

## TEAM WORK AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This research examined the intricacies of team work and their impact on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. The survey research design was utilized in this study, with a population consisting of 1059 academic staff from the chosen universities. A sample size of 290 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. To analyze the data and test the formulated null hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was employed. The results showed that team leadership had a significant and positive influence on employee performance ( $P < .000$ ,  $\beta = .270$ ) within the selected universities in Abuja. Similarly, team communication was found to have a significant and positive impact on employee performance ( $P = .007$ ,  $\beta = 1.066$ ) in the same institutions. In conclusion, this study highlights the crucial role of teamwork in enhancing employee performance, as evidenced by its positive and significant influence. The study recommended that the university management should invest in leadership development programs to enhance qualities such as clear vision setting, effective communication, empowerment, and adaptability. Strengthening leadership practices will contribute to creating a conducive environment for improved employee outcomes. It was also recommended that management of the universities should promote active listening, clear and concise communication, timely updates, and effective feedback mechanisms so as to contribute to improved team dynamics and employee performance.*

**Keywords:** Employee performance, team communication, team work, team leadership, universities

### INTRODUCTION

Collaborative teamwork stands out as a pivotal element in elevating employee performance and attaining organizational goals. In the contemporary, swiftly evolving business landscape, organizations increasingly recognize that individual endeavors often fall short in addressing the intricate challenges they encounter (Hackman & Katz, 2010). Consequently, organizations place a growing reliance on effective teamwork to propel success and achieve their objectives. The fundamental aim of teamwork is to harness the diverse skills and expertise of team members through collaborative efforts and cooperation (LePine et al., 2019).

By assembling individuals with complementary skills, teams can tap into the collective intelligence and capabilities of their members, resulting in higher quality outputs and enhanced productivity. Teamwork proves instrumental in achieving organizational goals by aligning individual efforts with the overarching objectives of the organization (Salas et al., 2015).

Robust and supportive leadership has the power to inspire and motivate team members, articulate goals and expectations, and provide the necessary guidance and resources for achieving high

performance (Hoch et al., 2018). Proficient leaders also play a pivotal role in facilitating communication, resolving conflicts, and empowering team members, resulting in heightened employee engagement and productivity (Eisenbeiss et al., 2021).

Effective team communication plays a crucial role in coordinating tasks, disseminating information, and nurturing shared understanding among team members (Kock & Nosek, 2021). The presence of open and efficient communication channels enables the seamless exchange of ideas, feedback, and insights, empowering team members to make well-informed decisions and collaborate towards common goals (Cattani et al., 2020). Implementing sound communication practices not only improves coordination and minimizes errors but also enhances problem-solving capabilities, ultimately contributing to elevated employee performance (Kirkman et al., 2019).

Leadership plays a crucial role in guiding and facilitating teamwork, setting clear goals, providing support and resources, and promoting a positive team culture (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). However, inadequate leadership skills, knowledge, or commitment can impede team dynamics, communication, and coordination, negatively impacting employee performance. Inadequate leadership may result in a lack of direction, confusion, and conflicts within the team, leading to reduced motivation and productivity.

Miscommunication, lack of clarity, and insufficient channels for sharing information can lead to misunderstandings, errors, and delays in decision-making. Effective communication is essential for team members to coordinate their efforts, align their goals, and maintain a shared understanding of tasks and responsibilities, ultimately impacting employee performance. Low cohesion can result in conflicts, competition, and a lack of shared commitment among team members (Arrow *et al.*, 2000). Without a strong team spirit, individuals may prioritize personal goals over team goals, leading to reduced cooperation and diminished overall performance.

Employee performance pertains to the extent of productivity, effectiveness, and achievement exhibited by an individual in fulfilling their job responsibilities and attaining desired outcomes (Bauer & Erdogan, 2018). It stands as a pivotal element for organizational success and competitiveness. Job satisfaction emerges as a key determinant impacting employee performance, with studies consistently revealing a positive correlation between the two (Judge et al., 2021). Another influential factor shaping employee performance is engagement. Employees who are engaged demonstrate emotional investment in their work, possess a strong sense of purpose, and feel connected to the organization (Saks, 2020).

In higher education, universities stand as bastions of knowledge, providing a diverse array of academic offerings. From undergraduate and graduate degrees to avenues for research and innovation, these institutions serve as beacons of intellectual growth. They play a crucial role in providing advanced education, fostering intellectual growth, and contributing to the development of knowledge and society. Despite a lack of ample research support and limited interest in exploring the impact of teamwork on employee performance within organizations, a few studies have been conducted on this subject. However, these studies often neglect crucial teamwork indicators such as team leadership, team communication as predictors of the influence of teamwork on employee performance. Notably, a study by Chichi (2021) examined team management and performance in Nigerian construction companies. This underscores a substantial research gap that warrants attention. Recognizing this gap in the existing literature, the researchers of this study acknowledge the necessity for further investigation to directly assess the relationship between teamwork measures, including team leadership and team communication, and their impact on employee performance within Nigerian academic institutions. By

scrutinizing these specific aspects of teamwork, a more comprehensive understanding can be achieved regarding their role in influencing employee performance.

