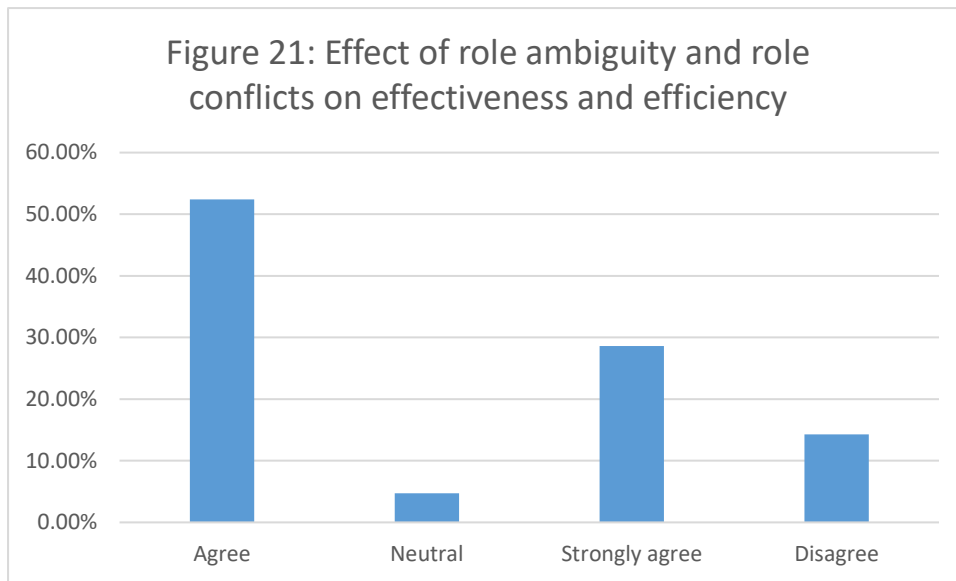
Figure 20: Ambiguity and conflicts regarding personnel responsibilities lead to work anxiety



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### 4.4.3 Effect of role ambiguity and role conflicts on effectiveness and efficiency.

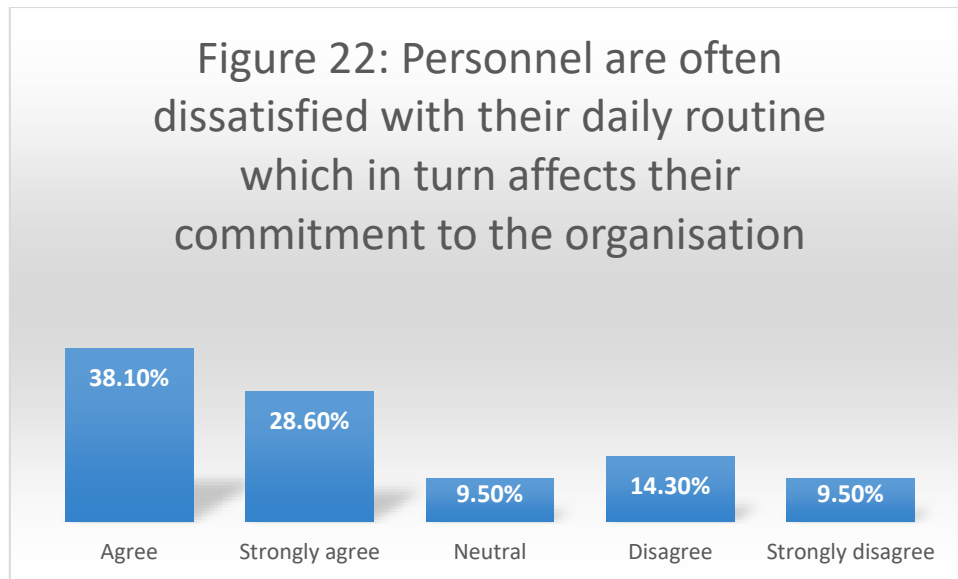
The effect of role ambiguity and role conflicts on effectiveness and efficiency of the public relations officers was also interrogated. Majority 52.4% and 28.6% (81%) indicated that the prevalence of the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflicts affected their effectiveness and efficiency, 14.3% indicated otherwise while 4.7% were undecided.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### 4.4.4 Dissatisfaction among employees with regards to their daily routines and its effect on their commitment.

