

PERCEIVED ENABLERS AND OBSTACLES TO TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

This study assesses employee perceptions of factors that have the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness (communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, diversity, social loafing) and, of the level of perceived team effectiveness in the organization. Biographical influences were also evaluated. A sample of 75 employees was drawn using cluster sampling. Data was collected using a self developed, precoded questionnaire whose psychometric properties were statistically assessed. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicate that leadership and motivation and, diversity significantly contribute to team effectiveness. Also, social loafing does prevail and has the potential to hinder team effectiveness. Recommendations to enhance team effectiveness are presented.

Keywords: Team Effectiveness, Leadership and Motivation, Communication and Conflict Management, Diversity, Social Loafing

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Introduction

The level of effectiveness in businesses is increasingly being determined by the extent to which customers' needs are being satisfied. Since jobs and projects in dynamic corporate environments are becoming less time bound, more complex and global in nature, the importance of work being done by more than one person rather than a single person performing single work units has escalated (De Meuse, 2012). The debut of teams was necessitated by the escalating scope of work especially as a result of technological advances and increasing physical distance due to global competition and having businesses abroad (Jane & Media, 2012). The survival of a business, therefore, depends on teams. A team can be defined as a group of people who work independently and cooperatively to satisfy the needs of customers by accomplishing organizational goals. Fritz (2012) states that groups and teams are essentially not interchangeable. The strength of a team lies on the interconnectivity between individual employees, while a group's strengths depend on the willingness to carry out the leader's commands (Pollick, 2012). In work groups, performance measurement is based on the sum of each member's contribution individually. A positive synergy is created by the joint efforts of each worker which is added to impact positively on the performance of employees. In contrast, teams create positive synergy through joint efforts. Individual inputs lead to a

performance level that is higher than the sum of individual efforts (Rao, 2008). Teams, therefore, involve people working together to achieve more than they could do alone and often within a faster completion time. Teams are seen as an idyllic organizational entity because it involves knowledge that will be shared which has an impact on the way in which employees perform their jobs. Hence, many organizations today use teams to accomplish work tasks and processes, achieve business goals and satisfy the needs of both employees and customers.

The increasing use of teams allows organizations to achieve a higher level of outputs without the need of an increase in the inputs. Using teams, however, does not guarantee the achievement of high performance (Rao, 2008). Teams can play a pivotal role in improving the level of success against other organizations but can only do so if they possess the qualities and characteristics for this to be achieved (Pollick, 2012). Success, therefore, depends on the interpersonal dynamics of the members (Rasing, 2010). However, numerous other factors have the potential to impact on team effectiveness. The fundamental priority for teams is proper communication between members in a team and stronger relationships can be achieved if team members feel comfortable relying on one another (Carool, 2012; Holmes, 2011). Teamwork can prevent unnecessary conflicts amongst members when each person tries to provide full support to the members that require it as well as reduce work related

problems. Working closely with someone else can result in tasks being shared, limiting stress and other mental and physical problems that are likely to occur (Management Study Guide, 2011) provided that team leaders can create and harness a proper working environment so that teamwork in business can be successful and can flourish (Rasing, 2010). In addition, organizations that seek to gain a competitive advantage and strive to become a successful business understand that motivating employees and creating a working environment designed to support employees is instrumental in stimulating employees to work effectively and at optimum levels (Schiltz & Media, 2012). Diversity is also imperative because effective teams are built by bringing people, who are similar and different, together and allowing them to work as a team to bring success to the organization. The strength and weaknesses of team members can complement each other. Members can learn from each other by sharing a diverse range of knowledge, skills and expertise that enhance decision-making (Carool, 2012; Holmes, 2011) and improve the organization's standing in gaining a competitive advantage. Team members bring different views to the organization which promotes adaptability, accuracy and development. Teams work in conjunction with each other to ensure that tasks are accomplished thereby, promoting the success and the welfare of the organization (Smith & Media, 2012). However, teamwork not only brings the good, but the bad as well especially if unequal participation occurs and team members rely on other people to do their share of work while they relax or get other forms of their personal work done. This occurrence of social loafing may impact on workplace morale and give rise to conflict (Joseph & Media, 2012) and thus, be detrimental not only to the business but to the other members who are experiencing an increase in stress levels as they not only have to complete their own task but also the unfinished tasks of the lethargic member. Therefore, this paper aims to assess employee perceptions of factors that have the potential to contribute to and influence team effectiveness (communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, diversity, social loafing) and, of the level of perceived team effectiveness in the organization. The influence of biographical profiles on employee perceptions of these factors of team effectiveness is also evaluated.

The nature of teams in organizations

For teams to be successful, all members need to understand the role that teams play and its importance in organizations. Every team member has a specific role that he/she plays. A role can be defined as the expected behaviours that each member of a team has to perform. Roles must be clearly defined as it provides members with responsibilities, a voice regarding the successful achievement of goals and, a

sense of comfort knowing the position they hold in the group (Maikeru, 2009). By working with team members, a wide variety of creative solutions on problems can arise as different members with various skills are grouped collectively to form a team for a specific purpose in the workplace. Therefore, various types of teams may be formed, namely, functional, horizontal, self-managed, multi-agency, problem solving and virtual teams, each with its own purpose.

