



**Role clarity and employee  
performance within cross-  
functional teams in a South African  
energy-generation subsidiary**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Jane Mabotja hereby declare that this mini dissertation submitted herewith to the North-West University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is my own original work. It has been text-edited in accordance with professional communication standards and has not been previously submitted to any other institution for evaluation purposes.

Jane Mabotja

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## ABSTRACT

Cross-functional teams are vital to operational efficiency in energy generation settings, where time-critical, safety-important and technically challenging tasks require seamless collaboration across different areas. Despite their value, the effectiveness of such teams often struggle with unclear roles, inconsistent communication and varying levels of employee experience. This quantitative study examined the link between role clarity and worker performance within cross-functional teams at a selected South African energy generation subsidiary. Using a deductive approach and a correlational, cross-sectional design, the research sought to empirically determine whether higher levels of role clarity translate into improved self-reported employee performance.

Data were collected from 54 employees across engineering, workshop operations, project management, maintenance, quality and supporting technical roles. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used to intentionally target individuals actively involved in cross-functional operations. Role clarity and employee performance were measured with established scales, both of which showed strong internal reliability. Descriptive statistics offered insights into demographic patterns, including employment type and years in cross-functional teams, while inferential tests employed Pearson's correlation and straightforward linear regression.

The results showed a positive and statistically significant link between role clarity and employee performance ( $r > 0$ ,  $p < .01$ ), further supported by a meaningful regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings confirm that increased clarity in roles, expectations and reporting structures are associated with better performance among employees working in complex, interdependent team settings. Differences observed across experience levels and types of employment suggest that targeted approaches, such as structured onboarding, ongoing communication and strengthened managerial support may help optimise performance.

The study contributes to organisational behaviour and human resource management literature by offering empirical evidence from a highly specialised energy generation setting. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of systematic role clarification processes to boost cross-functional team effectiveness, especially in environments where

operational reliability and accuracy are critical. The recommendations emphasise the need for ongoing communication, continuous training and organisational support to maintain consistent role understanding across various technical teams.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	FULL TERM
CFT	Cross-Functional Teams
HR	Human resource
JCM	Job Characteristic Model
NWU	North West University
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
RC	Role Clarity
RA	Role Ambiguity
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
SA	South Africa
KPI	Key performance Indicators

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

Cross-functional teams have become a central element in organisational systems, particularly in sectors that require the highest levels of teamwork to deliver time-bound and high-quality work. These teams have members from various departments who are given the responsibility of achieving a mutually agreed organisational goal. The team's efficiency is regularly impacted by the role clarity of personal duties in the team. Purnomo *et al.* (2021:534) posit that role clarity determines workers' clear comprehension of their duties, responsibilities, performance prospects and reporting systems. Role clarity indicates levels of productivity and effectiveness. Conversely, role ambiguity can cause misunderstandings, a reduced level of motivation and suboptimal performance. Regardless of the increasing reliance on cross-functional teams in the South African energy subsidiaries, there are still inadequate empirical studies that have examined the influence of role clarity on workers' performance in these scenarios. This research study intends to examine this connection by concentrating on the context of a South African energy generation subsidiary. Investigating how role clarity impacts personal and team performance will add valuable insights in improving cross-functional team efficiency and heightening organisational results.

## **1.2. RESEARCH CONTEXT: BACKGROUND**

The energy generation subsidiary functions in a very demanding environment where reliability and efficiency are of higher importance for daily operations. The subsidiary business unit handles complex refurbishment and maintenance and projects for the parent company, with the high expectation of quality and timeous completion of the tasks at hand. To ensure that the subsidiary business unit achieves quality work and complete their project/maintenance tasks timeously with no compromising of safety during the execution of these complex projects and refurbishment, the organisation bring together its teams from various departments such as design, Engineering, safety, quality and project management to work together to achieve its mandated goals. The success of these teams relies on how well each member understands their specific duties and responsibilities. However, a major issue these teams face is the lack of role clarity, which might obstruct performance and reduce the team's overall efficiency. Role clarity is

essential as it guarantees that workers comprehend their exact duties, performance prospects and reporting structures and in that way lessening levels of confusion and improving productivity (Singh, 2024:45). When workers do not have clarity in their duties, they might experience uncertainty, overlapping duties and occupational fights which eventually yield inadequacies in project implementation (Maslach & Leiter, 2022:112).

In the South African energy generation subsidiary business unit, which operates as a technical and engineering-driven organisation, role ambiguity remains a recurring challenge that directly affects the quality and timely execution of work. The organisation heavily relies on cross functional teams. However, overlapping of duties and unclear roles often results in employees unsure of their job functions. Studies have shown that role ambiguity contributes to reduced job satisfaction, increased stress levels and diminished performance in a technical environment (Fathima *et al.*, 2022; Cininta, 2023). In the generation subsidiary, these shortcomings can lead to re-work, decision delays and quality deviations, ultimately disrupting schedule adherence and customer commitments. Bakker *et al.* (2021) posit that well-defined roles experience better-quality workers' engagement, better occupational satisfaction and improved teamwork. Equally, obstinate role ambiguity can cause minimal occupational performance, minimised motivation and augmented turnover levels (Quirap, 2022:98). When all roles are clearly defined and directly connected to deliverable, teams are likely to work more cohesively, decisions are made faster and tasks are completed right the first time.

Regardless of the acknowledged significance of role clarity in maximising worker's performance, there is still inadequate studies that have discovered its influence in the South African energy industry, predominantly in subsidiaries that depend on cross-functional teams. Comprehending how role clarity impacts workers' performance is fundamental in the formation of directed interventions that will improve collaboration, reduce performance gaps and procedural inefficiencies and improve organisational technical efficiency. This study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the relationship amid role clarity and worker's performance in a South African energy generation subsidiary by offering perceptions that can enlighten approaches in improving role definition and the whole team efficiency.

### 1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The cumulative difficulties of energy generation processes in South Africa requires the presence of operative teamwork among workers with varied knowledge. To meet these stresses, energy generation subsidiaries have implemented cross-functional teams to try and improve productivity, advance problem-solving processes and enable knowledge exchange. However, one of the main serious issues that is being experienced by these teams is role ambiguity, which arises when workers do not have a clear comprehension of their main duties, performance expectations together with decision-making authority. The lack of distinct roles in cross-functional teams can cause major confusion, inadequacies, fights and minimised occupational satisfaction which eventually affects employee performance and administrative results (Scarlat & Bărar, 2023:56).

Role clarity is a fundamental aspect influencing worker's performance in cross-functional teams as it guarantees that team members thoroughly comprehend their responsibilities, reporting systems and responsibility measures. When workers have role ambiguity, they might find it hard to make decisions, duplicate efforts or have the inability to take initiative because of uncertainty around their main duties (Levinthal & Rerup, 2021:85). In the extremely controlled energy industry where timely project execution and production efficiency is highly critical, these inadequacies can end up causing project delays, operative disturbances, minimised levels of productivity and also compromising quality. Moreover, role ambiguity is connected with high work-related stress, minimised levels of engagement and maximised turnover rates that can additionally influence the whole team efficiency (Chen *et al.*, 2025:102).

Regardless of the importance of role clarity when it comes to refining employee performance, numerous organisations like the chosen South African energy generation subsidiary lack fixed tools to describe and communicate occupational duties within cross-functional teams. The main problem is the lack of clear guiding principles on how accountabilities should be dispersed and coordinated amongst team members. Frequent change in project scope, reporting structures and leadership approaches intensify role ambiguity, thereby constraining employees ability to maintain consistent and reliable performance. Frequent changes in project scope, reporting structures and leadership approaches intensify role ambiguity, thereby constraining employees' ability to maintain

consistent and reliable performance. The absence of clear structure for role provision causes workers to resort to informal role negotiation which might result in misalignment amid separate contributions and team goals (Pasanen, 2024:67).

This research examines connection amid role clarity which is the independent variable and employee performance which is a dependent variable in cross-functional teams located in South African energy generation subsidiary. This study seek to examine the extent to which role clarity impacts worker's productivity, collaboration, job satisfaction and the overall performance. Finding the main sources of role ambiguity and investigating their influence on employee results will offer actionable perceptions on how to improve team dynamics and operative efficiency in the energy industry.

#### **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this research study is to examine the connection amid role clarity and worker's performance in cross-functional teams located in the South African energy generation subsidiary. The study will assist in evaluating the influence of role clarity, its influence on performance and the aspects adding to role ambiguity. Furthermore, the study seeks to offer perceptions that will assist in improving teamwork, occupational satisfaction and operative effectiveness through the means of better role definition and management processes.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To attain the aim of this research, the following objectives have been identified:

- To quantify the level of role clarity among employees in cross-functional teams.
- To assess the impact of role clarity on employee performance metrics.
- To examine the statistical relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction.
- To identify the item-level pattern within the role clarity construct.
- To evaluate strategies that statistically improve clarity and team performance.

## 1.6 RESEARCH SCOPE

This research examined the link between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams at a South African energy-generation subsidiary. It focused on employees engaged in cross-departmental projects and operations, including roles in engineering, maintenance, quality, project management, and technical support. Role clarity and performance were assessed using validated quantitative scales, with data analysed through descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression.

The study excluded external contractors, employees outside these teams, and variables like job satisfaction or leadership style that the instrument did not measure. Consequently, the findings are specific to the subsidiary involved and reflect perceptions at the data collection time.

## 1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To answer the study's objectives, this research explores the following study questions:

- What is the measured level of role clarity in cross-functional teams?
- To what extent does role clarity predict employee performance?
- Which dimensions of role clarity are most strongly associated with job satisfaction and collaboration?

## 1.8 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Based on this theoretical alignment, the study conceptualises role clarity as the independent variable that predicts employee performance as the dependent variable within cross-functional teams.

**H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams.

**H2:** Higher levels of role clarity are associated with higher job satisfaction among employees.

**H3:** Role ambiguity negatively impacts collaboration and productivity in cross-functional teams.

## **1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research study is important for real-world and educational purposes. For the chosen South African energy generation subsidiary, the study outcomes will produce valued perceptions on how role clarity impacts worker's performance in cross-functional teams. Finding the main problems linked to role ambiguity will assist managers together with team leaders in formulating approaches that will boost job clarity, advance teamwork and heighten the overall effectiveness. Enhanced role definition can yield maximum levels of efficiency, minimised occupational stress and high occupational satisfaction that will benefit workers and the organisation (Asamani *et al.*, 2025).

This research study will add knowledge to the current body of literature on team dynamics, organisational conduct and performance administration, predominantly in the energy industry. It will contribute empirical proof to the increasing research on cross-functional teams by bridging the academic gaps in comprehending how role clarity impacts performance in high-stakes sectors. The study results can function as a reference for forthcoming research on refining team structures and worker's engagement in comparable organisational contexts.

## **1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Although this research seeks to produce valued perceptions into the connection amid role clarity and worker's performance in cross-functional teams, there are some limitations that should be recognised. Firstly, this research will be restricted to a single energy generation subsidiary in South Africa, which might limit the generalisability of the study outcomes to other sectors. The results might mirror the company's main dynamics making wider implementation to varied business environments hard (Zabel O'Brien & Natzel, 2023:92).

This research is depended on self-reported survey data, which might cause response prejudice because of personal insights of role clarity and performance. The participants may give publicly desirable replies rather than individual experiences (De Souza &

Schmader, 2022:134). In a cross-sectional study the data will be gathered at a single point in a duration of which might restrict the capability to evaluate changes in role clarity and performance over time. Forthcoming studies must resolve this limitation by conducting a longitudinal approach to observe trends and causality over a prolonged period.

### 1.11 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

**Role Clarity:** The degree to which workers clearly comprehend their occupational duties, expectations and reporting systems in a team or organization (Shipman, Burrell & Huff Mac Pherson, 2023:21).

- **Employee Performance:** The efficiency with which workers' finish their responsibilities, attain organisational objectives and add to team success (Clack, 2021:35).
- **Cross-Functional Teams:** Teams consist of staff from varied departments which function collectively towards a shared objective, regularly requiring high levels of partnership and coordination (Attah *et al.*, 2024:56).
- **Role Ambiguity:** A circumstance where workers have uncertainty around their tasks, responsibilities or expectations which causes misunderstanding and minimised levels of effectiveness (Shockley *et al.*, 2021:87).
- **Positivist Research Philosophy:** A scientific method of research that depend on objective measurements, statistical examination and hypothesis testing to launch connections amid variables (Jutidharabongse *et al.*, 2024:112).
- **Quantitative Research:** A study method that includes the gathering and the examination of numerical data to find patterns, connections and trends in a structured and objective way (Karunarathna *et al.*, 2024:98).

### 1.12 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This research study is made up of five chapters that explain the main aspect of the research. Chapter 1 presents the study background data, the main study's problem, objectives, study questions, importance, limitations and significant definitions. Chapter 2 encompasses a literature review that mainly communicates current research, theoretical

structures and identifies academic gaps linked to role clarity and workers' performance in cross-functional teams. Chapter 3 explains the study design and methodology by detailing the study's approach, philosophy, sampling strategy, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, validity, reliability and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 concentrates on data analysis and study outcomes through the means of descriptive and inferential statistics to show the connection between role clarity and employee performance. Chapter 5 is the last section of the study which focus on the study outcomes in connection to the literature, drawing conclusions, giving suggestion to organisations and present areas for forthcoming studies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The South African energy sector is characterised by its critical role in the national development of its complex operational challenges, including ageing infrastructures, high electricity demand and the stringent regulatory requirements. Within this environment, energy generation subsidiaries rely heavily on cross functional teams to execute philosophy and breakdown projects, drive maintenance programmes and foster innovation. The performance of these teams are a key factor in the organisation reaching its key performance indicators and also the competitiveness of the subsidiary. The pivotal factor influencing this team's performance is role clarity, which is defined to be the degree to which an employee has a clear perception of their role expectations and actions (Gede & Huluka, 2023). Hartenian *et al.* (1994) allude that role clarity is an important factor to increase employee's performance. It is therefore, imperative that the two relationships between role clarity and employee's performance be studied in the context of the South African energy subsidiary to ensure that the organisation meets its goal and maintain its efficacy in the energy generation sector.

Though global literature firmly establishes a positive correlation between role clarity and employee's performance, the manifestation of this relationship in the unique socio organisational context of the South African energy generation subsidiaries remains critical, yet under researched area. The literature review will provide a detailed investigation of current studies on the relationship between role clarity and worker's

performance, predominantly in cross-functional teams in the energy industry. It will explore significant theoretical viewpoints like Role Theory, the Job Characteristics Model and Team Effectiveness Theory with the intension to launch a conceptual groundwork for the research. It will also stress the importance of having clear role definition in improving collaboration, productivity and occupational satisfaction while recognising the issues caused by role ambiguity. Looking at maximising dependence on cross-functional teams in energy generation subsidiaries, comprehending how role clarity influences worker's performance is important in refining organisational effectiveness. This review also find academic gaps in the current literature, predominantly the absence of studies concentrating on the South African energy industry and placing this study as a contribution to close those gaps

In line with this focus, this chapter's main aim is to explore both the theoretical and the empirical perspectives that explain the connection between role clarity and employee's performance, particularly in cross-functional teams. It also interprets these ideas within the working environment of a South African energy generation subsidiary, where team collaboration and operational precision are essential. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the theories that explain how role clarity influence individual and teams performance, to review previous study studies that have examined these relationships in cross-functional team settings and to highlight the contextual gaps that exist in the South African energy industry and show how the study contributes to addressing them.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework forms the foundation for understanding the relationship between role clarity and employee performance, particularly in cross-functional teams. Organisational behaviour theories suggest that well-defined roles have the ability to improve worker's effectiveness, drive collaboration while role ambiguity causes major stress, minimised levels of performance and workplace fights (Sehgal, 2023:42). In settings like energy generation subsidiaries where multiple departments collaborate on complex and interdependent projects, role clarity become especially critical. This research will take inspiration from Role Theory, the Job Characteristics Model together with Team Effectiveness Theory with the goal to examine how clearly defined roles add to personal and team performance, predominantly in the South African energy industry.