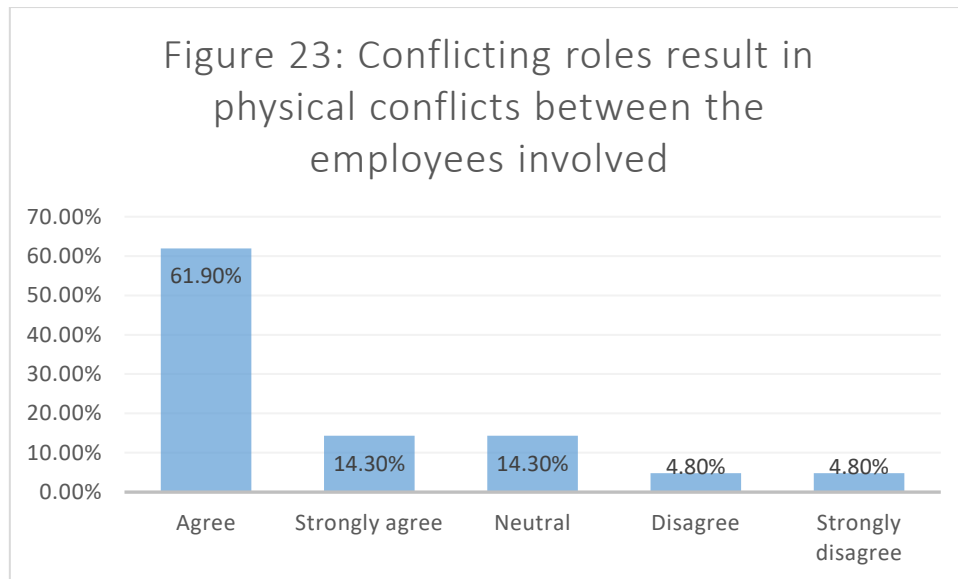
Role ambiguity and role conflict have been established to cause dissatisfaction among the employees of organization and hence having a dire effect on the overall organizational performance. In interrogating the veracity of these assertions, the findings revealed that 38.1% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed making up 66.7% of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service indicated that they were dissatisfied about their daily routines and this took a toll on their commitment to the organization. 23.8% (14.3% and 9.5%) disagreed while 9.5% remained neutral.



*Source: Field Data, 2021.*

#### **4.4.5 Instances where role conflicts and role ambiguity have resulted in physical conflicts between employees.**

Role conflicts, especially has been argued to more often than not result in physical conflicts between the employees. In light of the above, the study examined whether this effect of role conflict was prevalent among the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service in the discharge of their duties. The findings indicate that, 76.2% of the respondents (61.9% and 14.3%) are of the view that there were pockets of violence inspired by conflicting roles, while 9.6% (4.8% and 4.8%) disagreed with the assertion and 14.3% are neutral.

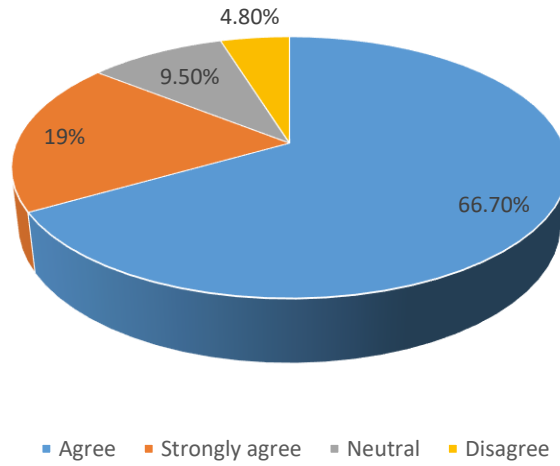


*Source: Field Data, 2021*

#### **4.4.6 Role ambiguity and role conflicts associated with duties and responsibilities spurring creativity among employees**

On the positive tangent, role conflicts and role ambiguity has been observed to influence creative solutions to problems and organizational dilemmas. The findings from the interrogation of that assertion revealed that 66.7% agreed and 19% strongly agreed respondents representing 85.7% of the respondents contended that role ambiguity and role conflicts have in certain situations spurred creativity among them, while 9.5% remained neutral and 4.8% disagreed in that there were no advantages to role ambiguity and role conflicts.

Figure 24: Conflicts associated with personnel duties and responsibilities sometimes spurs creativity among personnel and other colleagues



Source: Field Data, 2021.