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

- i. What is the relationship between team leadership and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja?
- ii. What is the nature of relationship between team communication and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja?

The broad objective of the study is to investigate team work and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the relationship between team leadership and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.
- ii. Evaluate the extent of relationship between team communication and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.

The following hypotheses in null form were raised for this study.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Team leadership have no positive and significant influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** Team communication have no positive and significant influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Concept of Team work

Teamwork is characterized by the collaboration of a work group with a shared purpose to achieve goals or tasks (Harris & Harris, 1996). It stands out as a vital approach to engaging employees, effectively reducing organizational hierarchy, and fostering increased employee engagement.

The concept of teamwork encompasses various elements, including collaboration, sharing of information, mutual support, and collective responsibility (Fapohunda, 2013; Khattak et al., 2013). According to Business Dictionary (2020), teamwork refers to the act of working together with a group of individuals towards a shared objective. In a business context, teamwork proves essential for colleagues to work together efficiently, leveraging their individual skills and offering constructive feedback, even in the face of personal conflicts. Ultimately, teamwork involves a group of individuals willingly joining forces and working collectively towards a shared objective (Obiekwe et al., 2021).

### Team Leadership and Employee Performance

Organizational productivity and success hinge significantly on effective leadership. Successful leadership encompasses values, creativity, knowledge, self-confidence, ethics, courage, and charisma. The possession of leadership skills is paramount for both personal and professional development. Team leaders bear the responsibility of skillfully delegating tasks based on team members' abilities and attributes to elevate overall productivity. Organizations that are adeptly managed excel in maximizing efficiency and achieving their goals. Top managers wield substantial influence in steering organizational performance.

They shape the structure, strategy, and culture of an organization through sharing knowledge, insights, and responsibilities (Kakkos et al., 2018). Leadership has a direct impact on employee performance and overall organizational excellence. Organizations invest heavily in effective leadership as it is key to success (Lunenborg, 2017). Successful leaders possess skills such as self-awareness, empathy,

emotional intelligence, relationship management, and self-regulation. They adapt their leadership styles based on the situation at hand.

### **Team Communication and Employee Performance**

Communication is essential for organizational productivity and success. According to Adler (2008), the concept of communication encompasses the dynamic exchange and flow of information between individuals. Effective communication has been found to decrease labor turnover, indicating its positive impact on productivity (Watson, 2006). It is interlinked with time management as it helps team's complete tasks on time. To ensure effective communication, the receiver must understand the information transmitted by the sender. Communication directly influences team members' behavior and performance. Managers spend a significant portion of their time communicating with staff members (Snavelly, 2001).

### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Employee performance denotes the capacity of employees to successfully fulfill their tasks and accomplish organizational goals, measured against predetermined performance standards (Chen, 2011). It functions as an assessment tool widely utilized by organizations to gauge employees' capabilities and efficiency (Darden & Babin, 1994). Highly proficient employees, possessing adequate training and skills, are recognized as valuable assets contributing to organizational success and conferring a competitive edge. The significance of employee performance transcends the organizational realm. Ramlall (2008) underscores that employee performance holds crucial importance for overall societal well-being, influencing employees' living standards and consumption patterns, thereby contributing to a balanced economy.

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

The fundamental premise of this study revolves around the Transformational Leadership Theory, first put forth by James V. Downton in 1973, and further developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. This notable leadership theory highlights the leader's capacity to stimulate and spur followers towards achieving exceptional results (Downton, 1973; Burns, 1978). One of the key strengths of the Transformational Leadership Theory is its emphasis on inspiring and motivating followers to transcend their individual interests and work towards a shared vision (Bass, 1985). It has been linked to positive outcomes such as heightened fulfillment among followers, elevated levels of commitment within the organization, and enhanced performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2021). However, critics argue that Transformational Leadership Theory may be rooted in an idealized and unrealistic perception of leaders, as it places excessive emphasis on their personal qualities while downplaying the influence of contextual and situational factors that shape leadership effectiveness.

#### **Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, is a widely recognized framework in social psychology that explores how individuals form and maintain their social identities, and how these identities shape their behavior and intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to Social Identity Theory, individuals strive to attain a positive social identity by categorizing themselves into social groups and identifying with those groups.

