A CASE STUDY OF ROLE CONFLICT EXPERIENCED BY CHANGE CHAMPIONS DURING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

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DECLARATION

I, **Xoliswa Faith Nakani-Mapoma**, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

February 2019

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Signature   Date

ABSTRACT

A change champion has been defined as a person from any level of the organisation who is skilled at initiating, facilitating and implementing change, and who can effectively champion organisational changes. From a review of the literature, it was anticipated that change champions may experience role conflict, due to the multiple roles that they needed to fulfil simultaneously. Informed by organisational role theory, this research investigated the change management programme of a specific public entity as a case study, and analysed the nature of the role conflict that change champions experienced during a specific organisational change. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four change champions, the change coordinator and the Executive Director Corporate Services. The organisational documents that relate to change management were also consulted with a view to providing background information and an overview of the change management programme. A deductive thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data. A coding framework was developed prior to the collection of data, and was used for the identification of theoretical codes and themes in the data. The following codes were developed and explored as types of role conflict: role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility.

In terms of the findings, this study confirmed that change champions did experience role conflict during organisational change, mainly due to various expectations that come from different role senders. In the light of these findings, it was recommended that senior managers could reduce the incidents of role conflict by training change champions, introducing an orientation programme for new change champions, consider their personal values when appointing them, and allocating sufficient time for change champions to fulfil this additional role. This study has contributed to the body of knowledge by drawing on role theory and applying it to change management, in order to provide insight on the role of change champions during the organisational change, and in particular the role conflict that they experienced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

LIST OF TABLES

x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to analyse the nature of role conflict that is experienced by change champions during an organisational change, referring specifically to the change management programme of a public entity. The research was therefore set in the context of organisational change management and the role of the change champions during organisational change, and sought to answer the question: What is the nature of the role conflict that is experienced by change champions during organisational change?

1.2   CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

The entity was formed in 2010, following the merger of two previous entities. It has a total staff complement of about 500 employees, and of these, 100 employees are based at its head office. Prior to the merger, the two former entities had different cultures, and were operating independently. This necessitated the Board of Directors and the executive management team to introduce a change management programme, with a view to forming a new culture for the new entity.

Whilst the entity was still implementing the change management programme, it had to review its strategy as this had lapsed after a period of five years. The review of the strategy resulted in another organisational change to align the operations to the new strategy of the entity. During the implementation of its change management programme, it appointed change champions to assist. The study therefore analysed the nature of role conflict that was experienced by the change champions during the organisational change.

This study focused on the role of the change champions in an organisation, in support of the implementation of an effective behavioural change programme. Furthermore, this study investigated whether change champions perceive any role conflict between their roles as managers/employees and as change champions.

1

1.3   KEY CONCEPTS

Against this backdrop of an organisational change programme, key concepts of the study are change champions and role conflict. Change management has been defined as the process of 'continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers' (By, 2005: 369); while Warrick (2009: 15) defined a change champion as "a person from any level of the organisation who is skilled at initiating, facilitating and implementing change and who can effectively champion organisational changes."

The concept of role conflict comes from role theory. Solomon *et al*. (1985) described role theory as studying the conduct of specific positions that are distinct in social networks, rather than focusing on the incumbents of those positions. Wickham and Parker (2007) described organisational role theory as a theory that examines the individuals' roles in community structures that are decided in advance, and accordingly play a role in the achievement of organisational objectives.

Similarly role conflict has been defined "as a state of mind or experience or perception of the role incumbent arising out of the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other(s) more difficult or even impossible" (Pandey and Kumar, 1997: 191).

1.4   METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative research methodology and used a descriptive case study design, because it aimed to describe a natural phenomenon that occurs within the data in question. It conducted a qualitative exploratory case study entailing the analysis of the experiences of the champions, to determine whether they understand their role and the expectations that the organisation has of them. The current case study is instrumental because it provides a description of a particular place, person, a number of people, or work.

In terms of collecting data, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, where four change champions, the Executive Director Corporate Services and the

2

change coordinator were interviewed. All the participants were sampled purposively, as they had already been identified by the entity as people who were key in the implementation of change management. Over and above the interviews, the research also used the organisational documents that relate to change management within the entity. The material included the following: the strategy of the organisation, all organisational documents that relate to change management, the change management road map, the communication code, the leadership code and results and Action Plan of the staff satisfaction survey. It then used deductive thematic to analyse data. Literature was reviewed to develop a theory driven coding memo. The following themes emerged from the reviewed literature, namely, role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Organs of state are expected to adhere to a given political direction or mandate, which may result in organisational change. When implementing the changes, they require the support of their personnel, who need to be willing to learn how to manage the organisational change and especially the cultural changes that are required (Hartley, Benington and Binns, 1997).

In light of the discussion above on role conflict, it was important for this study to analyse the nature of role conflict that change champions may experience during organisational change. Through such an examination, the purpose of the study was to identify the types of role conflict and explore their implications for the organisation in general and change champions in particular.

1.6 RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Hartenian *et al.* (2011:40), roles can be expectations one has about social behaviour or functions or positions. Organisations require personnel to execute specific roles at work to implement their expected functions successfully and professionally (Wickham and Parker, 2007). Therefore, employees in organisations

are meant to have different expectations of themselves and their colleagues during the implementation or performance of their organisational roles (Wickham and Parker, 2007).

Literature on role theory has suggested that, the efficiencies of employees can be affected by role ambiguity and role conflict (Hartenian *et al.*, 2011; Katz and Khan, 1978; Rizzo *et al.*, 1970). Furthermore, literature shows that both role conflict and role ambiguity cause emotional tension (Addae, Parboteeah and Velinor, 2008 quoting Cooper and Schindler, 2001) and could impact negatively on the performance of employees' task and organisational outcomes. Therefore, it is anticipated that employees who experience higher levels of role conflict, role strain, role incompatibility, role overload and role ambiguity would generally be less committed to the organisation. Employees in different organisations experience conflict, even if they are aware or unaware thereof, and the consequences of conflict are bound to happen whether in a bad or positive manner (Judeh, 2011). Thus, role ambiguity and role conflict will inevitably arise at the work place (Judeh, 2011).

According to Floyd and Lane (2000), employees who perform a change champion role as an additional role during strategic renewal, experience strategic role conflict due to the technological changes that formed part of the organisational change. For instance, senior management may expect one set of roles to be met, while operating- and middle-level managers expect another. Thus, under those conditions, the system that create roles may no longer offer certainty in social interactions. Therefore, differences in priorities associated with strategic renewal leads to uncertainty over which role to perform. It is argued that employees who are allocated change champion roles without capacitating them with the requirements of the additional role, experience role conflict because they lack the necessary skill and capacity to perform the additional roles (Hailey, Famdale and Truss, 2005).

Furthermore, Gatenby *et al.* (2014) argued that employees who perform a change champion role experience role conflict as they experience pressure in performing operational roles effectively as part of their roles as employees, and at the same time are expected to perform different – and sometimes competing – change initiatives.

4

This is also in direct contrast of the chain of command principle. They further stated that managers who are change champions are better positioned to encourage the organisational change and public sector restructuring as long as the conflicted role expectations are more relaxed and internally determined. It is therefore, anticipated that change champions could experience role conflict, because they are expected to perform their employee role, and in addition, a change champion role.

The purpose of the study was therefore to focus on determining the nature of role conflict that is experienced by change champions during the implementation of organisational change.

1.7   RESEARCH GOAL

This research aimed to analyse the nature of role conflict that change champions experience during organisational change, referring specifically to the change management programme of a public entity. The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. To describe the change management programme of the entity.

2. To identify the expectations that change champions have of their role.

3. To identify the expectations placed on the change champions by various role senders, namely the change agent, supervisor/manager, fellow employees and the change coordinator.

4. To identify and analyse the types of role conflict (namely, role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility) that change champions' experience.

5. To formulate recommendations on how to support change champions to avoid or reduce the likelihood of role conflict.

1.8   OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

This study is made up of five chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and the context of the study. It provides the context of the study, the definitions of key concepts, a research goal and explanation of the research methodology and the outline of the chapters to follow.

Chapter 2 is the presentation of the literature review on organisational role theory, including organisational change, change management, change champions and their role. It has also dealt with role concept, types of role conflict that include role ambiguity, role overload, person role conflict, role strain and role incompatibility. It also deals with the consequences of role conflict.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology adopted and outlines the goals of the research and the research paradigm in detail. An explanation is provided on the reasons for choosing the case study method for the study. The research participants, the data gathering tools, the methods of analysis, and ethical considerations are also outlined.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings from the interviews and documentary data explored to respond to the research questions and the research objectives. The findings are of a qualitative nature and their analysis is consistent with the main aim and objectives of the study. The themes reflected upon were established from the literature review for purposes of addressing the research objectives.

Chapter 5 offers a conclusion of the research study. It also provides a summary of the case study, research limits, and contributions of the study, recommendations for future studies and concludes the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In line with the goal and objectives of the study, this chapter reviews literature that relates to organisational change, change management and the role of change champions during organisational change. It also reviews literature on organisational role theory which was the key theory for this research. Literature on the concept of a role is also reviewed and this is followed by literature on different role conflicts and the types of such role conflict.

The chapter starts with the definitions of organisational change and change champions and thereafter proceeds with a discussion on the responsibilities of change champions. It then continues with the discussions on the role concept. This is followed by the definition and discussion of organisational role theory. It further considers role theory and change and thereafter reflects on role conflict, its types and its consequences.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

According to Kotter (1998), change is obligatory, it is necessary and no organisation large or small is exempted from it. Similarly, organisations undertake change due to an array of reasons and pressures that range from new strategic initiatives, innovation and technology to scarcity of resources, competition, and change in politics (Baillien and De Witte, 2009). Organisational change was defined by Jones (2013) as a way in which organisations shift from the current position to a different, preferred position in order to increase their effectiveness. He further described its primary aim as a system of discovering innovative or better methods of utilising resources and competences to improve the organisation's capabilities to create value and improve its performance.

In creating a link between organisational change and change in the strategy of an organisation, By (2005) suggested that there is a strong link between organisational change and organisational strategy. Therefore, any change in the strategic direction of the organisation leads to changes in the organisation.

Regarding the implementation of the organisational change, organisations can get assistance from employees who are appointed as change champions with a view to assist in the implementation of change (Nikolaous *et al.,* 2007). Change champions are regarded as capable of implementing change management (Nikolaous *et al.,* 2007) because of their characteristics and their ability to persuade their fellow colleagues to embrace change.

As change brings fear, the organisations that undergo change need to consider the emotional state and inclinations of employees who are going through the change (Nikolaous *et al.,* 2007) to avoid opposition to change. Similarly, change efforts can also be thwarted by employees' personal differences and previous bad experience of change (Nikolaous *et al.,* 2007). Yilmaz and Kılıçoğlu (2013: 17) also outlined an array of reasons for employees to resist change and these include interference with need fulfilment, selective perception, habit, inconvenience or loss of freedom, financial loss, security in the past, fear of the unknown, threats to power or influence, knowledge and skill obsolescence.

2.3   CHANGE CHAMPIONS

Fernandez and Rainey (2006) argued that the successful implementation of change management is dependent on the employees of the organisation, who are willing to assume the change champion responsibility and ensure its successful implementation. These employees are called change champions.

Change champions have been given different meanings. Some writers have defined a change champion as 'a person at any level of the organization who is skilled at initiating, facilitating, and implementing change' (Shifaza *et al.,* 2013: 597; Warrick 2009:15), while Markhan and Aiman-Smith (2001) defined a champion as an

individual who recognises a new technology or market opportunity as having significant potential, adopts the project as their own; commits personally to the project; generates support from other people in the organisation; and advocates vigorously for the project.