#### 4.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of findings. The findings presented so far indicated that, the personnel of the public relations outfit of the Ghana Education Service were least impacted by role ambiguity. However, role conflicts seemed to be the more experienced concept by the personnel and this had severe implications for their individual performance in the organization.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter serves as the concluding chapter where the findings are discussed. The chapter also explores the limitations of the study and made recommendations that would influence and inform further studies into the impact of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance of the public relations practitioners.

#### **5.1. Summary of the findings**

The research was geared towards an examination of the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on the performance of the public relations personnel of the Ghana Education Service. The summary of the findings was done in accordance with the objectives of the study, as well as the research questions. The summary was also based on an analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire.

##### **5.1.1 Objective one: Assessment of role ambiguity in the roles of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service.**

The first objective of the study was to examine the incidence of role ambiguity in the roles, duties and responsibilities of the public relations officers that were sampled for the study. The findings of the study indicated that, the personnel have a firm grip on the concept of role ambiguity as represented in the 90% who conceptualized role ambiguity as roles that are not clear or well understood that result in misunderstandings and uncertainties. These definitions are in tandem with Rizzo et al (1970), who defined role ambiguity as the lack or deficiency of clarity of plans and goals, as well as the uncertainty about the authority or knowledge on how to perform assigned jobs or roles.

The assessment of role ambiguity was done using several indicators. First and foremost, the study evaluated whether the public relations personnel in the Ghana Education Service have certainty about the authority they have. Idris (2011) concluded from his assessment that, role ambiguity can be seen in the lack of clear authority and knowledge on how the employees or individuals are supposed to perform a particular role assigned to him or her. However, the findings indicate that, in this respect, the participants had a clear authority over their duties, signalling an absence of role ambiguity. The study revealed that the personnel of the public relations department had a high degree of certainty of the authority they possessed over their roles and this is based on how knowledgeable they are in their mandate. Their level of knowledgeability was high as indicated in their educational qualification where all respondents either had a degree or a masters in a field relevant to the public relations practice.

Researchers have contended that, inability of the individual employees to recognize and understand the various goals and objectives of their jobs, roles and responsibilities are indicators of role ambiguity. Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) for instance conclude that, role ambiguity can play out between employees themselves where they lack clarity of what is expected of them. This observation by Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) is defeated in this study and in that regard, takes away any incidence of role ambiguity. The findings of this study show that, the public relations personnel within the Ghana Education Service are aware of the various goals, objectives and expectations of their roles, giving an indication that there is a high incidence of role clarity.

Considering the intimations of Onyemah (2008), ability of individuals to divide their time is one of the determinants of role ambiguity. Onyemah (2008) indicates that, the uncertainty with regard to the performance of a role results in role ambiguity and this affects the ability of the employees to plan their activities and execute their roles in accordance with what is expected of them. But as true as this statement may be, the findings indicate that the public relations

personnel of the Ghana Education Service are able to apportion their time properly in the execution of their duties

Rizzo et al. (1970) intimated that, role ambiguity also refers to the uncertainty about the knowledge on the various jobs, roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals. Sinha and Subramanian (2012) suggests that, this is caused by lack of information necessary for the performance of the job. This did not manifest in this study since majority (72%) of the respondents indicated that they had knowledge of their responsibilities and what the expectations of them are. This differs from an examination of sales executives by Onyemah (2008) where it was concluded that that role ambiguity pertained to the uncertainty about what members of a particular role set expects of an employee or individual and this is expressed in the hesitance felt by sales persons about the expectations of their executives, customers and friends. In that instance, they are likely to be confronted with the dilemma of role ambiguity

The clarity of explanation of the roles of the employees is referred to as role clarity. According to Rizzo et al. (1970), role clarity refers to the extent to which the individuals or employees know and understand the various expectations associated with their performance of a particular role or function. In this study, role clarity in this context, is a term used to refer to a situation where there is clear communication and subsequent understanding of an individual's roles and responsibilities. As far as clarity of explanations with regards to what is expected of them is concerned, the public relations personnel of the Ghana Education Service indicated that they had clear explanations about their various roles in the Service, thereby reducing the prevalence of role ambiguity. Hence, there were no problems associated with a lack of information on the expectations of their roles and this meant that there was no prevalence of role ambiguity in the performance of their roles.

