

Assessing the Relationship Between Team Spirit and Organisational Performance of AMAC Staff

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Abstract

The issue of low team spirit in Nigerian government organisations has become a pertinent issue in contemporary times and has continued to linger with derailed organisational performance ensuing. However, several scholars have applied different factors to ascertain the relationship between team spirit and organisational performance in several organisations in Nigeria and found mixed results. This study sought to determine the relationship between team spirit and organisational performance among Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) staff in Nigeria. Using a survey research design, primary data were obtained with questionnaires distributed to AMAC staff. 341 questionnaires were distributed, of which 259 were properly filled out and returned, representing a 75.95% return rate. The analytical methods employed were descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The results that ensued from this study revealed that there is a high correlation between team spirit (esprit de corps) and the performance of AMAC staff, with a correlation coefficient of 0.994. The study concluded that team spirit is strongly and positively related to team performance. As a result, where there is a high level of team spirit, there is bound to be a high level of organisational quality output and improvement. The study recommended that there is a need for proper communication channels among the team members working in the AMAC organisation. This is so in order to eschew the lack of information about job duties and requirements, which can serve as an impediment to the organization, and it is further stated that a cordial relationship should be established between teams in order to promote effective and efficient attainment of the goals of the AMAC organisation.

Key Words: Team Spirit, Esprit de corps, Teamwork, Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

Today, the value of collaboration in organisational performance cannot be overstated. Irrespective of where you are working, there is increasing benefit derivable from collaboration within a team structure you are exploring and working with, according to Chris et al. (2021). The inconsistent nature of the work environment has continually required crucial attention to be attached to teamwork maximisation from both employees and employers within an organisation, with the importance of the activities of teamwork repeatedly highlighted (Gomez, 2017).

According to Business Dictionary (2020), teamwork is a collaborative working relationship between groups for a common goal to be achieved. Indisputably, the activity of teamwork is something that cannot be circumvented by any organisation if they want to make progress in terms of achieving their set aims (Lemons & Strong, 2016). Consequently, it is documented to be the most crucial part of the workplace and emphasises the disposition exhibited by people in coming together to realise a common aim (Oke et al., 2016).

Developing teamwork is one of the major challenges inherent within an organisation in recent times due to the arrival of modern technology and the rise in the level of competition prevalent between industries (Hu & Liden, 2016). The different challenges make it harder to build a strong structure of teamwork within an organisation's environment. However, the most effective approaches to overcoming teamwork challenges include confidence, positive communication, effective leadership, and team spirit (Ryan, 2017). However, the least used among these factors is team spirit, as its importance has consistently been undermined, especially in the Abuja metropolis and, more so, at AMAC as a government parastatal.

Team spirit is seen as the various ways through which team performance can be raised or allowed to not be depleted to continually trigger better performance throughout work (McInnes & Peters, 2015; Liff & Wikström, 2017). Better performances through team spirit are influenced by several other factors ranging from interpersonal skills to communication; without focusing on the capabilities or abilities of the team members, persistent communication, team members' cohesiveness, team member knowledge, training and development, team members' trust, and team members' recognition and reward are all considered teamwork measures (Liff & Wikström, 2015; Zand & Shafizadeh, 2015; Liff & Wikström, 2017; Arinze et al., 2018). Consequently, these factors have been lacking in the performance of AMAC,

which has reduced the team spirit and, subsequently, the team's performance, despite the perceived availability of working materials.

Similar studies have explored the different aspects of teamwork in both private and public organisations within and outside the shores of Nigeria, adopting different teamwork measures to measure the organisation's performance metrics (Paula, 2016; Liff & Wikström, 2017; Rasool, 2019). However, little or no emphasis has been given to the factor of team spirit. Consequently, several studies have neglected the importance of this factor, while attention has mostly been given to others, even among the AMAC staff. The study attempted to ascertain the relationship between team spirit and the performance of AMAC staff in Nigeria, following the continued neglect of the importance of team spirit to the organisation. The study thus hypothesised that there is no significant statistical relationship between team spirit (esprit de corps) and AMAC staff performance in Abuja.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Team Spirit, Teamwork and Organisational Performance

Team spirit allows team members to have more trust, self-confidence, and the capacity to plan and make great decisions with others. Also referred to as esprit de corps, team spirit contributes to the creation of a good work environment through actionable goals, creative activities, positive methods, and values. In a company, a lack of team spirit can contribute to low morale and poor production. Any institution must enforce team spirit to achieve its goals and vision (Sanyal & Hisam, 2018). This is because team spirit helps people grow themselves, properly deploy their potential, and discover the appropriate ways to do essential duties.