On this issue of championing an innovation idea, Shane (1995) defined change champions as people who are encouraged to take risks in overcoming organisational challenges to innovation, and who are involved due to their different inclinations from the majority of organisation employees. Howell and Shea (2006:124) defined change champions as people who arise in an organisation and contribute to innovation by enthusiastically and willingly stimulating its development through the critical organisational stages, which include the introduction of new ideas, and the promotion of innovation.

When contrasting the different descriptions of a change champion, Warrick (2009) and Shifaza *et al.* (2013) defined a change champion in a similar manner while Howell and Shea (2006) and Shane (1995) also have similarities in their definitions. In addition, Howell and Shea (2006) and Shane (1995) referred to champions of innovation, while Warrick (2009) and Shifaza *et al.* (2013) defined them differently by referring to them as people inside the organisation who are skilled at initiating, facilitating and implementing change. While Warrick (2009) and Shifaza *et al.* (2013) specifically used the term "change champion" in their descriptions, MacIntosh-Murray and Choo (2005) defined a change-championing role as one of the roles that are enacted by a change agent. Therefore, they did not make any distinction between a change champion and change agent.

This study adopted the Warrick (2009) and Shifaza *et al.* (2013) definition of change champions because the change champions of the entity which was the case study are people from different levels inside the organisation who are capable of initiating, facilitating and implementing change; and were not the change agents, but supported them. This study has therefore made a distinction between change agent and change champion.

9

2.4   CHANGE CHAMPION RESPONSIBILITIES

According to Warrick (2009), change champions play three roles, namely initiating, facilitating and implementing. This also requires the change champions to be well informed about the issues, the opportunities, and how to get things done. Informing change champions about the issues and opportunities will assist them to deal with challenges, rather than dealing with the symptoms that prevail at a later stage when challenges have been left unattended (Warrick, 2009). As part of initiating change, change champions need to work with stakeholders and get commitment for support from them. Stakeholders involve individuals who are in the best position to influence or contribute to the success of the preferred change (Warrick, 2009). The participation of change champions is significant to designing and implementing successful changes. Change champions must be continuously mindful of the need get buy-in and further restructure it and be committed to change (Warrick, 2009).

Secondly, the facilitation part of change relates to working with people and teams. It further refers to networking and getting the right people together in an attempt to assist with change (Warrick, 2009). This role further requires the training of change champions in a variety of people skills that comprise listening skills and coaching skills (Warrick, 2009). Change champions can also enable a diversity of actions such as building change teams into high performance teams, guiding brainstorming, problem solving, planning, and conflict resolution meetings, and helping teams design and implement successful changes (Warrick, 2009:16).

Finally, the implementation role relates to making things happen (Warrick, 2009:17), developing skills in planning and managing the change process. Organising and dealing with the change process involves making things happen and keeping people focused and motivated (Warrick, 2009). This role further involves establishing feedback mechanisms to assess and monitor progress on change (Warrick, 2009). The last part of this role includes persevering until the change succeeds. In addition, champions may need to adopt multiple perspectives and to work collaboratively with people; a concept referred to as perspective taking (Howell and Boies, 2004: 125).

Howell and Boies (2004: 124) further argued that champions play a decisive role in implementing new ideas by communicating strategic meaning around the innovation, persistently promoting the innovation, securing resources, and involving and motivating others to support the innovation. Markham and Aiman-Smith (2001:50) maintained that champions do believe in innovative strategic directions; they keep projects alive; and they influence others to divert resources to the championed project. Markham and Aiman-Smith (2001) argued that change champions associate with new product development and are passionate about their activities.

In addition to the roles as described by Warrick (2009), as mentioned above, a champion provides a continuous support to the project team and supports the idea for the innovation (Howell and Higgins, 1990). A champion transmits problems to those who have the ability to solve them and displays persistence in overpowering difficulties (Howell *et al.,* 2005). Change champions further advance reasons why the innovation will succeed (Howell and Higgins, 1990).

Furthermore, a change champion overcomes obstacles to the innovation and gets key decision-makers involved (Howell and Higgins, 1995). They make improvements based on feedback they receive from their peers and stakeholders (Howell and Boies, 2004). Howell *et al.* (2005) further observed that change champions enthusiastically uphold the invention's benefits and they get the idea carried out. They remain continuously involved in the innovation, until it is implemented (Howell and Boies, 2004). They further retain stakeholders as part of the innovation and encourage the individuals participating to embrace the change (Howell and Boies, 2004).

Since change has different phases that include planning, inception and implementation, Hendy and Barlow (2012) noted that change champions have a tendency to continue to strongly identify with, and protect their existing positions. The authors therefore recommended the use of change champions only at the inception phase of the change process when they are communicating the vision, and not during the implementation phase, where they may experience greater levels of role conflict, be reluctant to move forward, and therefore be less effective. Thus, in

11

addition to the change champion roles, Shane (1995: 49) posited that the champion affords the innovators with autonomy from the rules, procedures and systems of the organisation so that innovators can establish creative solutions to existing problems.

Shane (1995) further argued that the champion encourages fellow employees to embrace innovation. The champion creates a loose monitoring system to insure that the innovators make proper use of organisational resources, while at the same time allowing the innovators to act creatively (Shane, 1995: 50). In the network facilitator role, the champion defends the innovators against interference by the organisational hierarchy through the development of cross-functional coalitions between managers in different functional areas of the organisation who support the innovation (Shane, 1995: 50).

In light of the above discussions on change and the role of change champions, it becomes evident that organisations that undergo change require the support of the change champions. However, this support does not provide any certainty that the change management programme will be implemented successfully unless the change champions are skilled and equipped with resources in their role.

2.5   THE CONCEPT OF ROLE

A role has been described as a set of expectations about behaviour for a position in a social structure (Rizzo *et al.,* 1970:155). It has also been regarded to be external to the individual and linked to specific positions within a social structure (Stryker and Burke, 2000:289). Malik and Waheed (2010:224) further defined role as a number of responsibilities one accomplishes in response to the expectations of the significant others and one's own expectations from that position.

Furthermore, Harigopal (1995 cited in Van Niekerk, 1998:45) posited that the concept of role provides a comprehensive pattern for behaviour and attitudes, is a strategy for coping with a recurrent situation and it can be identified socially and represents a clear entity. Harigopal (1995) cited in Van Niekerk (1998:45) further argued that the concept of role is recognisably fulfilled by individuals and forms a

basis for identifying and placing persons in society. Lastly, it consists of sets of activities that an individual may organise into a way of life.

Regarding the definition of role, this study used the definition of role by Malik and Waheed (2010) because it refers to a number of responsibilities and expectations including one's own expectations. This is also consistent with two objectives of the current study, namely to identify the expectations change champions have of their role and to identify the expectations placed on the change champions by various role senders, namely the change agent, change coordinator, supervisor/manager and fellow employees.

According to Katz and Khan (1978), the concept of role creates a link between an individual and the organisation. They further stated that every employee in an organisation is connected to some set of other members through operational needs of the organisation. These operational needs are implemented through the expectations those members have of that individual within the organisation.

Two objectives of this study were to identify the expectations the change champions have of themselves and the expectations placed on the change champions by other role senders. Beena (1999) cited by Bako (2014:30) identified three types of roles, namely the expected role, which is about the expectations others have from the occupant; the perceived role, which is the expectation the occupant believes is expected of them; and the actual or enacted role, referring to the definite behaviour portrayed by the role occupant.

Furthermore, Ebbers and Wijnberg (2017) argued that sometimes managers omit to define role boundaries after they have restructured the roles to align them with changing conditions. This usually happens when an organisation has undertaken an organisational review. This omission leads to the employees having to describe their own roles instead of conforming to well-defined roles, which in turn may create confusion amongst the employees.

Noor (2004) argued that roles give individuals the structure within which to gain an insight on meaning, purpose, and agency. Meaning relates to the identity that

individuals attribute to themselves through enacting a specific function in a social structure that they subsequently view as descriptive of themselves, while purpose relates to a commitment an individual has to a role. Agency is about serving as an agent to fulfil the meaning and commitment one has to a role (Reitz and Mutran, 1994). Furthermore, roles are tightly linked to statuses, which are known as positions in society (Noor, 2004). Accordingly, a person holding a position enacts an array of roles associated with it (Noor, 2004).

In an organisational context, roles are either expectations or functions. Since functions relate to jobs that workers do in an organisation, a wide range of expectations can arise, that include expectations between colleagues, expectations between a superior and a direct report, and the expectations between an employee's work and those of their boss (Hartenian *et al.,* 2011). In cases where the expected role differs from the perceived roles, the employee perceives role ambiguity, or an absence of role clarity and when the perceived roles differ from the enacted roles (actual social behaviour and function), the individual experiences role conflict (Hartenian *et al.,* 2011).

As roles evolve and change on needs basis, Javerntie-Thesleff and Tienari (2016: 240) identified four role transitions, namely macro role transition, micro role transitions, inter-role transitions and intra-role transitions. Firstly, macro role transition relates to emotional and physical transition between jobs, careers, committee appointments, and other positions. Secondly, micro role transitions are regular and usually occur in changes like travel between home and work where role exits and entries are temporary and recurrent (Javerntie-Thesleff and Tienari, 2016: 240).

The third role transition, namely inter-role transition, arises when an individual moves from one role to another, whereas intra-role transition, which is the fourth role transition, refers to changes in an individual's alignment toward a role already occupied (Javerntie- Thesleff and Tienari, 2016: 240).

2.6   ORGANISATIONAL ROLE THEORY

Wickham and Parker (2006) stated that the organisational role theory was first introduced about 30 years ago. It has been an important theory that supports human resource management and has provided a framework for the allocation of work roles within the organisation.

Biddle (1986, cited in Javerntie-Thesleff and Tienari, 2016:237) identified five distinct perspectives on role and these include functional, organisational, symbolic interactionist, structural, and cognitive. The functional perspective relates to the characteristic behaviours of individuals who occupy particular positions within social systems, while the organisational perspective focuses on the manner in which individuals accept and enact an array of roles in task-oriented and hierarchical systems that are formal organisations (Javerntie-Thesleff and Tienari, 2016: 237).

Structural perspective relates to 'social structures', conceived as stable organisations of sets of persons (called 'social positions' or 'statuses') who share the same, patterned behaviours ('roles') that are directed towards other sets of persons in the structure. Symbolic interactionist is the concept of norm and assumes that shared norms are associated with social positions. Norms are said to provide merely a set of broad imperatives within which the details of roles can be worked out. Lastly, cognitive assumption is about relationships between role expectations and behaviour.

This study focused on the organisational perspective as it relates to individuals that accept and enact roles in organisations, as this was relevant to the study. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the study used the organisation as a case study.

Wickham and Parker (2006:2) argued that division of the labour principle necessarily requires employees to enact specific work roles in order to perform their required tasks effectively and efficiently. They further stated that organisations are essentially a network of employees enacting specific roles that are "expected" and "required" by others in the institution. Furthermore, there are consequences in cases where

15

employees perform their roles in a way that is unanticipated by their colleagues (Wickham and Parker, 2006).

Similarly, if employee roles are not dealt with efficiently, they are likely to result in job dissatisfaction, lower levels of commitment and productivity, increased intention to resign, and higher rates of absenteeism (Wickham and Parker, 2006). Katz and Kahn (1966 cited in Wickham and Parker, 2006:3.) argued that organisations are made up of an association of separate functional groups of employees that have specific work roles to fulfil. Therefore, in terms of the organisational role theory, these functional groups assist in describing a 'role set' for the individual employee and determine the specific role behaviour the employee is expected to endorse (Katz and Kahn, 1966 cited in Wickham and Parker, 2006:3).

Katz and Kahn (1966 cited in Wickham and Parker, 2006:3) also argue that the endorsed set of role behaviours serve as a guideline on how the employees should behave and point towards two important points. These are that each individual employee accepts a role that has been conferred on them by the supervisor, a 'role' that is reflective of the organisation's culture and norms of behaviour; and secondly, for an organisation to function effectively and efficiently, the array of roles must be effectively communicated, fully understood, and accepted by its employees (Katz and Kahn, 1966 cited in Wickham and Parker, 2006:3).