Role Theory posits that workers working in predefined roles know their duties and anticipated conducts in an organisation. When roles are openly explained, workers go through minimal levels of uncertainty which permits them to do tasks more successfully and add profoundly with team objectives (Lapshun & Fusch, 2023:63). Conversely, a lack of role clarity makes workers find it hard to comprehend their main duties, thereby leading to augmented workplace stress, fights and inadequacies (Furendal & Jebari, 2023:88). In cross-functional teams the absence of well-defined roles regularly causes duplicated efforts or abandoned responsibilities and in that way obstructing the whole team performance.

The Job Characteristics Model further clarifies how occupational design like position clarity, job identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback impacts employees drive and efficiency. Employees who comprehend their positions in a team have high possibilities of finding their roles significant, which will result in maximum levels of occupational satisfaction and engagement (Bakker, 2022:74). Role ambiguity can minimise employees' sense of drive and control over their duties and this will contribute to minimal levels of efficiency and occupational dissatisfaction. This model stresses the significance of clearly defining occupational roles in cross-functional teams because they guarantee that workers identify their contributions to the whole organizational objectives.

Team Effectiveness Theory gave alludes to how team dynamics, practices and role definition influence the levels of performance. The theory stresses how operative teams necessitate clearly well-defined roles and duties to work well. When positions are ambiguous, workflow disturbances happen of which damagingly affecting team unity and efficiency (Saban, 2024:57). In the framework of energy generation subsidiaries, role ambiguity can end up causing miscommunication and inadequacies. Implementing this theory will enable this research in stressing how improving role clarity in cross-functional teams can nurture teamwork, streamline processes and eventually advance employee performance.

These theories together explain how role clarity impacts employee performance in cross-functional teams. Role Theory shows how well-defined expectations decrease uncertainty and facilitate task completion, while the Job Characteristics Model emphasises that clear

job details boost motivation, significance, and sense of identity in tasks. Team Effectiveness Theory adds that structured, clearly assigned roles improve coordination, reduce overlap, and enhance team results. Combined, these theories support the idea that increased role clarity can lead to improved employee performance. This combined understanding underpins the study's hypothesis.

### **2.3 OPERATIONALISATION OF CONSTRUCTS**

Role clarity has been measured in different ways across organisational studies, but most researchers rely on multi-item scales that assess how well employees understand their tasks, goals and work processes. One of the earliest and most recognised measures is the Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Inventory developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970). Since then, several studies have adapted and refined this instrument to suit different work environments. These scales generally ask employees to reflect on whether they know what is expected of them, how their performance is evaluated and whether their duties are clearly defined in their teams. The responses are often captured using Likert-type scales that indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

While some researchers explore role clarity through separate aspects such as task clarity, goal and process clarity, others prefer to treat it as a single, combined construct. Studies by Hinkin (1998) and Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), for instance, use a unidimensional approach that brings these elements together to represent the overall experience of clarity that employees have in their roles. This integrated view makes sense in modern organisations, especially in cross-functional teams where roles often overlap and separating each element may not fully capture the employee's understanding of their responsibilities.

Employee performance has also been discussed and measured in various ways in organisational research. According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997), performance goes beyond simply completing assigned tasks; it includes three main areas: task performance, which focuses on how effectively individuals carry out their duties; adaptive performance, which reflects how well they adjust to changes or challenges and contextual performance, which includes behaviours that support the broader functioning of the organisation, such

as teamwork and initiative. Later work by Campbell (1999) and Koopmans *et al.* (2014) supports this multidimensional view, showing that performance should be understood as both job-related and behaviourally oriented. From the literature, it is clear that both role clarity and employee performance are measurable and have been studied extensively through well-established instruments. Although role clarity is theoretically multidimensional, the present study analysed role clarity as a single composite variable, consistent with its statistical design and hypotheses.

## **2.4 CONCEPTUALISING ROLE CLARITY**

The role clarity construct has taken on a significant role in the field of studies on organisational behaviour and human resource management, representing the degree to which employees are so free of role conflict to the extent that they have a clear conception of their roles, responsibilities and performance expectations in the work organisation. Research has extensively developed the perspective that role clarity is a fundamental determinant of individual productivity, employee job contentment and team effectiveness by reducing uncertainty, harmonising employee efforts with organisational goals and facilitating accountability (Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.*, 2023:198).

Role clarity is not simply about assigning responsibilities; it internationalises the articulation of the organisation's purpose, the coordination between the individual's role and the strategic priorities and the implementation of strong feedback loops to make people aware of how they are contributing to the organization's achievement (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022:680). Recent empirical studies also show that role clarity moderates a bunch of relevant variables (i.e., innovative work behaviour, organizational citizenship behaviour, and leader-member exchange), which in turn impacts the performance, as well as innovation potential, organizational adaptability and employee well-being (Zaheer, Anjum, Amoozegar & Heidler, 2025:3) hence a thorough understanding of role clarity will be very important both for further theory development, as well as for practice. It provides a conceptual framework for analysing its strongly connected constitutive dimensions by contrasting it with role ambiguity in current organisational research and by outlining its ongoing development.

### 2.4.1 Definitions and Dimensions of Role Clarity

Role clarity involves that employees are well aware of their responsibilities, what outcomes are expected and how they contribute to the companies' overall objectives. According to Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023:198), it occurs when the workers are certain about what they are expected to do and how their duties can be beneficial to the organisation. Being aware of this helps in lowering confusion and increasing accountability in people. Ahmed *et al.* (2022:678) concur that when there is a clear understanding of what the goals are, then people will have a good guide on how to do well and remain motivated. The ideas demonstrate the role clarity as a factor of improved outcomes both in the individual and in the organisation.

The key components of role clarity are task clarity, process clarity and goal clarity, which provide the whole scenario. Task clarity deals with assigning duties explicitly and therefore, workers have a clear understanding of what belongs to them and can take action without any hesitation (Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.*, 2023: 199). Process clarity emphasises that the procedures and methodologies of doing work in place should be well laid out making it less confusing on how to accomplish tasks. The next element, that is goal clarity, emphasized by Ahmed *et al.* (2022:681), is a very important one as it will enable the workers to be aware of the specific results they should receive and how they will be rated on performance. These three sections provide the what, how and why of a job that is necessary in being able to perform the work.

Role clarity is not simply the definition of a role, but also has an influence on what and what people do. Studies indicate that individuals whose roles are well defined are more likely to perform their activities well, adapt to changes and perform their duties even when they are not in office. In a study by Zaheer *et al.* (2025:3) it was determined that innovative work behaviour and teamwork are enhanced with clear roles. Equally, Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 200) found that clear roles are strongly linked to task, adaptive, and contextual performance among university staff. These findings indicate that defined roles not only affect individual performance, but also the performance of an organisation as a whole.

Role clarity varies as an organisation, leadership and context varies. In a study by Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 683) supportive leaders enhance clarity of goals hence boosting confidence and job performance of people. This demonstrates that leaders play a major role in creating clarity through setting clear expectations and providing feedback. According to Zaheer *et al.* (2025:5), roles in workplaces that experience the transition to technology are a flexible tool that maintains employees abreast with the new demands in the workplace. These observations imply that role clarity cannot be considered as a rigid statement of the responsibilities, but as a process of aligning the actions of the employees to the objectives of the organisation.

#### **2.4.2 Role Clarity vs. Role Ambiguity**

Role ambiguity and role clarity are the two opposite concepts that have been researched extensively in psychology and management. The role clarity implies that there is clarity in responsibilities, expectations and processes. Role ambiguity implies that they are not clear, and thus, employees are not aware of what to do. According to Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 201), role clarity is a way of providing the direction of the employees and minimizing the duplication of duties, thus, making the work more efficient. Conversely, role ambiguity tends to create confusion, reduce motivation and commitment to the organisation due to the interpretation of requirements (Dialnet, 2021: 53). This comparison explains the reason why businesses attempt to clarify positions and minimise uncertainty.

The detriments of role ambiguity are not new and the impacts are more predominantly experienced in employee performance and emotion. According to Dialnet (2021: 55), role ambiguity contributes to job stress, dissatisfaction and decreased commitment since employees are unable to accomplish unclear expectations. The concept can also be observed in the tertiary system, where imperfect roles of non-academic employees lead to the lack of efficiency and role conflict (Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.*, 2023: 202). Role ambiguity is also detrimental to teamwork as it creates confusion on who does what hence resulting in duplication of work or lack of work. The findings support the argument that although clarity is beneficial to performance, ambiguity is detrimental because it brings about frustration and lack of engagement.

The gap between role clarity and ambiguity is also evident in the case of their impact on adaptive and contextual performance. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 200) discovered that role clarity does not only enhance task performance, but also adaptive performance where employees quickly adapt to change and contextual performance which encompasses behaviours that are beneficial to the overall company environment. Conversely, role ambiguity undermines flexibility as employees fear making decisions and their self-confidence when it comes to taking initiative is low (Dialnet, 2021: 57). These results indicate that clarity enhances the capacity of employees to cope with uncertainty, whereas ambiguity aggravates the predicament caused by the transforming environment.

Role clarity or ambiguity depends on leadership to determine which side triumphs in an organisation. According to Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 683), empowered leaders make situations less ambiguous by assigning employees clear objectives and instilling their confidence in carrying out tasks. On the same note, Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 5) suggest that leaders who foster effective communication and alignment enables the employees to avoid the confusion and stress that is associated with ambiguity. The role clarity and ambiguity are not the antithetic notions; they are predetermined by the management practices, company culture and communication. Businesses that encourage transparency in the management of ambiguity sources tend to have a higher performance and staff welfare.

## **2.5 THE EVOLUTION OF ROLE CLARITY IN ORGANISATIONAL STUDIES**

The concept of role clarity has undergone a comprehensive conceptual evolution in which it evolved to a narrower concept that entails solely task definition to a comprehensive concept that entails employee motivation, flexibility and organisational citizenship. The former theoretical laboratory perspectives emphasised the necessity to possess employees with precise incisive understanding of the expected behaviours in an effort to prevent misunderstanding and ineffective work. According to Nwokohu-Obidike, Gabriel and Ogbonda (2023: 201), the concept of role clarity has moved beyond a perspective as a system of ensuring compliance with job description to the notion of a giver of trust and interaction among workers. This change is based on the recognition that defined and discrete roles are not just fundamental to the personal output, but also overall organisational output.

The role visibility treatment in the academic community has gradually incorporated psychological and behavioural elements and thus, shedding light on its influence on household attitudes and other endowments. Dialnet (2021:54) will prove that role ambiguity, which until recently was considered much more of a performance-related problem, is now identified with stress, job dissatisfaction and burnout and how psychologically important the role clarity can be. Similarly Zaheer *et al.* (2025:3) indicate that role clarity is linked with high levels of innovative behaviour and organisational citizenship behaviour, thus demonstrating its implication on more than just the routine behaviour, but discretionary behaviour to strengthen organisational resilience. Such progress testifies to the fact that it should no longer be considered an operational issue, but a complex creation with strategic implications.

The role clarities literature has also included leadership and organisational culture as the key determinants of role clarities. According to Ahmed *et al.* (2022:683), empowering leadership is a modern trend influencing the role clarity by aligning the tasks of the employees with the goals of the organisation and through fostering self-efficacy. This is one of the ways this view was a divergence to the tendency amongst earlier concepts based on the assumption that role clarity was only a result of the formal job design and task allocation. Modern theories have argued that role clarity arises dynamically by way of communication, feedback process and leadership practice and thus as a process that evolves along with the organisation in process of change. Reiterating that aspect is because of its emphasis on leadership, which illustrates that role definition has become a critical tool that gives managers the chance to impact motivation and performance.

The most recent stage of the studies of role clarity has focused on its role in the context that is characterised by digitalisation, the technological disruption and cross-functions integration. Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 5) clarify that role clarity is now a more agile process in dynamically evolving industries, which allows employees to keep pace with the evolving organisational objectives whilst retaining efficiency. This adaptive outlook is also applicable to the spheres of higher education and energy as innovation and work across functional lines requires understanding to prevent conflict and wastefulness (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022: 681). This continued development of the construct demonstrates that the role clarity has grown beyond a primitive requirement of operational efficiency as a dynamic

strategic aspect of organisation performance which remains at the heart of the academic theory and practice.

## **2.6 ROLE CLARITY AS A DETERMINANT OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

Role clarity is one of the key determinants of employee performance, which defines how people approach their work and bring success to organisations. Differentiation of roles allows employees to specialise in the things that matter the most, put their skills into proper use and not get confused which tends to reduce productivity. Contrastingly, role ambiguity has been associated with reduced levels of efficiency, dissatisfaction and increased turnover and it is a vital factor that leads to the achievement of organisational goals. Statistics and empirical research in the higher education, corporate work environment and the government sectors all demonstrate that role clarity increases productivity, increases job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Zaheer *et al.*, 2025:3).

### **2.6.1 Impact on Productivity and Efficiency**

Role clarity greatly promotes employee productivity since it makes people understand their responsibilities, the quality they must meet and how their input impacts organisational performances. Evidence acquired by Nwokohu-Obidike, Gabriel and Ogbonda (2023:200) confirmed that non-academic employees who have clear expectations portrayed greater levels of task performance, which enhanced the efficiency of operations in universities. This demonstrates that employees who are assured of their tasks are able to work with attentiveness and conviction which saves time wasted on not knowing what is required. In a similar manner, Ahmed *et al.* (2022 : 682) state that clarity in goal-setting allows employees to apply their abilities in a more efficient manner, which leads to increased productivity rates. These results indicate that role clarity is the corner stone to the constant and efficient performance.

Role clarity enhances efficiency because it will eradicate redundancy and overlapping of roles since in such settings there are issues of poor communication. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 201) explain that failure to define roles properly by organisations tends to create overlapping roles resulting in confusion and conflict which eventually lower efficiency.

Conversely, Zaheer, Anjum, Amoozegar and Heidler (2025:3) show that employees whose roles are clearly defined can work more effectively in teams and prevent redundant repetition and thus maximise teamwork. This shows that efficiency cannot be assumed as an individual performance only, but also produce the environment in which teams can perform in a coordinated fashion without misunderstanding each other.

Role clarity also allows employees to focus their efforts on value-adding tasks to create innovation and ongoing improvement. According to Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 5), when employees have role clarity they are more inclined to display innovative work behaviour because the lack of ambiguity will enable them to concentrate on problem-solving and creativity instead of spending time resolving uncertainties regarding expectations. Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 683) also indicate that the reinforcement of the sense of clarity by empowering the leaders leads to the fact that the employees are more adaptive and this fact will increase their efficiency in addressing evolving needs. These observations indicate that role clarity does not only favour standard productivity, but also motivates efficiency in dynamic organisational settings where flexibility and innovation is a must.

## **2.7 INFLUENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION AND RETENTION**

Role clarity is a critical factor in job satisfaction because it reduces uncertainties and provides employees with feelings of security with regard to their responsibilities (Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.*, 2023: 202). Empirical studies have shown that those non-academic employees who have a clear conceptualisation of their jobs experience high rates of job satisfaction and that clarity creates confidence in what is expected to be delivered. This finding is consistent with the results of Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 681), who argue that when employees are exposed to certain objectives and systematic feedback, they are more satisfied because they are able to track their progress, as well as to appreciate the usefulness of their input. All these findings imply that employee satisfaction is not entirely dependent on extrinsic compensation, but also inherently driven by internal clarity and a sense of stability in the work place.

Role clarity also has a significant effect on employee retention as it creates a situation that reduces stress and lowers turnover intentions. According to Dialnet (2021:55), role ambiguity is a primary antecedent of job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates as

employees get frustrated with vague demands. On the contrary, employees who have all the responsibilities clearly defined are more engaged and less likely to seek other employment opportunities (Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.*, 2023:202). Such evidenceary trend highlights the fact that there is a strong relationship between retention and role design whereby clarity creates the foundation of long lasting organisational commitment.

The positive influence of role clarity on retention and satisfaction is also increased by the fact that the positive effect is enhanced by supportive leadership practices. Ahmed *et al.* (2022:683) highlight that the empowerment of leadership boosts goal clarity and self-efficacy that ultimately leads to the satisfaction and loyalty of employees to the organisation. Likewise, Zaheer *et al.* (2025:5) hypothesise that role clarity supports innovative behaviour, thus inculcate the perception of growth and development to the employees and encourage them to stick to the organisation. This means that the accumulated evidence confirms that role clarity does not only alleviate current satisfaction, but also develops the trust and engagement needed to retain talent in the long-term.