The achievement of a team relies on the common efforts of every team member. Azmy (2012) opined that management procedure is imperative for developing organisational culture as it encompasses providing workers with the tactical issues and urgencies of the business. The organisation sets the framework where all workers can express their abilities according to what they are intended to realise (Ohina et al., 2018). This acknowledged that subsections put together teams and that crews carry their cultural ideas to a project, triggering variances and coordination hitches (Oke et al., 2016). Teamwork is therefore the key to enhancing individual and collective preparation, which influences the company's quality and efficiency by extension. With a high-performing team, an organisation can achieve something much bigger, more effectively, and more enjoyable than a group of the same individuals working on their own.

On the other hand, Kerber (2018) opined that effective teamwork is essential to the success of any business. They averred that since "no man is an island," the positive effect of productive teamwork can energise an entire organisation just as the negative effects of a lack of teamwork can cripple one.

There are many benefits to using teams due to the increased number of options and resources they provide. Lider (2020) observed that teamwork facilitates the pooling of talents to provide focused attention toward the attainment of organisational goals. In this regard, teamwork allows organisations to bring together critical contributors who might not otherwise be able to work together. This allows workers to work in harmony, which increases the pace of work and results in a high yield of quality production and consequently increases the organisation's performance. Hayworth (2019) opines that teamwork allows organisations to unite the varying perspectives of different cultures and business customs to avoid counterproductive ethnocentrism.

Nevertheless, Kayworth (2020) suggested that teamwork allows organisations to unite the varying perspectives of different cultures and business customs to avoid counter-productive ethnocentric bias but rather encourage "groupthink" and to develop innovative solutions to problems. In addition, the ability to respond to the specific and varied needs of an organisation can be addressed quickly and effectively with teamwork. They further opined that teamwork improves resource utilisation by leveraging time to the advantage of the organisation and effectively bridging individual differences so that teams can be more productive.

2.2. Organisational Team Performance

Organisations with greater emphasis on teamwork have increasingly received higher employee performance and are better at problem-solving (Zand & Shafizadeh, 2015). Some studies posit that teaching people the procedures for working in a team is difficult since teaching individual teamwork is inappropriate (Oluwa & Ibrahim, 2021). Two major factors that affect team performance include interpersonal and self-management skills (Gomez, 2017). As teamwork is an essential component of any type of work organisation, these factors stimulate communication, including interpersonal relationships among team members, and also improve employee performance. According to Boakye (2015), teamwork is necessary as a measure that displays a variety of features in a variety of organisations comprising non-profits. Likewise, Gomez (2017) posits that teamwork is an individual action joined together to achieve a common purpose, which collapses the needs of the individual to those of the group.

Principally, every individual in a team puts aside their individual needs for the bigger group goal, which is a performance inducer (Biswas, 2015). Nevertheless, Hu and Liden (2015) explained teamwork as a collaboration between team members and see it as mutual aid and an inclination to work together, which shows that teamwork is the ability to work together to improve the productivity progress of the organisation. Katzenbach and Smith (2003) emphasise team components as matching abilities, individuals, organisational objectives, mutual initiatives, and work approach, which are inducers of organisation productivity. Kelli et al. (2015) and Katzenbach and Smith (2003) see the diversity within the confines of teamwork as important to every organisation's productivity stride and suggest the team's performance outcome as an indicator of the level of effectiveness of the team.

Laconically, team success is determined by the quality of each team member's mutual contribution to teamwork and, in turn, organisational performance (Azmy, 2012). Regrettably, team performance is constrained by a variety of issues that can make or mar the performance of an organisation, such as tribal sentiment, communication barriers, class variance, language barriers, and prejudice, all of which affect the performance of the organisation (Saxena, 2014). Similarly, a poor attitude put up by any member of a team can trigger a technical deficiency in the strategies put together, which leads to a negative influence on teamwork and poor team performance (Steven & Zhiang, 2010). Additionally, Sharon (2018) depicts the possibility of increased worker turnover as a repercussion of an efficient worker's exit from the firm due to prejudice.

Consequently, Mohrman et al. (1995) opined that performance, team satisfaction, and interdependent work are the three variables that explain the effectiveness of the team. Studies by Katzenbach and Smith (2003) and Khoshtale and Adeli (2016) opined that an efficient team deals with collaboration, focus, efficient communication, and interdependence. Covey (1989) in Uher and Loosemore (2004) exposes a fundamental decree of events necessary to achieve positive teamwork and team-determined effort, which includes openness, mutual respect, reliance, combined efforts, and respect. As a result, when each and every member expresses appreciation, morale rises, which is a result of trust and leads to interactions, which leads to better teamwork (Abosede et al., 2020).

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The HRM-performance linkage model of Becker and Huselid (1998) and Wright et al. (2003), whose basic notion suggests that teamwork has a direct impact on employee skills and motivation, which is then translated into improved employee/organisational performance, serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. The HRM-performance linkage framework is based on the resource-based view (RBV), which asserts that by boosting employees' abilities and team spirit, employee/organisational performance would improve (Lopez et al., 2005). According to the RBV viewpoint, an organisation's potential for competitive advantage is dependent on its ability to harness the unique qualities of its pool of people resources and talents.

The following is the primary causal pathway of the HRM-performance linkage model:

Teamwork > Skills > Attitudes > Behaviour > Employee/Organisational Performance.

Looking at the causal chain indicated above, the overall structure of the model is the indirect or hierarchical linkage between cooperation and employee performance via the outputs of skills, attitudes, and behaviour (Black, 2001). Teamwork activities focused on improving employees' skills have a direct impact on their attitudes: motivation, dedication, and satisfaction (Barlett, 2001).

The HRM-performance linkage model theory/model was thought to be particularly important to the study since it could explain the challenges associated with teamwork and employee performance. The primary idea is that cooperation facilitates the acquisition of necessary abilities, which leads to improved organisational performance for team members. Every member of the team will never be equally gifted, but via interaction and collaborative job performance, the weak members will learn from the strong members.

3. Methodology

The study used a survey research design. The target population for this study comprised 2295 staff of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC Staff Strength Records, 2021). The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1973), simplified formula for sample size calculation. This is evidenced in the study of Atanda, (2021) and Muhammed et al., (2022). Taro Yamane's formula is stated thus:

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

Where: n = sample size; N = population size; e = degree of tolerance error, which with a confidence level of 95%, the degree of tolerance error is 5% (0.05). The sample size is computed below:

$$n = \frac{2295}{1 + 2295(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2295}{1 + 2295(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2295}{1 + 5.7375}$$

$$n = \frac{2295}{6.7375}$$

$$n = 340.630 \approx 341.$$

According to the formula, the sample size for the study is 341. The questionnaire used for the study is divided into two sections: the first section includes demographic information from respondents who are AMAC staff, and the second section includes a question about the effect of team spirit on AMAC staff teamwork. The research questions in the questionnaire were coded on a 5-point Likert scale to determine the degree to which the various respondents agreed or disagreed with the questions, as in the study of Okafor and Afolabi (2021).

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics employ frequency and percentage to get the respondents' mean responses, while the inferential statistics applied are Pearson product-moment correlation to get the strength of the correlation between the team spirit and team performance of AMAC staff in Abuja.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The study targeted the 2295 employees of AMAC, and 341 respondents were required for this study, out of which 259 questionnaires were properly filled out and returned. This represents a 75.95% return rate.

4.1. Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 4.1: Respondent's Demography

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender of Respondents			
Male	177	68.34	68.34
Female	82	31.66	31.66
Total	259	100.0	
Age Group of Respondents			
25-29 years	61	23.55	23.55
30-39 years	66	25.48	25.48
40-49 years	119	45.95	45.95
51 and above	13	5.02	5.02
Total	259	100.0	
Respondents Education Level			
Diploma	64	24.71	24.71
Graduates	153	59.07	59.07
Post Graduate	42	16.22	16.22
Total	259	100.0	
How long have you been working for AMAC			
1 -5 years	57	22.00	22.00
6 – 10 years	112	43.24	43.24
11 – 15 years	36	13.89	13.89
Over 15 years	54	20.85	20.85
Total	259	100.0	

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 259 respondents who properly filled out and returned the questionnaire, 117 were male and 82 were female, which indicates a response rate of 68.34% and 31.66%, respectively. The age group of the respondents comprises those with the age range between 25 and 29 to be 61, 30 and 39 to be 66 respondents, 40 and 49

to be 119 respondents, and 50 and above to be 13 respondents. This indicates a response rate of 23.55%, 25.48%, 45.95%, and 5.02%, respectively.

The educational level of the respondents indicates that 64 respondents had diplomas, 153 are graduates, and 42 have postgraduate certificates. This demonstrates a response rate of 24.71%, 59.07%, and 16.22% simultaneously. Respondents' working experience is displayed in Table 4.1, which shows that the respondents with experience between the ages of 1 and 5 years are 57, 6 and 10 years are 112, 11 and 15 years are 36, and over 15 years are 54, which is an indication of the response rates of 22.0%, 43.24%, 13.89%, and 20.85%, respectively.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Data

Table 4.2: Team Spirit Factors

Team Spirit Factors	SA	A	U	D	SD
Do you agree that a lack of proper communication affects teamwork?	96	2	1	0	0
Do you agree that lack of employee's empowerment on communication impact on teamwork in AMAC?	87	11	1	0	0
In your understanding do you agree that poor employee compensation impact teamwork	97	1	1	0	0
Do you agree organisational culture impact teamwork at AMAC	86	12	1	0	0
To what extent do you agree with the following strategic statements in relation to culture that might impact teamwork at AMAC	86	12	1	0	0
To what extent does teamwork affect performance in organisations?	85	13	1	0	0
As a worker would you prefer to work as team or as an individual?	74	12	1	12	0
Working as a team leads to efficiency?	97	1	1	0	0
Working on our team inspires people to do their best?	85	13	1	0	0
Team work improves unity of direction?	63	36	0	0	0
We are able to resolve conflict with other teams collaboratively?	86	12	1	0	0
Mean Total	9.52	1.26	0.10	0.12	0

Source: Author's Computation, 2022.

Table 4.3: Performance Factors

Performance Factors	SA	A	U	D	SD
Team member trust increases the Performance of AMAC, Abuja	85	13	1	0	0
Team spirit (esprit de corps) increases the Performance of AMAC, Abuja	85	13	1	0	0
Rewards and recognition increases the Performance of AMAC, Abuja	63	36	0	0	0
Leadership styles increases the Performance of AMAC, Abuja	86	12	1	0	0
Mean Total	3.22	0.75	0.030	0	0

Source: Author's Computation, 2022.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

It was hypothesised that there is no significant statistical relationship between team spirit (esprit de corps) and AMAC staff performance in Abuja. The person correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 4.4: Correlation Analysis for Team Spirit (Esprit de Corps) and the Performance of AMAC Staff

Correlations			
		Team Spirit Factors	Performance Factors
Team Spirit Factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.994**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
Performance Factors	Pearson Correlation	.994**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's Computation, 2022.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The model similarly demonstrates a high correlation between the variables (team spirit and performance) with a correlation coefficient of 0.994, as shown in table 4 above. The model posits a p-value of 0.001, which is less than the 0.01 level of significance and therefore indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis. This is an indication that there is a strong positive relationship between team spirit and organisational performance with a correlation coefficient of 0.994, which agrees with the study of Marique and Stinglhamber (2016), which posits a high impact of team spirit on the performance prevalent within an organisation.

In consonance, Fawazy (2017) disclosed that effective internal communication with a well-defined channel of communication is of essence to the members of a team, which is an inducer of a team spirit that promotes organisational performance. Consequentially, AMAC employees see team spirit as enhancing greater responsibility, shared vision, cooperation, support, and willingness to be productive to the benefit of the organisation, just as in the studies of Moghimi et al. (2014) and Zincirkiran et al. (2015). This is similar to the studies of Abosede (2020) and Obaji et al. (2017) and does not completely align with the study by Alarafat and Doubas (2021).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

According to the findings of this study, the synergy instilled in a well-functioning team located within an organisation induces productive performances in such an organisation, which leads to the growth and development of the organisation involved. Similarly, team spirit promotes team performance, which induces quality output and serves to promote organisational performance improvement when applied necessarily.

The study thus recommends that there is a need for proper communication channels among the team members working in the AMAC organisation. This is so to eschew the lack of information about job duties and requirements, which can serve as an impediment to the organisation. Consequently, emphasis must be placed on establishing cordial relationships between teams to promote the effective and efficient attainment of the goals of the AMAC organisation. Furthermore, the adoption of an all-inclusive and democratic form of governance in an organisation is necessary for the AMAC organisation. This is so to expand the mental capacity, potential, and ability of the employee that would otherwise be stifled in the workplace.

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