For the controlling of any divergence from role expectation and actual role implementation, organisational role theory has created a review framework known as 'role episodes' (Wickham and Parker, 2006:3). The role episode involves members of a role set and the focal person (Katz and Khan, 1978). Members of the set hold the role expectations for the focal person; and these are activities that they require of him in order to perform their own roles or to maintain their own satisfaction (Katz and Khan, 1978). The next step in the role episode is the sending of these expectations from the members of the set to the focal person; the communication of role requirements intended to influence his behaviour (Katz and Khan, 1978).

16

Parker and Wickham (2005) argued that organisational role theory is supported by four basic assumptions, namely role taking, role consensus, role compliance, and role conflict. Role taking was described by Love and Davis (2014) as a process involving shared gestures as understanding and then reconstructing others or others' attitudes as imagining or constructing what others might do and as developing others' perspectives.

The characteristics of role taking are comprised of communicative, affective, and cognitive work on the part of the people that communicate with one another, as they provide and elicit signs including verbal and behavioural cues, attune to and express feelings, and imagine one another's thought processes (Love and Davis, 2014: 849). Sluss, van Dick and Thompson (2011) on the other hand, described role consensus, as a process that arises when individuals agree about each other's role expectations and are willing to enact the expected roles.

Employees experience a lack of role consensus when they disagree about others' role expectations and become unwilling to accept expected role behaviour (Sluss *et al.,* 2011). Role consensus serves to underpin the commonly held norms and conceptions that give rise to consistency in behaviour and an adherence to the organisation's culture (Biddle, 1986: 76). Regarding role compliance, Parker and Wickham (2005:4) described role compliance assumption as that which states that each role has a set of behaviours that are well defined and consistently adhered to by employees. In the organisational context, this compliance is underpinned by the job description that sets the objectives of each position and dictates the behaviours expected in each position to achieve these objectives.

On the application of organisational role theory to organisational change, Yousef (2000) argued that role conflict and role ambiguity might have interactive effects on job satisfaction and attitudes toward organisational change. Yousef (2000) based his argument on the fact that when organisations go through changes, employees tend to experience role conflict and role ambiguity due to the uncertainty. According to Terry and Jimmieson (2003), role conflict is experienced during organisational

change because the norms of the new organisation may differ from those of the old organisation.

Similarly, employees may view organisational change as a main contribution to their job security, personal career paths, and financial wellbeing, as well as a threat to the many intangible benefits associated with their work environment, such as power, prestige and a sense of community at work (Terry and Jimmieson, 2003:92).

Dahl (2011) also argued that since the change process involves increasing frustration, uncertainty, fear, and emotional insecurity, organisational changes could lead to increased employee stress. He further argued that organisational changes are associated with significant risks of negative stress. Eggen (2015:9) argued that organisational changes might lead to ambiguity, fear and uncertainty. He further posited that diminished role clarity and changes in relations with or opportunities for social support, are all potential effects of going through change processes. This study can contribute to the body of knowledge by providing insight on the types of role conflict.

2.7   ORGANISATIONAL ROLE THEORY AND CHANGE

It is argued that organisational change has become a significant part of work life, with changes being required not only on an organisational level, but also on a personal level (Day, Crown and Meredith, 2017:4). Therefore, organisational changes such as restructuring and mergers can result in higher levels of job stressors and demands. Regarding the application of organisational role theory in relation to change, Judge *et al.* (1999:108) argued that critical organisational change is regarded as a challenging stressor in organisational life, associated with negative outcomes such as job loss, reduced status, conflict at work and home, and threats to the psychological well-being of the individual employee.

When investigating the effect of change management on employees, stated that role stress is regarded to have risen because of an imbalance between an employee's

understanding of the attributes of a detailed role and what the role incumbent accomplishes (Teo *et al.*, 2013). Day *et al.* (2017) further argued that employees that go through the change process experience emotional insecurity around the impact of the change in their job. This further leads to role ambiguity and increased workload, which have the potential to increase employees' level of burnout.

2.8   ROLE CONFLICT

According to Shenkar and Zeira (1992), role conflict arises when the important issues of one system contradict the primary issues of another system. It was later defined "as a state of mind or experience or perception of the role incumbent arising out of the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other(s) more difficult or even impossible" (Pandey and Kumar, 1997: 191).

Regarding the types of role conflict, Rizzo *et al.* (1970: 155) identified four kinds of role conflict, namely: 1) conflict between defined role behaviours and the focal person's values; 2) conflict between defined role behaviour and resources, including time and the capabilities of the focal person; 3) conflict caused by different roles, with different or incompatible expectations; and 4) conflicting expectations by incompatible policies. Shenkar and Zeira (1992:57) also identified four different types of role conflict, namely intra-sender conflict, inter-role conflict, inter-sender conflict, and person role conflict. Intra-sender conflict arises when inequitable demands are made by a single member of the role set, whereas inter-role conflict relates to incompatible pressures stemming from membership in multiple groups (Shenkar and Zeira, 1992). Inter- sender conflict occurs when opposing pressures from different role senders happen whereas person- role conflict arises when the focal person's values disagree with the recommended role performance (Shenkar and Zeira, 1992).

Following Shenkar and Zeira's (1992) types of role conflict, Caldwell (2003:992) also recognised four types of role conflict, namely: *1) inter-role conflict* which happens when the enactment or implementation of one or more roles comes into conflict with that of others, leading to inconsistencies in enactment, contending anxieties and

possible role overload whereas; 2) *intra-role conflict* appears from different expectations or discordant enactment standards in the execution of a single role; 3) *value–role conflict* arises when the inner or work values of a role incumbent are in conflict with the implementation of a definite role or task; and 4) *old–new role conflict* arises when one or more new roles contradict with or intrude on current roles. Furthermore, Caldwell (2003) and Shenkar and Zeira (1993) identified similar role conflicts, namely value role conflict and person role conflict even though Shenkar and Zeira (1993) mentioned the value role conflict as person role conflict. They further explained that inter-sender conflict occurs when opposing pressures from different role senders happen and this can be viewed as the violation of the chain of command principle.

In the organisational context, Noor (2004: 390) pointed out that role conflict in the workplace arises from three circumstances. The first is where the time needed to fulfil one role leaves insufficient time to devote to other roles; the second is where stress from fulfilling one role makes it difficult to meet the requirements of fulfilling another; and the third is where specific behaviours associated with one role make it difficult to meet the requirements of another.

This study used conflict between defined role behaviour and resources, including time and the capabilities of the focal person as identified by Rizzo *et al.* (1970). The study further adopted Noor's (2004) first type of role conflict, namely where the time needed to fulfil one role leaves insufficient time to devote to other roles. As indicated in the previous chapter that, a coding framework was developed relying on the stages as outlined by Boyatzis (1998) as well as a theory driven coding as suggested by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). This approach led to development of five codes which were later identified as types of role conflict, namely role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility. These types of role conflict are discussed and analysed in the following sections.

2.8.1 Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is defined as the differences between expected and perceived roles, or the absence of role clarity (Hartenian *et al*., 2011:40). On the other hand, role clarity has been described as the level to which employees' roles are clearly communicated and understood by them (Biddle, 1986:73). In addition, Schmidt *et al.* (2014) established that role ambiguity happens when there is no information and lack of clarity on a specific job position. They further argued that this leads to uncertainty about roles, responsibilities and job objectives (Schmidt *et al.,* 2014). Role ambiguity has further been defined as the degree to which performance results are unforeseen, or there is insufficient knowledge regarding expected role behaviours (Dasgupta, 2012:517). Nyanga, Mudhovozi and Regis (2012), identified three causes of role conflict, firstly role ambiguity arises when there is poor or inadequate communication about what the employee is expected to do, secondly, when there restrictions on employee authority, thirdly failure to cope with change. Also, Dasgupta (2012:517) identified the following causes of role ambiguity , firstly unpredictability of performance, secondly information deficiency regarding expected roles, thirdly, variation in quality of information, fourthly inadequate feedback about performance and lastly organizational complexity in hierarchy, chain of command and unity of command.

Teo *et al.* (2013) conducted a research on the sources of stressors that were experienced by health-care employees during organisational change. They selected staff employed in public and non-profit sector health-care organisations who are at least 18 years old in age and residing in Australia with a sample size of 365 nurses and non-nursing staff. The employees were given a task to reply to ten context-specific items on a non-nursing, administrative stressors scale. In terms of the research findings, role ambiguity was raised as one of job stressors on the nurses.

Mayers and Zepeda (2002) did a research on an urban high school that was situated in the South East. The aim of the research was to explore the challenges faced by high school department chairs during a change from a traditional system to a new system. The findings of the study revealed that chairs experienced both role conflict

and role ambiguity. Role ambiguity was caused by the following, (1) inadequate information about the expectations, (2) lack of training on how to become a chair, (3) lack of guidance on how they would be affected by change, and, (4) lack of follow up support after change had been implemented.

2.8.2   Person role conflict

Person role conflict has been described as that which arises in situations where the role occupant's values or preferences differ from those of role senders (Shenkar and Zeira, 1992). According to Pandey (1997:193) a person role conflict is experienced by the role incumbent when the expectations associated with the work role is incompatible with his or her needs, aspirations, values, or ethics. Person role conflict also arises when the role occupant lacks the required skills, which inhibits them from meeting a role's requirements (Caldwell, 2003:993). Caldwell (2003) further described person role conflict to arise when the inner or work values of a role incumbent are in conflict with the implementation of a role or task. This definition clearly identifies the conflict to be between the person and the work role only. Therefore, person role conflict arises when change champions' personal values conflict with the expectations of different role senders.

Regarding sources of person role conflict, Gunnarsdóttir (2016) suggested that middle managers who are change champions experience person role conflict. It is further argued that the sources of person role conflict involve: (1) personal needs that are in opposition to role expectation of job; (2) interpersonal relations, including the manner in which middle managers relate with other employees; (3) the manner in which middle managers are expected to change their behaviour and articulate their views; and (4) the inability of managers to make decisions related to new staff appointments, financial expenditure and so forth (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016).

Gunnarsdóttir (2016) did a study about middle managers during a period of radical change within the Norwegian child welfare service. The aim of the study was to explore how middle managers handle and respond to emotional dissonance and

constraints in autonomy during the change process. The findings of the study pointed out that, middle managers experience emotional discord, due to their position as both recipients and executers of organizational change. They therefore become susceptible to issues of loyalty and mistrust. The emotional discord is consistent with person role conflict.

2.8.3 Role strain

Role strain is defined as differences in expectations of a role, which are received from two role senders (Cline, 2010). Gordon *et al*. (2012) are of the view that both role conflict and role overload result to role strain if employees experience role overload due to lack of time to perform two roles they are expected to perform. They further argue that employees experience role overload when they are faced with expectations from various role senders, therefore role overload leads to role strain. Similarly, role ambiguity often causes role strain when an employee is faced with many demands (Whitehead, 2015).

Regarding causes of role strain, Hayes- Smith, Richards and Branch (2010) outline the following sources of role strain, namely, lack of training, uncertainty, inability to create a boundary between the employee role and the additional role, different expectations from different role senders, whereas, Giauque (2016) identified stress as one of the causes of strain.

Kjaerbeck (2017) conducted a study to explore the role of the hygiene coordinator as a key change champion, the communicative challenges and role conflicts implied in her practice. The study was done in a hospital in Denmark and it involved a change in a hospital ward following an outbreak of a resistant bacteria. The study concluded that the change champion had experienced role strain, because she lacked authority to reprimand her colleagues and senior management when they disregarded the implementation of hygiene measures in the ward. Another contributory factor to the resistance that caused role strain was due to the position of the change champion, who was an ordinary employee and not in a managerial position. The change

champion therefore lacked the necessary authority to prevent resistance to the change management and communicate freely about the required changes.