### **5.1.2 Objective two: Assessment of Role Conflict in the role of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service.**

The second objective of the study was an examination of the incidence of role conflict in the daily activities of the public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service. The study gleaned towards the definition offered by Centuran et al. (2017) who explained role conflict as a situation where an individual cannot understand what their role is and have mixed interpretations and sentiments due to their inability to meet the expectations of their related role or position. The four types of role conflict as espoused by Rizzer et al. (1970) namely intra-sender role conflict, inter-sender role conflict, intra-role conflict and inter-role conflict were manifested in the findings.

Intra-sender conflicts occur when there is the performance of contradictory and inconsistent roles. This was present in the study as the respondents indicated that they sometimes performed roles or duties that were contrary to their expertise. Majority of the personnel in the study (95%) indicated that there was the absence of the necessary resources to complete their roles. The lack of resources needed to successfully perform roles assigned to employees can result in role ambiguity since the employees may either resort to performing other functions that are not within their preserve or that may conflict with other sets of roles assigned to others within the organization. Centuran et al. (2017) explained that, this affects the ability of the employees to understand their roles and based on their inability to meet expectations of their superiors, they have mixed interpretations and sentiments. Another aspect of intra-role conflict was manifested in the rules and policies that conflicted the roles of the public relations personnel in the discharge of their duties. This is justified by Johnson (2003) who portends that role conflicts can occur as a result of the individual or employee is expected to undertake duties that he or she considers as not being part of their roles.

Inter-sender conflict, which implies that the employees receive incongruent and inconsistent demands from different senders was also observed. The findings showed that the public relations practitioners were saddled with the reception of incompatible and incongruent instructions from more than two superiors, and this often resultant in an attendant incongruent and incompatible expectations from these superiors. Beena (1999) offers a somewhat holistic perspective of role conflicts by defining it as the perceived and experienced incompatibility of the expectations of the roles assigned to individuals in organizations, the competing expectations and the demands linked with the role. These expectations more often than not, result in roles that are accepted by one person and rejected by another within the Ghana Education Service. Majority of the respondents (81%) affirmed this position. Rizzo et al. (1970) explains that, the incompatible requests from two or more different superiors result in role conflicts because they serve as a source of conflicting supervision and guidance, results in a confusion about the expectations of the said role. These were manifested in the findings of the study when the issue of incompatible requests from two or more people was interrogated further. This effect is due to ensuing differences in role expectations by different supervisors. A recent study by Palomino and Frezatti (2016) concluded that this often results in a perception among the employees that, their roles will be examined differently among different role expectations from different superiors and supervisors who have different requirements.

Inter-role conflict implies that individuals have two or more roles and this was also another observation gleaned from the findings of the study. The findings revealed that the personnel were often mandated to perform tasks that were outside their province of expertise. Majority (95%) of the respondents from the Ghana Education Service indicated that they sometimes perform other functions that are not related to their work. These findings confirm the articulations by other researchers like Johnson (2003) who argues that, role conflicts can occur as a result of the individual or employee is expected to undertake duties that he or she considers

as not being part of their roles. There is incompatibility of the roles assigned to the public relations officers with the roles they are used to performing because these tasks are incongruent with their expertise, goals or interests.

Lastly, intra-role conflict where the roles assigned to the public relations personnel of the Ghana Education Service are performed in different ways. Majority (74%) of the respondents stated that they have specified roles that are performed in different ways. The different ways in which roles are performed could be a potential source of role conflicts. Kahn (1996) explains that the role conflicts that ensue are as a result of the sets of pressures associated with the compliance one needs to make to deliver on a duty or responsibility. Hence, diverse ways imply more pressure.

### **5.1.3 Objective three: Effects of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance of public relations officers of the Ghana Education Service.**

Although the public relations officers of the Service indicated that, role conflict was more prevalent than role ambiguity, there were unanimous sentiments regarding the effects of role conflicts on their performance. The study revealed that, the performance of the employees was affected by occupational stress that stems from the various conflicting, incompatible and incongruent roles that they are known to be performing. The buttresses and reaffirms the organizational stress theory which stipulates that, employees who do not have adequate control of their roles in terms of understanding the expectations, or performing other tasks that are not within the preserve of the expectations of their designated roles are bound to suffer some stress (Mansell and Brough, 2005). This finding is not misplaced in literature. Existing studies that have examined the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity, like Tang and Chang (2010) have been tailored towards occupational stress. The study also solidifies the findings of Rosen et al.