## **2.8 CONNECTION WITH ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT**

The relationship between role clarity and organisational commitment is also strong as role clarity identifies the personal tasks and the overall goals and creates a sense of purpose in the work environment. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 201) documented that employees with high role clarity portrayed better contextual performance, which is an indicator of behaviours that go beyond the formal job responsibilities and benefit the organisation as a whole. This implies that the better the individual roles are understood in relation to the bigger organisational goals, the higher the chances of the employees being committed to organisational values and remain loyal to their employer. As a result of this role clarity acts as a psychological anchor cementing long-term commitment.

Employee engagement can also be increased by role clarity because day-to-day activities are given a sense of purpose and direction. Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 683) found that goal clarity was enhanced through leadership practices that empowered and consequently increased employee self-efficacy and engagement. This observation shows that when

goals are clearly expressed, workers would strive harder and put more efforts in the organisation since they feel that they can and are aligned with success in the organisation. Similarly, Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 3) indicated a positive relationship between role clarity and organisational citizenship behaviour which is a key determinant of engagement as employees were more ready to take supportive actions and cooperate with their colleagues.

The interdependence of clarity, commitment and engagement is further enhanced in vibrant organisational environments which require flexibility and creativity. Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 5) states that role clarity gives employees the confidence to engage in innovative work behaviours thus enhancing their organisational growth commitment and intrinsic interest in work. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 200) also argued that role clarity can contribute to adaptive performance so that employees are able to react to change without losing focus or commitments. The results support the hypothesis that role clarity is not only an operational necessity, but also a strategic driver that helps to promote commitment and engagement and, eventually, underprepared sustainable organisational performance.

## **2.9 ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ITS ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCES**

Role ambiguity has been considered a negative issue that influences the performance of organisations and the well-being of employees. As opposed to role clarity, which gives employees confidence and direction, role ambiguity creates uncertainty about duties, expectations and performance standards. This ambiguity upsets personal performance and group work, often leading to increased stress, a lack of motivation and a lack of commitment to the organisation (Dialnet, 2021:55; Nwokohu *et al.*, 2023:201). Intersectoral literature provides evidence that in cases of ambiguity, organisations face more attrition, poor communication and mental stress among employees and this therefore highlights ambiguity as a crucial risk to operational efficiency and human stability.

## 2.10 WORKPLACE STRESS, BURNOUT AND TURNOVER

Role ambiguity is widely recognised as a major cause of workplace stress as employees struggle to understand what is expected of them and how their performance will be assessed. Research consistently shows that unclear or overlapping responsibilities significantly increase stress and frustration levels, especially in situations where employees must interpret inconsistent or insufficient instructions. According to Khan, Tahir and Zafar (2020), role ambiguity has a strong positive link with psychological strain as employees use extra cognitive and emotional effort trying to decipher expectations, which in turn reduces efficiency and heightens emotional tension. As a result, the lack of clarity creates a work environment where stress becomes ingrained in everyday work practices.

The intersection between role ambiguity and burnout is also very clear; the constant lack of clarity undermines the ability of employees to maintain involvement and motivation. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023:202) state that non-academic staff who experienced conflicting or overlapping expectations were more prone to develop burnout symptoms of disengagement and low productivity. These results are consistent with the existing literature on different organisational environments, where role ambiguity is associated with emotional exhaustion and lack of attachment in work. Therefore, burnout is not only a workload phenomenon, but also an unclear expectations phenomenon in which the resilience of employees is undermined.

Role ambiguity is also a contributing factor to the turnover because a long-lasting sense of uncertainty undermines trust in the organisation and makes employees less obligated to stay loyal. Dialnet (2021:57) maintains that when employees have to face ambiguous duties they are more likely to have turnover intentions that were frequently followed by seeking alternative jobs in which the duties are more clearly defined. Similarly, Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 681) argue that the clarity of goals can moderate the risk of turnover because a sense of stability and purpose helps employees focus on a goal, while the lack of clarity, in turn, leads to a higher turnover propensity. Through these observations, it can be established that ambiguity does not just trigger stress and burnout, but also leads to expensive employee turnovers hence disruption of organisational continuity.

### 2.10.1 Conflict and Communication Breakdowns in Teams

Role ambiguity is a significant area of conflict in organisations since it causes confusion about roles and it undermines the boundaries that define roles. In cases where employees are not clear about the expectations placed on them, they often end up repeating the same duties or skipping crucial responsibilities thus contributing to interpersonal conflict in the team. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 201) argue that overlapping duties as a result of inadequately defined roles, triggered conflicts among non-academic staff in the Nigerian universities. This is a point that highlights that ambiguity, in addition to compromising performance, enhances interpersonal friction, and therefore, leads to working relationships that are strained and team cohesion that is low.

Role ambiguity also paralyses team communication by dampening the transmission of correct and timely information. As shown by Dialnet (2021: 55), confusing roles constantly interfere with the communication systems since employees do not know whom to consult with or whom to report to thus developing bottlenecks in the decision-making processes. This ambiguity kills the coordination aspect since the team members cannot build the required trust or responsibility when their roles are not clearly defined. Communication failure is especially harmful and Zaheer *et al.* (2025: 5) argue, in an innovative or cross-functional setting, where teamwork is the key to success. These results support the fact that problems in communication are one of the logical outcomes of role ambiguity.

Role ambiguity among teams also reduces the overall efficiency of the team by creating blame-shifting and defensive behaviours. Moreover, Dialnet (2021: 57) documents that conflict resolution was poor in teams where there was ambiguity since employees did not have a clear accountability structure. On the contrary, a study by Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 682) indicates that clarity of goals also helps to reduce such conflict by ensuring that the expectations of the parties involved are matched and there are open channels of communication. This fact explains that although role clarity builds team work, ambiguity creates a series of conflict and miscommunication that eventually diminishes the team effectiveness.

## 2.11 PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES OF ROLE AMBIGUITY

The psychological effects of role ambiguity are devastating to the employees since it creates a sense of uncertainty that has a direct effect on employees psychologically. Dialnet (2021: 55) posits that vague roles increase the level of anxiety, frustration and emotional limpness, workers have to work without knowing their course of action. This continuous insecurity reduces the self-esteem of the employees and destroys their feeling of security in their work place. Similar claims by Nwokohu-Obidika *et al.* (2023: 201) proves that in cases where employees lack adequate knowledge of their responsibilities, they lack sufficient psychological stability, which negatively impacts their ability to be productive. These results show that ambiguity not only impairs performance, but also negatively affects mental health.

The psychological stress that role ambiguity causes tends to bring about a low job satisfaction level and poor self-efficacy. As Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 681) attest, goal clarity boosts self-confidence and goal absence diminishes the belief of the employees that he/she is capable of achieving success. This drop in self-efficacy leads to a self-sustaining process of employees becoming less competent, which only reduces their motivation and interest. Dialnet (2021: 57) also notes that the ongoing ambiguity is an addition to a sense of helplessness and inertia which are usual antecedents of burnout. The results of these studies prove that not only is performance influenced by role ambiguity, but domains of their self-view towards work is also formed.

Role ambiguity is also linked with the long-term adverse psychological consequences, which include reduction in organisational commitment and withdrawal behaviours. A study by Zaheer *et al.* (2025:5) observe that employees in a situation of lack of clarity about their expectations get less likely to have organisational citizenship behaviours as a sinking sense of direction extinguishes their intentions to perform more than the official role. Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 202) in turn, determined that role ambiguity directly resulted in poor adaptive performance, that is, when employees feel psychologically strained, they are less adaptive to change. This fact implies that the psychological impacts of ambiguity do not just focus on individual well-being since it eventually reduces the ability of the organisation to facilitate engagement, resiliency and innovation.

## 2.12 ORGANISATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON ROLE CLARITY

The organisational structures and the managerial practices have a key role in influencing the levels of role clarity that employees have. Well organized job descriptions, clear hierarchical arrangements and well-defined reporting lines generate an environment where employees are able to excel in carrying out their duties with value and great confidence. According to Nwokohu-Obidike *et al.* (2023: 201), reporting structures were not clearly stipulated in the universities, which created overlapping responsibilities and ambiguity, which adversely impacted efficiency and employee effectiveness. On the other hand, when organisations institutionalise clarity using transparent procedures and communication, these organisations can be better placed to reduce uncertainty and maximize performance. This fact proves that the existence or lack of role clarity are all the consequences of organisational structures.

Another contextual aspect that highly dictates role clarity in organisations is leadership style. A study conducted by Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 683) revealed that goal clarity is achieved through empowering leadership as the developers explicitly communicate expected outcomes and promote self-efficacy hence employee performance. Likewise Zaheer, Anjum, Amoozegar and Heidler (2025: 5) emphasize that open communication and a focus on creating an alignment with the individual workload and organisational goals leads to leaders minimising the vagueness and inspire trust amongst personnel. This implies that leadership is not merely the means of task management, but an important factor of either ineffective or clarity of the responsibilities undertaken by the employees.

Role clarity experienced by employees will also largely depend on the organisational culture since it determines the values, belief and consciousness in communication that determines how to behave in the workplace. Nwokohu -Obidike *et al.* (2023: 202) state that where dysfunctional communication and performance norms characterise cultures, ambiguity is established because of years of inefficiencies in employee trust/commitment. Conversely, cultures that cherish transparency, teamwork and responsibility instill transparency ensuring that roles are well clarified and always enforced. Dialnet (2021: 55) indicated that in disorganised cultures where expectations change unpredictably it is more likely that ambiguity will flourish with the resultant increases in stress and

disengagement. This confirms reports of culture as a situational issue that may strengthen or weaken role specificity.

The role clarity is further defined by technological and environmental developments, especially in dynamic and innovation driven industries. Zaheer *et al.* (2025:3) establish that with digital transformation in workplaces role clarity equips a worker to accommodate better by ensuring that tasks change in regard to the organisational goals. The lack of revision of roles as a way of keeping up with changes in technology create a state of ambiguity among the employees hence diminishing their usefulness. Ahmed *et al.* (2022: 681) further note that resilience in dynamic environments improves flexibility and makes the employees stay motivated regardless of the dynamic needs. These results indicate that context, specifically technological change takes over in influencing the experience of clarity and its influence in how employees perform.

### **2.13 ROLE CLARITY AND EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE**

Role clarity is the extent to which workers comprehend their occupational duties, expectations and reporting systems in an institute. It is a serious element in an operative team structure and administrative success predominantly in cross-functional teams where duties regularly overlap (Morgeson *et al.*, 2010:112). Role clarity incorporates job, objective and practical clarity, which add to better workers' effectiveness and performance. While role clarity is often understood to comprise multiple dimensions such as task clarity, goal clarity and technical clarity (Mutebi *et al.*, 2022:63), this study adopts a unidimensional analytical approach. The multidimensional structure provides a theoretical foundation for comprehensive item development in the questionnaire, however, for the purpose of statistical analysis, these items will be aggregated into a single composite variable representing overall role clarity. This decision aligns with the study's hypotheses, which seek to examine the general relationship between role clarity and employee performance, rather than isolating the individual effects of each subdimension. Treating role clarity as a unified construct is consistent with prior research that prioritises practical measurement and streamlined analysis in organisational studies (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003:886; Hinkin, 1998:107). Workers who have a clear comprehension of their positions have high possibilities to be engaged, productive and resonate with

organisational goals (Jia *et al.*, 2024:89). In contrast, role ambiguity can cause confusion, minimised drive and inadequacies in task execution.

Empirical research has stressed a positive correlation between role clarity and occupational performance. Workers who see their roles as well-defined have more levels of confidence when taking decisions, being when working and high levels of devotion to their work (Tran *et al.*, 2024:65). Studies have also proven how clear role definitions add to maximum occupational satisfaction and minimised occupational stress because workers do not have to predict their duties or engage in pointless role negotiation (Lapshun *et al.*, 2023:76). Equally, workers who go through role ambiguity regularly have minimal level of efficiency, heightened occupational dissatisfaction and maximum stress levels. The absence of clearly defined duties in cross-functional teams can cause major misunderstandings that can result in redundant efforts or serious tasks being unnoticed and eventually affecting the whole organisational performance.

Role ambiguity has been extensively acknowledged as a major driver of occupational stress and workers' disengagement. Workers who are unclear regarding their responsibilities and expectations regularly struggle with occupational anxiety, a minimised level of confidence and lessened drive (Estlund, 2021:48). When workers are uncertain about their positions in a team, they might experience exhaustion, absence of answerability and lessened commitment to organisational objectives. This is predominantly pertinent in cross-functional teams in the energy industry where effectiveness and precision are fundamental. Without role clarity, workers might go through contradictory instructions from numerous supervisors, unclear performance pointers and the absence of ownership over tasks which adds to workplace inadequacies and minimised occupational performance (Decker *et al.*, 2022:91).

To lessen the destructive effects of role ambiguity, establishments should evaluate and improve role clarity through designed appraisals. Numerous approaches like worker's surveys, performance evaluations and interviews can be implemented to measure workers' insights of role clarity (Bernuzzi *et al.*, 2023:102). These tools will permit organisations to find gaps in communication practices, advance occupational descriptions and guarantee that team members have a thorough comprehension of their duties. Proactively resolving the issues of role ambiguity can assist organisations in improving

employees' efficiency, occupational satisfaction and the whole team performance. In cross-functional teams, well-defined roles permit seamless partnership, better management and advanced efficiency which eventually adds to better-quality organisational success in fields like energy generation, where collaboration and operative precision are vital.

## **2.14 CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS AND ROLE CLARITY IN THE ENERGY SECTOR**

Cross-functional teams are extensively implemented in organisations with the intension to improve teamwork, problem-solving processes and productivity by bringing workers from varied departments to function collectively towards communal objectives mostly in refurbishment and maintenance. These teams permit corporations to make use of varied knowledge in refining decision-making and quickening innovation (Tariq, 2025:58). But the efficiency of cross-functional teams deeply relies on role clarity and structured partnerships. The absence of clearly defined roles makes it hard to comprehend their exact duties in the team, which might cause major inadequacies and fights. In the energy industry, cross-functional teams influence the management of multifaceted tasks, supervisory compliance and strategic decision making. Guaranteeing role clarity in these teams is important in heightening their effectiveness and attaining organisational objectives.

Regardless of the advantages that come with cross-functional teams, they regularly go through problems that are related to role ambiguity, leadership misunderstandings and communication breakdown. One of the main complications is overlapping duties, where numerous workers might undertake the identical task or avoid tasks because of unclear occupational assignments (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2023:74). Undefined leadership systems can cause confusion concerning decision-making authority and accountability, predominantly in big organisations where workers report to numerous supervisors. Communication barriers amid departments can obstruct the flow of occupational data and can cause inadequacies and misalignment of objectives. These challenges are particularly evident in energy generation subsidiaries where numerous technical, supervisory and operative teams should coordinate flawlessly to guarantee cooperation and productivity.

Empirical studies have proved how the role clarity can meaningfully improve cross-functional team performance which can result in maximum levels of effectiveness, high occupational satisfaction and minimised workplace conflict (Prakash Nanappan Thodi, 2024:88). Teams with well-defined roles have the ability to finish projects on time, uphold high levels of accountability and nurture a positive occupational atmosphere. In contrast, role ambiguity can cause major hindrances in decision-making, duplicated efforts and augmented stress levels amongst employees. In the energy sector, having role clarity will guarantee that workers comprehend their exact contributions, minimise re-works due to operational fall outs, safety incidents and supervisory non-compliance. Consequently, organisations should implement structured role provision approaches to try and enhance cross-functional team productivity.

Numerous case studies from the energy industry stresses the significance of having clear team systems when it comes to refining project results and worker's performance. For instance, research that focused on energy corporations applying structured cross-functional team structures showed how clear role definitions add to better management, quicker problem resolution and improved efficiency (Yin *et al.*, 2023: 95). Organisations that rank role clarity through the means of operative leadership, consistent performance assessments and transparent communication have high worker's engagement and robust teamwork dynamics. Resolving the role ambiguity in energy generation subsidiaries can improve operative efficiency, minimised inadequacies and advance the whole organisational success.