In another study, Gatenby *et al.* (2014) explored the role of middle managers in United Kingdom public service reform. The study concluded that middle managers were doing three major, but often conflicting roles, that involved change, fulfilling roles of 'government agent', 'diplomat administrator' and - less credibly - 'entrepreneurial leader'. These managers experienced role strain due to the number of expectations from different role senders.

2.8.4 Role overload

Role overload has been described as an inability to fulfil several roles simultaneously (Manasseh, 2013). It further arises when there is insufficient time to meet the expectations of two or more roles as expected by two or more role senders (Biddle, 1986). Also according to Zhou *et al.* (2014:8) role overload arises when employees experience inconsistency between the time required to finish the task and the time available for them, whereas (Dasgupta, 2012:518) defined role overload as the pressure of having to do too much work in too little time.

Zhou *et al.* (2014) identified two causes of overload, namely time inconsistency and overload caused by having too much work. Adnan and Saud (2016:45) highlighted several causes of role overload, namely (1) when an employees has insufficient skill to perform the task; (2) when an employee is unable to complete an assigned task or target in the given time period; (3) when an employee is assigned many responsibilities or several roles/tasks at the same time with a short deadline; (4) when employees have high expectations of themselves; and (5) when there is no motivation by the senior managers to enact the role.

Research on the concept of role overload was conducted in a pharmaceutical manufacturing firm located in the eastern United States where 159 employees were selected to participate. The purpose of the study was to examine whether employees with high demands but low decision latitude will experience high levels of role

24

overload (Adnan and Saud, 2016).Research findings confirmed that employees that lack decision-making experience high levels of role overload, therefore they require more capacitation in order to decrease the levels of role overload.

2.8.5   Role incompatibility

Role incompatibility is described as an inability to fulfil two roles that are incompatible and therefore conflicting (Hill *et al.*, 2010). They further describe it to arise when performing one role is not easy due to the pressures of the other role. It has further been defined to arise when there is a conflict between work and family tasks (Love, Tatman and Chapman, 2010). Role incompatibility has further been described to arise when pressures arising in one role are incompatible with pressures arising in another role (Rau and Hyland, 2002:112).

Rau and Hyland (2002:112) further identified three kinds of role incompatibility namely, work-to-family (WTF), family-to-work (FTW), and work-to-school (WTS). Work to family conflict relates to work interfering with family life whereas family to work conflict is about family life interfering with work life. Similarly, work to school conflict arises when work interferes with school, therefore making it difficult for the individuals to fulfil both roles.

Regarding sources of role incompatibility, Rau and Hyland (2002:115) highlighted the following sources, firstly, non- flexible organisational policies, and secondly, allowing a person to enact one role while in the physical domain of another role, while Carlson *et al.* (2011) identified lack of support from supervisors and abusive supervision as sources of role incompatibility.

Sharma, Dhar and Tyagi (2015:268) did a study on 693 nursing staff associated with 33 healthcare institutions in Uttarakhand, India. The aim of the study was to explore the   level to which work–family conflicts cause stress among nursing staff who had to deal with work to family conflict role incompatibility. The results shown that stress acted as a mediator between work–family conflict of the nursing staff and their psychological health. Kramer (2018) did a self-reflection study on his personal
25

experience of perceived role incompatibility between his role in portraying a reprehensible character in a theatre production, and his roles as a scholar, administrator, and church member. He applied boundary theory to explain how he handled this incompatibility. He explained that according to boundary theory, individuals streamline and order their setting by publicly making and keeping boundaries between roles. In this study on change, boundary keeping may also assist in arranging the times and location for exercising particular roles (i.e. employee and change champion).

2.9   CONSEQUENCES OF ROLE CONFLICT

Research on role conflict reveals that it may lead to job dissatisfaction, lower performance appraisal results and low job performance (Hartenian *et al*., 2011*)*. In an organisational context, change brings uncertainty, and consequently employees would rather have certainty (Ballien and De Witte, 2009). Furthermore, Celik (2013: 201) argued that consequences of role conflict include tension; lack of confidence; a feeling of hopelessness; anxiety and depression; decreased job satisfaction; distrust in the organisation; ill relationship with members of role set and superior officers; and poor performance, which in turn affects the organisations' overall performance. Role conflict further leads to the decrease in production, frequent staff turnover, frequent lateness and absence from work (Judeh, 2011).

Similarly, individuals who go through organisational change are subject to task and team stressors that include role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, role incompatibility, role strain and person role conflict (Ballien and De Wet, 2009) and consequently there is a connection between organisational change and role conflict (Ballien and De Witte, 2009).

2.10   SUMMARY

The literature reviewed by the researcher and then discussed in this chapter helped to position the research problem by providing insight into the expectations that employees have of each other in the organisational context. The chapter has

accordingly provided insight into organisational change and the role of change champions during its implementation. It has also provided a better perspective on role theory, especially organisational role theory that examines the individuals' roles in social systems that are planned in advance, focusing on objectives, and categorised according to hierarchy, and accordingly playing a role in the accomplishment of organisational goals. The literature reviewed also provided a better understanding of the types of role conflict and the circumstances under which employees experience such role conflict. The consequences of role conflict on the employees and the organisation were also highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research design and the stages taken to conduct it. It further provides a description of the qualitative methodology used to gather data, including the research paradigm and design. The chapter further describes the participants, how they were sampled, and their roles within the entity. It further describes the data analysis, and the steps taken in all stages of data-collection. In terms of the approach in conducting thematic analysis, a coding manual was developed and five codes based on the theory were identified. Confidentiality and ethical issues were also dealt with.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research paradigm is described as a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Jonker and Pennink, 2010, cited in Wahyuni, 2012:69). This research also adopted an interpretivist paradigm, which is about embracing the status quo theories about the social world and a subjectivist assumption about epistemology (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The interpretivist paradigm is in essence subjective because it attempts to understand the status quo of the social world from the perspective of individual experience (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). It has been suggested that an interpretive paradigm permits researchers to assess the world through the insights and understandings of research contributors, thereby allowing the researcher to learn from their experience and understand their opinions (Thanh and Thanh, 2015).

Thanh and Thanh (2015) further argued that people who use an interpretive paradigm apply flexible ways when looking for answers from the research participants. They further look for answers from people who have experienced the

incident and who come from a specific group. However, Mack (2010) argued that an interpretivist's main assumption is about the use of the direct experience of the people who are within the organisation, rather than trying to adopt an outsider position. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm involves understanding, explaining and clarifying the social reality through the eyes of different people (Mack, 2010).

The interpretive paradigm is relevant to the current research because it tries to investigate the social reality from the perception of the research participants (Wahyuni, 2012), and it allows research participants and researchers to use their experience and values during data collection and data analysis. Accordingly, this study explored participants' insights, views, opinions, and explanations of behaviour (Smith, Evans and Westerbreek, 2005). Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2015) described qualitative research methodology as research that brings out descriptive data through the participants' experience and noticeable conduct. Therefore, qualitative researchers understand and relate with research participants to gain insight of their encounters (Taylor *et al.*, 2015).

Role conflict is most often measured in subjective terms by asking respondents whether they perceive that the demands of one role are incompatible with the demands of another role (Coverman, 1999:971), and hence is regarded as subjective (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). This qualitative research design is therefore consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, because the researcher engaged with the change champions through interviews in an attempt to appreciate their world of experience.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD – CASE STUDY

According to Yin (1994:19), research design can be defined as, ".....the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research question and ultimately, to its conclusions. Colloquially, a research design is an action plan from getting here to there, where there may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions".

Collis and Hussey (2009:82) argued that case studies are often described as exploratory research, and are used in areas where there are few theories or a deficient body of knowledge. This study conducted a qualitative exploratory case study entailing the analysis of the experiences of the champions, to determine whether they understand their roles and the expectations that the organisation has of them. A qualitative case study research method was considered to be suitable for this study because it gives the researcher the ability to respond to 'how' and 'why' questions (Baxter and Jack, 2008:545).

Yin (2003), in Baxter and Jack (2008:547), identified three types of case studies, namely explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive, whereas Stake (1995) in Zainal (2007) categorised case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. This study used a descriptive case study design, because it needed to describe a natural phenomenon that occurs within the data in question. The current case study is instrumental because it offers a description of a particular site, individual, group, or occupation.

3.4   METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

According to Watkins (2012:69), the interview serves as a data collection technique for research methods falling within the context of the qualitative paradigm. Cooper and Schindler (2006:204, 208, 210-2011) suggested that three types of interviews are identifiable. Firstly, an unstructured interview where no specific questions or order of topics are addressed, with each interview customised to each participant.

Secondly, a semi-structured interview that generally starts with a few specific questions and then follows the individual's tangents of thought with interview probes. Thirdly, a structured interview, which is similar to a questionnaire and guides the question order and the specific way the questions are asked, but the questions generally remain open-ended.

Data was collected through the methods stipulated below in the next sections.

3.4.1 Semi- structured interviews

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, where four change champions, the Executive Director Corporate Services and the change co-coordinator were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were preferred in this study because they are flexible in nature (Leedy and Ormond, 2013). This method gives the interviewer the flexibility to deviate from the prepared questions and ask questions from the themes that come up in the interviews.

The researcher also probed for more answers during the interview process to allow the participants to provide more information (Kvale, 1996). More follow-up interviews were conducted either to close the gaps between the responses provided by the participants or to probe for more on the information to build on emerging themes (Rubin and Babbie, 2010).

The researcher also made notes of the respective responses (Bailey, 2008). The participants were comfortable with hand written responses because they had been assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews.

An interview guide (See Appendix A) was prepared before the interviews could commence and this guide as well as interview questions was sent to the respective participants (Kvale, 1996). The interview covered the elements of role theory as well as attempting to understand the expectations of the different role senders including those of change champions during the implementation of change management.

3.4.2 Sampling

According to Collis and Hussey (2009:209), a 'sample' is made up of some of the members of a 'population' (the target population), the latter referring to a body of people or to any other collection of items under consideration for the purpose of the research. As mentioned above, interviews were conducted with four change champions, Executive Director Corporate Services and the change coordinator. All of them were sampled purposively as they had already been identified by the entity as

people who were key in the implementation of change management. The interviews with the participants sought to understand the nature of role conflict they experience during organisational change.

3.4.3   Other data gathering methods

Over and above the interviews, the research also used the organisational documents that relate to change management within the agency. The material included the strategy of the organisation, all organisational documents that relate to change management, the change management road map, the communication code, the leadership code and results and Action Plan of the staff satisfaction survey

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process is described as working with the data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, coding it, synthesising it and searching for patterns in order to determine the meaning contained in the results (Maree, 2007 in Nthatung, 2016). This is done to determine patterns, perception themes and meanings. In order to understand the nature of role conflict, this study used thematic coding, which was built on the theory-driven framework (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, Boyatzis, 1998), and five codes in line with the theory, interview questions, interviews as well as relevant organisational documents were identified. The five codes that were developed were role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility. A copy of the coding manual together with a memo that describes the types of role conflicts that were explored are attached as Appendices C and D respectively. In addition, a memo used to validate and test reliability of the codes is attached as Appendix E, while Appendix F is a table that connects themes in the data with theory driven codes.

 Regarding the theoretical concepts on organisational role conflict, the researcher outlined codes that served as a basis to the theory. The elements of the codes were

derived from the elements of the theory. The codes were generated from both the organisational documents as well as the organisational role theory. According to Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013), the use of qualitative descriptive approaches to data analysis, such as thematic analysis, is appropriate for researchers who wish to adopt a descriptive case study.

3.6   RESEARCH QUALITY

Reliability and validity are essential features of qualitative research because in the absence of accuracy, the research becomes insignificant, it loses its value and ultimately becomes useless (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Accordingly, for purposes of this study, the researcher focused on the methods developed for qualitative research, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Anney, 2014:272).