Whilst numerous advantages of teams exist, drawbacks may arise as some workers struggle with teams and may be reluctant to associate or share ideas with new people to get the job done or may feel intimidated by team members (Schreiner, 2012). Groupthink can also hamper creativity and there is always the possibility of inherent conflict as a result of differing personal styles, opinions and ideas that have the potential to collide. The evaluation of individual performance also becomes difficult as the outcome is based on the team's effort and not the individual effort alone thereby posing reward challenges. These potential problems in teams emphasize the importance of ensuring effective team development which can generate an attractive atmosphere where good communication and teamwork is fostered whilst building trust amongst members (JISC, 2009). Tuckman (1965) identified five stages of team development, namely, forming (characterised by resistance, determining team goals, getting to know each other), storming (more attention is given to differences rather than similarities, conflict, clarifying what each can offer as an individual, greater emphasis on 'I'), norming (more attention is given to similarities rather than differences, training, conflict resolution, improving interpersonal relations, greater emphasis on 'we'), performing (members are self-motivated, well trained and can solve problems independently; teams are trustworthy, productive and have the willpower; focus is both on performance of members and production) and adjourning (determining what is next); these five stages of team development have been evaluated by several researchers (Benne & Sheats, 1948; JISC, 2009; LaFasto & Larson, 2001).

Team effectiveness

Teams are building blocks in an organization. A pre-requisite to success in businesses is effective teamwork, whose fundamental need is having the right skills. Fundamental to team effectiveness are its objectives, decision implementation and the development of a healthy environment (Bocco, 2012).

Various models of team effectiveness exist. The Driskell, Hogan and Salas model (1987) is based on inputs, process and outcomes and highlights the need for interaction between team members for effectiveness to be achieved. It further explains that the environment has a great impact on outcomes and teamwork (Essens, Vogelaar, Mylles, Blendell, Paris,

Halpin & Baranski, 2005). The model by Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum, Salas and Volpe (1995) emphasizes that the situational and organizational characteristics also affects how teams function. This model stresses the importance of the environment that teams work in as well as the role that all competencies play in the performance and training of members. The Shanahan (2001) model includes structure, outputs, inputs and process. The process phase is segmented into three portions, namely, task work, leadership and teamwork where leadership plays a pivotal role. The effectiveness of teams is measured by comparing their performance with the objectives that are set out. The model by Blendell, Henderson, Molloy and Pascual (2001) distinguishes between inputs factors (leadership style, experience, team composition, degree of distribution, aptitude and personality, operating procedures), process factors (knowledge, leadership, behaviours, attitudes) and output factors (accuracy of responses, team satisfaction, timeliness of products, error rate). The T7 Model of Team Effectiveness by Lombardo and Eichinger (1995) comprises of five internal team factors (thrust, trust, talent, teaming skills, task skills) and two external team factors (team-leader fit, team support from the organization).

In order to build strong and successful teams, it is vital that organizations are aware of the fact that good teams are not achieved overnight. Sufficient time and proper leadership is vital. Team members require proper guidance and support from their leaders and fellow mates. In addition, the organization has to foster a culture of teamwork so employees feel comfortable in the environment they are working in. The ability to achieve high performing work teams depends on the factors that influence team effectiveness (Management Study Guide, 2011).

Factors that contribute to or influence team effectiveness

Effective teamwork can bring about astonishing results. However, this is easier said than done. There are many factors that need to cohere to ensure team success. Every organization that is motivated to achieve high performing work teams must ensure that they effectively communicate and help groups manage conflict effectively, they motivate members to achieve business goals and lead the team towards success, they ensure that diversity is highlighted and manage social loafing (Jones & George, 2009).

Communication and conflict management

Communication and conflict management can make or break teams. Communication plays a key role in conflict management and if businesses want to achieve high performing work teams these factors need to be taken into account (Eunson, 2008).

Communication is seen as a prime factor in which organizations and managers rely on in order to ensure that all daily plans and functions run smoothly. When communication with team members is effectively done, members have the potential to interact with one another. Members are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and they are motivated to achieve the organization's goals. They are not reluctant to associate with one another and feel free to answer or ask questions (Williams & Media, 2012). Fostering good and open communication in the business shapes a team player's experience, increases the level of productivity and effectiveness of the team in the organization (Switzer, 2010) and determines the health and success of the business.

Communication that is done effectively not only passes on information from one person to another but will ensure that the person receiving the information understands it and will convey it to another person in an effective manner. Communication that is effective can ensure that all members receive the right information necessary for their responsibilities. It also allows for teams to receive updates on how well the company is performing. Ineffective communication may lead to members being confused. Members may not know what is expected of them and may feel a lack of motivation. This may lead to members being unaware of how to contribute to the success of the company (Williams & Media, 2012). Furthermore, when coaching a team in an organization, the key aspect that influences the results of team members working together is effective communication (Cairo, 2009). Also, effective communication can allow for teams to be trained easily.

Ineffective communication can result in stress and tension and hence, leaders have to ensure that their members communicate properly, that is, they have an open mind, listen actively to one another and have the ability to clearly understand the goals of projects (Gluck, 2000). In this regard, active listening and paraphrasing or reflecting is important. The main aim of reflecting is to ensure that one is aware of the intention of the other member as well as to show the other members that you respect what they are communicating (Parker, 2008).

Effective teams have a positive impact on the organization's growth, productivity as well as creativity. However, bringing different people together from different cultures may cause conflict to arise (Phillips, 2011). Various types of conflict include relationship conflict, data conflict, interest conflict, structural conflict and value conflict, each of which have varying causes (Nauheimer, 2010). Very often causes may be minimized if not eliminated through effective communication. Whilst many modes of communication exist, corporate environments predominantly use team meetings, newsletters and e-mail updates. Undoubtedly, conflicts are part of developing organizations and a business cannot improve productivity without

resolving these conflicts. This responsibility relies on the team leaders or managers in the organizations who must ensure they are impartial and that members understand team tasks. Teams must see conflict as a way of creating new ideas and also try and avoid conflict in order to prevent frustration, anger or alienation. Balancing these forces poses a challenge to the team leader (Phillips, 2011).

Strategies that leaders can adopt to prevent conflict is to gain knowledge and learn how to prevent its occurrence by ensuring that ground rules are set at the beginning of the work activity relating to behaviours and processes that all members agree with. These guidelines will alleviate the need for a leader taking up the enforcer role (Phillips, 2011). Another strategy is to create an agreement on how a team can solve conflicts if they happen to occur. This allows them to pay attention to good conflict resolution techniques and behaviours as well as prepare them for the process of conflict resolution.

Conflict should be seen as an opportunity. When a problem is identified early, a manager can prevent this issue from becoming even bigger. Conflict management is a way of managing employees or teams provided that the leader facilitates the identification of the cause of it and determines effective ways to deal with the problem (Cliffsnotes, 2012; Phillips, 2011).

Motivation and leadership

Both leadership and motivation are dependent on one another. Motivation helps a team to reach its objectives and pushes members to work very hard in achieving team goals. Managers need to have the right leadership skills in order to influence motivation. Managers must possess both motivational and leadership traits and create an environment that encourages team members to effectively work on the job. By motivating members, the leader can be assured that there will be an improvement in both the member's performance and self-esteem.

Many companies are failing due the inability to deal with stressors arising from change in the organization or competition. Therefore, it is imperative for companies and managers/leaders to actively improve motivation (Balzac, 2012) by creating a vibrant vision towards the future, becoming a major motivator by having coaching/mentoring skills, giving rewards and recognition for successful work performed individually or as a group, looking outside the company (connecting with networks and professional associations and meeting with customers), setting clear goals to provide clear direction (Holmes, 2011; Mind Tools, 2012) so that employees can become personally committed to the work goals and feel that they do play an important role in the workplace, encouraging a family focus (family photographs on tables as a form of motivation), ensuring breaks are taken, achieving

work and fun equilibrium and promoting outside activity (encourage sport or hobbies and other opportunities for employees to mingle with one another).

Evidently, employee motivation depends on leadership, that is, the process by which a person has an influence on other people. Leadership is a process in which a leader or manager directs, influences or motivates the activities of other people to provide assistance in achieving organizational and team goals. Every team has the responsibility of setting their own goals, purpose and approach. A leader must be part of the team but also stands apart from a team because of his/her position as a leader. Team members expect a leader to guide them in achieving their goals and objectives (Clark, 2011).

For effective leadership to occur there are certain requirements that need to be fulfilled.

- Building commitment and confidence: Team members should be encouraged to take risks to grow and develop and be challenged to take up new roles which can bolster their confidence (Clark, 2011).
- Build confidence by providing proper guidelines and direction to team members to boost their performance, dedication and morale.
- Manage relationships with outsiders by communicating with people who may positively or negatively affect the team's purpose or goals (Clark, 2011).
- Continually repeat the process: Once team goals have been achieved, team members should celebrate their success and continue the process again by setting new targets and goals whilst ensuring that they are aligned with the team's purpose so as to continually add value to the organization (Cornelius, 2007).
- Create a vision to ensure team success.

An effective leader fulfills three sets of functions, namely, task, relational and environmental functions. The task function involves clarifying goals, establishing structure, engaging in decision making, training and standard setting whilst the relational function incorporates coaching, collaborating, conflict management, satisfying needs and modeling principles (Clark, 2011). The environmental function involves networking, buffering, assessing, advocating and sharing information (Clark, 2011). Evidently, the lack of proper leadership can be seen as a blockage towards achieving good performance.

Diversity

Diversity refers to people who share different traits on the bases of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or ethnic group. Diversity may raise imperative social responsibility issues as well as ethical issues relating to equal opportunities and fair treatment (Manning, 2000). Due to the expanded global environment, managers need to pay greater attention to diversity

aspects. If this is not done, the organization might fail (Jones & George, 2009). Turning a group into a team poses a great challenge to the organization. Managers have to lead groups of diverse individuals in tasks and projects. It may become very easy to work with people who are similar to you, but working with people with diverse skills and knowledge brings in richness to the team. Managers must, therefore, ensure that diversity is valued, rewarded and encouraged. This means that the organization must form teams that include members from many varying cultures and backgrounds, thereby making teams more heterogeneous than homogeneous. For organizations that are small, teams may include members from different genders, different age groups or from a different disciplinary area. When working in larger international organizations, teams may include people of different nationalities including the above traits (Kangaslahti & Hampden-Turner, 2004).

A manager can reap great benefits from encouraging diversity when forming teams. Teams become motivated to change their current processes, with the aim of making them more efficient. This will have a great impact on the quality and level of productivity. Effectiveness in teams will increase due to cooperation and synergy as teams are prepared to effectively communicate with one another, and manage conflict effectively. Diversity in teams also encourages innovation and enhanced creativity because members have unique experiences that they can share with the team (Jones & George, 2009; Kenyon, 2005; Plowman, 2010). Working with people from different cultural backgrounds brings about diverse thinking and forces members to work outside their comfort zone and consider new ideas and beliefs (Fritz & Media, 2012).

If team members learn and appreciate diversity, many aspects of the organization will be improved. Firstly, as members become aware of their skills and abilities, they also identify ways on how to use their strengths to achieve goals more effectively. This may not only improve productivity (OpPapers, 2008) and decrease time wastage, but can also help the organization to gain a competitive advantage (Plowman, 2010). Interpersonal relations are also improved. If members understand the importance of diversity, they are better educated on how to solve conflict by considering cultural barriers and the different styles of resolving conflict. In addition, team members are aware of the many differences that lie within the team and they learn to cooperate with their peers and appreciate the differences that exist (OpPapers, 2008; Plowman, 2010). Customer needs and expectations are also better satisfied. Diverse members take into consideration the differences that team members possess which allows them to build a deeper relation with their customers. In addition, this creates an increase in customer satisfaction, improvement in client relations and in time increases team success (Plowman, 2010). Furthermore, if

members see the benefits of diversity, they may feel a need to conform to the group's standards or norms. This will broaden the way an individual thinks and will improve their personal satisfaction in oneself which may lead to a confident team (Plowman, 2010). Evidently, in order for teams to be successful, they need to embrace diversity and see it as a way to improve team performance and organizational functioning.

Social loafing in teams

Working in teams has many advantages and disadvantages and an example of the latter is the potential for social loafing. Social loafing may occur when members do not put enough effort into achieving organizational goals compared to fellow members. One reason for social loafing existing in teams is due to a lack of recognition of individual members. This may lead to the team failing to achieve the organization's goals and, hence, deteriorating team effectiveness (PsyAsia Support Centre, 2009). Social loafing in teams, therefore, must be managed. Three ways to reduce, if not eliminate, the occurrence of social loafing include making individual contributions identifiable, emphasizing the value of individual contributions and keeping group size to an appropriate level (Jones & George, 2009).

Research Design

Respondents

In this study, the population comprises of 80 employees in a public sector department of a local municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. A sample of 75 employees were drawn using the cluster sampling technique. According to Sekaran and Bougie's (2010) population-to-sample size table, for a population of 80, the corresponding minimum sample size should be 66, thereby confirming the adequacy of a sample of 75 for this study. The adequacy of the sample was further determined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.515) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (1507.747, $p = 0.000$) for the four dimensions having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness and, the perceived level of team effectiveness in the organization, which respectively indicated suitability and significance. The results indicate that the normality and homoscedasticity preconditions are satisfied.

The composition of the sample may be described in terms of age, race and tenure. The majority of the respondents are 40 years and above (92%), are Black employees (70.7%) and have 6-10 years of service in the organization (65.3%) followed by those who have 11-15 years of tenure (20%).

Measuring Instrument

Data was collected using a self-developed, precoded questionnaire comprising of two Sections. Section A comprised of biographical data relating to age, race and tenure and was measured using a nominal scale. Section B consisted of items pertaining to employee perceptions of the factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness (communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, diversity, social loafing) and, their perceived level of team effectiveness in the organization. Section B was measured using a five point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree to (5) strongly agree. In-house pretesting was adopted to assess the suitability of the instrument and a pilot testing using 8 subjects was undertaken. The feedback from the pilot testing confirmed that the questionnaire

was appropriate in terms of relevance and construction.

Measures/statistical analysis of the questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed using Factor Analysis. A principal component analysis was used to extract initial factors and an iterated principal factor analysis was performed using SPSS with an Orthogonal Varimax Rotation. In terms of the validity, five factors with eigenvalues greater than unity were generated which respectively related to leadership and motivation, team effectiveness, diversity, communication and conflict management and social loafing thereby indicating that the questionnaire validly measures the factors contributing to or influencing team effectiveness and, assessing the perceived level of team effectiveness in the organization (Table 1).

Table 1. Factor Analysis: Validity Of The Measuring Instrument

Factor	Factor Label	Eigenvalue	% of Total Variance
1	Leadership and motivation	4.078	11.99
2	Team effectiveness	3.604	10.60
3	Diversity	3.472	10.21
4	Communication and conflict management	3.034	8.92
5	Social loafing	2.807	9.26

The inter-item consistency and reliability of the overall combined questionnaire is fair (above average), with the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha being

0.609. However, reliabilities of the factors separately were higher (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Of Factors And Team Effectiveness: Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Factor	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
Communication and conflict management	0.727
Leadership and motivation	0.835
Diversity	0.750
Social loafing	0.611
Team effectiveness	0.817

Table 2 indicates that the items measuring leadership and motivation and its potential to contribute to team effectiveness in the organization has a very high degree of inter-item consistency and reliability (Alpha = 0.835). The items relating to communication and conflict management (Alpha = 0.727) and diversity (Alpha = 0.750) also measure their potential to contribute to team effectiveness consistently and reliably. In addition, the items measuring social loafing and its potential to influence team effectiveness has a fair and above moderate degree of item-item consistency (Alpha = 0.611). The items measuring team effectiveness reflect a very high level of inter-item consistency and reliability (Alpha = 0.817).

Statistical analysis of the data

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation, Mann-Whitney test, Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA) were used to evaluate the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Results

Factors contributing to or influencing team effectiveness and the level of team effectiveness in the organization

Descriptive Statistics

The perceptions of employees regarding the factors that have the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness (communication and conflict

management, leadership and motivation, diversity, social loafing) and, the level of team effectiveness in the organization were assessed by asking respondents to respond to 34 items using a 1 to 5 point Likert scale. The results were processed using descriptive statistics (Table 3). The greater the mean score value, the more positive the perceptions of the factor

(communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, diversity) and the greater its potential to positively impact on team effectiveness. However, in the case of social loafing the smaller the mean score value, the less its perceived prevalence in the work environment and the less the extent to which it can hinder team effectiveness.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics: Factors Contributing To or Influencing Team Effectiveness and The Level Of Team Effectiveness

Dimension	Mean	95 % Confidence Interval		Variance	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Communication and conflict management	3.907	3.794	4.019	0.239	0.4888	2.5	4.8
Leadership and motivation	4.299	4.207	4.391	0.161	0.4014	3.0	5.0
Diversity	4.297	4.216	4.377	0.123	0.3510	3.0	5.0
Social loafing	1.973	1.844	2.102	0.314	0.5602	1.0	4.0
Team effectiveness	4.419	4.338	4.500	0.124	0.3525	3.9	5.0

From Table 3 it is evident that the respondents have varying views of the factors that have the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness, which in descending level of mean score value indicate its prevalence:

- Leadership and motivation (Mean = 4.299)
- Diversity (Mean = 4.297)
- Communication and conflict management (Mean = 3.907).
- Social loafing (Mean = 1.973)

The results indicate that employees have a very positive view of leadership and motivation (Mean = 4.299) closely followed by diversity (Mean = 4.297) and then communication and conflict management (Mean = 3.907) thereby reflecting that these factors have the potential to contribute positively to team effectiveness. However, there is also evidence that social loafing does exist in the organization to a fair extent (Mean = 1.973) which has the potential to hinder team effectiveness. Table 3 also indicates that employees have a very positive view of team effectiveness in the organization (Mean = 4.419). When compared against a desirable maximum attainable score of 5, it is evident that there is room for improvement in terms of communication and conflict management. Fewer areas of improvements exist for leadership and motivation and diversity. Furthermore, when compared against a desirable minimum score of 0 in the case of social loafing, it is evident that there are areas for improvement. In order to assess where these strengths and areas for improvements lie, frequency analyses were conducted.

In terms of leadership and motivation, employees expressed that their supervisor builds rapport with all employees in a professional manner (98.6%), effectively co-ordinates their efforts and ensures that they are congruent with team and

company goals (97.4%), allows mistakes provided that employees indicate how they will be rectified and what has been learnt from such mistakes (96%), encourages a 'no-blame' culture (94.7%), mentors them and keeps them focused on their work goals (94.7%) and encourages training and stimulates employees to develop and grow (93.7%). In addition, whilst 89.3% of the employees maintained that their supervisor does not tolerate gossip or rumour, 10.6% were not convinced.

In terms of diversity, 98.6% of the respondents believed that team members in their workplace regard working with people from different backgrounds as an opportunity for mutual learning for themselves and others. Furthermore, 97.3 % of the employees expressed that they respect and relate well to others from varying backgrounds, that team members in their workplace are sensitive to others' emotions and responds accordingly, taking background and culture into account and, show a strong commitment to making diversity a success in the organization. In addition, 94.7% of the employees maintained that team members in their workplace overcome obstacles to help people develop no matter what their background and ability and 93% felt that their team leader/supervisor ensures that a policy of including people and their differences is an integral part of the success of the organization. Also, 92% of the employees felt that team members in their workplace demonstrate empathy and sees things from other people's perspective and 84% believed that at their workplace employees of all ethnicity, races and religions are treated equally, although 16% were not convinced of the latter.

In terms of communication and conflict management, 97.3% of the employees expressed that their team leader/supervisor allows them to develop their own objectives, the team's objectives and

contribute to organizational aims. Furthermore, 88% of the respondents reflected that when someone does something that irritates them (for example, smokes in a non-smoking area), their tendency is to peacefully request the person to refrain from doing it. In addition, 86.6% of the employees indicated that when communicating with someone with whom they are having a conflict, they actively listen and attempt to manage the situation calmly and 76% reported that when they are involved in an interpersonal dispute, their general pattern is to examine the issues between them as logically as possible to find a workable compromise. However, 32% of the respondents were unsure and 10.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they attempt to mediate when they observe people in conflicts in which anger, threats, hostility and strong opinions prevail. Furthermore, 16% of the employees either disagreed or strongly disagreed and a further 36% were uncertain whether they will call a meeting to talk over a problem to settle a dispute when people they work with become involved in a personal conflict.

In terms of social loafing, 41.3% of the employees felt that when there is a problem it is difficult to figure out who is a fault, 30.7% believed that they find themselves letting others do the 'dirty work' when they are available to pitch in, that they find it difficult to please their direct supervisor (18.6%), that employees in their team get nothing done despite having an acceptable workload (16%), that they are confused about what is expect of them (13.4%) and expressed that they fail to do their best when they feel unmotivated and underappreciated (13.3%).

In terms of team effectiveness, all employees maintained that they are clear about general team strategies to achieve goals and discuss these regularly with their fellow employees and supervisor, there is a high degree of mutual understanding and trust across all team members, they are clear about the tasks that require joint skills or efforts amongst employees and that their supervisor regularly discusses individual responsibilities to ensure minimal conflict and overlap. Furthermore, 98.7% of the employees believed that they understand the links between their personal performance goals, team goals, department goals, and organization goals and, realize that trust is an integral part of team cohesiveness and that they actively look for ways to build trust between the team members and themselves. In addition, 97.3% of the employees expressed that they check that their goals are consistent with that of their team members' and the wider organization.

Inferential Statistics

Relationship between the factors and team effectiveness

Employee perceptions of the factors contributing to or influencing team effectiveness and the level of team effectiveness in the organization were correlated.

Hypothesis 1: The factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness (communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, diversity, social loafing) correlate significantly with the perceived level of team effectiveness in the organization (Table 4).

Table 4. Correlation: Factors And Team Effectiveness

Factors	r	Team effectiveness
Communication and conflict management	0.193	0.097
Leadership and motivation	0.793	0.031*
Diversity	0.721	0.042*
Social loafing	-0.925	0.011*

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4 indicates that there is a strong, significant and direct relationship between team effectiveness and leadership and motivation and diversity respectively at the 5% level of significance. The implication is that as leadership skills and motivation and diversity increase, teams become more effective. Furthermore, there is a strong, significant but inverse relationship between social loafing and team effectiveness at the 5% level of significance. As expected, the results indicate that as social loafing

increases in the organization, team effectiveness decreases and vice versa. Table 4 also indicates that no significant relationship exists between communication and conflict management and team effectiveness. Hence, hypothesis 1 may only be partially accepted at the 5% level of significance.

Impact of biographical variables

The influence of the biographical variables (age, race, tenure) on employee perceptions of the factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness and, the level of team effectiveness in the organization were assessed.

Hypotheses 2: There is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, race, tenure) regarding the factors having the potential to contribute to team effectiveness and, the level of team effectiveness in the organization (Table 5 to Table 9).

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis Anova: Factors Having the Potential to Contribute To or Influence Team Effectiveness and the Level of Team Effectiveness and Age Respectively

Factor	Kruskal-Wallis Statistic	Df	p
Communication and conflict management	1.811	2	0.404
Leadership and motivation	4.472	2	0.107
Diversity	6.063	2	0.048*
Social loafing	1.792	2	0.408
Team effectiveness	0.792	2	0.673

* $p < 0.05$

Table 5 reflects that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in age regarding the potential of diversity to contribute

to team effectiveness at the 5% level of significance. In order to evaluate where these differences lie, mean analyses were compared (Table 6).

Table 6. Mean differences: diversity and age

Factor	Age Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Diversity	20-29 years	1	4.875	0.3236
	30-39 years	5	4.475	0.3287
	40-49 years	16	4.422	0.3427
	50 years and over	53	4.231	0.3510

Table 6 indicates that as employees in the organization get older their perceptions of the potential for diversity to contribute to team effectiveness decreases slightly. The perceptions of the oldest category of employees of the potential of diversity contributing to team effectiveness is still very high and positive (Mean = 4.231).

However, Table 5 reflects that age of employees does not influence their perception of any of the other factors (communication and conflict management, leadership and motivation, social loafing, team effectiveness) respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2 may only be partially accepted in terms of age and diversity at the 5% level of significance.

Table 7. Mann-whitney test: factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness and the level of team effectiveness and race respectively

Factor	Mann-Whitney U	Z	p
Communication and conflict management	478.500	-0.943	0.346
Leadership and motivation	484.000	-0.876	0.381
Diversity	486.000	-0.854	0.393
Social loafing	440.000	-1.408	0.159
Team effectiveness	552.000	-0.054	0.957

Table 7 indicates that there is no a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in race regarding the factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness and, the

level of team effectiveness in the organization respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2 may be rejected in terms of race.

Table 8. Kruskal-wallis anova: factors having the potential to contribute to or influence team effectiveness and the level of team effectiveness and tenure respectively

Factor	Kruskal-Wallis Statistic	Df	p
Communication and conflict management	0.795	3	0.851
Leadership and motivation	7.974	3	0.047*
Diversity	9.391	3	0.025*
Social loafing	0.684	3	0.877
Team effectiveness	3.025	3	0.388

* p < 0.05

Table 8 reflects that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in tenure regarding the potential of leadership and motivation, and diversity to contribute to team

effectiveness at the 5% level of significance. In order to evaluate where these differences lie, mean analyses were compared (Table 9).

Table 9. Mean differences: leadership and motivation, diversity and tenure respectively

Factor	Tenure Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership and motivation	0- 5 years	5	4.543	0.4449
	6-10 years	49	4.364	0.3524
	11-15 years	15	4.095	0.3767
	16 years and over	6	4.071	0.5907
Diversity	0- 5 years	5	4.275	0.2404
	6-10 years	49	4.230	0.3436
	11-15 years	15	4.408	0.3852
	16 years and over	6	4.583	0.2189

Table 9 indicates that employees with fewer years of service (0-5 years and 6-10 years) are more convinced that leadership and motivation contributes to team effectiveness in the organization. However, employees with greater service in the organization (11-16 years and over) are more convinced that diversity contributes to team effectiveness in the organization.

However, Table 8 reflects that tenure of employees does not influence their perception of any of the other factors (communication and conflict management, social loafing, team effectiveness) respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2 may only be partially accepted in terms of tenure and leadership and motivation and diversity respectively at the 5% level of significance.

Discussion of Results

Factors contributing to or influencing team effectiveness and the level of team effectiveness in the organization

The results reflect that employees were convinced that leadership and motivation, followed by diversity and communication and conflict management positively contributed to team effectiveness in the organization. Whilst perceptions of these factors and their contribution to team effectiveness were predominantly positive, minor areas for improvement

were noted. In terms of leadership and motivation, some employees were not convinced that their team leader/supervisor did not tolerate gossip or rumour. In terms of communication and conflict management, some employees doubted that they would mediate when they observe people in conflicts in which anger, threats, hostility and strong opinions prevails and, that they would call a meeting to talk over a problem to settle a dispute when people they work with become involved in a personal conflict. No drawbacks were noted in terms of diversity and team effectiveness. The results also depict a high level of perceived level of team effectiveness in the organization.

However, the findings also reflect that social loafing does exist in the organization to a fair extent and has the potential to hinder team effectiveness. In this regard, a significant percentage of employees reflected that when a problem arises, it is difficult to determine who is at fault, that they let others do the undesirable processes at work when they are available to pitch in and that team members get nothing done despite having an acceptable workload.

The results indicate that leadership and motivation and diversity respectively have a strong, significant and direct relationship with team effectiveness, thereby confirming its potential to contribute to team effectiveness in the organization. Researchers emphasize that leadership is imperative for the smooth functioning of team and motivation of team members (Balzac, 2012; Clark, 2011; Holmes,

2011; Jones & George, 2009; Herre, 2010). In addition, Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2011) stated that an organization must be clear on the motivation in diversity management. Abiding by the equity legislation is not enough. Grobler *et al.* (2011) further elaborates that unlike affirmative action, diversity management cannot be seen as a short term strategy for correcting the imbalances in the organization. It is a long-term process that requires top management commitment. In relation to diversity, Kangaslahti and Hampden-Turner (2004) states that when harnessed, diversity will enhance creativity, problem solving, and result in better decision-making, which will lead to better servicing of customers and markets, as well as higher business competitiveness and success. Using many different approaches to problem solving and the exclusion of groupthink, when nurtured, will lead to greater innovation by the diverse teams. If managed properly, diversity in the organization may translate into real bottom line advantages.

However, no significant relationship was perceived between communication and conflict management and team effectiveness. Anderson (2012) nevertheless emphasizes that effective communication may cut down time lost in misinterpretation or misunderstandings. A message that is not communicated properly may cause the receiver to take the wrong actions. When a message is conveyed properly, team members will be able to take the correct actions for the team to succeed as a whole (Cairo, 2009; Gluck, 2000; Williams & Media, 2012; Parker, 2008; Phillips, 2011; Eunson, 2008).

A strong and significant but inverse relationship was noted between social loafing and team effectiveness thereby, confirming that the prevalence of social loafing has the potential to hinder team effectiveness. The implication is that as social loafing increases in the organization, team effectiveness decreases and vice versa. Social loafing, thus, impacts on the functioning of teams. Winterholler (2012) suggests that a group leader can work against the impact of social loafing in teams by identifying loafers and encouraging them to contribute or work more efficiently for the benefit of the group as a whole. It is difficult to prevent social loafing from occurring but leaders can work on increasing motivation by providing some form of incentive and individual recognition (Kishore, 2006; Winterholler, 2012). When forming teams it must also be noted that social loafing is higher in larger groups of team members so it is important to keep group size to an appropriate level (Jones & George, 2009).

The impact of biographical variables

The results of the study reflect that age and tenure significantly influences employee perceptions regarding the potential of diversity to contribute to team effectiveness in the organization. Significant differences were also noted in terms of tenure and the potential for leadership and motivation to contribute to team effectiveness in the organization. The results reflected that employees with fewer years of service (0-5 years and 6-10 years) are more convinced that leadership and motivation contributes to team effectiveness in the organization. However, employees with greater service in the organization (11-16 years and over) are more convinced that diversity contributes to team effectiveness in the organization. In this regard, Stoker (2008) noted that team members with a short term tenure attained high levels of individual performance when their team leader shows a more directive behaviour. For members with longer team tenure, individual performance was greater and emotional exhaustion less when the team leader exhibits a coaching style. No other biographical influences were noted in terms of age, race and tenure. However, Stoker (2008) states that including all races in teams will pose as an advantage to the organization. These individuals bring in unique ideas, skills and talent to the team. This can also facilitate the relationships built in the teams and will have great impact on team effectiveness. Responding to gender, Green (2012) believes that leaders need to be aware of diversity as it is driven by women in the workplace. In today's workplace, women are employed in the most prominent positions. It is, therefore, beneficial to include women in teams as they can serve as good decision makers and provide many different skills to the team.

In this study, it was noted that social loafing was not influenced by any of the biographical variables (age, race, tenure) respectively. However, Winterholler (2012) concludes that social loafing is more likely to occur in men rather than women. Also, he adds that it is also seen that social loafing is present more in Western cultures to a certain extent than Eastern cultures. The reason lies in the differences in the focus on the individual versus group accomplishments.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The results of the study reflect obvious recommendations which when implemented have the potential to result in enhanced team effectiveness (Table 10).

Table 10. Recommendations to enhance team effectiveness

Factor	Recommendation
Communication and conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When team members become involved in personal conflict, call a meeting to talk over the problem to settle the dispute. • When team members engage in conflict in which anger, threats, hostility and strong opinions are present, attempt to mediate. • When involved in an interpersonal dispute, examine the issues between the parties as logically as possible to find a workable compromise. • In a conflict situation, listen actively and manage the situation calmly. • When confronted with an irritating behaviour of someone else, peacefully request the person to refrain from doing it.
Leadership and motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team leaders/supervisors must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Not tolerate gossip or rumour. ➢ Build rapport with all employees in a professional manner. ➢ Encourage a 'no-blame' culture. ➢ Allow mistakes provided that employees indicate how they will be rectified and what has been learnt from such mistakes. ➢ Mentor and keep employees focused on their work goals. ➢ Encourage training and stimulate employees to develop and grow.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat employees of all ethnicity, races and religions equally. • Team members should demonstrate empathy and see things from other people's perspective. • Team members should help people to develop no matter what their background and ability in the interest of overcoming obstacles. • Be sensitive to others' emotions and respond accordingly, taking background and culture into account. • Respect and relate well to others from varying backgrounds. • Adopt a policy of including people and their differences. • Regard working with people from different backgrounds as an opportunity for mutual learning for self and others. • Display commitment to making diversity a success in the organization.
Social loafing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not leave others to carry the load or to do the 'dirty work'. Always pitch in to assist or at least effectively execute your work. • Know what is expected of you and your team goals and the contribution of your work to team and organizational goals. • Fulfil all work obligations and contribute effectively to team goals. • Do not neglect work activities in favour of personal work.

Evidently, team effectiveness is largely influenced by leadership and motivation and diversity in teams. However, teams working toward a particular goal cannot be composed of a group of randomly chosen individuals. Instead, team composition has to be planned to incorporate diverse and unique skills, competencies and ideas that synergistically mesh together to bring about innovation, creativity and team success. Hence, the implementation of the recommendations made in this study can enhance the factors that have the potential to contribute to team effectiveness whilst reducing, if not eliminating, the prevalence of social loafing which has the potential to hinder team effectiveness. Directed by a clear vision, team effectiveness can then become a source of strategic decision-making and gaining a competitive advantage in corporate institutions.

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