## **2.15 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

While organisational research in the South African context exists, it has mainly focused on macro-level themes such as public service delivery, transformational leadership, and employment equity, often overlooking the micro-dynamics of team design in technical settings (Mamabolo & Myres, 2021). This pattern is especially evident in the energy sector, where scholarship predominantly covers infrastructure investment, the just energy transition, and regulatory policy (Baker & Phillips, 2023; Eberhard & Godinho, 2022). Likewise, analyses of state-owned enterprises frequently highlight systemic challenges such as skills shortages and operational inefficiencies (Mkhize & Umejese, 2020), but tend

to avoid exploring internal, human-centric mechanisms, such as role clarity, that could directly address these performance issues.

Consequently, a significant contextual gap persists. The unique socio-organisational dynamics of South African workplaces, including a complex history of labour relations and ongoing transformation pressures, are likely to influence team interactions and perceptions of role clarity in ways that differ considerably from Western or Asian contexts. Therefore, although the universal principles of Role Theory may be relevant, their specific expression and the importance of different aspects of role clarity within a technically specialised, cross-functional team in South Africa remain unexplored.

This lack of contextualised research poses a clear problem for practitioners. It creates uncertainty about how role ambiguity precisely affects performance within South African energy generation subsidiaries and conceals which managerial strategies can most effectively address these challenges. This research aims to fill this gap by empirically examining the link between role clarity and employee performance within cross-functional teams, thereby providing evidence-based insights for both academic literature and industry best practices.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**  
**3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

Research philosophy refers to the set of assumptions and beliefs that guide how a study understands reality and approaches the process of generating knowledge. In organisational research, two prominent philosophical positions are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism assumes that reality exists independently of individuals and can be studied objectively using measurable and observable data. In contrast, interpretivism focuses on subjective meanings and seeks to understand how individuals interpret social phenomena (Kaluarachchi, 2025:53). Given the purpose and design of this study, positivism provides the most appropriate philosophical foundation.

This research adopts a positivist philosophy because it emphasises the use of objective measurement, statistical testing and hypothesis-driven inquiry to establish relationships between variables. Positivism aligns directly with the study's quantitative approach, which uses structured questionnaires to collect numerical data on role clarity and employee performance and aims to determine the strength and direction of relationships rather than explore personal or contextual meanings. As noted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), positivism is suitable for studies that seek generalisable, law-like conclusions through systematic analysis and controlled assumptions. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) highlight that positivist research relies on measurable constructs and replicable procedures, which resonates with the operationalisation of role clarity and performance in this study.

Furthermore, the positivist paradigm is appropriate because the study follows a deductive logic, beginning with established theory and hypotheses and progressing towards empirical testing, which is central to positivist reasoning (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The focus on objectivity, neutrality and value-free analysis aligns with the organisational environment of the South African energy generation subsidiary, where decisions related to performance improvement require evidence-based insights rather than subjective interpretations. The positivist stance therefore ensures that the findings are rigorous, empirical and objective qualities that are essential in organisational research and that

strengthen the credibility and generalisability of the study's outcomes (Kunisch *et al.*, 2023:91).

### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study utilises a deductive research methodology situated within the positivist paradigm, which complements its deductive logic and aligns with the quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design used to examine the relationship between role clarity and employee performance. This approach is appropriate for this study as it is grounded in established organisational theories, most notably Role Theory (Kahn *et al.*, 1964) and the foundational work of Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970), which emphasise that well-defined roles reduce ambiguity, enhance certainty and support improved job outcomes.

These theoretical perspectives, combined with the operational realities highlighted in the South African energy generation subsidiary, such as duplicated efforts, unclear reporting structures and inconsistencies in project execution, enable the formulation of clear hypotheses predicting how role clarity influences employee performance. Consistent with Saunders *et al.* (2019) and Bryman and Bell (2015), a deductive approach is suitable when research aims to test theory using measurable constructs, which resonates with this study's reliance on structured questionnaires and statistical analysis. Because role clarity and employee performance are well-established constructs in the organisational behaviour literature, the deductive method allows the study to proceed systematically from theory to hypothesis development and ultimately to empirical verification.

Within this framework, the positivist paradigm strengthens the study's methodological stance by supporting objective measurement, structured processes and empirical testing of relationships between variables. Positivism assumes that organisational phenomena exist independently of individual perceptions and can therefore be studied using rigorous and quantifiable techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This aligns directly with the study's reliance on numerical data gathered through standardised surveys to determine how role clarity influences employee performances in cross-functional teams. Positivism also emphasises neutrality and replicability, which are vital in the operational context of the energy generation subsidiary where consistent, evidence-based insights are required to improve collaboration and reduce ambiguity-

related inefficiencies (Kunisch *et al.*, 2023). By combining positivism with a deductive approach, the study maintains methodological coherence, strengthens internal validity and ensures that conclusions are grounded in observable, statistically supported patterns. This alignment ensures that the research offers credible and practically relevant insights into how improving role clarity may advance employee performance in the subsidiary's complex, multidisciplinary team structures.

### **3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The survey-based methodology was chosen for this study as it aligns with the positivist philosophy and deductive approach guiding the research and provides an effective means of gathering objective, quantifiable data from employees working in cross-functional teams in the South African energy generation subsidiary. Surveys are widely acknowledged as suitable for positivist studies because they enable standardised data collection that maintains researcher neutrality and supports hypothesis testing (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:102). This approach is particularly relevant because the study examines measurable constructs, role clarity and employee performance, requiring structured items that can be analysed statistically. The survey strategy aligns with the cross-sectional correlational design, enabling data collection at a single point in time from a broad sample without disrupting operational activities. This is essential in the subsidiary's environment, where employees from engineering, safety, project management and quality teams work under significant time pressures and cannot participate in time-intensive qualitative methods.

The use of structured questionnaires also supports the statistical requirements of this study as the goal is to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between role clarity and employee performance. Survey items presented in Likert-scale format ensure standardisation, reduce ambiguity and provide data suitable for correlational and regression analyses. In the context of this subsidiary, where issues such as unclear reporting lines, duplicated efforts and performance inconsistencies have been reported, the ability to gather precise, comparable data is essential for identifying patterns that can inform evidence-based interventions. Alternative strategies such as interviews, focus groups or case studies align more closely with interpretivist and qualitative paradigms and would not provide the level of objectivity, scale or statistical generalisability required

for this study. Therefore, the survey strategy remains the most appropriate and contextually coherent approach for examining the influence of role clarity on employee performance in a multidisciplinary organisational setting.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research uses a cross-sectional, quantitative correlational study design to examine the relationship between role clarity and workers' performance in cross-functional teams in the South African energy generation subsidiary. This quantitative design is tailored to measure and analyse role clarity and performance with precision. By utilising the standardised survey, employees' experience was converted into quantifiable data. This enabled a rigorous statistical examination to confirm whether a meaningful link exists and critically gauge how strong and in what direction the link operates. These empirical findings will provide a clear, evidence-based signal to management, highlighting where and how to focus their interventions.

Correlational design was selected as it permits the investigation of the relationship between two key variables, which are role clarity and employee performance, without manipulating any aspects (Rasul *et al.*, 2021:69). A cross-sectional method was also selected for this study as the study data is gathered at a single point in time, making it worthwhile and time-efficient while still providing significant perceptions (Metwally *et al.*, 2025:92). This method resonates with the study objectives and permits statistical analysis to regulate the strength and direction of relations among variables.

This research study implements a quantitative approach because it intends to measure the influence of role clarity on workers' performance through the means of statistical methods. A quantitative methodology is suitable as it offers personal, measurable and generalisable study outcomes (Ghanad, 2023:66). Structured surveys will enable the study to gather data from workers in the South African energy generation subsidiary, ensuring a standardised data-collection process that enhances reliability and validity. The utilisation of qualitative research would not be suitable for this study as it concentrates on non-numeric data, discovering themes, viewpoints and detailed perceptions (Oranga Matere, 2023:81).

## **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

### **3.5.1 Target population**

The target population in this research study consists of workers who function in cross-functional teams within the chosen South African energy generation subsidiary. This encompasses employees from departments such as the project team, engineering, safety, quality, as well as everyone who has collaborated on project-driven or ongoing cross-departmental assignments (Bernuzzi *et al.*, 2023: 145). This population comprises approximately 300 employees who meet these criteria. These employees are chosen based on their occupational environments, which necessitate a high level of teamwork and clearly defined roles that resonate with this research study's focus: role clarity and employees' performance. The estimate of 300 employees is based on the business unit's internal workforce structure.

### **3.5.2 Inclusion Criteria**

- Participants needed to be current employees of the designated South African energy generation subsidiary during data collection. This ensured all responses were grounded in the specific organisational context under review.
- To gather relevant insights into role clarity and team performance, only participants working in a cross-functional team at the subsidiary were included in the study.
- The study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the workforce. As a result, all employment types, including permanent, fixed-term contracts and temporary staff (such as interns or trainees) were eligible to participate.
- Participation was completely voluntary. Only those who were willing or volunteered to continue completing the self-administered questionnaire within the designated data collection period were included.

### 3.5.3 Exclusion Criteria

- Personnel not involved in cross-functional team activities, either currently or recently were excluded.
- Individuals not directly employed by the subsidiary, such as external consultants, service providers or employees of partner or parent organisations were ineligible.
- Employees who were unavailable during the data collection period or who discontinued their participation during the filling of the questionnaire were excluded from the study final sample for data analyses.

### 3.5.4 Sampling Method and Sample Size Determination

The research study utilised a non-probability purposive sampling technique to select participants who met the inclusion criteria and had the required occupational experience in cross-functional teams. This technique assists in guaranteeing relevant participants that align with the study objectives (Karunaratna *et al.*, 2024:19).

The sample size was calculated following Cohen's (1992) power analysis guidelines, suitable for correlational and regression-related quantitative studies. Cohen (1988; 1992) suggests that for a medium effect size ( $r = .30$ ), with  $\alpha = .05$  and a power of 0.80, at least 84 participants are needed for Pearson correlation, and about 67 participants are required for a simple linear regression with one predictor. Consequently, the study aimed for a sample size between 67 and 84 participants:

For Pearson Correlation ( $r = .30$ )

Using Cohen's table for correlation:

- Effect size =  $r = .30$
- $\alpha = .05$
- Power = .80

Required sample size  $\approx N = 84$

For Simple Linear Regression

Using Cohen's  $f^2$  values:

- Effect size =  $f^2 = 0.15$

- $\alpha = .05$
- Power = .80
- Predictors = 1

Required sample size  $\approx N = 67$

## 3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

### 3.6.1 Data collection Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool is a structured survey questionnaire due to its ability to collect large volumes of data in a standardised and systematic way (Taherdoost, 2021:72). The questionnaire is self-administered and distributed electronically to employees working in cross-functional teams in the chosen energy generation subsidiary. Electronic circulation is selected for its effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and the ability to reach a diverse sample of participants, thereby minimising logistical issues associated with physical surveys (Beatty *et al.*, 2023:98). The survey consists of three main sections. The first section collected the demographic data. To uphold the validity of the sample and comply with the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria, only essential demographic variables were collected, specifically employment type, tenure in the organisation and experience in cross-functional teams.

These factors ensure that all participants meet the eligibility requirements for inclusion in the study and have the appropriate level of organisational familiarity and exposure to cross-functional team dynamics, including employment type and years of experience in the organisation. The second section measure role clarity through the means of recognised scales that can measure job clarity, objective clarity and technical clarity (Mutebi *et al.*, 2022:63). The third section assess worker's performance like occupational effectiveness, collaboration contributions and task completion efficiency (Keshvarparast *et al.*, 2024:85). A five-point Likert scale fluctuating from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" and quantify replies, guarantee constancy in data interpretation and enable statistical examination (Lionello *et al.*, 2021:77).

To enhance the reliability of the results, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test with a small group of eight workers before the main study. This pre-test helped identify any

uncertainties in the survey questions, ensuring that all items are transparent, pertinent and resonate with the research's purposes (Adam *et al.*, 2024). From the pilot study, only the final description of the questionnaire was advanced.

### **3.6.2 Data Collection Procedure**

The data-gathering process was conducted through an online survey using Microsoft Forms. The form was configured to ensure anonymity by allowing the respondents to participate without signing in; no email addresses, names, IP addresses or device information were collected. Data were stored securely in Microsoft's cloud environment in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) privacy requirements. To promote once-off participation, the survey link was distributed only to the intended population. Microsoft further limits duplicate submissions through its internal response-tracking features, thereby supporting data integrity. The participants were emailed a link to the survey and the informed consent form was the first part of the survey, outlining all participation requirements and informing participants that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw their participation at any time with no penalties. The link guaranteed one reply per participant via email authentication, without storing individual identifiers (Taherdoost, 2021:73). The study responses were collected over three weeks, with a single notice email sent after the first and second weeks.

### **3.6.3 Company Permission**

Prior to commencing data collection, formal permission to conduct the research in the organisation was obtained from the organisation's research facilitation department. A goodwill request letter for the research was sent, the letter also included the request for internal distribution of the questionnaire via the company's communication channels to encourage broad participation. The survey questions were also approved by the organisation and an ethics clearance letter was issued for approval of the study to be conducted in the subsidiary chosen.

### **3.6.4 Data Analysis**

The gathered data were examined through the means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is extensively acknowledged as a statistical software for quantitative data processing and hypothesis testing (Habes *et al.*, 2021:58). The examination was a three-step method that started with data cleaning and preparation, followed by descriptive examination and ending with inferential statistical testing. Data cleaning included inspection for missing responses, outliers and irregularities to ensure that the dataset is comprehensive and reliable for the examination process (Ilyas & Rekatsinas, 2022:91).

Descriptive statistics summarised the over-all characteristics of participants and offer an overview of the data trends (Ghoghre, 2024:77). This is shadowed by inferential statistical examination where Pearson's correlation coefficient is utilised to examine the connection between role clarity and worker's performance (Keshvarparast *et al.*, 2023:85). A regression analysis was also done with the intension to determine the degree to which role clarity forecasts variations in worker's performance in that way answering the research's principal study questions (Ilyas *et al.*, 2021:109). These approaches are selected as they permit the researcher to measure relations amid variables and make a significant conclusion grounded on statistical proof.

The SPSS enable this research in guaranteeing the correctness, effectiveness and objectivity in process of data examination by reducing the risk of human mistake in calculations. Factor analysis will further authenticate whether the survey items correctly measure the envisioned constructs of which will guarantee the reliability and validity of the study outcomes. The results from the statistical tests will be demonstrated in tables and graphical formats to show relationships amid role clarity and worker's performance in cross-functional teams.

### **3.6.5 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was done before the main process of data gathering with the intension to test the efficiency and clarity of the study tool (Janaka *et al.*, 2024:63). Pilot testing assisted permit in recognising uncertainties, improve questionnaire items and guarantee

that participants comprehend the questions as envisioned (Beto *et al.*, 2025:79). A sample of 8 workers from the target population took part in the pilot study to provide feedback on the clarity, significance and directness of survey items. Changes were done to the questionnaire to improve clarity and remove possible prejudices (Beto *et al.*, 2025:79). A pilot study assisted in guaranteeing that the final data gathering process is free from significant errors and inadequacies, eventually resulting in higher-quality data.

### **3.6.6 Validity and Reliability**

In quantitative studies, validity, together with reliability is important in guaranteeing that the measurement tools correctly collect the envisioned constructs and yield reliable results. Validity is the extent to which a study tool measures what it is supposed to measure, while reliability evaluates the consistency of the measurement over a duration (Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021:54). Validity was guaranteed through the means of construct validity, content validity and criterion validity. Construct validity was ensured by resonating the survey items with deep-rooted structures on role clarity and worker's performance. Content validity was evaluated by subject matter specialists who did an appraisal on the questionnaire to guarantee that it lengthily collects the study variables. Criterion validity was assessed by equating the results with comparable research in organisational behaviour to ensure that the study outcomes resonate with the current literature (Lim, 2024:72).

Reliability was evaluated through the Cronbach alpha coefficient that was implemented to measure the inner consistency which guaranteed that all items on the questionnaire add to the identical fundamental construct. A Cronbach alpha value higher than 0.7 is normally an acceptable score for reliability (Izah *et al.*, 2023:99). A Test-retest reliability was done by giving the survey to a small group of participants two times with a two-week interval and examining the correlation amid answers. A high correlation amid the two sets of answers specified if the questionnaire is constant over time (Thach *et al.*, 2021:102). A pilot testing assisted in finding any irregularities to guarantee that the final tool is valid and reliable for the main study. Guaranteeing a robust validity and reliability measures lessened measurement mistakes and heighten the credibility of the study findings.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ensuring ethical honesty in a study is important, especially when directing studies that include human participants. One of the most essential ethics is informed consent which guarantees that participants are completely conscious of the research's aims, measures and possible risks before agreeing to take part (Young *et al.*, 2022:67). A comprehensive consent form made the first part of the questionnaire explaining to the participants the study objectives, the dynamic of their contribution and their right not to participate at any time without any consequences. The participants were informed that they could continue and that they should carefully read the consent form before taking part in the study to ensure their participation is voluntary and informed. To ensure anonymity, the participants were not required to sign the consent form; instead, they were asked to continue with the survey if they agreed with the detailed information in it. The researcher's contact details were made available to the participants to resolve any matters raised by the participants before they conducted the survey to strengthen ethical transparency (Bloemraad & Menjívar, 2022:75). Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity is vital for participant privacy. Anonymity, together with confidentiality, is an ethical concern.

The collected data were stored in the researchers SharePoint and not made accessible to anyone other than the researcher thus lessening the risk of illegal access (Razaque *et al.*, 2022:89). The study attained an ethical clearance from the North West University (NWU) Ethics Committee before the process of data gathering starts to guarantee adherence with standard ethical research processes (Sadeghi & Smith, 2024:81). Organizational permission was granted by the organisation research department and verified that the research resonates with company guidelines and does not disturb standard business processes. Following these ethical deliberations, the researcher maintained the integrity, transparency and participant protection, which will guarantee that the research is conducted responsibly and ethically.

#### **3.7.1 Data Protection and Compliance with POPIA**

This research study follows the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act No. 4 of 2013 by implanting the following safeguards:

- No personally identifiable data, like names and ID numbers will be disclosed.

- Data will be anonymised and only aggregate outcomes will be reported.
- Access to raw data were limited to the researcher and kept securely.
- Microsoft Forms follow POPIA by guaranteeing that data is kept in encrypted form.

The platform's privacy settings disable the gathering of email addresses unless agreed to.

### **3.8 STUDY LIMITATION**

#### **3.8.1 Cross-sectional Study**

This study utilises the cross-sectional research design, which means that data were collected at one point in time. The design is suitable for research that is limited in time frame and also useful for identifying the relationship between role clarity and employee performance. It has a limitation in that it cannot show which variable happens first. Carlson and Morrison (2009:19) allude that because the exposure and outcome are measured at the same point in time, it is an unlikely chance of knowing which variable happened first before the other. A cross-sectional study can show that two variables are related, but cannot prove that one causes the other. To understand cause and effect clearly, a study would need to collect data over a longer period, using a longitudinal design. Therefore, this study only reflects the relationship of role clarity and employee's performance at one time.

#### **3.8.2 Sample size**

The study utilises a non-probability purposive method to recruit participants who met the outlined study inclusion criteria. While this approach was more suitable for accessing employees in the subsidiary, it is not without limitations. Non-probability methods do not provide every participant an equal chance of selection. This increases the potential for sample bias and limits the representation of the broader population. Saunders *et al.* (2019) emphasise that such techniques limit the ability to make broad statistical generalisations as the findings may reflect only the characteristics of individuals who were both available and willing to participate. Similarly, Andrade (2021) advise that insights drawn from a purposive sample must be interpreted cautiously as they may not capture the views of the broader target population.

Recent methodology reviews (Memon *et al.*, 2025; Rohr *et al.*, 2024) highlight that inferences from non-probability samples depended on the assumption that the selected individuals adequately reflect the full diversity of the population. Although this sampling was instrumental in collecting highly contextual data for the study of the relationship between role clarity and employees' performance in the chosen energy generation subsidiary, it limits the study's external validity. Therefore, the findings will only apply to the specific organisation studied, rather than being generalised to other organisations or larger populations.

The study might encounter non-response bias, which occurs when individuals who choose not to participate differ in meaningful ways from those who do respond, potentially influencing the accuracy of the findings. In the context of this study, employees who experience low role clarity or dissatisfaction with the work environment may have been less willing to complete the questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

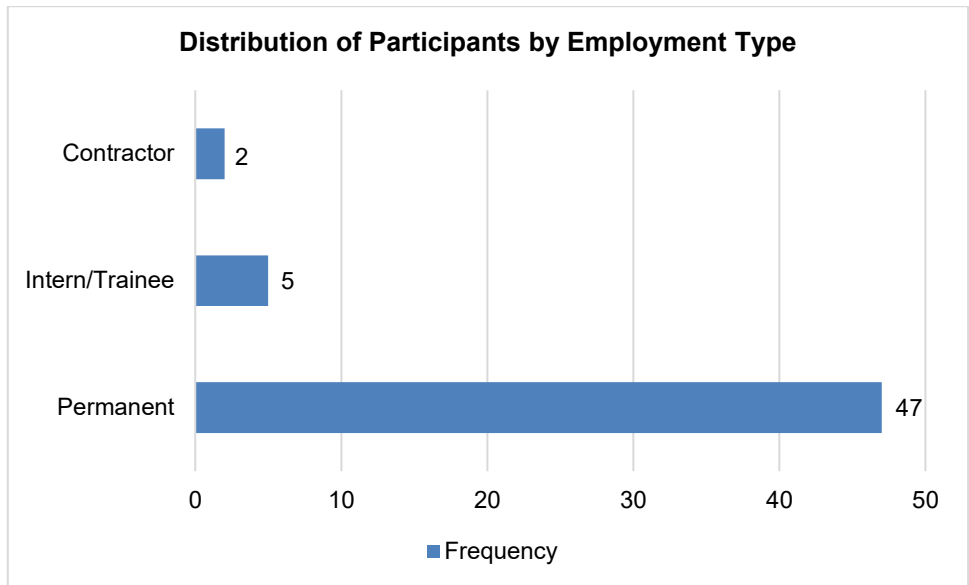
The chapter outlines the findings of the quantitative study undertaken to establish the relationship between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams in one of the South African energy generation subsidiary companies. The chapter starts by outlining the description of the demographic features of the respondents before the reliability analysis of the two scales of measurement utilised in the research is described. It then provides the descriptive statistics to summarise the perceptions of the participants about the clarity of the roles they have and their self-reported performance. Subsequently, inferential conclusions such as Pearson correlation and simple linear regression are provided to test the hypothesis of the study. This chapter ends by discussing the findings of the current literature and the organisational environment in which the study was performed.

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

The current section outlines the demographic profile of the 54 respondents who took part in the research. The contextualisation of the evaluation of role clarity and employee performance requires a comprehensive understanding of the demographic composition of the sample. The demographic data discussed included the type of employment, years in the organisation and years in cross-functional teams.

##### **4.2.1 Employment Type**

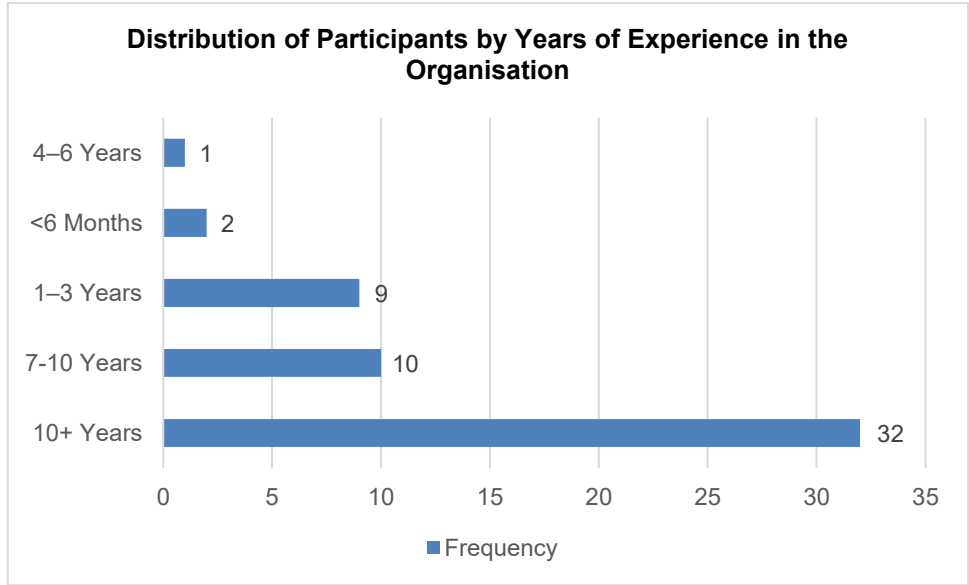
The summary of participants' employment status is shown in Figure 4.1. Most of the respondents (87.0%, n = 47) had an established tenure with the organisation as most of them were permanently employed. The percentage of those who were interns or trainees was 9.3% (n = 5) and the percentage of contractors was 3.7% (n = 2). This type of distribution implies that the research is mainly based on the views of permanent employees, who are most likely to be more exposed to organisational structures and team processes.



**Figure 4.1: Distribution of Participants by Employment Type**

**4.2.2 Years of Experience in the Organisation**

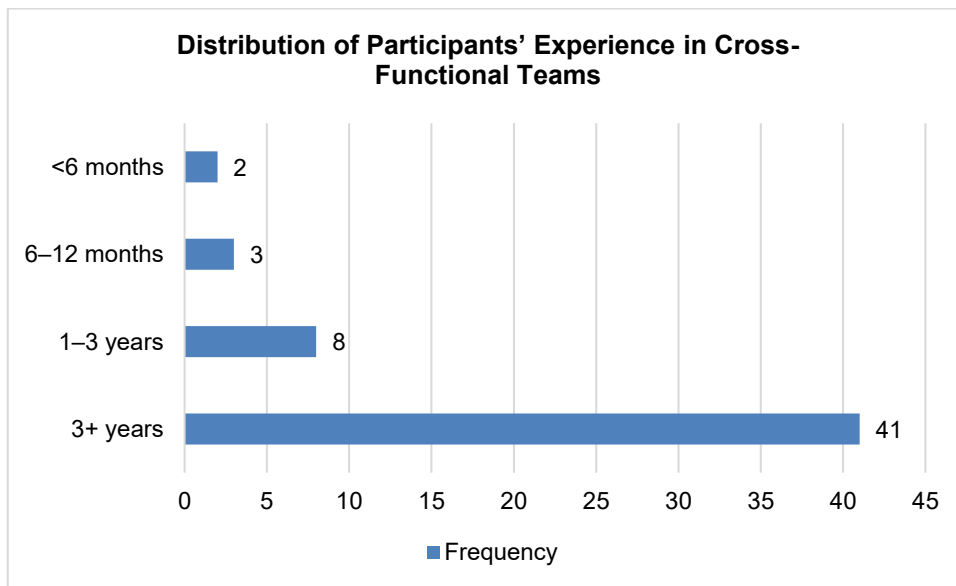
The respondents were also encouraged to provide the number of years that they had worked in the organisation. Figure 4.2 shows that most of the respondents (59.3% , n=32) had a career of over 10 years of experience. Another 18.5% (n=10) mentioned seven to 10 years of tenure and 16.7% (n=9) mentioned one to three years. A small proportion of the respondents. 1.9% (n=1) had four to six years and 3.7% (n=2) less than six months. The findings indicate that the sample was mainly made up of long-serving employees whose understanding of the operations of the organisation was vast.



**Figure 4.2: Distribution of Participants by Years of Experience in the Organisation**

### 4.2.3 Experience in Cross-Functional Teams

The distribution of the cross-functional team experience of the participants is presented in Figure 4.3. Most of the respondents (75.9%, n = 41) indicated that they had been in cross functional teams over a period of more than three years. Another 14.8% (n=8) stated one to three years of experience. Only a small segment of the sample had a limited experience in cross-functional teamwork with 5.6% (n=3) having between 6 and 12 months experience and 3.7% (n=2) having less. These results indicate that the respondents were relatively familiar with the team-based work systems and multidepartment work.



**Figure 4.3: Distribution of Participants' Experience in Cross-Functional Teams**

### 4.2.4 Summary of Demographic Characteristics

All in all, the demographic makeup shows a mature and experienced workforce. The bias in the sample is the focus on permanent employees with long organisational service and high levels of experience in cross-functional teams, which makes the findings credible as the respondents have much knowledge of the organisational environment and the work in teams. In turn, such a demographic profile creates a crucial contextual basis of the results of the further sections.

## **4.3 ANALYSIS OF ROLE CLARITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

### **4.3.1 Reliability Analysis of the Measurement Scales**

The reliability analysis is an essential requirement of a quantitative inquiry as it provides an evaluation of whether the items of measurement measure what they should measure. The reliability of Cronbach alpha was used in this investigation as a measure that is generally agreed to measure the levels of internal consistency, which is used to measure how much the items in a scale are related to each other. Having a high Cronbach alpha would imply that the items are functioning in unison and are all assessing one underlying concept thus any further statistical test such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression model would be based on reliable and consistent measurements.

Table 4.1. The Cronbach alpha values of the two multi-item scale used in this research study are on the role clarity scale (eight items) and employee performance scale (12 items). The role clarity scale gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.824 compared to employee performance scale that gave a Cronbach alpha of 0.861. The two coefficients increase beyond the traditional standard of 0.70 that is often cited as representing bearable reliability in social-science research thereby attesting that both scales exhibit a high standard of internal consistency.

In a contextual perspective, these reliability figures mean that the respondents had a given interpretation of the items of the individual scales. In the case of the role clarity scale, the question about whether one understands what they are doing, whether there is a clear boundary of control, whether the supervisors communicate with them clearly and so on, all these items tend to be consistent with each other and summarise the construct of perceived clarity in work roles. In similar manner, in the case of employee performance scale, the issues related to teamwork, deadline issues, quality of work and accountability are coherent and reflect the evaluation of employees concerning their performance in cross-functional teams. Such a high internal consistency enhances the beliefs in the integrity of the data and promotes the validity of the conclusions that will be provided in the further parts of this chapter.

**Table 4.1: Reliability of Role Clarity and Employee Performance Scales**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Role Clarity	8	0.824	Good reliability
Employee Performance	12	0.861	Good reliability

**4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Composite Variables**

The results were based on descriptive statistics which summarised the overall rate of role clarity and employee performance as reported by the participants. These values included the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of the individual composite constructs. The mean will give a value of an overall perception of all the participants and the standard deviation will show the level of spread of the responses, but the minimum and maximum values will show the limits of the scores observed within the five-point Likert scale. A combination of these measures will give a preliminary understanding of the overall perception of role clarity and performance of employees in cross-functional teams.

The average score of role clarity was 4.02 (SD=0.66), which indicates that participants (average score) believe that their roles are clearly defined, but the differences in the answers were moderate. The noticed range, which is 2.29 to 5.00, suggests that most of them experience high levels of clarity, although the percentage of those who report lower levels is also high hence suggesting the possibility of inconsistencies in communication of the roles or expectations in the organisation. To the performance of employees, the composite variable showed a greater mean of 4.29 (SD [0.39], which suggests that the perceptions of the performance were not only very favourable, but also homogeneous in the respondents. The range of scores (3.67 to 5.00) proves that even the lowest levels of performance reported are under the scale range of agree.

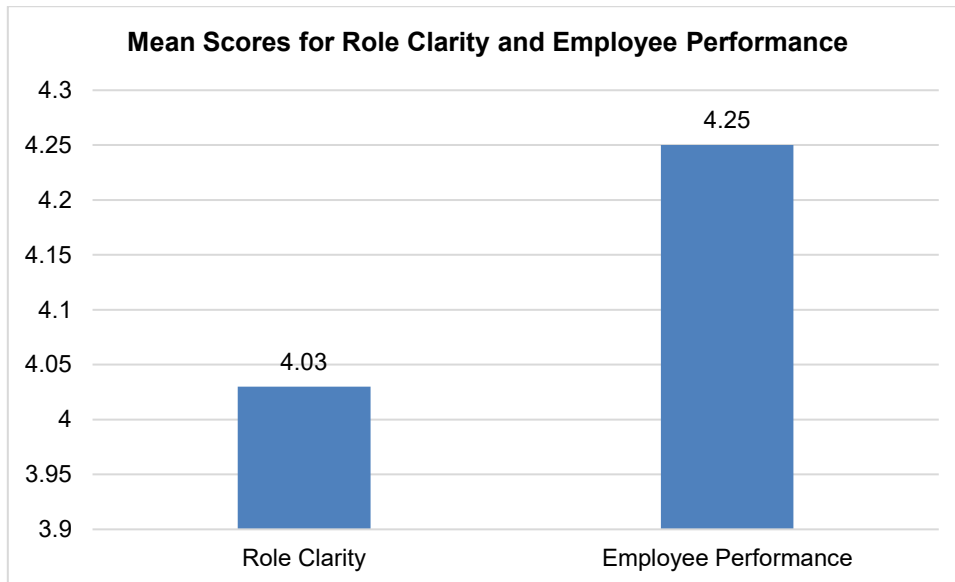
These means that employees tend to feel confident in the knowledge of their role duties, as well as their ability to work well in cross-functional environments. The slightly larger mean in the performance indicates that the ambiguity in role definition may be alleviated in performance by the workers through accrued experience, shared interaction or

independent work-related to the cross-functional contexts at work where the role ambiguity is partially resolved by inter-dependent work and group goals. The inconsistency observed in role clarity is also a further indication of the need to assess the communication processes and supervisory practices in the organisation in a systematic manner.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

Construct	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Role Clarity	53	4.02	0.66	2.29	5.00
Employee Performance	53	4.29	0.39	3.67	5.00

To supplement such statistics, Figure 4.1 has a bar chart that compares the average results of the two constructs. Upon comparison, the figure shows clearly that the two variables are above the midpoint of the Likert scale, which in turn shows strong levels of consensus among employees. The visual comparison also supports the numerical observation that the performance of the employees is viewed slightly more positively than the clarity of the roles. This observation is indicative of the fact that employees might find themselves facing some gaps in role related information, communication or clarity even though they believe that they are doing a good job. These patterns will also be further associated with organisational communication patterns and team dynamics in the discussion section of this chapter.



**Figure 4.4: Mean Scores for Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

### 4.3.3 Item-Level Descriptive Analysis

In order to gain a more specific profile of the perception of respondents, an item level descriptive analysis of all the statements in the role clarity scale and employee performance scale was performed. Table 4.3 shows the mean and the standard deviation of each item. Under role clarity construct, the strongest scores were recorded in the areas of understanding the tasks one is in charge of (M = 4.30; SD = 0.87) and the knowledge of how performance influences the success of the team (M = 4.37; SD = 0.71). These findings show that workers are usually very clear on what they are expected to do and how their tasks contribute to the overall team performance. Also noted to score high were those items that pertained to having a clear understanding of the goals of the team (M mean = 4.19; SD = 0.69) and items that pertained to the fact that the roles were well-communicated (M mean = 4.11; SD = 0.72), indicating that overall, most of the role expectations are communicated effectively. The reduced mean scores were, however, achieved when rarely receiving conflicting instructions regarding the job (M = 3.55; SD = 1.20) and receiving regular updates about changing team goals (M = 3.72; SD = 0.90). The fact that these scores are above the neutral point, but they also emphasize that some employees do not always receive consistent instructions or believe that they receive updates regarding the changing priorities in good time and in the necessary clarity and this aspect may breed some ambiguity in cross-functional work.

In the case of the employee performance items, the trend is highly positive and rather steady. The mean scores were maximum on willingly helping team members in need (M 0.462; SD 0.49), contributing ideas that will help solve team problems (M 0.449; SD 0.50), trusted by others to do his/her job well (M 0.451; SD 0.50) and feeling accountable to do what it takes to achieve team goals (M 0.42; SD 0.57). These results lead to the team culture that can be described as a team that is collaborative, initiating, trusting and responsible. The objects associated with the making of high-quality work (M=4.43; SD=0.67), with communicating effectively with others on the team (M=4.42; SD=0.57), and with taking the initiative to set goals in order to be more productive (M=4.28; SD=0.60) continue to support the image of the high-self-reported performance.

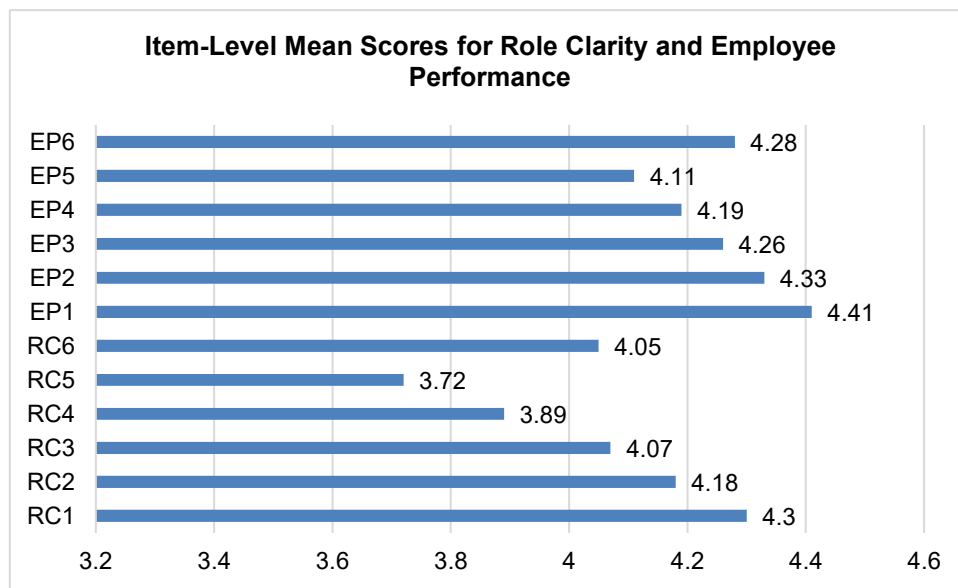
A little lower, but positive scores were observed on the rarely making mistakes (M = 3.72; SD = 0.79) and for regularly achieving the set goals (M = 4.13; SD = 0.56), which is probably due to the challenging nature of the working environment instead of poor performance. Using these item means as a bar or line graph of the items in Figure 4.2, one can see how much higher scores on performance items and a bit more variation in role clarity items, especially on conflicting instructions and shifting goals. This implies that although the employees believe that they are doing a good job and working in teams, there is room to enhance communication processes to ensure that expectations of the role are always clear and aligned as the team priorities change.

**Table 4.3: Item-Level Descriptive Statistics for Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I understand the tasks I am responsible for.	4.30	0.87
My responsibilities are clearly communicated to me.	4.11	0.72
I rarely receive conflicting instructions about my job.	3.55	1.20

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
I know the limits of my authority in decision-making.	4.08	0.98
I have a clear understanding of the team's objectives.	4.19	0.69
My personal goals align with the team's mission.	4.04	0.87
I know how my performance contributes to team success.	4.37	0.71
I receive regular updates about the team's changing goals.	3.72	0.90
I consistently complete my tasks on time.	4.15	0.69
I produce work of high quality.	4.43	0.67
I manage my workload effectively.	4.23	0.65
I rarely make errors in my work.	3.72	0.79
I willingly help my team members when needed.	4.62	0.49
I communicate effectively with others in my team.	4.42	0.57
I contribute ideas that help solve team problems.	4.49	0.50
I am trusted by others to perform my role well.	4.51	0.50

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I consistently meet the goals set for me.	4.13	0.56
I proactively set goals to improve my performance.	4.28	0.60
I track my performance to ensure goal achievement.	4.13	0.79
I feel accountable for achieving team objectives.	4.42	0.57



**Figure 4.5: Item-Level Mean Scores for Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

#### **4.3.4 Correlation Analysis (Hypothesis Testing)**

To determine the direction and strength of the relationship between role clarity and employee performance, the correlation analyses were carried out. This method of analysis is also explained by the fact that both operationalisation variables were on the basis of continuous Likert type scales and the objective of the research was to find out whether the higher levels of role clarity are concomitant to the higher levels of employee

performance in cross-functional teams. The product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) introduced by Pearson was chosen as it is the most common measure in the quantification of the linear relationship between two continuous variables.

The correlation analysis provided the  $r$ -value of 0.552 with a  $p$ -value less than 0.001 that indicates the moderately strong and statistically significant positive relationship between role clarity and employee performance. The positive coefficient shows that the higher the levels of role clarity the higher the self-reported performance. The level of significance ( $p < 0.001$ ) proves that the relationship observed could hardly be explained by the chance factor and thus empirically supports the hypothesis of the study.

The findings of the correlation test are listed in Table 4.4. The 0.552 coefficient means that employees with the clear vision of their tasks, duties, scope of authority and team goals are more likely to assess their performance in the positive way of meeting the time deadlines, delivering high-quality work, involvement in group activities and accountability of the results. This result is supported by theoretical literature: the previous researchers note that role clarity reduces ambiguity, enhances confidence and provide employees with the ability to concentrate their efforts more efficiently, which has a direct impact on improving performance in team-based settings.

**Table 4.4: Correlation Between Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>r-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Role Clarity and Employee Performance	0.552	< 0.001	Significant, positive relationship

Practically, the implication of this finding is that any efforts aimed at promoting the clarity of instructions, goals, communication and role responsibilities may lead to some discernible improvements in employee performance in the organization. In theory, the finding supports the major claim of the role theory, which is that well-defined expectations form the basis of predictable, coordinated and productive employee behaviour. The strength of the observed relationship is in line with previous empirical studies that suggest that clarity is one of the basic aspects of efficient team operation, particularly in cross-functional situations where the coordination requirements are increased.

### 4.3.5 Regression Analysis (Hypothesis Testing)

The regression analysis was done to show that role clarity is a significant predictor of employee performance in cross-functional teams. Regression also compares the impact of variations in the independent variable (role clarity) on the dependent variable (employee performance) unlike correlation which only measures the strength and direction of a relationship. This renders regression especially useful in evaluating the practical impact of role clarity on the performance outcomes and in establishing to what extent the variation in performance can be attributed to clarity.

The regression equation also generated a  $R^2 = 0.304$ , which implies that 30.4% of the variance in employee performance is attributed to role clarity. This is a huge impact on an individual predictor in a behavioural study. The role unstandardised regression coefficient was 0.33 with a p-value of  $< 0.001$  and the effect was significant. This statement is expressed in simple terms as that in every one-unit increment in role clarity, employee performance would rise by a factor of 0.33 on the five-point scale. This high degree of significance shows that role clarity does not only relate with performance, but it significantly relates with the prediction of the level of employee performance.

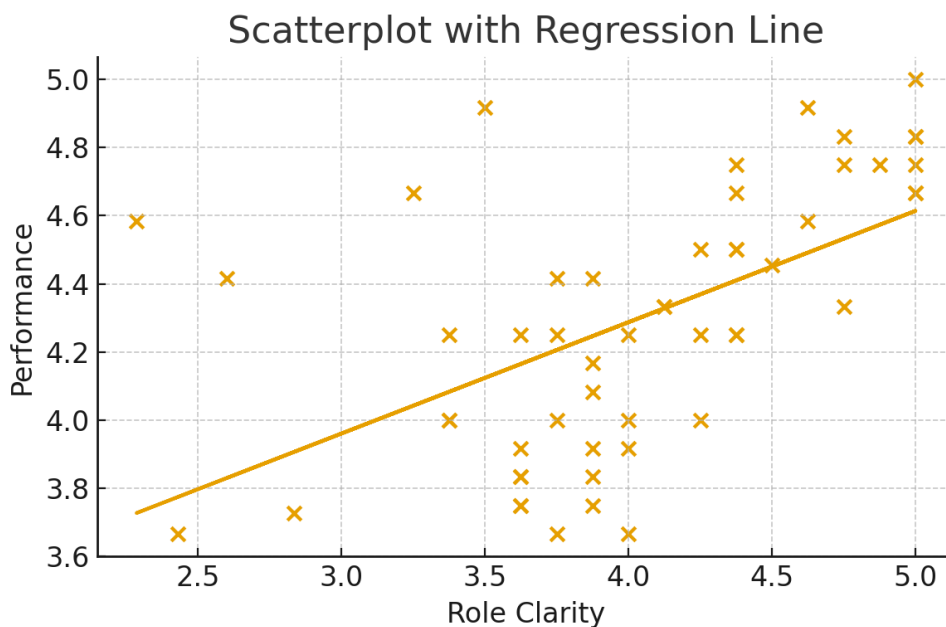
**Table 4.5: Regression Analysis Predicting Employee Performance from Role Clarity**

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
$R^2$	0.304	Role clarity explains 30.4% of performance variance
Regression Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	0.33	Performance increases by 0.33 per unit of role clarity
p-value	$< 0.001$	Significant predictive relationship
Constant (Intercept)	2.98	Baseline performance when role clarity is zero

Based on these values, the regression equation for this study is:

$$\text{Employee Performance} = 2.98 + 0.33 (\text{Role Clarity})$$

The analysis shows that the employees have moderate levels of performance at the lowest levels of clarity, with the average score of 2.98. In addition, the data shows that the more the clarity, the higher the performance in a proportional fashion. Figure 4.3 is a scatterplot of performance and role clarity and the regression line is overlaid. The predictive relationship is demonstrated in a positive slope of this line since employees who have high levels of clarity always report high performance. The closeness of the data points to the regression line and also supports the strength of the model and proves that the relationship observed is significant and significant enough in practice.



**Figure 4.6: Scatterplot Showing the Regression Line for Role Clarity and Employee Performance**

The implications in practice are the importance of proper communication, clear division of duties and guidance in cross-functional environments. By having a clear understanding of their responsibilities, goals and expectations the employees demonstrate a greater ability to perform work on time, deliver high quality work, peer support and sustain a sense of accountability. Theoretically, such observations are well attuned with role theory, which postulates that role clarity reduces the effects of ambiguity, enhances motivational impulse, as well as coordinated behaviour in complex team structures. Based on this, this

research provides strong empirical support to the hypothesis that role clarity augmentation is an essential facilitating variable of employee performance in cross-functional groups.

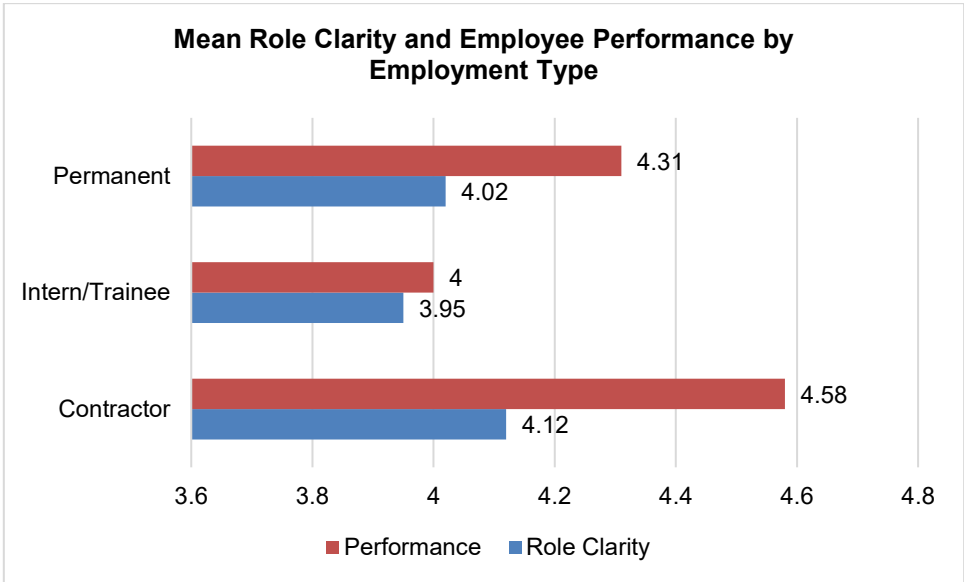
#### **4.3.6 Differences Across Employment Groups**

The analysis of the role clarity and performance of different employment categories provides a clue on whether employees in these categories have different clarity and performance in cross-functional teams. The analysis is useful in the identification of particular areas that need to be intervened in, especially onboarding, training and the supervisory aspects. Since the groups are not equal, especially the group of contractors, there were no formal inferential tests, including ANOVA that were conducted. Rather, plausible trends are represented by the use of descriptive statistics.

The results of Table 4.6 provides a summary of the mean role-clarity and performance scores in the three types of employment. The best mean scores were achieved by contractors in the role clarity ( $M = 4.12$ ) and performance ( $M = 4.58$ ). The means of permanent employees were moderate (role clarity: 4.02; performance: 4.31) and the lowest ones were observed in the cases of interns/trainees (role clarity: 3.95; performance: 4.00). Such tendencies might speak of the differences in the acquaintances with the organisational processes and disparity of the responsibility level. The interns, who are more recent to the company might still be getting used to the team setups and demands, which may be the reason as to why the perceptions of clarity and performance are slightly worse. On the contrary, the sample of contractors is small, but they might be assigned some specialized tasks with more distinct boundaries and thus increased their clarity and performance scores.

**Table 4.6: Mean Role Clarity and Employee Performance by Employment Type**

Employment Type	Role Clarity	Performance
Contractor	4.12	4.58
Intern/Trainee	3.95	4.00
Permanent	4.02	4.31



**Figure 4.7: Mean Role Clarity and Employee Performance by Employment Type**

**4.3.7 Differences Across Years of Experience**

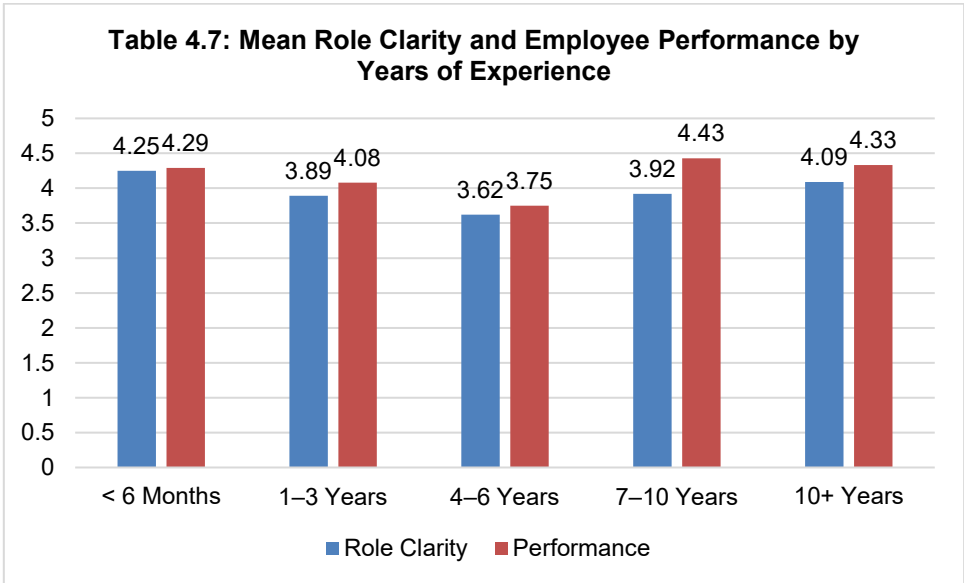
A review of trends in the various levels of organisational experience for determining whether familiarity with organisational systems and cross-functions processes has any impact on clarity and performance perceptions. The experience is often linked to a better understanding of the tasks, stronger peer relationships and a greater ability to manoeuvre through the team dynamics. This was because of the unequal sizes of groups, in particular, the small size of the mid-range groups, necessitating no ANOVA. As a result, descriptive statistics provide significant information regarding possible experience-related trends.

Table 4.7. outlines the averaged role clarity and performance scores of five categories of experience. Employees of less than six months experience had quite a high level of clarity (M = 4.25) and performance (M = 4.29), which was presumably be due to intensive early-stage support and formal induction programs. Employees who had 4-6 years of

experience showed the least clarity (M mean 3.62) and performance (M = 3.75) and it is possible to assume that employees in the mid-career stage may face the challenges of pressure due to higher work levels or new demands. The highest performance score was within the 7-10 years category (M=4.43) and those of employees with over 10 years of experience scored high and consistent in terms of clarity (M=4.09) and performance (M=4.33).

**Table 4.7: Mean Role Clarity and Employee Performance by Years of Experience**

Years of Experience	Role Clarity	Performance
< 6 Months	4.25	4.29
1–3 Years	3.89	4.08
4–6 Years	3.62	3.75
7–10 Years	3.92	4.43
10+ Years	4.09	4.33



**Figure 4.8: Mean Role Clarity and Employee Performance by Years of Experience**

#### 4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the entirety of the obtained quantitative results that investigated the association between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams. Reliability test showed that the two measurement scales had good internal consistency, which implies that the items were able to measure their constructs. Descriptive statistics showed that the participants indicated a high rate of role clarity and performance and at the item level, patterns of item-level were exemplified by positive trends across the individual statements.

The analysis of correlation showed that role clarity had strong, statistically significant positive relationship with employee performance that there is a strong correlation between role clarity and performance outcomes. This relationship was also supported by the regression analysis which indicated that role clarity is a significant predictor of employee performance and explains a significant percentage of variability in performance scores. There was evidence of interesting trends when it comes to descriptive group comparisons of employment categories and experience level; nevertheless, no inferential test was performed due to uneven groups.

Altogether, the findings suggest unanimous support to the idea that role clarity is critical in determining the performance of employees working in cross-functional settings. These results provide a considerable basis on the next chapter of the mini-dissertation that discusses the implication of the results in terms of the existing literature and organisational practice.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a detailed synthesis of the study findings by incorporating the statistical outcomes described in Chapter 4 into the context of research purposes, the literature that currently exists and the impact of the study on the organisation in general. The main aim of this chapter is to explain the empirical evidence in a way that demonstrates the impact of the findings to cross-functional teamwork, role clarity and the performance of employees in the context of the chosen energy generation subsidiary. An objective discussion of the results is presented first, focusing on the quantified amount of role clarity, the predictive correlation between role clarity and employee performance and how role ambiguity affects employee performance.

The analysis then proceeds to examine the dimensions of role clarity that have a considerable impact on performance behaviours and also a reflective thought on strategic interventions through which clarity and team effectiveness can be improved. The chapter also outlines the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, highlighting the way the findings can broaden the rest of the available literature and shape organisational practice. Lastly, the limitations of the study are identified, directions of future research are pointed out and the chapter ends with a synthesis of the contribution of the study. In this orderly fashion, the chapter shows how the quantitative data as a whole can respond to the main objective of the research and add to the subtlety of the knowledge about how role clarity influences the performance of employees in cross-functional teams.

#### **5.2 DISCUSSION BY OBJECTIVES**

##### **5.2.1 Objective 1: To quantify the level of role clarity among employees in cross-functional teams**

The reported mean score of 4.03 for role clarity in the findings indicates that employees in cross-functional teams generally experience high levels of clarity regarding their roles. These results align with the existing literature, which emphasises that role clarity is

improved when organisations deliberately structure tasks, establish clear expectations, as well as maintain strong communication lines (Mutebi *et al.*, 2022:14). The fact that most of the role-clarity indicators continue to be high, and most importantly, the understanding of the employees of their tasks and responsibilities is high, indicates that the team members have a clear understanding of the demands placed on them and how their work contribute to the team. This aligns with the stance put forward by Rizzo *et al.* (1970:155), who argue that well-defined job roles reduce ambiguity, enhance employee confidence and make performing duties more effective. In the descriptions, the employees rarely receive conflicting instructions hence portraying the organisation positively in terms of internal communication processes.

Although the overall role clarity was high, the relatively low mean score related to the definition of the decision-making authority shows that there may be a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries. As per the argument of Mutebi *et al.* (2022:18), one of the most important dimensions of role clarity is decision-making clarity since the lack of clarity in the latter domain may hinder performance and cause a slowdown in response times. In general, the findings suggest that despite the high role clarity, there are still chances to improve the communication of the decision-making boundaries, in particular, in complex cross-functional settings, where the work processes require the structure of coordination among several units. This finding is also consistent in project execution organisations, where each phase is time-bound and requires timely coordination. In this specific environment, delays or coordination gaps can occur when decision making boundaries are not clearly defined. Strengthening clarity around decision rights may therefore support efficient and timely project delivery.

### **5.2.2 Objective 2: To assess the impact of role clarity on employee performance metrics**

The current research indicates that role clarity has a moderate and positive impact on the employee performance measures as shown by moderately positive correlation between role clarity and performance ( $r = 0.41$ ) and regression analysis results confirms that role clarity has strong predictive ability of employee performance ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This empirical correlation supports the theoretical hypothesis of Rizzo *et al.* (1970: 157), which states that role clarity reduces ambiguity and this way employees can focus on core

performance behaviours and avoid the thinking burden caused by uncertainty expectations. The favourable correlation also aligns with that of Mutebi *et al.* (2022:21), who argue that transparency in work, roles and decision-making processes creates a platform for maintaining coherent and efficient performance. In the terms of the given inquiry, the higher the level of the clarity of the roles, the higher the level of productivity, a more efficient performance of the tasks and coordination of the performance of the cross-functional teams, which is why it can be considered that clarity is not only a formal necessity, but also a performance tool that strengthens its efficiency and reduces the uncertainty of performance related to the tasks.

In a chosen energy generation subsidiary, this relationship is particularly meaningful since cross-functional teams must operate in a time-sensitive and safety-critical environment where task clarity directly affects the execution quality and project timelines. The results suggest that in this organisation, if the employees understand their responsibilities and reporting lines, they are better positioned to deliver high productivity, maintain coordination across the organisation and perform tasks efficiently during projects and maintenance. Greater clarity may also support more accurate task execution and help minimise avoidable rework, thereby reinforcing safe and reliable operational practices.

Furthermore, the medium magnitude of the correlation shows that despite such a crucial role of role clarity, employee performance is also conditioned by organisational and interpersonal factors of performance, such as team support, workload distribution and quality of leadership, which are also constantly emphasised in the organisational-behaviour literature. However, the results offer strong support to the idea that role clarity improvement can significantly increase the outcome of individual performance in cross-functional contexts.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: To examine the statistical relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction**

Although this research did not experimentally address job satisfaction as an independent variable, the pattern observed in the data on role clarity and performance provides significant insights into the inverse correlation between ambiguity and employees' attitudes. The role clarity score is high across most items hence the employees rarely feel

uncertain regarding their duties, which as Rizzo *et al.* (1970:158) note is one of the most important predictors of job dissatisfaction when unattended to. Mutebi *et al.* (2022:17) also posit that role ambiguity interferes with employees' sense of stability and their emotional attachment to work. This theoretical position is indirectly supported in this study because moderate positive correlated role clarity and performance ( $r = 0.41$ ) is often linked with higher performance, which is often directly linked to more positive job attitudes, such as satisfaction, motivation and engagement. Workers who have a clear understanding of their duties, reporting lines and responsibilities will also view their jobs as manageable and meaningful hence alleviate the frustrations normally associated with the vagueness in the workplace.

Moreover, the results of the regression analysis that revealed the significant predictive value of clarity on performance could suggest that ambiguity, the reverse scenario, would most probably have negative implications on the psychological health and the levels of satisfaction of the employees. Thus, although job satisfaction was not directly measured, the empirical patterns are closely consistent with previous studies in the sense that the environments marked by high clarity automatically counteract the adverse emotional consequences that are created by ambiguity in cross-functional teams.

In the subsidiary's high-pressure, cross-functional environment, where coordination between engineering, safety and project management teams is essential, role ambiguity can have more pronounced effects. Uncertainty about tasks, responsibilities or reporting structures may increase cognitive load and reduce employees' sense of control, which can, in turn, weaken their psychological connection to their work. This underscores the importance of maintaining clear and consistent communication to support employee well-being in such demanding operational settings.

#### **5.2.4 Objective 4: To Identify Item-level patterns within the role clarity construct.**

The findings of this study suggest employees experience different levels of clarity across the items that make up the role clarity construct. The items related to the knowledge of their own tasks and duties gained the highest mean scores, thus indicating that employees have a good idea of what they are required to perform. This observation aligns with the arguments of Mutebi *et al.* (2022: 15) who argue that the clarity of roles in terms

of task understanding is core to the expression of effective work behaviours and coordination, which a cross-functional team requires.

On the other hand, the items with lower scores were related to knowledge of the limits of decision-making authority and, thus, highlighted specific aspects of role clarity that employees perceive as weaker. This point is consistent with that of Rizzo *et al.* (1970: 155), who point out that the state of ambiguity often continues in the areas within which employees are not sure of the scope of their authority, which additionally leads to hesitation and lack of confidence in the tasks based on the decisions made.

The regression analysis also suggests that performance is significantly predicted by overall role clarity (conceptualised as a composite variable with 0.41, significant and less significant ( $p < 0.01$ )), which indicates that it is possible to gain substantial performance improvement by improving the less developed items, such as communication about decision limits and development of team goals in this conceptualisation. High clarity was also reported by the employees regarding the way their contribution to team success is made, supporting Mutebi *et al.* (2022:18), who opines that the comprehension of the organisational goal as a whole enhances motivation and efficiency.

All these findings indicate that cross-functional employees in the subsidiary demonstrate high levels of clarity in their task accomplishment and teamwork contributions. However, item-level patterns reveal specific aspects of clarity that could be improved. Improvements in decision clarity and in the notification of evolving goals might lead to better performance, particularly in an environment where continuous improvement is required to achieve better outcomes in terms of plant integrity through lessons learned.

### **5.2.5 Objective 5: To evaluate strategies that statistically improve role clarity and team performance**

The findings of this study demonstrate that interventions aimed at strengthening role clarity can meaningfully enhance team performance, particularly in cross-functional environments. The significant regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) confirms that higher levels of role clarity are associated with improved performance outcomes. This supports Rizzo *et al.* (1970:157) argument that reducing ambiguity through clearly defined

structures and expectations is a critical component of achieving consistent and high-quality performance.

In the framework of this study, the presentation of item-level means shows that the strategies focused on strengthening the understanding of the limits of decision-making and providing frequent information on the changing team goals could be especially effective since these aspects produced relatively lower scores. Mutebi *et al.* (2022:22) also note that clarity-upgrading measures, i.e., transparent communication systems, cross-unit alignment meetings and clear distinctions in authority levels contribute to improved coordination and help avoid the confusion often associated with cross-functional collaboration.

The descriptive differences observed across employment categories and experience levels suggest that the targeted interventions to strengthen role clarity in the subsidiary might be necessary. Improved onboarding processes for newly hired staff and the implementation of employee refresher training for those with intermediate experience can improve clarity and lead to better performance. Overall, the findings indicate that should the organisation seek to optimise cross-functional performance, it should implement a structured and continuous approach to role clarification. Such an approach should be reinforced through ongoing training, frequent communication and active managerial support, ensuring clarity is sustained throughout the project and the operational cycles that characterise the organisation's work environment.

## **5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.3.1 Theoretical Implications**

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the theoretical understanding of role clarity in cross-functional teams, particularly in technically complex, high-risk environments such as the chosen South African energy generation subsidiary. By confirming a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between role clarity and employee performance ( $r = 0.552$ ;  $\beta = 0.41$ ), the study empirically supports the propositions of Role Theory as established in Chapter 2. Role Theory posits that clearly defined expectations reduce uncertainty and enhance behavioural predictability, thereby

improving performance (Rizzo *et al.*, 1970). The regression results confirm that employees with high clarity are more likely to self-regulate effectively, coordinate with others and maintain consistent task execution, thereby affirming the theoretical assumptions underpinning the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, the findings advance recent theoretical perspectives that emphasise the motivational and cognitive mechanisms through which clarity influences behaviour. Mutebi *et al.* (2022) argue that clarity strengthens intrinsic motivation by aligning individual understanding with team-level expectations. This study empirically validates this claim in an environment characterised by interdependent workflows and safety-critical tasks.