Shenton (2004:64) outlined four methods that allow qualitative research to increase its trustworthiness and these are credibility (related to internal validity), transferability (related to external validity), dependability (associated with reliability) and conformability (associated with objectivity). In the current study, the reliability of the codes was tested through interview questions, change management documents and interviews.

3.6.1   Credibility

According to Anney (2014:276), credibility is described as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It therefore establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Anney 2014:276). In the initial interviews and any follow-up interviews, participants were afforded an opportunity to read the researcher's hand written notes to ensure accuracy. The researcher also summarised the written responses verbally during the interview process to ensure that the participants agreed with the contents or to afford

them an opportunity to make the necessary changes and provide additional information.

3.6.2   Transferability

Anney (2014:277) described transferability as a level to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. In other words, it is the interpretive equivalent of generalisability. Shenton (2004) argued that transferability is reliant on the depiction of the entire research design strategy and the sampling methodology. In the current study, the researcher complied with the principles of transferability through ensuring that the verbal statements were hand written and the interviewees confirmed their accuracy. This method provides a detailed description of the setting of the research context. Therefore, the capturing of verbatim statements of the participants was done through hand written notes.

3.6.3   Dependability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:299) in Graneheim and Lundman (2004), dependability "seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced changes', that is the degree to which data changes over time and alterations made in the researcher's decisions during the analysis process. Creswell (2009) argued that dependability happens when data becomes immovable for some time under different conditions. In this study, dependability was achieved through the demonstration of the research method followed and preserving the records of data collected.

3.6.4   Confirmability

Confirmability is described as a method that ensures the neutrality of the researcher during the study (Korstjens and Moser, 2017). The researcher has to protect and preserve the data by avoiding any self-interest or manipulating the data. They further argued that the interpretation should be based on the data instead of the researcher's preferences. According to Shenton (2004), the notion of confirmability is the qualitative researcher's comparable concern for objectivity.

The researcher must avoid bias and base the findings on the experiences and opinions of the participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that writing on researcher disposition, principles, and expectations, is a main measure of confirmability and should be evidently stated in qualitative research. This method assists the researcher to clarify how the researcher's opinions can appear in the researcher results while still providing valuable understandings.

To comply with the requirements of confirmability, an audit trail was followed in this study where the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data was detailed. As the purpose of the research was to understand the nature of the role conflict that is experienced by change champions during organisational change, many sources of evidence were used to build into the research purpose (Golafshani, 2003). Furthermore and to enhance data analysis, a thematic analysis was used due to an array of sources of evidence that was used during the study.

3.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Babbie and Mouton (2004:520) argued that ethical issues arise out of the researcher's interaction with other people, other beings, and the environment, especially where there is the potential for a conflict of interest. Guillemin and Gillam (2004:261) argued that ethical predicaments and anxieties are part of the everyday practice of doing research and therefore the participants must be fully informed of the option to remain anonymous and to be able to withdraw from the research at any stage.

35

Approval of the research proposal was obtained from the Commerce Faculty Higher Degrees Committee of Rhodes University, and the ethics application to conduct research involving human subjects was approved by the Rhodes Ethics Committee. Permission to do the research was also obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of the entity (See Appendix B – Institution Consent Form). In accordance with the ethical guidelines, the researcher observed confidentiality, and the participants were informed that their individual data would be kept anonymous.

The researcher offered anonymity to the participants to encourage honesty in their participation and assured the respondents that the reporting of the findings would be without misrepresentation or fabricated conclusions.

3. 8   SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the relevant research questions. It further discussed the case study method within an interpretive research paradigm utilised for this research. The procedure adopted to deal with the research question was described. The way in which the researcher tried to meet the suitable quality standards for the study was presented and possible limitations were identified. Ethical considerations were dealt with. The following chapter presents the research findings as collected and analysed in the interviews and organisational documents data.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings from the interview and documentary data that was collected and analysed to answer the research questions and address the research objectives as outlined in the previous chapter. This case study entailed a change management programme that is being implemented at a certain public entity. The focus was particularly on the role of change champions during the change management process and to identify and analyse sources of role conflict that are experienced by change champions during the organisational change. The documentary data was used to provide a brief background and overview of the change management programme of the entity. The findings are of a qualitative nature and were analysed using the thematic approach. Five themes were also created, namely role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, conflict, role overload and lastly role incompatibility.

The objectives are outlined as follows:

1. To describe the change management programme of the entity.

2. To identify the expectations that change champions have of their role.

3. To identify the expectations placed on the change champions by various role senders, namely the change agent, change coordinator, supervisor/manager and fellow employees.

4. To identify and analyse the types of role conflict (namely, role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility) that change champions' experience.

5. To formulate recommendations on how to support change champions so as to avoid or reduce the likelihood of role conflict.

4.2 BACKGROUND TO AND OVERVIEW OF THE CHANGE

As stated, the first objective was to describe the change management programme of the entity. The entity that was the subject of this research was formed in 2010, following the merger of two other entities. Soon after the merger, the new entity embarked on a change management process with a view to develop a new culture. While still busy implementing this cultural change programme, a need arose to review the strategy of the organisation and this led to an organisational review, which took place in 2015, and resulted in additional change management processes.

The organisational review brought about changes to the organisational structure to align it to the new strategy. These structural changes included the following shift of functions: (1) Information Technology and Facilities moved from the Operations department to the Corporate Services department, (2) the Destination Tourism and Marketing department was split, with Destination Tourism moving to Operations, and the Marketing department becoming a stand-alone department.

These structural changes affected many employees because the reporting lines changed in certain instances and the levels of some positions changed – some levels went up and others were dropped. The employees were not happy with this realignment as they felt it brought instability, uncertainty, anxiety and fear of a loss of jobs. They also perceived that there was favouritism, as some employees were not affected at all.

In an attempt to address the above issues, the management appointed change agents from a consulting firm to manage the change. The change agents started the process by conducting a climate survey. Thereafter, the change agents recommended the appointment of employees as change champions, as well as a change coordinator, to assist in the implementation of the change management programme.

At the time of data collection, the change management programme consisted of three phases. Phase I entailed an organisational review in the form of a climate survey which had led to the identification of five key areas for attention, namely

Communication, Leadership, Reactions to Change, Culture and Reward, and Recognition. Phase 2 entailed addressing these five key areas, and lastly, Phase 3 entailed attending to other areas that were not being addressed in Phases I and 2. These included communication and leadership. All the phases are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Table 4.1 below outlines the change management programme of the agency and its main events,

TABLE 4.1: CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME AND ITS EVENTS

Year	Event	Change Initiative
2010-2012	Merger (Interim CEO appointed).	External change agent appointed. Various change management sessions were held with all employees. These sessions were encouraging employees to embrace the change and work together as a team.
2012-2013	A permanent CEO was appointed.	Another external change agent was appointed. He also held various sessions with managers.
2014	A third CEO was appointed following the resignation of the previous one.	Change management started losing momentum.
2015-16	Organisational review was initiated. Three new Executive Directors joined the entity.	Change management gained momentum and change agent was appointed to implement it. Climate survey was conducted. Change coordinator and change champions were appointed and trained. Other employees were also trained through various workshops.
2016-2017	Organisational review was implemented.	Another change agent was appointed. The implementation of change management was continuing. Change champions were assisting in the implementation. They held departmental sessions and sessions with the change coordinator.
2017		Departmental change management/team building sessions were held. The change champions and change agents were assisting in the implementation. Staff satisfaction survey was conducted.
2018		The implementation of change management was continuing and change champions were assisting in the implementation

During the organisational review (Phase 1), the management of the entity took a decision to formalise the change management programme and solicited the services of a new external service provider (change agents) to assist with the implementation

of the programme. The change agents suggested the appointment of the change champions to assist in the implementation of the change management programme. The change agents further held more workshops with the change champions with a view to train them in their roles and expectations as change champions.

As mentioned earlier, after the climate survey of Phase 1 of the change programme five key areas for attention were identified, namely Communication, Leadership, Reactions to Change, Culture and lastly, Reward and Recognition.

The first area focused on was communication as the employees were of the view that Senior Management took decisions that affected the employees without any form of consultation. These decisions included the transfer of functions and staff from one department to another department. The employees further stated that essential information was not communicated through effective and well-established channels such as meetings and emails. Secondly, on the issue of leadership, the employees were concerned about the lack of visibility of leadership in the day-to-day operations. Thirdly, regarding culture, the culture of high performance and excellence was raised as a desirable culture to replace a culture where accountability was lacking. Fourthly, on the issue of reward and recognition, the employees felt that in order for the entity to achieve its stronger value proposition, it has to invest in its employees. The employees further identified three areas that would lead to their personal success and these were growth, development and self-actualisation. Fifthly, regarding reaction to change, the employees felt isolated in the change process.

As part of the implementation of Phase 2, it became clear that the issue of communication which had not been addressed adequately in Phase 1 was an ongoing challenge and leadership around this process also proved inadequate. There was also a perception of lack of transparency around the change management process, which created mistrust. In an attempt to address the issues raised, the change agents suggested the following approach as part of Phase 2 – Head Office (HO) staff were split into four groups and one to two-hour sessions per week per group for a period of 11 weeks were undertaken. The following topics were

40

covered: Communication 1, 2 & 3; Management & Leadership 1 & 2, Teamwork 1 & 2, Accountability & Ethics 1 & 2, Trust and Sustainability. Staff initially viewed the process with suspicion and there was a general reluctance to attend and participate in the sessions. However, as the process unfolded so attendance and general participation improved.

The change agents further held change management sessions with the rest of the employees within the organisation to create awareness of cultural change. The resultant product of these sessions was the development of a Communication Charter and a Leadership Charter.

The third phase of the implementation involved various departmental team-building sessions, which were coordinated by the change agents and change champions. The aim of these sessions included the following: (1) to provide a platform for staff to raise real concerns; (2) to provide a safe environment for staff and executives to engage; and (3) to follow a process to resolve issues, plot a way forward and conclude matters that had not been addressed previously. In these sessions, the employees were encouraged to raise their concerns about and suggestions for the change they want to see in the entity. Some of the suggestions included a safe working environment, showing respect and recognition, and arranging information sessions that would assist in the dissemination of essential information.

All three phases were followed by a staff satisfaction survey, which focused on change management, with a view to assess the effectiveness of the change programme. In the survey, the employees raised an array of concerns but the change agents identified five issues that were of major concern to the employees. The issues included salaries and benefits, communication from executive level, the performance management system, consultation, and supervisors not holding regular meetings, at least quarterly. Regarding salaries and benefits, the employees raised uncertainty over the details of calculations related to salary amounts as well as deductions.

After the above-mentioned phases, the change agents furnished the agency with a close out report wherein all the issues that were raised during the departmental

41

sessions were summarised and presented to Senior Management for action. Senior Management delegated the task of implementing the change to the change champions under the supervision of the change coordinator. At the time of data collection, the entity was still busy with the change management programme as it is an ongoing process.

4.3   THE CHANGE CHAMPIONS' EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR ROLE

The second objective was to identify the expectations the change champions have of their role. Interviews were conducted to investigate this objective.

4.3.1   The expectations that change champions have of their role

In relation to what was expected of them, the following themes emerged from the interviews with the change champions: (1) facilitate change, (2) participate and promote participation, (3) provide support, (4) remain neutral, (5) be a link, and (6) encourage change.

First, when analysing the different expectations of the change champions, some change champions used the term "facilitate" when expressing their expectations. They confirmed that change was facilitated through inspiring other employees to participate in the change management initiatives and attend change management meetings. They further conveyed the discussions that emanated from the departmental change management meetings to the change champion meetings for further escalation to the Executive Management.