(2010) where it was concluded that occupational stress in organizations is hinged on role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity being the immediate causative factors.

Majority (95%) of the respondents experienced anxiety in the performance of their responsibilities. Mansell and Brough (2005) in expanding the concept of the organizational stress theory postulated that, a part of organizational stress is seen in the anxiety experienced by the employees of the organizations due to instances like lack of clarity on their roles as well as the expectations, uncertainty about the roles they are to perform and insufficient understanding of the goals and objectives of the roles.

Role conflicts also had an effect on their effectiveness and efficiency. Majority (81%) indicated that the prevalence of the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflicts affected their effectiveness and efficiency. Tang and Chang (2010) argue that role ambiguity and role conflicts results in a situation where the individual becomes doubtful of their capabilities which consequentially results to a reduction of their perceived self-efficacy and this affects their effectiveness and efficiency.

The perceived low self-efficacy results in dissatisfaction among the personnel regarding their daily routines and this had a rippling effect on their commitment to the duties and the organization. Kahn et al. (1964) intimates that role ambiguity and role conflict both result in dissatisfaction and decreased confidence in the organization, coupled with tension and overall ineffectiveness of the organization. The negative effect of dissatisfaction among the employees on their commitment to the organization is also expressed in the findings of the study of Gormley and Kennerly (2010) in their analysis of the influence of work role and perceptions of climate on the commitment of the faculty of an educational organization shows that both role conflict and role ambiguity have negative effects on organizational commitment.

Role conflicts have also been indicated to have spurred some physical conflicts among the public relations officers of Service since some of the public relations officers have personalized their roles. The findings of Duzie (2012) and Rahim (2011) show that, role conflicts and role ambiguity have the prospects of degenerating and escalating into interpersonal conflicts. This is in part due to the tendency of some individuals to personalize role conflicts resulting in a friction between the individuals involved.

Earlier studies have established that, role conflicts and role ambiguity do not always have negative consequences for the performance effectiveness and efficiency of the employees and the organization in general, but has the prospect of helping the organization gain some strides and make some gains. Some of such assertions is by Fisher (2000) who argues that role conflict and role ambiguity possess some creative and positive tendencies that can actuate social change and Yoshioka (1990) that role ambiguity has the tendency to enable employees and individuals become adaptable to changing situations. Similarly, there were some positive highlights in the study where the conflicting roles as indicated by the personnel of the public relations department have influenced creative and innovative solutions and ways of executing their duties in the Ghana Education Service. These findings buttress earlier studies like that of Tang and Cheng (2010) who concluded that role conflicts increase creativity among employees as multiple roles were observed to have exposed employees to different perspectives.

## **5.2 Practical Suggestions and Recommendations to Manage Role Conflict in the Ghana Education Service**

The findings of the study showed that, role conflict is prevalent in the Ghana Education Service and measures must be taken to reduce its prevalence and totally curb it. The following recommendations and suggestions are put forward;

- i. There should be an established differentiation of roles that are assigned to each employee.
- ii. There should be steps taken to ensure consistency in the performance of the given sets of roles to avert increased incidents of role conflicts.
- iii. There should be unanimity among the superiors about the role expectations of the public relations officers. This will cater for the issues regarding incongruent and incompatible assignment of duties and its attendant problems of unclear expectations.
- iv. Personnel must be given roles that are not incongruent with their required roles or expertise.
- v. There should be steps taken to ensure the highest standards of role clarity to remove misunderstandings and differences in mind-sets regarding the perceived and expected roles of the personnel. This can be achieved by ensuring that the necessary information needed for the performance of the various roles are provided.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

As Public Relations practice continues to evolve, it is imperative to keep assessing how the practitioners of the profession progress in the performance of their job. Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity as discussed in the earlier chapters can have direct or indirect effects on the performance of Public Relations practitioners. This study sought to research into how role conflict and role ambiguity affects Public Relations practitioners in the Ghana Education Service.

The study revealed that the PR practitioners of GES had a fair understanding of the concept of role conflict and role ambiguity. They knew exactly what their roles as PROs were relative to the two concepts that the research set to find out.

Also, the study tried to find out whether there were instances of role conflict and role ambiguity. It was revealed that the PROs had clarity on what their roles were and what was expected of them as they had a lot of knowledge about their work. This eliminates the concept of role ambiguity in the discharge of their duties. However, same cannot be said about role conflict as the study revealed that role conflict is prevalent in the PR practice of GES for instance practitioners having to deal with taking instructions from more people with multiple expectations vis-a-vis not having the resources they needed to perform such roles.

There is therefore the need to have consistency in the PR practice of the Ghana Education Service and to that, the Service must assign established roles to all PR practitioners across the Greater Accra Region in order to eliminate the concept of role conflict and to ensure uniformity in the practice of PR in the service.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies**

The study suffered from limitations, which served as the basis for recommending suggestions to aid in prospective studies.

- i. Since this current study is an exploratory one, future studies should use a larger sample to give a generalizable view, with regards to the effect of role ambiguity and role conflicts on employee and organizational performance.
- ii. Future studies should also envisage an organization-based studies to help in adequately measuring the effect of role ambiguity and role conflicts on the performance, effectiveness and efficiency of employees and organizations in general. Qualitative case studies should be done to have a deeper insight into how the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflicts impacts on the performance of such organizations.

- iii. Another potent area for further studies is the examination of various ways in which the organizations have attempted to mitigate the incidence of role conflict and role ambiguity and how these can be used as a reference in such discussions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is SELASI GLORIA KUGBLENU, a student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations. I am conducting a research on the topic *Impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on the performance of Public Relations officers. A study of directorates of the Ghana Education Service.*

I will be privileged to have you participate in this survey. You are assured of the confidentiality of your responses as information provided will be used for academic purposes only.

The questionnaire is made up three sections.

Kindly indicate your responses by selecting from the list of alternatives provided, the one that best answers each question.

#### SECTION A

##### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section seeks basic questions about you.

Kindly select only one option from the alternatives provided.

1. Gender: a. Male    b. Female
2. Age
  - a. 19 years or less
  - b. 20 to 29 years
  - c. 30 to 39 years
  - d. 40 to 49 years
  - e. 50 to 59 years
  - f. 60 years or above
3. How long have you been working in the Ghana Education Service?
  - a. 1 year or less
  - b. 2 to 4 years
  - c. 5 to 7 years
  - d. 8 to 10 years
  - e. 11 or more years
4. What is your highest educational qualification?
  - a. Diploma
  - b. Higher Diploma
  - c. Bachelor's degree
  - d. Master's degree
  - e. Doctorate degree

5. In one sentence, clearly describe your role in the **Ghana Education Service**?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION B**  
**ROLE AMBIGUITY**

**Please tick the boxes below to indicate how you agree or disagree with the statements below regarding your role at the Ghana Education Service where the ratings are: 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree**

**In your own words, briefly define role ambiguity**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. I feel certain about how much authority I have

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

7. I have a clear, planned goals and objectives for my job

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

8. I know that I have divided my time properly

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

9. I know exactly what my responsibilities are.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree

Strongly Agree

- 10. I know exactly what is expected of me.
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
  
- 11. Explanation is clear of what has to be done.
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree

**SECTION C**

**ROLE CONFLICT**

**Please tick the boxes below to indicate how you agree or disagree with the statements below regarding your role at the Ghana Education Service where the ratings are: 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.**

**Briefly define your role as a Public Relations Officer in the Ghana Education Service**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

- 12. I have specified roles but I perform them in different ways
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
  
- 13. I receive assignment without thenecessary resources to complete it
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
  
- 14. In the discharge of my duties, I encounter rules and policies that conflict with my roles
  - a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree

- c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
15. I work with two or more units/departments who operate quite differently
- a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
16. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people
- a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
17. I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others
- a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
18. I receive assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it
- a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree
19. I perform other functions that are not related to my work.
- a. Strongly Disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly Agree

**SECTION D**  
**EFFECTS OF ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ROLE CONFLICT ON PR**  
**PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE**

**Kindly answer questions in this sections if you responded agree or strongly agree to more than one of the questions in Sections B and C above.**

20. The situations of role conflicts and role ambiguity results in stress associated with the performance of your responsibilities.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
21. The ambiguity and conflicts regarding my responsibilities lead to work anxiety.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
22. Role ambiguity and role conflicts affect my effectiveness and efficiency.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
23. I am often dissatisfied with my daily routine which in turn affects my commitment to the organization.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
24. There are situations where conflicting roles result in physical conflicts with the employees involved.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
25. The conflicts associated with my duties and responsibilities sometimes spurs creativity among myself and my colleagues
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral

- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree