



TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS OF UGANDA.

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Abstract

The current paper discusses the influence of team-building activities on employee performance in government parastatals in Uganda. Although there are various components of team-building activities such as internet activities, indoor activities and outdoor team-building activities. This paper specifically focuses on internet team-building activities and it assesses its influence on employee performance in organizations in Uganda. The study conducted a comprehensive literature review in which the works of principal authors such as Bratton and Gold, Mayo, Cole among others were cited.

The researcher employed a cross sectional survey research design. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 113 respondents. The data collected was analyzed using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS). The study revealed a strong positive and significant correlation between internet team-building activities and employee performance ($r = 0.865, p = 0.000$), thereby concluding that, internet team building activities are significant determinant of employee performance in Uganda. It is from this that the researcher recommends that recommends employers invest much in indoor team-building activities to enhance employee job performance in the organization

KEYWORDS: Team-Building Activities, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

The history of team-building idea can be traced back in the United States of America (USA) to the late 1920s and early 1930s with the now-classic Hawthorne Studies to study the relationship between productivity and work conditions conducted by Professor Elton Mayo, from 1927 to 1932, at the Western Electric Hawthorne Works in Chicago (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

Mayo (1933), pointed out certain critical conditions which were identified for developing an effective work team, discovered that a worker's performance is affected by internal and external social demands and informal groups within the work plant influence the habits, attitudes, and morale of the workers and also found that workers rated aspects such as being recognized for their work, feeling secure and a sense of belonging is more important than physical conditions at work. The most famous and easy model of team-building is that of Tuckman (1965), who designated four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

According to Dunaja (2015), organizations in the East African countries embraced the idea of team-building activities in the middle 1990s due to political shifts in the region and the need to incorporate middle and lower cadre employees in the management hierarchy in the organizations and improve employee performance due to growing competition.

Arnold (2018), contended that in Uganda team-building activities developed in the late 1990s and early 2016's when mostly foreign-owned companies started International Standard Certifications to get recognition in the European Union, and this involved participation of employees of all categories which required improved teamwork among employees through approved job description and procedures.

National Water & Sewerage Corporation started as Kampala Water Board in the 1970s. It was only in Kampala until 1972 when a decree; NWSC Act sec 5 (1) was passed for all towns to be incorporated into one Institution, called National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) as a Public Utility Company whose mandate is to provide safe and clean water and sewerage services on a sound commercial and viable basis. To date, NWSC operations have expanded from three towns in 1972 to the current sixty-six towns in Uganda (Musisi, 2014).

Rukanyangira, N., Muyinda, W. M., & Mawa, M. (2018). that Business Associations are interconnected to Sustainability of team building activities and that all other relationships should work together to achieve sustainable activities that will stand the test of time

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the social exchange theory

The social exchange theory was developed by Blau (1964), and can also be traced back to Gouldner (1960) and Homans (1958), and entails undetermined obligations in a relationship between two parties, in which a party in the relationship does the other a favor and there exists an expectation of some undetermined future return. The social exchange has been described as unspecified cooperation between two or more parties which results in a mutual benefit for all parties (Shore, L. M., & Barksdale, K., 1998). In this exchange, both parties reach an agreement based on a comparison of how much something is going to cost relative to the level of reward or benefit that something will provide (Cross, C., & Dundon, T., 2019). Researchers over the years have progressively adopted the social exchange theory as the theoretical underpinning for employee-employer relations (Coyle-Shapiro, J. A., & Diehl, M. R. (2018).

In this study, the social exchange theory was used to engender feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust towards this study, among the employees of NWSC (Abonyo, F. F., 2023). It is important to note that the exchanges occurring between employees and others go well beyond simple economic exchange (Blau, 1964, p. 94). Although some exchange may be purely instrumental with the payoff being money, social exchange elicits positive affect, trust, and kinship. The attitudes and behaviors exchange participants offer to each other are offered for reasons far beyond guilt. They have inspired behaviors that are reciprocated during the exchange process. Social exchange (which had previously been called psychological exchange in early social exchange literature e.g., Homans, 1961) involves obligations that are unspecified and lack a standard of value. Thus, in a social exchange, participants are not prioritizing equivalencies in value, as opposed to economic exchange.

Purpose of the Study:

The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of team-building activities on employee performance in the National Water and Sewerage Corporation

Objective of the Study

To examine the effect of team-building internet activities on employee performance in National Water and Sewerage Corporation

Literature Review

The available literature highlights the influence and relevance of team building activities on employee performance.

Team-building activities facilitate employees to cooperate, improve their skills and deliver useful responses without any dispute between them (Jones *et al.*, 2007). Oso (2002), noted that employees feel empowered when they effectively participate in team-building activities and this makes them independent which is the basis of job satisfaction and minimum stress level (Salam, A., 2016). In an environment of belief and honesty, employees feel free due to which new and productive ideas arise and the team feels that the ultimate goal is being achieved (Ahmad, I., & Manzoor, S. R., 2017). The organizations have increased employee performance, higher productivity, and efficiency and can solve problems quickly which mainly and mostly focus on teamwork ((Ahmad, I., & Manzoor, S. R., 2017).

Dyer and Dyer (2013), describe the concept of team-building as a process of diagnosing team dynamics and instituting processes to improve team performance. Research has shown that team-building activities can significantly improve team productivity (Klein *et al.*, 2019). However, it is not practical to spend a lot of time and money on team-building activities if employees participate in a particular team only temporarily. With that said, such teams may still be able to benefit from team-building activities which led to improved employee performance and productivity (Dyer and Dyer, 2013).

Manzoor, S. R., Ullah, H., Hussain, M., & Ahmad, Z. M. (2011), noted that employees work confidently in teams as they are supported by the upper-level management and as a result, this increases their productivity. Furthermore, (Hanu, C., Amegbe, H., Yawson, M. D. T. A., & Mensah, P. (2023), described that team-building activities encourage employees to use their knowledge, skills, capabilities and cooperate with their co-workers to maximize the performance of the whole organization. The past study concluded that team-building activities have a significant positive effect on employee performance (Amos, M. A., Hu, J., & Herrick, C. A. (2005). (Janet, 2013), also concluded that team-building activities have a significant positive effect on employee performance.

Team-building is a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks (Ferris, 2002). Team-building is structured activities aimed at “changing the mood of a situation into one that is more trusting and relaxed where individuals can begin to “let down”, interact with and acknowledge each other” (Rivas & Jones, 2012). Hitch (2013), stated, “If team members are guarded in their conversations, they hold back. When they hold back, the team fails to tap into the unique perspectives, diversity, and expertise of everyone in the group.”

Organizations have used team-building activities as one of their strategies to increase employee motivation or foster relationships after acquisition and an overall reduction in turnover which improves the overall level of employee performance and productivity (Klein *et al.*, 2016). Raganowicz-Gargas, (2014), points out that in as much as an individual team member's contribution should be valued; leaders should concentrate on team-building processes.

Kalisch *et al.* (2016), noted that if there is an established culture of teamwork in an organization where workers observe the visions, norms and have a particular target to achieve then the organization has a high chance of reducing the staff turnover (Kalisch, Wiech, Herrmann & Dolan, 2016). Furthermore, Kalisch *et al.* (2016), revealed that institutions that provide seminars dealing with how employees can manage stress levels make employees understand and get support from their other colleagues before the situation worsens. Team-building activities are especially important in alleviating biases arising from behavioral orientations or other distractions such as occupational job environments that are likely to prejudice the outcome of a decision (Rivas & Jones, 2012).

Team-building activities can improve team performance by improving team cohesion (Mullen & Copper, 1994). Ideally, team-building activities will produce greater team cohesion, which refers to the unity and bond that forms when team members have mutual positive feelings toward each other, when they can manage conflict and solve problems in a supportive and trusting environment, and when they are satisfied with how the team works together (Carron & Brawley, 2012). While some evidence shows that team-building activities improve several constructs related to team cohesion such as social bond (Greitemeyer & Cox, 2013), pro-social behavior (Jin & Li, 2017), group identification (Morschheuser *et al.*, 2017), and social communication (Peña & Hancock, 2016), research has not yet explicitly tested the direct effect of team-building activities on team cohesion and employee performance.

Team-building activities also activate a strong level of goal commitment in team members (Klein *et al.*, 2019). Research has demonstrated increasing goal commitment to improving team performance across a variety of settings (Klein *et al.*, 1999). Accordingly, many traditional team-building activities include a component that focuses on discussing and setting team goals (Bruner *et al.*, 2013). However, although TVG creates a context for –goal setting and goal commitment, prior research has not tested the relationship between TVG and goal commitment (Salas *et al.*, 2005).

In a study undertaken by Jones *et al.* (2007), on the effect of team-building activities in the organization, it was found that employees working within the team can produce more output as compared to individual effort. Also, in another study carried out by Ingram (2016), on linking teamwork with performance. It was found that a good manager assigns responsibilities to his/her employees in a form of a group or team to take the maximum output from the employees. In another study carried out by Conti and Kleiner (2003), on how to increase team-building activities in an organization, it was found that teams offer greater participation, challenges, and feeling of accomplishment. It was concluded that organizations with teams attract and retain the best people as employees.

Shipherd (2014), asserted that higher levels of team cohesion increase both immediate and long-term team performance. This cohesion, Shipherd (2014), adds is majorly achieved through team-building activities. Team-building is very crucial and determines how the organization is structured currently it also influence changes in the job environment and the workers' perception and attitude towards work (Grohar-Murray & DiCroce, 2016).

Team-building activities lessen these stressors at work which enhances decision-making freedom, high levels of job control, and ultimately low levels of fatigue (Lornudd, Bergman, Sandahl, & von Thiele Schwarz, 2016).

In a study carried out by Boakye (2015), on the impact of team-building activities on employee performance, using Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital and Ejisu Government Hospital, several measures of team performance were analyzed including team trust, recognition, and rewards. The study used correlational techniques to analyze the relationship between the two variables, that is teamwork and organizational performance. The study found that teamwork is positively and significantly related to organizational performance. In another study, Manzoor, Ullah, Hussain, and Ahmad (2011), worked on the effect of teamwork on employee performance, using the staff of the higher education department of Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa, Peshawar Province of Pakistan. The study which was designed as a descriptive survey design found that a positive and significant relationship exists between teamwork and employee performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study employed both secondary and primary sources of data. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaires comprising of both open and close ended questions from a sample of 113 respondents from National Water and Sewerage Corporation headquarters drawn from different departments, namely; Administration and Management, Commercial and Customer Care, Technical, and Finance and Accounts using a list of employees obtained from the Human Resource Manager NWSC. The sample was used because they are beneficiaries of Team-building Activities which in turn affect the level of employee Performance in the National Water and Sewerage Corporation. The study utilized both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques; that is, managers, and administrators were selected using purposive sampling because they were considered as the key informants, employees of organization were selected using simple random sampling. The data was then analyzed quantitatively using SPSS to obtain frequencies, standard deviation, mean, correlations and regression. The overall response rate was 79.6% and a non-response rate of 20.4% as 23 questionnaires out of the overall total of 113 were not returned.

Data Quality and Analysis:

A content validity index was used to check for clarity, simplicity, ambiguity and relevance of the instruments. Experts in the field were consulted about the content of the instruments, ambiguity of question items and their relevancy. There after the instrument was given to raters who rated the relevancy of each item and a content validity index was computed. The results were as follows;

Table A: Content Validity Index for Administered Questionnaire

Raters	Relevant Questions	Total Number of Questions Rated	Score
Rater 1	33	40	0.825
Rater 2	32	40	0.800
Rater 3	33	40	0.825
Average CVI			0.825

Source; Primary Data, 2021

The minimum CVI recommended in the survey studies is 0.7 (Amin, 2005: 288). The ACVI of 0.825 renders the questionnaire valid and therefore reliable to collect data for the study.

In this study, the reliability of the measurement items was completed by running a reliability analysis utilizing SPSS v22 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) in order to obtain the Cronbach Alpha for each scale and check the item to total correlations. The research questionnaire was checked for item consistence basing on Cronbach's alpha test. The results are displayed in the table below.

Table 3.4: Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.825	40

Source: primary data, 2016

According to Amin (2005) if the reliability is 0.7 and above, then the questionnaire is reliable for research. The instrument was deemed reliable since it scored 0.825.

Research Findings

The parameters that were highlighted during the analysis of the collected were twofold, namely, whether team-building internet activities influence employee performance in the National Water Sewerage Corporation.

Table C: Descriptive Statistics on team-building internet activities

No	Team-building internet activities	Mean	SD
1.	My employer allows employees to spend time browsing the web when internet access is available in NWSC	3.97	1.075
2.	My employer allows me to chat with my team on Facebook and Twitter	3.57	1.134
3.	I participate in virtual games with my fellow employees	3.53	.950
4.	My employer hosts a video conference and asks each remote employee to tell three truths and one lie about themselves	3.72	1.245
5.	My employer hosts a digital breakfast club, where employees come together with their favorite breakfasts to make light conversation	3.97	1.106
6.	I usually a watch movie through a video conference call with my fellow employees	3.59	1.111
7.	My employer host remote workshops and classes where all employees are allowed to participate	3.49	1.202
8.	I participate in online team-building bingo fun activity with my fellow employees	3.93	1.288
9.	Online workout sessions have fostered real-world teamwork and enabled employees to form alliances	3.67	1.190
10.	My employers occasionally virtual dance party	3.56	1.250
	Overall score	3.65	1.143

Source: Primary data, 2021

The study gave the overall score mean value of 3.65 indicating that most of the respondents agreed that internet team building activities influence employee performance in National Water Sewerage Corporation.

Results of the Correlation Analysis:

In an effort to find out the basic relationship between team building activities influence employee performance, the researcher carried out a correlation analysis and the results were as follows;

Table D: Correlation between internet team-building activities and employee performance

		Internet team-building activities	Employee performance
Internet team-building activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.865**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.865**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

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

Source; Primary Data, 2021

Correlation results in Table D above show that there is a positive strong significant associative relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance at NWSC head office considering Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.865$ and $\text{Sig} = 0.000$ which is less than 0.01. The positive correlation implies that the positive change in internet team-building activities results in a corresponding positive change in employee performance at NWSC head office and vice versa. Therefore, there is a statistical relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance at NWSC head office. This finding relates to Gergel *et al*, (2012), finding which indicated that firms commonly use internet team-building activities to facilitate problem-solving between employees within the firm, and also to collaborate with another firm. Internet team-building activities improve profit margins by increasing operational efficiency and productivity within the company, either using innovative solutions or through the increased sharing of knowledge through virtual means.

Simple Regression Analysis on internet team-building activities and employee performance

In addition to the descriptive statistics above, the internet team-building activities were regressed against employee performance to confirm the results got from the descriptive statistics as well as test the direction of the relationship and the following results were obtained.

Table E: Model Summary of the internet team-building activities and employee performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865 ^a	.749	.746	.21389

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internet team-building activities

Source; Primary Data, 2021

The Regression results as presented in table E above show the adjusted R square value is 0.746; it implies that 74.6% of Employee performance at NWSC head office is influenced by Internet team-building activities; the remaining 25.4% of employee performance of NWSC head offices being explained by other factors. This hence means that there is a relationship between Internet team-building activities and Employee performance at NWSC head office.

Table F: Anova Value for internet team-building activities and employee performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.003	1	12.003	262.382	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.026	88	.046		
	Total	16.029	89			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Internet team-building activities

Source; Primary Data (2021)

Results of the study in table F above indicate that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. There is a statistical significance of the regression model indicated by $F=262.382$ and $P=0.000$ which is less than 0.05. This is also supported by the regression mean square value of 12.003 compared to the residual mean square of 0.046. This thus means that there is a relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance at NWSC head office.

Table G: Coefficients of internet team-building activities and employee performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.799	.181		4.406	.000
	Internet team-building activities	.792	.049	.865	16.198	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Source; Primary Data, 2021

Results from table G give t values and Beta. The t-values test the hypothesis that the coefficient is different from 0. To reject this, you need an at-value greater than 1.96 (for 95% confidence). The t-value for Internet team-building activities is 16.198 which is greater than 1.96. This implies Internet team-building activities affect the performance of NWSC head office considering a significant factor ($\text{Sig} = 0.000$). Also, the standardized beta coefficients 0.865 imply that an increase of one unit in employee performance is caused by 0.865 units increase in internet team-building activities

based on the equation $Y = \beta x + C$ where Y = employee performance (Dependent variable), x = Internet team-building activities (Independent variable, $\beta = 0.865$ and C = constant). This, therefore, means that there is a statistical relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance at NWSC head office.

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study findings revealed that at NWSC head office; employees are allowed to spend time browsing the web when internet access is available (mean=3.97 and SD=1.075), employees are allowed to chat with their team on Facebook and Twitter (mean= 3.57 and SD=1.134), employees participate in virtual games with their fellow employees (mean=3.53 and SD=0.950), NWSC hosts a video conference and asks each remote employee to tell three truths and one lie about themselves (mean=3.72 and SD=1.245), the organization hosts a digital breakfast club, where employees come together with their favorite breakfasts to make light conversation (mean=3.97 and SD=1.106) and employees usually watch a movie through a video conference call with their fellow employees (mean=3.59 and SD=1.111). Generally, the researcher obtained an overall mean of 3.65 and an overall standard deviation of 1.143 implying that respondents agreed to a moderate degree that internet team-building activities influence employee performance at NWSC head office.

After computing Pearson's coefficient, the study came up with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = 0.865$ which indicates that there is a relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance in NWSC. The Pearson's r correlation coefficient of 0.865 is positive which means that a positive change in internet team-building activities results in a corresponding positive change in employee performance in NWSC and a negative change in internet team-building activities can result in a corresponding negative change in employee performance. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This thus implies that there is a significant relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance in NWSC head office.

Concerning the adjusted R square value, 74.6% of Employee performance at NWSC head office is influenced by Internet team-building activities; the remaining 25.4% of employee performance of NWSC head offices being explained by other factors. This hence means that there is a relationship between Internet team-building activities and Employee performance at NWSC head office.

Study findings also revealed the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. There is a statistical significance of the regression model indicated by $F=262.382$ and $P=0.000$ which is less than 0.05. This is also supported by the regression mean square value of 12.003 compared to the residual mean square of 0.046. This thus means that there is a relationship between internet team-building activities and employee performance at NWSC head office.

Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that internet team-building activities only contribute 74.6% towards employee performance at NWS, the remaining 25.4% of employee performance at NWSC head offices being explained by other factors. The study thus recommends that NWSC should continue to organize internet team-building activities and allow employees in different departments to fully participate in such activities to enhance employee performance, especially during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study also recommends that Managers at different levels within NWSC should continue to put internet team-building activities as one of their priorities. This and other previous studies have shown that suitably designed internet team-building activities and programs can positively influence teamwork, which has been seen to have a positive correlation with employee performance.

Since internet team-building activities bring about a collective action where employees of an organization interact to create and promote productivity, the management of various firms needs to eliminate roadblocks (such as outdated technology) that tend to disrupt online collaboration and to increase the level of information sharing through video conferencing, e-mails, phone calls, instant messaging and audio-conferencing to enhance employee performance.

Conclusions

The study concludes that; there is a positive significant strong relationship between team-building internet activities and employee performance in NWSC considering the Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=0.865$. The positive value of (r) implies that a positive change in team-building internet activities results in corresponding positive employee performance and vice-versa. Therefore, research objective one was achieved.

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