Other change champions used the term "participate", meaning that they were to encourage the staff participate in the change management through holding departmental meetings and motivate them to raise issues that required the attention of the Executive Management. They further revealed in the interviews that they also made the fellow employees participate in change management through creating

awareness about change. While some change champions understood their role to assist, the interviews revealed that they assisted in the implementation of change by providing fellow employees with the necessary information that related to change and the rationale behind change. They further attended meetings with the change agents and change coordinator in order to communicate the developments regarding change and progress on its implementation.

Third, some change champions understood their role was to provide support to both the entity and the employee. The interviews revealed that they gave this support to the employees by alleviating their anxiety about change and dispel any temptation to resist change. They further provided this support by bringing solutions to the challenges experienced by fellow employees during the change management process. Regarding giving support to the employer, the interviews revealed that change champions, provided support to their employer by encouraging fellow colleagues to embrace change, support change and consequently participate in the process through the change management initiatives. Furthermore, some change champions expressively stated they were expected to "allay fears" of the employees in relation to the change process by giving reassurance to the employees that they would not lose their jobs and benefits. Change champions further stated that they allayed fears of the fellow employees by informing them that change would not bring any changes to their employment benefits and conditions of service. Therefore, the employees would not be worse off because of the change.

Fourth, some change champions said they were expected to remain neutral and not take the sides of either the employees, or the employer. They explained further to say that employees expect the employer to change, and similarly Senior Management expect the employees to change. Therefore, their role was to allow the employees to raise their feelings about change, and give their opinion on how Senior Management should deal with various issues. At the same time, change champions communicated the expectations of Senior Management to the employees. These expectations included, participating in change management initiatives and attending departmental change management meetings.

In addition, some change champions described the expectation to "serve as a link between the employer and the employees" in managing change, as well as assisting the employees to cope with and embrace change. On making a follow up with the change champions on the meaning of serving as a link between the employer and the employees, change champions explained that they achieved this by conveying the emerging change management matters between the employees and the employer to ensure that the matters raised by staff get the necessary attention.

Sixth, change champions were expected to encourage change within the unit and to ensure that the process was implemented with a positive motivation and attitude. They stated that they achieved this by following up on issues that had been raised by employees regarding the change. They also encouraged employees to participate in the change management initiatives, having them interact with different aspects of the change programme. They achieved this by opening lines of communication between themselves in their capacity as the change champion and the change coordinator in terms of relaying the employee's suggestions and concerns.

Overall, change champions were familiar with what was expected of them and when analysing various expectations that were expressed, there were no major differences amongst the change champions. They had similar thoughts on what was expected of them, but used different terminology. The expectations were similar and the key message was clear, namely to support and encourage others to support and embrace the change, to allay fears, to serve as a link, and to help to implement the change.

Warrick (2009) highlighted three roles that change champions fulfil during organisational change, namely: initiating, facilitating and implementing change. These three roles are consistent with the findings here on the six role expectations that change champions had of themselves, namely: (1) facilitate change, (2) participate and promote participation, (3) provide support, (4) remain neutral, (5) be a link, and (6) encourage change.

4.4   THE ROLE SENDERS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHANGE CHAMPIONS

The third objective was to identify the expectations placed on the change champions by various role senders, namely the change agent, change coordinator, managers/ supervisors and fellow employees. Interviews were conducted and organisational documents on change management were analysed to address the objective. The expectations of the various role senders are discussed below.

4.4.1   Change agent's expectations

The change agent held various workshops with the change champions wherein the expectations were set out. His expectation was that they were to encourage fellow employees to embrace the change, and to ensure that staff were encouraged to participate in the change management programme with a view to ensure a successful implementation of the behavioural change programme. This suggested that the change agent expected the change champions to be available and to contribute positively to achieving an effective behavioural change programme.

The change agent further expected change champions to reassure employees about the importance of the cultural change in the organisation. They were expected to achieve this by explaining to the employees that change would not adversely impact their benefits and conditions of service, but rather that it was aimed at changing the organisational culture. Change champions were further expected to play a critical role in facilitating the change management programme. They were expected to achieve this by attending meetings with employees, acting as a change coordinator and providing feedback on the progress of the change. Furthermore, the change agent expected change champions to ensure that the change process was implemented successfully. They were expected to achieve this by getting buy-in from employees, showing empathy to the affected employees and journeying with them through all the change management stages.

4.4.2 Change coordinator's expectations

The change coordinator who is employed as a Human Capital Development Manager, also held sessions with the change champions to communicate the employer's expectations. The coordinator expected change champions to assist the organisation to resolve potential issues that could lead to employee resistance to change management programme initiatives. The change champions were expected to achieve this by communicating a clear message from Senior Management regarding change and being transparent in terms of providing the details of the change and its desired outcomes.

The change coordinator further expected change champions to launch change management initiatives and planning meetings (e.g. meetings for providing reports on change management issues). Change champions were also expected to plan change management initiatives and assist with their implementation. They could achieve this by involving fellow employees in the planning process to get their buy-in. They were further expected to be in the forefront- front in the implementation of the change management initiatives by showing up on time to the sessions for the implementation of change management initiatives and displaying enthusiasm about the change. The change coordinator further expected change champions to prepare monthly reports on the change management programme. Lastly, the change coordinator expected change champions to ensure that change was implemented successfully by engaging and involving keen employees who also displayed enthusiasm towards the change. They were further expected to encourage employees that were still reluctant to embrace change.

4.4.3 Fellow employees' expectations

Employees expected the change champions to act in the interest of the employees, instead of the employer during the implementation of the change management programme. They expected them to show empathy and consider their views during the change management sessions. Employees further expected change champions

to communicate their views to Senior Management for consideration. Employees also expected change champions to display loyalty and trustworthiness towards them by ensuring that their anonymity was not compromised when communicating their concerns to Senior Management.

In respect of change champions that were managers, the employees expected the change champions that were managers to provide solutions to every issue that they brought to them. These issues included sorting out allegations of favouritism, insufficient growth opportunities in terms of skills development and encouraging teamwork within certain departments. The employees further expected change champions to find solutions in alleviating the employees' workload.

4.4.4   Expectations of the supervisor/ manager

Supervisors and /or managers expected change champions to assist the organisation in addressing change management issues and resolve those that could be resolved easily, without referring them to the change coordinator. The supervisors and / or managers also expected the employee role of the change champion to be performed as well. The supervisors and managers also expected change champions to display some level of loyalty towards the supervisors and/ managers. In order to achieve the expectations of becoming loyal and trustworthy to the supervisors and/ managers, change champions discussed issues that could put supervisor or manager in a bad light with the concerned supervisor and or manager , before escalating them to the change coordinator. This is an attempt to deal with lack of trust, or loyalty.

Regarding departmental issues that could be resolved easily, without involving change coordinator, change champions achieved this by discussing issues with managers and supervisors and reached a solution in cases where such solutions could be reached.

In analysing different expectations, it became apparent during the interview process that employees had their specific expectations of the change champions. Interviews

47

revealed that change champions who were also managers in the organisation, were perceived by the fellow employees to be the employer's representatives instead of representing the employees. This suggested that the employees expected change champions to act in the interest of the employees instead of the employer. There was therefore a misalignment in the expectations of the employer, the employees, the managers and the change champions due to the perceived lack of trust and loyalty. Relating to supervisors and/ managers' expectations of change champions as their subordinates, some managers and/ or supervisors expected change champions to prioritise their job tasks by delivering their reports on time and achieve their quarterly targets as detailed in their key performance areas. They were also expected to attend departmental meetings to discuss issues that were not related to change management.

4.4.5 Discussion of Role Sender Expectations

There is a lack of literature on the expectations of other role senders on change champions and very few studies on the application of role theory to change champions have been conducted. As presented above, there were several expectations that were placed on the change champions by the four main role senders. Warrick (2009) identified three main roles of champions (namely initiating, facilitating and implementing organisational change) and these were consistent with the expectations champions had of themselves.

Firstly, when contrasting the expectations of different role senders to these three main roles, none of the role senders expected change champions to *initiate* change. This was due to the nature of this change process, in that champions were only introduced at the point when the change was already underway.

Secondly, all four role-senders expected change champions to *facilitate* change, and this was consistent with the expectations the change champions had of themselves.

Thirdly, regarding the third role of *implementing* change, two role senders, namely, change coordinator and change agent expected change champions to implement

48

change and these were consistent with the expectations change champions had of themselves, while two other role senders (namely employees and supervisors/ managers) did not have the same expectations as change champions.

4. 5   TYPES OF ROLE CONFLICT

The fourth objective was to identify and analyse types of role conflict that were experienced by change champions. From the literature reviewed, five types of role conflict were identified namely, role ambiguity, person role conflict, role strain, role overload and role incompatibility.   A coding memo was developed prior to data collection in order to identify theoretical codes and themes. A copy of the coding memo is attached hereto and marked Appendix C.

4.5.1   Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity refers to uncertainty about which tasks and responsibilities are part of the role (Biddle, 1986 cited in Ebbers and Wijnberg, 2017, p.1345). It has also been described as uncertainty in decision-making and role uncertainty (Celik, 2013; Tang and Chan, 2010). This study was set out to explore whether change champions experience role ambiguity in the implementation of the change management programme.

In terms of the findings, a change champions who was appointed during the implementation of the change management programme, following the resignation of another change champion, confirmed that he was not clear of his change champion role, because of insufficient details relating to the performance of the role. An interviewee said the following, "I am not certain about my expectations of my role and the expectation of others because I replaced another change champion". Similarly, change champions also experienced role ambiguity because they had never been given feedback on their performance on the role; therefore, they lacked clarity on the progress made in the change management programme.

49

This finding is consistent with the literature on role ambiguity. Employees who lack clarity on their role and uncertainty in decision making, experience role ambiguity that leads to a decrease in job performance (Celik, 2013). As much as Celik (2013) focused on role ambiguity that was experienced by employees without necessarily referring to organisational change, Mayers and Zepeda (2002) found that, in the context of organisational change, employees also experience role ambiguity during organisational change, as causes of role ambiguity were similar.

4.5.2   Person role conflict

Person role conflict is conflict that arises between the focal person's values and the prescribed role behaviour (Shenkar and Zeira, 1992:57). Caldwell (2003:993) further defines role conflict as a conflict that arises when either the inner values, or the work values of a role incumbent, are in conflict with the implementation of a role. This may happen when the role incumbent lacks the necessary skills to implement the role or when his/her preferences and personality differ from the expectations of the role senders, or the requirements of the particular role (Caldwell, 2003). This study was set out to explore whether change champions experience person-role conflict during the implementation of the change management programme.

According to the findings, some change champions were not comfortable with the fact that - at the time of data collection - the focus of the change management programme was restricted to the organisational Head Office, yet there are other satellite offices with many staff members. They would have preferred a situation where all the employees of the entity were participating in the change management programme for broader representativeness of the outcome. An interviewee said, "My concern is the concentration at Head Office other than looking at the majority of employees that are at Nature Reserves. Consequently creating a culture of dividing Head Office staff from the employees that are based at Nature Reserves." The champion accordingly had a different preference and personal values to the employer. This was inconsistent with focal values and inner values of equal treatment of employees and fairness. Therefore, the conflict was about the selectivity

50

of the change management programme that looked at the interests of certain employees while other employees were disregarded.

 The above is consistent with the literature on person role conflict. Employees whose inner values or work values are in conflict with the implementation of a role experience person role conflict (Caldwell, 2003). Even though Caldwell (2003) focused on person role conflict that was experienced by employees, this study has found that change champions also experienced person role conflict during organisational change. Gunnarsdóttir (2016) suggested that, middle managers that are change champions during organisational change also experience person role conflict.

4.5.3   Role strain

Role strain has been defined as the discomfort experienced when an individual has difficulty fulfilling a single role with conflicting role obligations. Therefore, a single role with multiple statuses leads to role strain (Cline, 2010). This is so because in the current study, change champions were expected to implement cultural changes while at the same time showing empathy and loyalty to their fellow employees (Cline, 2010). In view of this, this study was set out to explore whether change champions experience role strain during the implementation of the change management programme.

Interviewees confirmed that change champions experienced role strain because they were expected by the change coordinator to communicate a clear message regarding change. The change coordinator also expected them to be transparent about the reasons for change as well as the desired outcome, while at the same time, they had to ensure that their colleagues' anonymity was not compromised during the implementation process. For example, one change champion said as follows, "I have introduced an anonymous approach for staff members who wish to raise issues". This means that the change champion allowed fellow colleagues to put their suggestions in the sealed suggestion box that was placed in the boardroom.

51

Similarly, interviewees confirmed that they experienced role strain because they were implementing cultural change while also ensuring that they remain trustworthy to their colleagues. For instance, one change champion said, "I preserve trust between the employee and the employer by remaining neutral". They further confirmed in their interviews that they experienced lack of trust from their fellow employees and lack of loyalty from their managers and/ or supervisors during the implementation of the change management programme. This is consistent with the literature that states that an individual has a difficulty in fulfilling a single role with multiple status (Cline, 2010); while in the context of organisational change, Kjaerbeck (2017) concluded that a junior employee who was a change champion experienced role conflict due to her position in the organisation.

4.5.4   Role overload

Role overload been described as a situation whereby the capability and motivation for job performance of an individual does not match the expectations of his role (Kahn et *al.,* 1964:15). Furthermore, when individuals are faced with too many expectations or have to fulfil several roles simultaneously, they experience role overload (Biddle, 1986). Role overload has also been defined as a situation in which various role demands communicated to a role occupant exceed the amount of time and resources available for the accomplishment of the entire demands (Manasseh, 2013:175). Thus, this study was set out to explore whether change champions experience role overload during the implementation of the change management programme.

Change champions revealed in their interviews that they experienced role overload due to too many expectations from various role senders, with limited time and resources. In this regard, an interviewee said: "It is really tough- it requires one to really extend himself in terms of time". The change champions further revealed that they either come to work early, or work after hours to attend to change champion tasks. Conflict in this study is about role overload and change champions who experienced role overload revealed that, they gave priority to their employee role and

52

thereafter attended to the change champion role when they were able to. The change champions therefore saw the change champion role as optional.

This is consistent with the literature on role overload, which states that employees who are faced with too many expectations, with limited time and resources and no additional incentives experience role overload (Manasseh, 2013). Manasseh (2013) focused on role overload that was experienced by employees, Adnan and Saud, (2016) specifically found that managers in government organisations experience high levels of role overload; this finding is consistent with the findings of this study.

4.5.5   Role incompatibility

Role incompatibility is experienced when the implementation of one role is made difficult due to the demands of another role (Hill *et al.,* 2010). In addition, employees experience role incompatibility when they have to fulfil two incompatible roles (Hill *et al.,* 2010:350). In view of this, this study was also set out to explore whether change champions experience role incompatibility during the implementation of the change management programme.

The findings of the study confirmed that the change champions' roles were incompatible with their employee roles, due to the nature and content of the two roles. For instance, the change champion role had different expectations from different role senders that included employees, change coordinator, change agent and supervisors and / or manager. These expectations from different role senders involved: (1) loyalty to fellow employees and managers, (2) trustworthiness towards employees and/ or manager, (3) doing employee task first (4) empathy towards employees, (5) give reassurance to employees, and, (6) encourage colleagues to embrace change, just to mention a few expectations. The employee role was in line with the chain of command principle and the unity of command principle.

When dealing with the expectations of the manager/ supervisor, one change champion said the following, "I will do what my supervisor requires and attend to change management when I am able". Interviewees further explained that as an

attempt to show loyalty to their supervisors/ managers, they discussed issues that could put supervisor or manager in a bad light with the concerned supervisor and or manager, before escalating them to the change coordinator.

Therefore, this change champion experienced role incompatibility because he had received instructions from different role senders that included change coordinator and at the same time, the supervisor / manager wanted the employee role performed, hence he prioritised the employee role.

When dealing with the expectation of trust from the employees, one change champion stated the following, I preserve trust between the employee and the employer by remaining neutral" while the other change champion who was also a manager stated that "I explain and try to separate the two roles" when interacting with employees regarding change management matters. He stated that he separated the two roles because he did not want to be seen as an employer representative and consequently lose the employee trust. Still on the issue of change champions who were managers, one champion stated that, "I have introduced an anonymous approach for staff members who wish to raise issues", this was to ensure that their anonymity was not compromised and therefore trust was still preserved.

On the employee expectations regarding empathy, the change champions explained that they had to journey with fellow employees throughout the change management process while also giving them reassurance that they would not lose their jobs and benefits while the change agent expected change champions to encourage fellow employees to embrace change and explain to the employees that change would not adversely impact their benefits and conditions of service. Dealing with different expectation from different role senders caused irritation to the change champions and sometimes the change champions felt overwhelmed as one interviewee explained the situation in the interviews.

This is consistent with the literature that states that employees experience role incompatibility when they have to fulfil two roles that are incompatible with one

another and therefore conflicting (Hill *et al.,* 2010). In the light of these findings Kramer (2018), also found that lack of creating and maintaining clear role boundaries leads to role incompatibility. He further stated that inability to allocate times for particular roles further leads to role incompatibility.

4.6   SUMMARY

The aim of the study was to analyse the nature of role conflict that change champions experience during organisational change. Therefore, the chapter presents the analyses of results from the four objectives and the discussion of the findings. It has also given an overview of the change management programme within the entity and has outlined various expectations of the different role senders, as well as the expectations that change champions have of their role.

The first objective of the study was to describe the change management programme of the entity. The study has described the change management programme of the entity. The description started from the introduction of the programme including its phases and the appointment of change champions. It further referred to the implementation of the change management programme.

The second objective was to identify the expectations that the change champions have of their role. This study has found that change champions were familiar with their expectations, even though some lacked the necessary clarity due to their late appointment. The study has found out that change champions participated in the cultural change by creating awareness about change and providing fellow employees with the necessary information around change and the rationale behind change. Change champion also gave support to the employees by alleviating their anxiety about change while also providing support to the employer by encouraging fellow employees to embrace change.

The third objective, which was to identify the expectations, placed on the change champions by various role senders. The study has found that various role senders

have different expectations of the change champions. These role senders included, change coordinator, change agent, employees, supervisors/ and managers. For instance, employees and managers and/ or supervisors expected loyalty and trustworthiness from change champions whereas the change agent expected change champions to encourage fellow employees to embrace change and explain to the employees that change would not adversely influence their benefits and conditions of service. Thus, change champions experienced role conflict due to the different expectations from different role senders.

The fourth objective was to identify and analyse types of role conflict that are experienced by change champions. The study identified five types of role conflict through the literature review. The first type of role conflict was role ambiguity that arises when there is no information and lack of clarity on a specific job position. Role ambiguity further leads to uncertainty about roles, responsibilities and job objectives. There were less incidents of role ambiguity in the current study.

The second type of role conflict was person role conflict that arises when the role occupant lacks the skills inhibiting meeting a role's requirements and when the role occupant's values or preferences differ from those of role senders. Change champions experienced person role conflict due to their preferences which were in conflict with the organisational one.

The third role conflict was role strain, which is described as the discomfort experienced when an individual has difficulty fulfilling a single role with conflicting role obligations. The incidents of role strain in the study were prominent because of loyalty and trustworthiness issues.

The fourth role conflict was role overload, which occurs when a person is unable to fulfil several roles simultaneously. It further arises when there is insufficient time to meet the expectations of two or more roles as expected by two or more role senders. Similarly incident of role overload were also prominent because of inadequate resources that relate mainly to time.

56

Lastly, the fifth type of role conflict was role incompatibility that arises when the implementation of one role is made difficult, due to the demands of another role. Change champions also encountered incidents of role incompatibility. This was due to the violation of the chain of command principle and the unity of command. The incidents of role conflict were further caused by various role senders who had different expectations of the change champions.

The findings revealed that change champions did experience role conflict during the implementation of the change management programme. Few change champions had experienced role ambiguity but incidents of role overload and role strain were more prominent.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 addresses the last objective, namely, in the light of the findings of this study, to formulate recommendations on how to support change champions during the implementation of change, so as to avoid or reduce the likelihood of role conflict. It first provides a summary of the main findings, and then gives recommendations for practice to manage role conflict. It also deals with recommendations for future research, acknowledging the research limitations, delimitations and contribution of the study.

5.2   MAIN FINDINGS

The interviews and organisational documents consulted revealed that change champions did encounter various types of role conflict as identified in the literature review. The five types of role conflict that were explored included, (1) role ambiguity, (2) person role conflict, (3) role strain, (4) role overload, and, (5) role incompatibility.

It transpired from the interviewees that, incidents of role ambiguity were lesser than those of role overload. It further emerged from the interviewees that, incidents of role strain were also prominent because they involved issues of trustworthiness and loyalty. The change champions had to ensure that their fellow that their colleagues' anonymity was not compromised.

Regarding person role conflict, the interviews revealed that some change champions did experience person role conflict, as they were not comfortable with the fact that, the focus of the change management programme was restricted to the organisational Head Office, yet there are other satellite offices with many staff members. They would have preferred a situation where all the employees of the

entity were participating in the change management programme for broader representativeness of the outcome.

Regarding role incompatibility, the interviewees confirmed that they experienced role incompatibility due to the violation of the chain of command principle and the unity of command principle. It also emerged from the interviews that the change champion role had different expectations from different role senders that included employees, change coordinator, change agent and supervisors or manager. These expectations involved: (1) loyalty, (2) trustworthiness, (3) doing employee task first (4) empathy, (5) reassurance and (6) encourage colleagues to embrace change, just to mention a few expectations, therefore making it difficult to implement both roles.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

5.3.1 Role ambiguity

As one change champion had confirmed in the findings that he lacked information and clarity on his role as change champions, it is recommended that the entity should continuously train the change champion in his role. This will assist in providing clarity on their role and consequently eliminate role ambiguity. The entity is further advised to always ensure that all new change champions are provided with well-articulated and clear expectations in order to avoid role ambiguity in new change champions. The organisation should also introduce an orientation programme for new change champions in order to reduce the incidents of role ambiguity. The change champions should undergo relevant training in the new role in order to avoid uncertainty and lack of clarity about the role. As role ambiguity is also associated with lack of performance feedback, the entity should provide constant feedback to the change champions regarding progress made on the implementation of the programme. Lack of constant feedback on progress made on change management programme could also have negative impact on the change programme in future. It is recommended that, change champions should be given

constant feedback on progress made on change management programme (Dasgupta, 2012).

5.3.2   Person role conflict

Two change champions expressed their discomfort with the fact that the focus of the change management was at Head Office only and not at the regional offices and nature reserves. They viewed this as differing from their preferences and personal values. It is therefore recommended that the entity should consider the preferences and inner values of change champions when appointing them to the role or when implementing cultural change. As person role conflict is also associated with lack of skills, it is recommended to the entity to ensure that the change champions are well skilled for the role. On the organisational perspective, it is recommended that the organisation should consider the values that would underpin the change itself in order to eliminate incidents of role conflict (Caldwell, 2003).

5.3.3   Role strain

Since the different role senders had different expectations of the change champions, thereby leading to a role strain, the change champions perceived themselves as having to allow employees to raise their feelings about change without necessarily breaking their trust and compromising their anonymity. Their supervisors and / or managers also expected loyalty and trustworthiness from the change champions.

It is recommended that change champions should be capacitated in order to be able to create a boundary between the employee role and the change champion role (Hayes-Smith *et al.,* 2010). In order to reduce role strain, there must be role clarification and negotiation amongst various role senders on what can realistically be expected of change champions. Furthermore, Kramer (2018) recommends a system of creating and maintaining boundaries between two roles and allocating certain times for particular roles. This is another recommendation to the entity. Lastly

60

change champions should be referred to Employee Wellness Programmes to help reduce the stress that leads to role strain.

5.3.4 Role overload

The change champions confirmed their inability to fulfil several roles simultaneously due to insufficient time and resources. It is further recommended that the entity should create a conducive environment for the change champions in terms of giving the change champions a fixed number of hours per month to attend to change management issues (Zhou *et al.,* 2014). They must also be given a greater sense of control over their hours of work and their work schedule. The change champions that experience role overload should also be referred to the Employee Wellness programme for the necessary support. Senior managers should motivate change champions in enacting the role (Zhou *et al.,* 2014).

5.3.5 Role incompatibility

As role incompatibility is experienced when the implementation of one role is made difficult due to the demands of another role, it is recommended that the entity develop a system of creating and maintaining boundaries between the two roles and allocate certain times, or proportions of time to particular roles Kramer (2018). In addition, supervisors and managers should be supportive of change champions when they are performing their change champion role (Carlson *et al.,* 2011).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A limitation of the current study was that the sample size of champions who had experienced conflict was limited. Future studies should try to increase the sample size, which would possibly increase the number of incidents of role conflict that are

reported. Future studies could also exclude change champions who are managers and investigate whether change champions who are junior employees, experience role conflict in the same way.

This case study was conducted in the context of an organisational change that involved the merging two entities, and a review of the organisational strategy. Further research on the application of role theory to change champions should also be considered in a range of organisation entities experiencing a range of types of change, to explore if role conflict is manifested in different ways.

The study was of limited scope, and was therefore delimited in its focus, in that it only solicited the views of the initiators of change, namely the change champions and the change coordinator. Other employees within the entity were not selected. Furthermore, the focus was on the experiences of the change champions. It was also delimited to only identifying the incidents of role conflict that had been experienced, without necessarily trying to establish how the change champions have tried to address or avoid such conflicts. Future studies could therefore incorporate the employee view, and analyse the causes of role conflict and how the change champions tried to deal with its occurrence.

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge by drawing on role theory and applying it to change management, to provide insight on the role of change champions during the organisational change, and in particular the role conflict that they experienced.

The main findings of the study relating to the types of role conflict that are experienced by the change champions has revealed that they experience role conflict during organisational change, due to different expectations that come from different role senders. Further research is recommended, that applies role theory to the roles of change champions and change agents who are involved with the facilitation of organisational change initiatives.

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APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR CHANGE CHAMPIONS

1. When did you join the organisation as an employee?
2. In which department are you based?
3. Who do you report to?
4. For how long have you been a change champion?
5. What is your understanding of your role as a change champion?
6. In what ways do you perceive a role conflict between your role as change champion and an employee?
7. Sometimes your supervisor expects you to perform a certain tasks for him/ her as part of your role as an employee and at the same time the change champion co-ordinator expects a report from you as a change champion , on the change management initiatives, how do you then allocate time to each task to ensure that both tasks are performed?
8. How does this make you feel?
9. In what ways do you deal this this?
10. As a departmental change champion, your supervisor expects a certain level of loyalty from you as an employee and not raise certain issues that he/ she perceives to be controversial against the employer, whereas at the same time your fellow colleagues expect you to represent them in raising issues that require change, how do you then create this balance between the interests of the employer and those of the fellow employees?
11. Sometimes your fellow colleagues will request a meeting with you in your capacity as a change champion to raise their issues and the same time your supervisor expects you to hold your meetings after you have finished your tasks or after hours, how do you then try to convince your supervisor that your role as a change champion is also important as that of an employee?
12. Some supervisors expect change champions to report change management issues to them first before the change champion co- coordinator. Have you ever encountered this and how did you deal with it?
13. And if you perceive a role conflict, how did you address it?
14. Please share with me instances where you experienced a role conflict between your role as change champion and an employees, and
15. What were the outcomes of those instances?

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FOR CHANGE CHAMPIONS

1. How does that the fact that change championship role is not part of the organisations performance management system make you feel?
2. How does the fact that there are not rewards received by the change champions make you feel?
3. In what ways do you perceive a role conflict between your role as change champion and an employee?
4. Do you understand your expectation as a change champion?

5. How does role conflict make you feel?

QUESTIONS FOR CHANGE CO-ORDINATOR

1. When did you join the organisation as an employee?
2. In which department are you based?
3. Who do you report to?
4. For how long have you been a change coordinator?
5. What is your understanding of your role as a change coordinator?
6. Do you sometimes perceive a role conflict between your role as change champion coordinator and an employee?
7. How do you create a balance between your role as an employee and a change coordinator?
8. How do you cope with time pressures and time demands for each role?
9. How often do you meet with change champions?
10. Are the change champions always available for change champion meetings and do they produce their reports on time?
11. Sometimes change champions will not be available for meetings or produce reports on time because they had to perform their tasks as employees, how do you then assist them to create a balance between the two roles?
12. How often do you review the effectiveness of the role of change champions?

QUESTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

1. When did you join the organisation as an employee?
2. In which department are you based?
3. Who do you report to?
4. How did the change management concept come about?
5. Does the change champion coordinator report to you?
6. What support do you give to change champions and the coordinator?

APPENDIX B – CONSENT FORM

RHODES UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Department of Rhodes Business School

Research Project Title:	A case study of role conflict experienced by change champions during organisational change
Principal Investigator(s):	Ms X F Nakani- Mapoma

Participation Information
I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it I understand the risks of participating in this research study I understand the benefits of participating in this research study I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any stage without any penalty I understand that participation in this study is done on a voluntary basis I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential I understand that I will receive no payment for participating in this study

Information Explanation
The above information was explained to me by: Ms X F Nakani- Mapoma
The above information was explained to me in: □English □Afrikaans □isiXhosa

□isiZulu

□Other:

and I am in command of this language

OR, it was comprehensibly translated to me by: [name of translator]

INSTITUTION CONSENT FORM

A case study of role conflict experienced by change champions during organisational change

Participation Consent
I consent for you to approach employees to participate in the A case study of role conflict experienced by change champions during organisational change
I acknowledge and understand:
- The role of the institution is voluntary.   - I may decide to withdraw the institution's participation at any time without penalty.   - Employees , change champions will be invited to participate and that permission will be sought from them too.   - Only employees who consent will participate in the project.   - All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.   - The employees' names will not be used and individual employees will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.   - The institution will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.   - Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.   - A report of the findings will be made available to the institution.   - I may seek further information on the project from Xoliswa Nakani- Mapoma on 043 7054400.

Full Name:	
Position:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Please return to:	Rhodes Business School P O Box 94 Grahamstown 6140

79

	South Africa

APPENDIX C – CODING MANUAL

Code No	Label	Description	Definition of occurrence	Qualifications and exclusions	References/ Sources
1	Role ambiguity	A lack of information and/or lack of clarity on a specific role.	Change champion is uncertain about their role as a change champion.	Qualification – relates to a single role only. Exclusion – Not relevant to differences between two roles.	Ebbers and Wijnberg 2017, citing Biddle, 1986, Celik, 2013, Tang and Chan, 2010.
2	Person role conflict	Differing values, preferences and/or a lack of skills inhibiting meeting a role's requirements.	Change champion's own role expectations/values, preferences are in disagreement with those of one or more role senders.	Qualification – related to a single role only. Exclusion – not related to differences between two roles.	Shenkar and Zeira, 1992, Caldwell, 2003
3	Role Strain	Differences in expectations of a role, which are received from two role senders.	Change champion has a single role with multiple status and two role senders.	Qualification – related to a single role only. Exclusion – not related to differences between two roles.	Cline, 2010
4	Role overload	Inability to fulfil several roles simultaneously. Insufficient time to meet the expectations of two or more roles as expected by two or more role senders.	Change champion reports to two people with different expectations.	Qualification – related to several roles. Exclusion – not related to several roles.	Biddle, 1986,Manasseh, 2013)

| 5 | Role incompatibility | Inability to fulfil two roles that are incompatible and therefore conflicting. | Change champion performs two roles from two different senders. | Qualification – related to two roles.

Exclusion – not related to differences between roles if there is compatibility. | (Hill *et al.*, 2010) |

APPENDIX D – TYPES OF ROLE CONFLICT

(Codes generated from the role theory, Boyatzis and Fereday, 2006)

1. ROLE AMBIGUITY - role ambiguity happens when there is no information and lack of clarity on a specific job position (Ebbers and Wijnberg, 2017; Schmidt *et al.*, 2014; Celik, 2013; Tang and Chan, 2010).

- No role sender
- Role occupant – change champion

2. PERSON ROLE CONFLICT - when focal's own role expectations/ values, skills and preferences are in disagreement with those one or more role senders (Katz and Khan, 1978; Shenkar and Zeira, 1992; Caldwell, 2003)

- Change champion
- Change coordinator/ change agent
- Employees

3. ROLE STRAIN - Role strain has been defined as the discomfort experienced when an individual has difficulty fulfilling a single role with often conflicting role obligations, therefore a single role with multiple status lead to role strain (Clark Cline, 2010).

- Change agent to change champions
- Change coordinator to change champions and,
- Managers/ supervisors to change champions
- Employees to change champions

4. ROLE OVERLOAD- Simultaneous fulfilment of several roles- when a person is faced with too many expectations (Biddle, 1986). It has also been defined as a situation in which the various role demands communicated to a role occupant exceed the amount of time and resources available for the accomplishment of the entire demands (Manasseh, 2013).

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83

1. Change coordinator to change champions
2. Supervisor/Manager to change champions

5. ROLE INCOMPATIBILITY – Role incompatibility is experienced when an implementation of one role is made difficult due to the demands of the other role (Hill *et al.*, 2010). Also employees experience role incompatibility when they have to fulfil two roles that are incompatible and therefore conflicting (Hill *et al.*, 2010).

1. Change champion and employee role

APPENDIX E – STAGE 3. VALIDATING AND USING THE CODE

(Testing reliability of the codes through interview questions, change management documents and interviews)

Code No	Label	Description	Definition of occurrence	Interviews/interview questions and organisational documents
1	Role ambiguity	Lack of role clarity.	When there is no role sender.	I am not certain about my expectations of my role and the expectation of others because I replaced another change champion.
2	Person role conflict	Differences in personal values, lack of skills and capacitation.	When own role expectations/values/skills and preferences are in disagreement with those of one or more role senders.	My concern is the concentration at Head Office other than looking at the majority of employees that are at nature reserves. Consequently creating a culture of dividing Head Office staff from the employees that are based at nature reserves.
3	Role strain	One role and two different role senders employees.	When two superiors ask the employee to do a task and both cannot be accomplished at the same time. It appears from different expectations or discordant enactment standards in the execution of a single role.	I have introduced an anonymous approach for staff members who wish to raise issues
4	Role overload	Different expectations of two role senders.	Simultaneous fulfilment of several roles	Work after hours, come in early, do change champion task when I am able. No performance management, rewards. What is it in for me in return?
5	Role incompatibility	Two conflicting roles.	Performing two conflicting roles from two role senders	My employee tasks come first.

APPENDIX F – CONNECTING THEMES IN THE DATA WITH THE CODING MANUAL

Theory driven codes	Themes generated from the interviews and organisational documents
Role ambiguity • Change coordinator	I am unclear about my expectations because I substituted another change champion
Person role conflict 1. Supervisor/ manager 2. Change coordinator	1. Mistrust, 2. Inadequate resources 3. Prioritising Head Office
Role strain • Employees • Change coordinator • Supervisor/ Manager • Change agent	1. Mistrust 2. loyalty
Role overload • Change coordinator • Employees • Change agent • Supervisor/ Manager	1. Insufficient time or time pressures, performance management 2. Inadequate resources , 3 Mistrust, or lack of loyalty, Reward and recognition
Role incompatibility • Employees/ change champion role	1. Irritation, 2. Overwhelming 3. Performance assessment 4. Rewards 5. time