## Empirical Review

Chichi (2021) examined the influence of team management on the performance of Nigerian construction firms, with a specific focus on Dangote Cement Plc. The study utilized a purposive sampling approach, resulting in a sample size of 113 respondents. The collected data was then meticulously studied using a frequency table and percentage. For the purpose of assessing the relevant hypotheses, ANOVA regression analysis was employed. The investigation uncovered a statistically significant correlation between team leadership, and team communication with the overall performance of construction companies. As a recommendation, the management of Dangote Cement Plc is strongly urged to prioritize the development of effective team communication, as it has been proven to enhance workflows and maximize productivity among team members. However, the study was carried out in a construction company which has a different study area from the research under investigation.

Mousa and Mark (2021) explored the impact of effective teamwork, encompassing elements such as proficient communication, trust levels, interpersonal skills, team cohesion, and accountability, on employee performance within telecommunication companies in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Positioned within the realm of descriptive studies, the research adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The sample comprised 200 employees from telecommunication firms in Bahrain. Data analysis employed Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22, utilizing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, mean scores, and regression analysis. The study's findings revealed a high level of effectiveness in teamwork and employee performance within telecommunication companies in Bahrain. Notably, the research underscored a noteworthy impact of teamwork variables, including effective communication, trust levels, interpersonal skills, and team cohesion, on employee performance within these telecommunication enterprises. The study concludes with a recommendation advocating the cultivation of effective teamwork as a strategy to enhance employee performance in the telecommunication sector in Bahrain. However, the study was carried out in middle east Asia which poses an environmental gap, findings cannot be generalize based on this factor.

Mulyati and Herawati (2021) investigated the impact of leadership, teamwork, and employee involvement on the performance of employees at PT Attaraya Jaya Perkasa. The study encompassed a population of 135 employees, and 35 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews, and multiple linear regression was employed for data analysis. The study findings revealed that, individually, leadership and teamwork significantly influenced employee performance, whereas employee involvement did not exhibit a significant effect. Furthermore, the adjusted R square coefficient of determination indicated that 54.6% of employee performance is influenced by leadership, teamwork, and employee involvement, with the remaining 45.4% influenced by other variables like motivation, work environment, rewards, work discipline, compensation, and organizational culture. The study suggests that company leaders should uphold and enhance their roles to enhance the performance of PT Attaraya Jaya Perkasa employees. This recommendation takes into consideration various factors, including motivation, work environment, rewards, work discipline, compensation, and organizational culture. However, the study was carried out in Asia which poses an environmental gap, findings cannot be generalize based on this factor.

Muhammad (2020) investigated the influence of employee engagement on employee performance utilizing a causal research design to explore the interrelationships between the variables. A survey questionnaire was crafted to gather data from employees at both lower and middle managerial levels within small-scale organizations. Employing simple random sampling, a total of 190 respondents were

included, and the final analysis focused on 148 respondents. The study utilized regression and correlation analyses to predict and assess the relationships between the variables. Results revealed that the working environment, leadership and teamwork, and peer support significantly impacted employee engagement. However, the study found that employee engagement itself did not exert a significant influence on employee performance. In light of these findings, the study recommends the implementation of HR policies by organizations to enhance motivation and engagement among employees. However, the study area of this research focuses on small and medium enterprises.

**Literature Gap**

This research was able to fill the gap that emanated from previous research for example, studies by (Mousa and Mark ,2021 ;Mulyati and Herawati, 2021) were all carried out in different countries outside Nigeria . Similarly, Chichi ( 2021) narrowed the focus of his research to the construction industry. This current research in a way to fill this gap examined team work and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja, Nigeria.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present research experiment employs the survey research methodology. This structure grants the use of a well-crafted research tool to gather and generate data. The emphasis is on gathering data from the targeted study population, enabling the researcher to scrutinize the designated variables. The study's population consists of 1059 academic staff of two selected universities in Abuja which are the National open university of Nigeria, Abuja (419), University of Abuja (640). The information was gotten from the registry unit of the universities. The sample size for the study is 290, this was attained through the use of the Taro Yamane technique. This formula is given as show below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; n = Sample size desired, N = Total Population, 1 = Constant and e = Level of significance. n=Sample size, N= 290, 1 = Constant, e= 0.05. Substituting into the formula would have;

$$n = \frac{1059}{1 + 1059 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1059}{3.6475}$$

Therefore, n= 290.

Stratified sampling technique was employed to purposively draw a sample size of two hundred and ninety (290) academic staff. The questionnaire was distributed to four faculties in the two institutions, namely Management sciences, Social sciences, Natural sciences and Arts and humanities. The collected data was analyzed using multiple linear regression.

**Model Specification**

The dependent variable is employee performance (EPERF), while the independent variable is team work proxies by Team leadership (TL) and Team communication (TC). To achieve all the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was used to estimate the model. The model is presented thus:

$$EPERF_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TL_i + \beta_2 TC_i + e_i \text{----- (1)}$$

Where: EPERF = an indicator representing Employee performance (Dependent Variable);

$\beta_0$  = a constant and  $\beta_{1-2}$  = coefficients of independent variables;

TL= a predictor representing (Team leadership);

TC = a predictor representing (Team communication);

e= Stochastic error term;

*i* = Cross sectional; and

*f* = Functional relationship.

A-priori expectation: TL, TC > 0

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Two hundred and ninety (290) copies of questionnaire were distributed to academic staff of the two selected faculties. Two hundred and eighty four (284) copies of questionnaire were correctly completed and returned, given a response rate of 97.9%. Therefore, the conclusions drawn are based on the analysis of the two hundred and eighty four (284) completed questionnaire.

#### Regression Results

**Table 1**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.986 <sup>a</sup>	.972	.972		.207

a. Predictors: (Constant), TC, TL

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 unveils an R square value of .972, signifying the collective impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable is equal to 97.2%. The adjusted R square value echoes this, further corroborating that team leadership and communication comprise the significant determinants influencing employee performance in the two institutions. Hence, a mere 2.8% of the variability in teamwork remains unexplained by the model.

**Table 2**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	422.103	2	211.052	4933.868	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	12.020	281	.043		
	Total	434.123	283			

a. Dependent Variable: EPERF

b. Predictors: (Constant), TC, TL

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

The F-Statistics value of 4933.868, along with its significant level of .000, signifies a highly satisfactory and reliable model, with a 5% level of significance. This indicates that the results can be deemed as robust and suitable for guiding decisions.

**Table 3**  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.123	.062		-1.997	.047
	TL	.270	.005	.954	52.632	.000
	TC	1.066	.023	1.016	45.552	.000

a. Dependent Variable: EPERF

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

### Test of Hypotheses

To examine the team work and employee performance of selected universities in Abuja, the formulated hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Team leadership have no positive and significant influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.

Table 4.3 shows the result of t statistic value of 52.632 and the corresponding sig. level of .000 which is significant at 5% level of significance and the unstandardized coefficients value of .270, indicated that team leadership has a significant and positive influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. The unstandardized coefficient of .270 indicates that, on average, a one-unit increase in team leadership (TL) is associated with a .270 increase in employee performance (EPERF). Based on this, the null hypothesis, which says, team leadership has no significant and positive influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja, is rejected.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Team communication have no positive and significant influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja.

Table 3 shows the result of t statistic value of 45.552 and the corresponding sig. level of .007 which is significant at 5% level of significance and the unstandardized coefficients value of 1.066 indicating that team communication has a significant and positive influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. The unstandardized coefficient of 1.066 indicates that, on average, a one-unit increase in team communication (TC) is associated with a 1.066 increase in employee performance (EPERF). Based on this, the null hypothesis which says, team communication has no positive and significant influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja is rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that team leadership has a significant and positive influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. This indicates a significant and favorable influence of

effective team leadership on the overall employee performance within the institution. The study suggests that a clearer vision and well-defined goals set by leadership, coupled with effective communication, empowerment, and delegation, as well as the leadership's adaptability and commitment to accountability and integrity, have a positive effect on the performance of employees in the selected universities in Abuja . Moreover, the study aligns with the findings of previous research conducted by Chichi (2021), Mulyati and Herawati (2021). It also resonates with the expectancy theory, emphasizing the importance of individuals' expectations and perceptions regarding the connection between their efforts, performance, and desired outcomes.

The study also demonstrated that team communication has a significant and positive influence on employee performance of selected universities in Abuja. This implies that team communication has a significant and favorable impact on the overall employee performance within the institutions. The research suggests that fostering an environment of active listening, promoting clear and concise communication, ensuring timely and regular updates, implementing effective feedback mechanisms, and utilizing technology and tools in team communication all contribute to enhanced efficiency, thereby positively affecting the performance of employees at selected universities in Abuja. This finding is consistent with prior research conducted by Chichi (2021), Mousa and Mark (2021), Muhammad (2020).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The comprehensive examination of various factors impacting employee performance at selected universities in Abuja has revealed critical insights into the dynamics of team-related elements. The study illuminated the pivotal role of team leadership, team communication in significantly and positively influencing employee performance within the academic institutions. Effective team leadership was identified as a crucial factor influencing employee performance. A clear vision, effective communication, empowerment, delegation, adaptability, and a commitment to accountability and integrity were highlighted as leadership attributes positively impacting employee outcomes.

Drawing from the research findings, the ensuing recommendations were put forth :

- i. The university management should invests in leadership development programs to enhance qualities such as clear vision setting, effective communication, empowerment, and adaptability. Strengthening leadership practices will contribute to creating a conducive environment for improved employee outcomes.
- ii. The management of the universities should promote active listening, clear and concise communication, timely updates, and effective feedback mechanisms so as to contribute to improved team dynamics and employee performance.

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