Item-level patterns further illustrate that employees experience certain aspects of clarity more strongly than others. Higher scores on task expectations and contribution to team goals reflect greater clarity in these areas, whereas lower scores on decision-making authority highlight areas where clarity may be less consistent. These variations reflect differences in how employees interpret specific clarity indicators in complex operational settings and resonate with Rizzo *et al.*'s (1970) assertion that authority boundaries are often a common source of workplace ambiguity.

These insights suggest that although role clarity functions as an integrated construct, the specific aspects emphasised in day-to-day operations may vary in salience. This nuance enriches Role Theory by demonstrating how clarity operates in practice within cross-functional engineering teams, particularly in environments where operational risk and interdependence shape employee behaviour.

Finally, by confirming established theoretical expectations using a South African, high-reliability technical environment, the study enhances the global literature, which remains heavily concentrated in Western and Asian contexts (Al-Barghouthi, 2022). This expands the contextual validity of role clarity theory and provides evidence that its core assumptions hold in emerging-markets, engineering-intensive organisational systems. This study extends the contextual validity of role theory by illustrating that its core assumption holds within emerging-market engineering-intensive organisations.

### **5.3.2 Practical Implications**

The study has practical implications for managers and organisations reliant on cross-functional teams. The high correlation between role clarity and performance demonstrates that improving clarity is not merely administrative, but also an effective way to enhance productivity and teamwork. When teams understand the expectations placed on them, their contributions to group results and how to prioritise tasks, they are better equipped to deliver consistent outcomes (Mutebi *et al.*, 2022:21). The fact that participants reporting high performance also reported a high level of clarity suggests that organisations can gain tangible benefits by investing in clearer communication of responsibilities, objectives and expectations.

Meanwhile, the lower scores associated with decision-making limits and reports about evolving goals indicate certain spheres on which the organisations need to take measures. The ambiguity in the status of the decision-maker on certain matters in cross-functional teams can lead to delays in processes and frustrations (Rizzo *et al.*, 1970:158). The results indicate that the following mechanisms should be incorporated or reinforced by managers: role-clarification sessions, clear communication concerning the level of authority and frequent team briefing to align the members whenever there are changes in priorities (Mutebi *et al.*, 2022:22). These tendencies in the general patterns of employment and experience also suggest that clarity strategies must be specific: new staff might need formalised onboarding and mentoring and employees in the middle of their careers might need new guidelines as their roles expand. This, in practice, implies that role clarity is a continuing management task rather than a single task at the time of appointment.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results show that role clarity has a substantial impact on employee performance and organisations should focus on enhancing the communication frameworks in cross-functional teams. One of the main suggestions is that managers should provide clear and stable descriptions of job expectations, tasks to be performed and performance criteria.

Effective communication helps in reducing ambiguity and help employees focus more efficiently, which is in line with the observations of Rizzo *et al.* (1970:155) who emphasise the importance of clearly defined roles as a way to improve work performance. Therefore, organisations ought to consider using role briefings and written role descriptions to enhance employees' understanding of their work.

One more suggestion is connected with decision-making limits which proved to be a less strong aspect of clarity. Workers were alleged to have less confidence in the boundaries of their power that may cause reservations and inefficiency. To correct this, management ought to provide more explicit guidelines that define decision makers in the cross-functional processes. Mutebi *et al.* (2022:18) observe the necessity of clarity as it helps put into perspective the rights to make decisions in collaboration-based teams across units. This gap can be addressed by regularly holding alignment meetings, decision-flow diagrams or access to revised standard operating procedures, which would result in a more confident decision-making process.

The other suggestion has to do with continuous communication about changing team goals. Cross-functional teams are usually in a changing environment that is characterised by a quick change in priorities. Regular progress reports, briefings or feedback sessions could be provided to the employees to help them make changes to their work according to the changing demands. The tactic does not contradict the claims of Mutebi *et al.* (2022:22) who highlight the importance of constant communication to ensure clarity.

Taken together, the results underscore that sustaining role clarity is essential for improving execution reliability, reducing operational ambiguity and enhancing team performance in the subsidiary. Leaders should therefore implement continuous, deliberate clarity-building practices embedded in daily operations, project governance structures and team communication routines. Such practices not only support performance outcomes, but also strengthen coordination in high-reliability engineering environments where effective teamwork is foundational to safety, quality and operational success.

## 5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams, several limitations must be acknowledged.

Firstly, the research design has inherent constraints, the study relied on self-reported data, which can introduce bias in responses because employees might intentionally or unintentionally exaggerate their knowledge of their roles or their performance. Self-report measures effectively capture perceptions, but do not explain the gap between perceived and actual behaviour. Furthermore, the cross-sectional, single-organisational context limits the generalisability of the study's results. The factors that shape role clarity experience may include organisational culture, leadership style and internal communication structures, which differ across organisations and are shaped by contextual factors. A wider sample of organisations or industries would provide a bigger picture.

Second limitation concerns the sample size obtained and demographic representations. According to Cohen's (1988; 1992) power analysis guidelines, a minimum of 67 to 84 participants is recommended to detect a medium effect size ( $r = .30$ ) with sufficient statistical power in correlational and simple regression analyses. However, the study yielded only 54 responses, with 53 being complete and suitable for analysis. While this number is acceptable for exploratory, non-probability research, it nonetheless reduces the statistical power of the findings. It increases the risk of sampling error, thus limiting the robustness of the correlational and regression outcomes. Methodological literature also cautions that lower-than-expected response rates may lead to non-response bias, as those who choose not to participate might differ systematically from responders (Fincham, 2008; Bethlehem, 2010). Therefore, although the results are still meaningful, they should be interpreted cautiously given these sampling limitations. Additionally, The other limitation is an unequal representation of the participants in the demographic groups, especially on the employment type and years of experience. Other groups like the contractors and some classes of experience were very small making it hard to make firm conclusions about the differences among groups. These imbalances have avoided statistical tests like ANOVA.

Lastly, the authors considered the role of clarity and performance of the workers, but not the other factors that can contribute to this correlation, including leadership support, the quality of communication or job satisfaction. Though the research provides strong evidence on the role between clarity-performance relationship, future research should involve other variables to have the most comprehensive picture of issues that leads to high performance across cross-functional settings.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Further studies should extend the study to cover a broader range of organisational contexts. An analysis of role clarity and performance across industries, organisations or companies of different sizes would make the study more generalisable and enable meaningful comparisons of results or findings. This expansion can be used to examine whether the strength of the relationship between clarity and performance differs across environments characterised by varying degrees of hierarchy, innovation or regulatory control. Moreover, researchers might use other constructs, such as leadership effectiveness, communication climate or psychological safety to provide a more detailed explanation of the interaction between clarity and other organisational variables.

Given that this study was conducted in a single subsidiary and yielded only 53 usable responses, substantially below the recommended sample size of 67 to 84 participants, future studies should prioritise achieving larger, more statistically robust samples. Larger samples would improve statistical power, reduce sampling error and enable stronger subgroup analyses across demographic categories. Expanding the sampling frame to multiple sites or organisations may also mitigate non-response bias, a known risk when response rates are below the recommended thresholds (Fincham, 2008; Bethlehem, 2010).

Future researchers should also consider including additional variables that might interact with role clarity, such as leadership support, communication climate, job satisfaction, workload or psychological safety. Adding these variables to expanded theoretical models

would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how role clarity functions in cross-functional teams. It could uncover mediating or moderating effects not shown in this study.

The other promising research direction in the future is the utilisation of mixed-methods strategies. Although the quantitative data in this study will outline distinguishing patterns, the qualitative interviews or focus groups will reveal the real causes of low or high clarity in certain areas, especially those related to decision boundaries or changing team goals. It would allow the researchers to investigate employees' lived experiences and enhance insights into how clarity is cultivated or hindered in standard work procedures.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

This study offered a detailed analysis of the quantitative results, illustrating how these findings enhance understanding of the link between role clarity and employee performance in cross-functional teams. The data indicated that respondents generally reported above-average levels of role clarity, particularly regarding task responsibilities and contributions to team goals. However, certain areas, such as clarity of decision-making authority and communication about changing priorities, were less clear, pointing to ongoing ambiguities in the subsidiary's operational environment.

The results further confirmed that role clarity is a crucial predictor of employee performance, thus validating the study's conceptual framework and supporting the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 1. These findings bolster the dual role of role clarity as both a structural mechanism that guides behaviour and a motivational resource that boosts confidence, coordination and engagement at work. This outcome aligns strongly with the existing literature, which consistently highlights that clarity decreases ambiguity, enhances coordination and improves employees' ability to deliver reliable and high-quality performance in complex team environments.

The chapter also explored the theoretical and practical implications of these results. Theoretically, the study reinforces existing perspectives that role clarity operates as an integral construct, while the item-level variations highlight specific clarity aspects that employees may experience differently in practice. These variations do not indicate separate dimensions but rather reflect areas where clarity is strongest or weakest within

the unified role clarity construct. In practice, the findings highlight the significance of intentional clarity-enhancing strategies, such as structured communication, regular alignment meetings and customised onboarding, particularly in diverse, multidisciplinary teams common in energy-generation settings.

The key limitations were recognised, including reliance on self-reported data, a single-site research setting, a sample size smaller than the recommended 67-84 participants, and uneven demographic representation, all of which limit the generalisability and inferential robustness of the findings. These limitations highlight the need for methodological expansion in future research.

Given these limitations, the study recommends that future research broaden sampling to encompass multiple organisations, employ mixed-method approaches for richer experiential insights, and consider additional organisational factors such as leadership support, communication climate, and psychological safety. These measures would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of how clarity is created, sustained and translated into performance outcomes in complex team settings.

Overall, this study reveals that role clarity is a vital organisational factor, having notable and concrete effects on employee performance, particularly in cross-functional teams in high-reliability technical environments. Therefore, improving clarity in such environments is not just helpful but crucial for enhancing coordination, increasing performance and aligning with the organisation's strategic objectives.

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## ANNEXURE A LANGUAGE EDITORS' LETTER

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### Centre for Scholarly Publishing Services (PTY) Ltd

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02 December 2025

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**JANE MABOTJA**  
North West University Business School  
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences  
North-West University  
Potchefstroom Campus  
Private Bag X6001  
Potchefstroom  
2520

This serves to confirm that a mini-dissertation titled *Role clarity and employee performance within cross-functional teams in a South African energy-generation subsidiary* by Jane Mabotja submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Business Administration at the North-West University has undergone both a thorough copy-editing as well as proof-reading processes.

Sincerely,

.....  
Solani Ngobeni  
Publishing Director  
**Centre for Scholarly Publishing Services (Pty) Ltd.**

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## ANNEXURE B TURNIT IN REPORT

55204740:Jane\_Mabotja\_MBAC873\_2025\_November\_Examin...

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>11</b> %	<b>8</b> %	<b>7</b> %	<b>4</b> %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<a href="https://repository.nwu.ac.za">repository.nwu.ac.za</a> Internet Source	<b>1</b> %
<b>2</b>	<a href="https://ojs.amhinternational.com">ojs.amhinternational.com</a> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %
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<b>4</b>	Deniz Devrim Tasdemir, Lutfi SURUCU, MUSTAFA BEKMEZCI. "The Moderating Role of Leader Member Exchange in the Effect of Role Clarity on Employee Accountability", Management, 2025 Publication	<b>&lt;1</b> %
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<b>11</b>	Submitted to Regent Business School Student Paper	<b>&lt;1</b> %

# ANNEXURE C SOLEMN DECLARATION AND PERMISSION TO SUBMIT



NWU Higher Degrees Administration

## SOLEMN DECLARATION AND PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

### 1. Solemn declaration by student

I,

declare herewith that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation entitled (**exact registered/ approved title**),

which I herewith submit to the North-West University is in compliance/partial compliance with the requirements set for the degree:

is my own work, has been text-edited in accordance with the requirements and has not already been submitted to any other university.

**LATE SUBMISSION:** If a thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation of a student is submitted after the deadline for submission, the period available for examination is limited. No guarantee can therefore be given (should the examiner reports be positive) that the degree will be conferred at the next applicable graduation ceremony. It may also imply that the student would have to re-register for the following academic year.



I completed the AI use declaration form available from this link: [AI use in Research Form](#)

Ethics number:

ORCID:

Signature of Student:

University Number:

Digitally signed by Jane Mabotja  
Date: 2025.12.03 19:13:35 +0200

Signed on this  day of  of

### 2. Permission to submit and solemn declaration by supervisor/promoter

The undersigned declares that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation:

- Complies with the A-rules and the technical requirements provided for in the Manual for Higher Degree studies and in faculty rules;
- Has been checked by me for plagiarism (by making use of TurnItIn software for example) and a satisfactory report has been obtained, and;
- That the work was language edited before submission for examination.

Faculty specific requirements as per A-rules: 1.3.2, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.4.2, 4.10.4, 5.3.2, 5.4.2, 5.10.2

- Complies with regards to faculty rules on submission or acceptance by an accredited scientific journal;
- The student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her mini-dissertation/ dissertation/thesis for examination.
- The Declaration of AI use form has been completed and submitted to me prior to submitting for examination

Signatures of supervisor(s) and Promoter(s): (only compulsory in cases where there are co- or assistant- supervisor(s/promoters))

Digitally signed by Prof CJ Botha  
Date: 2025.12.04 11:14:31 +02'00'

Use the fill and sign option to sign here

Use the fill and sign option to sign here

## ANNEXURE D AI DECLARATION



### Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Academic Research Declaration Form

#### Section A: Researcher Information

Full name:	Jane Mabolja
Student/Staff Number:	55204740
Faculty and School:	Economics and Management Science_NWU
Research Unit:	
Name of Supervisor(s):	Prof C Botha
Research title:	ROLE CLARITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE WITHIN CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN ENERGY-GENERATION SUBSIDIARY

#### Section B: AI Use Disclosure

1. Was AI used in any part of this research paper?

- Yes (If you selected "Yes", complete Section C onwards and the signature section)
- No (If you selected "No", please proceed to the signature section.)


#### Section C: Details of AI Use

Please complete Section C on the next page by completing the table.

#### Section D: Declaration

I confirm that:

- I have read the best practice guidelines on best practices for ethical AI use in academic research and also the NWU protocols on responsible AI use.
- All AI contributions have been declared, acknowledged and properly referenced where applicable.
- No confidential, personal, or unpublished data was uploaded into AI systems.
- All AI outputs were checked and verified against credible scholarly sources.
- The final academic reasoning, analysis, and conclusions are my own, not solely generated by AI.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher:

\_\_\_\_\_  
03/12/2025  
Date:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of research supervisor/promoter:

\_\_\_\_\_  
4 Dec 2025  
Date:

**Section C: Continued**

Tool Used <i>(e.g., ChatGPT)</i>	Purpose of Use <i>(e.g., grammar correction, reference formatting, idea generation)</i>	How Information Was Verified	Section of Research Where Used <i>(e.g., proposal, data analysis, final report, etc.)</i>
Grammarly	Grammar corrections and language enhancement		Final Report.

## ANNEXURE E ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222  
Fax: 018 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Senate Committee for Research Ethics**

Tel: 018 299-484

Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

4 September 2025

### ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **North-West University Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on 4 September 2025, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

<b>Study title:</b>	The relationship between role clarity and employees performance in cross-Functional teams: The case study of a South African Energy Generation Subsidiary																																														
<b>Study leader/Supervisor (Principal investigator/Researcher):</b>	Prof C.J. Botha	<b>University no.:</b>	10201262																																												
<b>Student:</b>	Mrs J. Maboija	<b>University no.:</b>	55204740																																												
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<b>Expiry date:</b>	9/4/26																																														
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																																															

**Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):**

**General conditions:**

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
  - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
    - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
    - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- EMS-REC can be contacted for further information or any report templates through the secretariat. Botlennyana Maluleka ([Botlennyana.Maluleka@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Botlennyana.Maluleka@nwu.ac.za) / +27 18 2852436) or the chair Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout ([Diana.Viljoen@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Diana.Viljoen@nwu.ac.za) / +27 16 9103403).

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Diana  
Viljoen-  
Bezuidenhout

Digitally signed by Prof  
Diana Viljoen-  
Bezuidenhout  
Date: 2025.09.04  
15:29:27 +02'00'

**Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout**

**Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee**